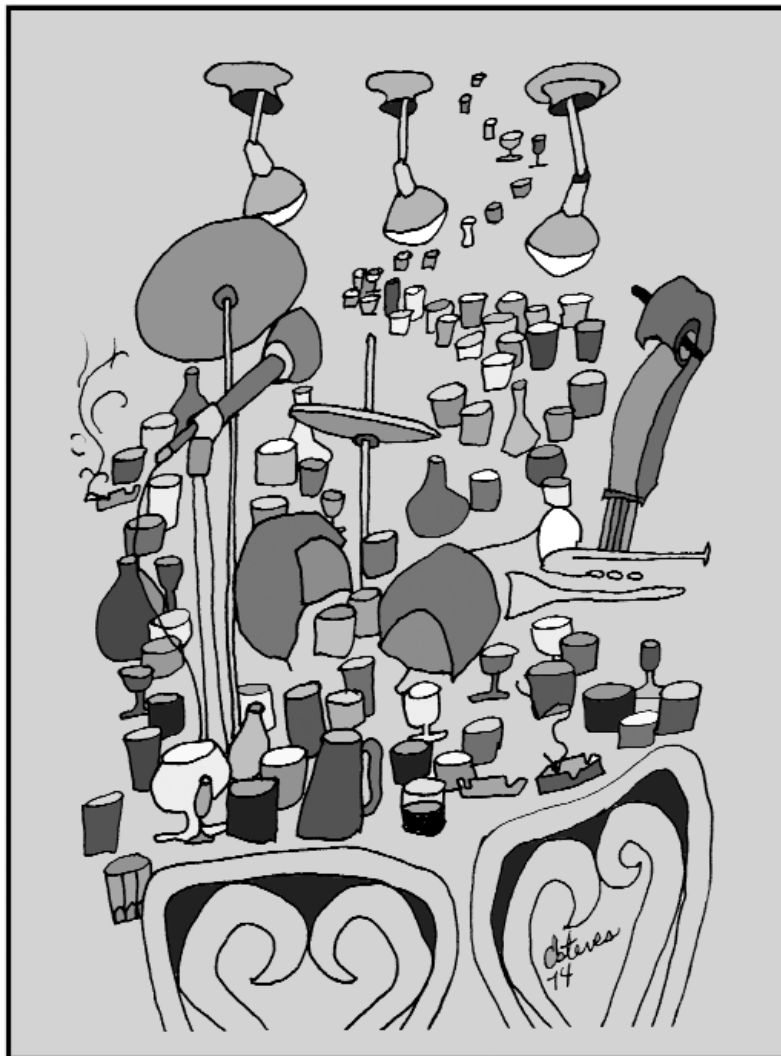


# Puerto Rican Music and Dance: Rican Structing Roots / Routes

## PART II

### PREFACE

JUAN FLORES AND WILSON A. VALENTÍN-ESCOBAR  
Guest Editors



*Clubnite at the New Rican Village (1974)*  
SANDRA MARÍA ESTEVES

## The present issue

presents Part Two of our sampler of new work on Puerto Rican music and dance, and is intended as a historical continuation of the previous issue, which we guest edited and which focused on the earlier stages, through the 1950s, of that story of expressive “roots and routes.” Again the range of approaches and themes is wide and varied, from historical accounts, critical interpretations, and personal profiles of major figures to interviews, personal testimonies, and poetic evocations. Here we have more attention to areas not fully addressed in Part One, such as the relation to contemporary literature, the religious dimension of popular music, and perhaps most importantly, the determining role of dance expression in the world of Puerto Rican music; two important new essays are dedicated exclusively to dance. And, while the focus is on salsa and that first, 1970s generation of Nuyorican cultural expression, attention also goes to other genres, such as Latin jazz, punk, reggae, rock, hip hop, and reggaeton.

Turning to the most recent generations of the music and dance history also involves the emergence of new themes and issues confronting Puerto Rican culture. Here more than in the previous issue, critical study turns to questions of artistic agency and the modification of inherited stylistic genres, new stages of oral tradition, and the philosophy of experimentation, the intense relation between art and politics, and issues of historical memory and the body in performance. Perhaps underlying and intertwining this array of critical concerns is a radically new understanding and preoccupation with the fact of diaspora, both the Puerto Rican and Latino diasporas in present-day U.S. society, and the broader and intense horizon of diasporic blackness and the sense of transnational cultural syncopation with its pan-African “roots and routes.”

As is evident in the current issue, salsa stands as a watershed, a cultural turning point, and as a powerful signifier in the story of Puerto Rican and Caribbean diaspora music and dance. While drawing together the varied styles and cultural movements expressive of Puerto Rican life in the diaspora, the musical revolution of the late 1960s and early 1970s at the same time launched a whole new epoch in Latin music by generating an international diffusion and broad symbolic significance unparalleled in previous stages of its history. For vast audiences around the world, including Puerto Rico, Cuba, Latin America, and the Latino communities in the U.S., Latin music has come to be virtually equated with salsa, and all subsequent stylistic innovations have necessarily shown the influence of and responded to this rich form of musical and dance expression.

Once again, we want to express how deeply we appreciate the fun and the honor of co-editing this rich assortment of intellectual effort dedicated to an increased understanding of Puerto Rican music and dance. Our joyful task has brought home to us, as it surely will to the many readers of these issues of the journal, the vibrant energy and interest alive today in the subject. We again thank the many musicians, dancers, journalists, students, scholars and lay historians for the remarkable wealth of knowledge and critical insight out there clamoring to be gathered and savored. Yes, savored, *sí, con todo el sabor y el swing de nuestra rica cultura de música y baile.*