

Planting Flags on Division Street

Plantando banderas en la calle Division

by Raquel M. Ortiz

Karina loves dancing *bomba*. In the middle of the *batey*, the music of the *barriles*, the *cuá* and the maraca allows her to sing and share her story

Today, Karina is desperately trying to get to a *bombazo*. Once she's on Paseo Boricua she can hear the *Tan tun tun TAN* of the *bomba* drums but, will she reach the community garden on time? Does Karina get to sing away her loneliness with the drums? Can Karina find the strength to believe that Abuelo Oscar will come home soon?

This story about an optimistic girl and a communal celebration invites readers to lose themselves in the rhythm of the *barriles*. It is an engaging exploration of the Afro-Puerto Rican tradition of *bomba* as well as an ode to public art and the people who build and celebrate community. Featuring Raquel Ortiz's lovely watercolor illustrations, this bilingual picture book introduces the topic of monuments and community to children ages 4 to 8. After reading this book children and adults will want to plant their own flags as they celebrate and help make community.



About the Author

Raquel M. Ortiz was born and raised in Lorain, Ohio and both of her parents are from Puerto Rico. She learned how to sing and dance *bomba* at la Casita de don Pedro in Humboldt Park (Chicago) with her daughter. Now, she and her son are studying *bomba* dance and drumming with Los Pleneros de la 21. Raquel has been studying and writing about Puerto Rican and Latin American art, literature, and music for many years. She has also worked for Santillana, creating textbooks and educational material for children in Puerto Rico and the U.S.A. She is the author of *El arte de la identidad* (Editorial de la Universidad de Granada) and *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural/ Sofi y el mágico mural musical* (Arte Público). Raquel has a Ph.D. in Anthropology and is a professor at Boricua College. She lives with her family in Brooklyn, New York.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

SUGGESTED VISUALS

- Map of Chicago/ Humboldt Park
- Flags or photographs of flags from Puerto Rico and all around the world
- Photographs of the Three Kings or Three Kings Day celebrations in the United States/Latin America
- Photographs of monuments (preferably Flags from Division Street and monuments the students are familiar with)
- Instruments: maraca, *barril* and *cuá*

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

BEFORE READING

- Show the students different flags. Ask them to identify the flag of the U.S.A. Invite them to identify flags from other countries.
- Explain to the students what a monument is. Share with them that a monument is a way to make history visible. Invite the students to identify and describe monuments they are familiar with.
- Display photographs of the Three Kings or Three Kings Day celebrations in the United States and / or Latin America. Invite the students to identify who is in the photograph. Ask the students if they celebrate Three Kings Day. Share information of the celebration, that it takes place on January 6th, also known as Epiphany, and commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ child. Explain that this holiday is celebrated all over the world. Invite the students to share how they celebrate during the winter holiday season.
- Show the students the following instruments: maraca, *barril* and *cuá*. Ask them what kind of music can be made with these instruments.
- Explain that *bomba* is an Afro-Puerto Rican musical celebration and creation between dancers, percussionists, and singers. The *primo* marks every move the dancer makes as the dancer and drum “talk” with each other. *Bomba* is sung by a lead singer and a chorus in a call and response style. The instruments used for a *bombazo* are the drums called *barriles* or *bombas*, the *cuá* and a maraca. There are many styles of *bomba*. Basic *bomba* rhythms are: Sicá, Yubá, Holandés, Cuembé and Séis Corrido. In this story all the songs are Yubá.
- Ask the students if they have ever participated in a *bombazo*. Explain that a *bombazo* is a communal celebration where everyone who is present participates. Let them know that people at a *bombazo* will sing, dance and play instruments.
- Connect to other cultures. Share that in other Caribbean cultures there are similar music and dance forms such as Gagá in the Dominican Republic and the Rumba in Cuba. It is also similar to the Flamenco of Southern Spain.
- Provide a brief overview of the story. Mention that many neighborhoods have community gardens or community centers where people come together for various activities. Prompt the students to talk about the activities they would organize if they were at a community garden or center.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Ask the students if they like to dance.
- Point out that Karina is in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago.

Do you like to dance? What is your favorite kind of music?

Have you ever been to Chicago? Which part?

Have you ever been to a big city? Which city?

Have you ever been to a community garden? What was it like?

Are you close to your grandfather or grandmother? Does he or she live far away?

What is your best friend's name?

AFTER READING, WORK ON IMMEDIATE STORY RECALL.
ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Who was the main character?

Where was the setting in the story?

What happens in the beginning of the story?

What happens in the middle?

What happened at the end?

What was your favorite part of the story?

AFTER READING

Discuss sequencing and terms associated with sequencing (i.e., first, then, next, finally) as the class reviews how Karina enters onto Paseo Boricua, goes into the community garden and then leaves Paseo Boricua.

- Review the transformation that Karina had after dancing *bomba*. Sing the songs in the story. Practice the beat for Yubá. Then try to do a basic Yubá step.
- Listen to *bomba* music. See if the students can identify some of the instruments that were shown, and mentioned, in the story.
- Give each student a large sheet of paper and invite them to design a community garden. Have them list the types of flowers, plants and trees they'll have in their garden. Remind them to have some kind of celebration happening in their community garden so that they can join in.
- Invite the students to design their own monument. Have them decide what they want to commemorate then help them decide on a symbol that represents their idea.
- Plan to celebrate a *bombazo*. Learn *Bomba* songs and dance moves. Learn the *bomba* rhythm Yubá.
- Create a list of words. Review vocabulary such as "community," "brave," "respect," "gigantic" and encourage students to work on sentence construction by making up sentences with select words.

ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN LANGUAGE ASSIGNMENT

Use the following prompts to develop public speaking and writing skills. Encourage students to draw a picture to illustrate their answers.

- Karina missed her grandfather. Where does your grandfather or grandmother live? Do you miss him or her? Tell or write about one of your grandparents. (My Grandfather / Grandmother and I ...).
- Karina was sad and angry at the beginning of the story but after dancing she felt happy and optimistic. What activity do you do that makes you happy? Tell or write about an activity that you do that helps you change your emotions from being sad and / or angry to happy and hopeful.
- Karina loves the monuments in her neighborhood, the two humongous flags. If you could create a monument for your neighborhood what would it be?
- Write a letter to the author.

OTHER FOLLOW-UP / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Have the students create a poster for a community celebration. Invite everyone!
2. Invite groups of students to design their own flag. Study flags and explain the concept of symbolism. Help the students to pick the colors and design(s) they will incorporate into their design based on symbolic significance.
3. As a prewriting activity 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 song about that instrument.

4. César sang with the drum about being strong and brave and free. Have the students write their own songs, identifying three adjectives that they are or that they want to be.
5. Reread the book and decide if it is reality or fantasy. Compare this story to other stories that are similar.
6. Study Humboldt Park geography. Locate the three places on the map where Karina stopped. Then invite the students to visit three places in Karina's neighborhood and map their journey.
7. Create a map of the students' neighborhood. Identify familiar landmarks and special places. Remind the students to write the names of the streets and identify North, South, East and West.
8. Listen to and watch a *bomba* performance.
9. Use your desk as a *barril*. Watch part of the documentary *Raíces* and try to keep time to some of the songs- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWeqsevB7qw>

VOCABULARY

balcony	humongous
brave	lonely
celebrate	miserable
continuing	noticed
construction cranes	reality
community	remembered
daydreaming	respect
faded	rooting
gigantic	soil
grumbled	

TO SING BOMBA

1. Explain that *Bomba* is sung in call-and-response fashions. Share that the call is one person singing and that these lyrics change. Point out that the response is multiple singers singing the same lines each time.
2. Sing a line of the song to the students and have the students sing the line of the song back.

Cuando Diego

*“Cuando Diego bailó, cuando Diego,
cuando Diego bailó hasta la tierra tembló”.*

Catalipa

*“Catalina pinta un lero
wYuba la marile”.*

Estoy buscando un árbol

*“Estoy buscando un árbol que me dé sombra que me de
sombra, que me de sombra.*

*Estoy buscando un árbol que me de sombra
que me acompañe en mi soledad”.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWeqsevB7qw>

TO DANCE BOMBA

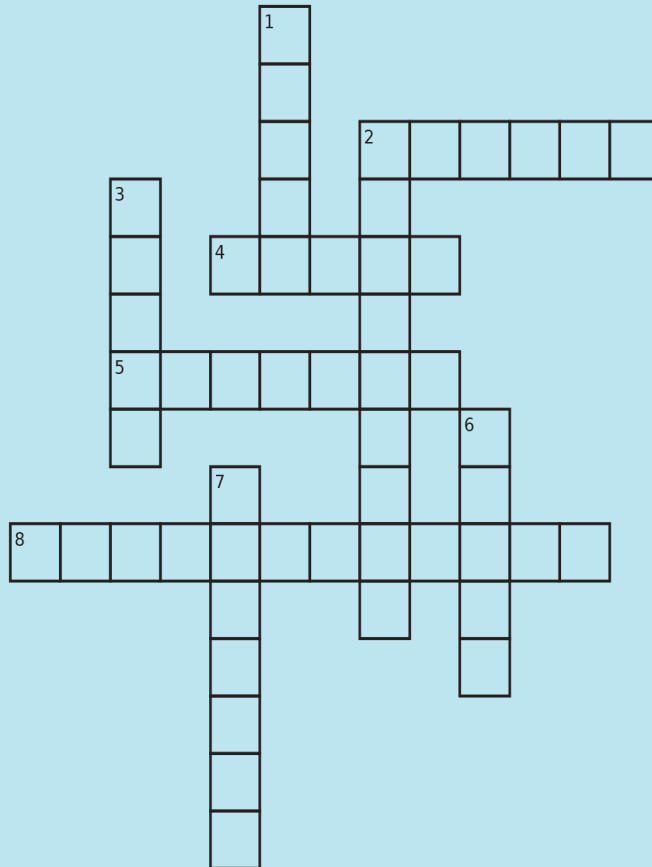
1. Explain that *el primo* is the drum that represents the dancer’s movements.
2. Gather the students into a circle and give each student woodblocks, a maraca or a drum.
3. Stand in the middle of the circle and ask the students to make sounds with their instrument each time you move. Move around the inside of the circle as students create sounds representing your movements.
4. Invite a student or groups of students to take turns being the dancer.

Watch examples of *bomba* on the Smithsonian website:

- *Viento de Agua performs a bomba with dancing and drums at the 2004 Smithsonian Folklife Festival*

Crossword Activity: 2nd and 3rd Grade

Planting Flags Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. _____ danced and celebrated being strong and brave and free.
2. Karina saw her friends in front of the _____ garden.
3. Tan tun tun tun TUN is a ___ rhythm.
6. The _____ always reminded Karina of Abuelo Oscar.
7. A _____ is a celebration where people

Across:

2. The singers stood on the balcony in front of the _____ .
4. The _____ marks every move the dancer makes.
5. The flags are at the beginning and end of Paseo _____.
8. The story takes place in this Chicago Puerto Rican neighborhood.

CONNECTING WITH THE INTERNET

Raíces. Documentary on Puerto Rican *Bomba* and *Plena*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWEqsevB7qw>

Smithsonian Activities and Materials related to *Bomba*

General:

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

***Bomba* Lesson:**

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

Los Pleneros de la 21

<http://www.losplenerosdela21.org>

Danza Fiesta

<http://www.danzafiesta.org>

Africaribe

<http://africaribe.net/>

Flags of Steel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNRl5mjNENI>

La Casita de Don Pedro y Doña Lolita

<http://www.paseoboricua.org/member-businesses/la-casita-de-don-pedro/>

Google Maps of Humboldt Park

<http://bit.ly/googlemaps-humboldtpark>

Dr. Raquel M. Ortiz

e: dr.raquelmortiz@gmail.com | v: (347) 746-2852 | fb: [facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/)

Developed by Raquel M. Ortiz, PhD | Designed by L. Alejandro Molina | Produced by Colores Editorial House