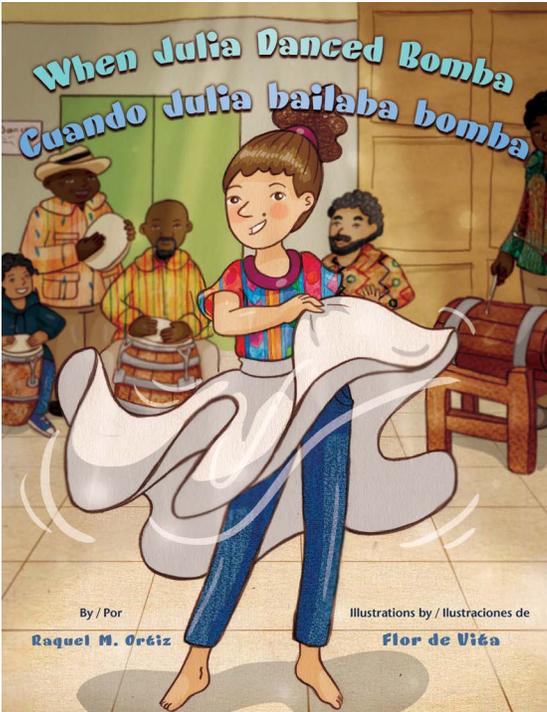


TEACHER'S GUIDE



When Julia Danced Bomba / Cuando Julia bailaba bomba

written by **Raquel M. Ortiz**
illustrations by **Flor de Vita**

Introducing children—and adults!—to the Afro-Puerto Rican tradition of *bomba* music and dancing, author and educator Dr. Raquel M. Ortiz shares a story for children about her rich Puerto Rican heritage. Julia does not want to go to dance class. Her turns are still too slow, her steps too big. She just can't do anything right! When Julia finds out she'll be participating in the *bombazo* and performing a solo, she is terrified. But Julia takes a deep breath, closes her eyes and focuses on the beat of the drum. As she dances, Julia notices that the drums are actually talking to her. She stops worrying and instead loses herself in the rhythm of the drums! With lively illustrations by Flor de Vita this book will help children understand that practicing—whether dance steps, dribbling a ball or playing a musical instrument—yields results!

ABOUT THE BOOK

Genre: Fiction

ISBN 978-1-55885-886-2

Hardcover

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Piñata Books

Ages 6-9

THEMES

Music, Dance, Culture, Afro-Latino, Family, Instruments, Percussion, Drumming, Talent, Fear, Jealousy, Imagination, Cultural Traditions, Caribbean Music, Latino/Hispanic Interest, Fiction



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bomba is an Afro-Puerto Rican music and dance form that is created by dancers, percussionists and singers. On the island of Puerto Rico *bombazos* are traditionally celebrated in the municipalities of Loíza Aldea, Mayagüez, Ponce, San Juan and Santurce. *Bombazos* are also held in US cities, such as Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Orlando and Philadelphia. Other Caribbean cultures have dances similar to *bomba*, such as *rumba* in Cuba and *gagá* in the Dominican Republic. Also, some aspects of *bomba* resemble the *flamenco* from Southern Spain.

Three instruments are needed for a *bombazo*: the drums called *barriles* or *bombas*, the *cuá* and the *maraca*. The *barril primo* is very important for a *bombazo* because it's the high pitched drum that marks every movement the dancer makes as she and the drum 'talk' with each other while the *buleador* or *segundo* are the low pitch drums that keep a steady beat. Also, *bomba* music is always accompanied by singing. After each verse is sung by the lead singer, the choir repeats the verse in a call-and-repeat style.

While there are many styles of *bomba*, the five basic *bomba* rhythms are: *cuembe*, *holandés*, *sicá*, *seis corrido* and *yubá*. In this story Julia dances to a *yubá*.

VOCABULARY

When Julia Danced Bomba has a number of words that your students may not be familiar with. Before or after the reading review some or all of the words listed below.

Content Specific

Cultural center, *barriles*, *bombazo*, solo, *barril primo*, main drum, *bomba*, *cuá*

Academic

Natural, preferred, make believe, daydream, concentrating, paused

ELL / ESL Teaching Strategies

Encourage your Spanish-speaking students to translate the Spanish words in the English text for the class.

Act out the following words found in text: ran, sat, pounding, banged, right turn, side step, jump, sing, dance, dance a solo, terrific turn, twirling, special spin, little hops, bouncing like a donkey, fancy footwork, strolling, stumbling, head held high, strolled, stopping, paused, smiled, nodded, closed her eyes, step, winked, hugged, and whispered. Encourage your students to act out these words when they hear them during the reading.



BEFORE READING

(Pre-reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)*

Pre-Reading Questions

1. Do you like to dance? Why? What kind of music do you like to dance to? How does dancing make you feel? Why?
2. What is a dancer? What does a dancer do? What type of an education may a dancer have?
3. Why do you learn dances in school? Songs?
As a hook for students, consider showing them the book trailer created by the author posted on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/UB2ATZaCEVA>

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 1, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask the students what they think the title, *When Julia Danced Bomba / Cuando Julia bailaba Bomba* means. Ask what they think this book might be about and whom the book might be about. Ask students to make a prediction on where this story may take place.
2. Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, introduction, English and Spanish text, illustration, backmatter, dedications, author's note and illustrator's note.
3. Study the back cover. Say the word *bombazo* together. Take turns guessing what a *bombazo* may be.

Establishing a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3)

Have students read to find out:

- What happens when we try too hard or worry too much?

- How do we become good at doing something?

Encourage students to consider why the author, Raquel M. Ortiz, wants to share this story with young people. Have students consider why the text is presented in both English and Spanish.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

Use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and facilitate a deeper appreciation of the story. Encourage students to refer to the text and illustrations to support their responses. To build close reading skills, students should cite evidence to support their answers.

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3)

1. Why is Cheito a "natural"? What does he do all week long?
2. Why doesn't Julia like bomba class?
3. Why wasn't it easy for Julia to imitate Yamaris? How were Julia's dance steps?
4. What is a *bombazo*?
5. Why couldn't Julia concentrate on her little cousin Carla's terrific twirl?
6. What did Julia do instead of noticing Natalia's special spin?
7. What was Julia thinking about when Yamaris was showing off her fancy footwork?
8. What did the drummer of the *barril primo*, the main drum, do?
9. What did Julia think once she heard the sound of the drum?
10. What happened once Julia stopped worrying and took a break from trying so hard?
11. What did Cheito sing?



Extension / Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft and Structure, Strand 6)

1. Based on the text and illustrations describe how to dance and play *bomba* music. Describe the music. Describe how *bomba* is danced. Why is *bomba* important to students?
2. Why do you think Julia preferred playing make believe instead of practicing *bomba*?
3. What could some reasons be for Julia to be lost in dance class?
4. What was the reason that Julia couldn't concentrate on Carla's terrific twirl or Natalia's special spin or Yamaris' fancy footwork?
5. Why do you think Julia inhaled and closed her eyes before she took her first dance steps?
6. Why did Julia think the drum was talking to her?
7. What does it mean that Julia "heard and felt the rhythm of the *bomba* drums"? Why do you think Julia danced well at the end of the story? What changed for her? How did she feel about *bomba* music? The *bomba* drum?
8. Why did big brother Cheito wink at Julia? The story ends with this sentence: "She was a

natural, too!" What do you think this means?
 9. Why do you think dancing or playing an instrument is important? Why should schools teach dance and/or music? What might happen if schools do not have dance and/or music programs?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purpose, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3, Craft & Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9)

1. Which parts of the book do you connect to the most? Why? Describe a time when you didn't feel you were good at something and you wanted to give up.
2. Julia daydreamed about being an astronaut. Write or draw a picture about what you dream of becoming when you are an adult.
3. Write a song or a poem about how it feels to be really bad at something. What do you want to do? Where do you want to go? What makes you feel better?
4. The story takes place in a cultural center. Imagine the different things you can learn about or do in a cultural center. Write a list of different dance classes, art activities and cultural programs you would like to see at a cultural center.
5. Onomatopoeia is using words that sound like what you are trying to describe. Use onomatopoeia to describe Julia's dancing or Cheito's drumming.

ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4-6)
 (Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4-7)

Below please find strategies that may be helpful to use with English Language Learner students.

1. Review all of the vocabulary. Have students make predictions about word meaning. Have students create and share an action for each word. Invite students to write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture, or create a list synonyms and antonyms
2. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages

after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader. Students who speak Spanish can help with the pronunciation of the Spanish words or read the Spanish alongside a student reading the English text.

3. Have each student write 3-5 questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.

4. After the reading:

- Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
- Working in pairs have students retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary or opinion about what they have read.

5. Ask the students to create a presentation on a type of music or dance from their home country. describe the instruments or dance moves for your classmates. Plan to have an interactive component to your presentation and invite everyone to learn to play a beat or learn a new dance step. Bring photos, instruments and/or recorded music for your presentation.



2. Have students act out some or all of the following words found in the story: Ran, sat, pounding, banged, right turn, side step, jump, sing, dance, dance a solo, terrific turn, twirling, special spin, little hops, bouncing like a donkey, fancy footwork, strolling, stumbling, head held high, strolled, stopping, paused, smiled, nodded, closed her eyes, step, winked, hugged, and whispered. Then have them create a new scene for *When Julia Danced Bomba* using five to eight of the action words found in the story.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use activities below to help students integrate what they have read with other curriculum areas. These activities may also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for creating a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

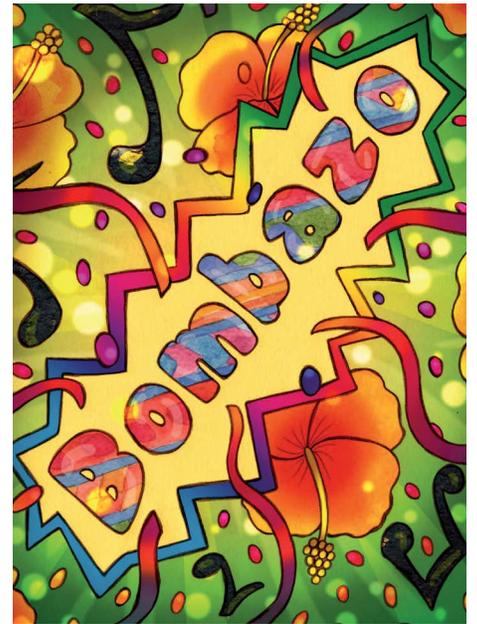
(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Have students listen to the sound of the following instruments: *maraca*, *barril* and *cuá*. List words that describe them and the sounds they make. Have students write a description of their favorite instrument and a poem about that one instrument or all of the instruments mentioned in the story.

Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Share with the students general information about Afro Latino music. Working in small teams or pairs have the students research and answer some or all of the following questions one one country or region in Latin American: What African instruments came to Latin American? What African beats came to Latin American? When did they come to Latin American? How did they influence music in that region? Have the students share their findings with the class, using maps and pictures or photos.
2. Have students research the origin of *bomba* and identify where it originated on a map of the island of Puerto Rico. Have them have groups of students learn about manifestations of African culture found in the different municipalities of the island. Invite the groups to define what a municipality is and to present on the municipality that they studied.



Art, Media and Music

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Have the students study the illustrations. Ask them to create a drawing of themselves in a *bomba* class or participating in a *bombazo*.
2. Listen to *bomba* music. See if the students can identify some of the instruments that were shown in the artwork and mentioned in the story. Then, have students use their desks as a *barril*. Have students play the Yubá beat and try to keep time to some of the songs.
3. Invite students to compose a *bomba* song. Share with them that Cheito sang with the drum about bomba instruments. Have the students write their own songs about who they are or that they want to be.

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Invite students to look at photos or works of art inspired by *bomba* musicians and/or dancers. Have them share their favorite images with their classmates.
2. Encourage students to research a *bombero/a*, either a singer, musician, or composer. Have

students answer the following questions:

- where does he/she come from, what did he/she study or when did he/she begin to sing or play an instrument, what he/she is known for in the world of *bomba*, and his/her most famous *bomba* song.
3. Have students search their homes or a musical instrument or something that could be used as a musical instrument and bring it into school. Invite each student to share his or her 'instrument,' how to play it, and what they like best about this instrument.
4. Invite students to interview a family member or caregiver and ask them about their favorite type of music and their favorite song. Then, have the students compare and contrast this to their own favorite type of music and song. As a class, have a battle of the songs, 'Oldies but Goodies' versus contemporary music. Play, listen to, and dance to the family members and caregivers and students favorite songs and vote on a class favorite.
5. As a class plan a *bombazo*. Learn bomba songs and dance moves. Learn the *bomba* rhythm Yubá. You can find information on how to sing, play and dance *bomba* here: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Educators/Musical-Explorers/New-York-City/Juan-and-Julia>

CENTRO TEACHING RESOURCES

Puerto Rican Heritage Cultural Ambassadors Program

This free, self-paced, multimedia online course on Puerto Rican history, culture, and traditions engages youth and educational institutions in promoting the teaching and learning of our heritage.

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rican-heritage-cultural-ambassadors-program>

Puerto Rican Voices

Semilla Cultural, Bomba and Plena Children's Workshop, LP 21 and Buya are three documentary shorts that introduce bomba dance, music and history.

Bomba and Plena Children's Workshop, LP 21

<https://vimeo.com/channels/prvoices/143677620>

Semilla Cultural

<https://vimeo.com/channels/prvoices/185062475>

Buya

<https://vimeo.com/channels/prvoices/154797783>

Digital Archives

Festival de Bomba y Plena

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/digitalarchive/index.php/Detail/objects/57>

Centro Voices

"Bombacation Summer: Bomba & Plena Classes and Events for Families"

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/centrovoices/arts-culture/bombacation-summer-bomba-plena-classes-and-events-families>

"Bomba and plena: old steps, new paths"

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/centrovoices/arts-culture/bomba-and-plena-old-steps-new-paths>
Timeline of Puerto Rican History Booklet
centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/events_2015/ChronologicBrochure_2015.pdf

The Puerto Rican Heritage Poster Series

<http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/research-education/education/puerto-rican-heritage-poster-series>

- Diasporas in the History of the Puerto Rican People: Cartography (Part I) Taíno, Spanish, and African Roots (c. 2000 BC - 1890s)

CONNECT WITH THE INTERNET

Carnegie Hall: Bomba and Plena with Juan and Julia

<https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Educators/Musical-Explorers/New-York-City/Juan-and-Julia>

Smithsonian Bomba Lesson:

<http://www.folkways.si.edu/bomba/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>

Smithsonian Activities and Materials related to Bomba:

<http://www.folkways.si.edu/puerto-rican-bomba-plena-shared-traditions-distinct-rhythms/latin-world/music/article/smithsonian>

Artist Spotlight: Los Pleneros de la 21: Afro-Puerto Rican traditions:

<https://folkways.si.edu/los-pleneros-de-la-21-afro-puerto-rican-traditions/latin/music/article/smithsonian>

Lesson Plans

<https://folkways.si.edu/lesson-plans/smithsonian>

ADDITIONAL ONLINE LITERACY RESOURCES

Colorín Colorado!

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)

<https://www.familieslearning.org>

Reading Is Fundamental

<https://www.rif.org>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Raquel M. Ortiz was born and raised in Lorain, Ohio. Her parents are from the island of Puerto Rico. Raquel and her daughter, Sofia, learned to sing and dance

bomba at La Casita de Don Pedro in Humboldt Park, Chicago. She and her son, César, studied bomba dancing and drumming in New York City with Los Pleneros de la 21 and she currently collaborates with BombaYo. When Raquel isn't dancing or drumming she creates educational material for the Puerto Rican Heritage Cultural Ambassadors Program for the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Hunter College).

She is the author of *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural / Sofi y el mágico mural musical* (Arte Público Press, 2015), *Planting Flags on Division Street / Plantando banderas en la calle Division* (Colores Editorial House, 2015), *Sofi Paints her Dreams / Sofi pinta sus sueños* (Arte Público Press, 2019) and *A Summer of Change! / ¡Un verano de cambio!* (Red Sugar Cane Press, 2020). Please visit her web page at <https://colorespublishing.wordpress.com/about/>

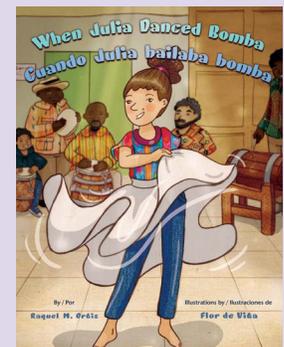
ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Flor De Vita, a native of Veracruz, Mexico, is the illustrator of *Just One Itsy Bitsy Little Bite / Sólo una mordidita chiquitita* (Piñata Books, 2018). A graduate of the

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey with a B.A. in Animation and Digital Art, she currently resides in Jalisco, Mexico.

Learn more about *When Julia Danced Bomba / Cuando Julia bailaba bomba* at: <https://artepublicopress.com/product/when-julia-danced-bomba-cuando-julia-bailaba-bomba/>



The Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Centro) is the nation's leading university-based institution devoted to the interdisciplinary study of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Centro is dedicated to understanding, preserving and sharing the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Centro invites Centro Voices contributors to make use of the extensive archival, bibliographic and research material preserved in its Library and Archives.

The Centro Library and Archives is devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the history and culture of Puerto Ricans. The Centro Library and Archives was established in 1973 as a component of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. The collections include books, current and historic newspapers and periodicals, audio, film & video, manuscripts, photographs, art prints, and recorded music. The Library and Archives provides services and programs to the scholarly community as well as the general public. Constituents are diverse and come from the United States and abroad. The Library and Archives facilitates access to information on its holdings through the City University's online public catalog or CUNY+. It also provides research and information assistance via phone and email.

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