

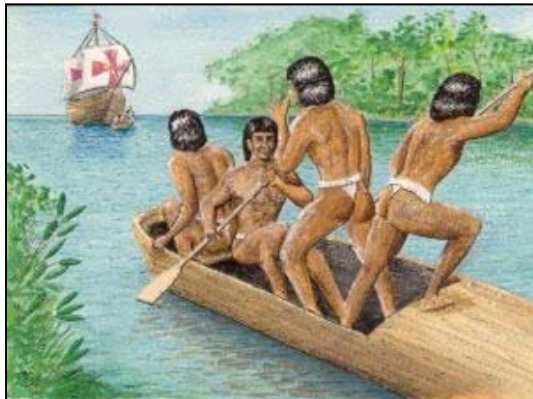
Boleros for the Disenchanted

By Chloe Hagerman

Puerto Rico

Christopher Columbus discovered Puerto Rico during his second voyage to the Americas in 1493. He originally named the island “San Juan Bautista” for St. John the Baptist, which was changed to Puerto Rico in 1521. At the time the island was inhabited by the Taíno Indians – who called the island Borikén – but they were driven to the brink of extinction by slavery and European diseases, to which they had no immunity. The Taínos didn’t leave much behind, but today they are remembered by Puerto Rican culture with their influence on music and vocabulary.

Because of its lack of material wealth or advanced civilization, aside from important ports like



San Juan, Puerto Rico remained of little importance to the Spanish until the 19th century. Once Spain began losing its territories in the Americas to independence movements, it began paying more attention to Puerto Rico and Cuba as its last two colonies. Determined to keep these two island colonies, Spain offered free land to any Europeans who declared their loyalty to Spain and the Roman Catholic Church. The desired effect was that the independence movements would lose their popularity with a larger population of Spanish loyalists on the island.

Relationship with the United States

In its frenzy to construct a canal in Central America, the United States determined that Caribbean Sea ports were essential for their navy to refuel and take shelter, and Puerto Rico came up on their radar for the first time. Both of Spain’s final colonies were also rich in sugar, a product highly valued by the United States.

After Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States in 1898. It spent the next several years under U.S. military control, until Theodore Roosevelt recommended in 1906 that Puerto Ricans become American citizens. Puerto Ricans did become American citizens in 1917 when Congress passed the Jones Act. While they did have full citizenship, the United States retained control of their economy and military. Puerto Ricans were drafted into the United States military for World War I and all subsequent U.S. wars where a draft was in effect. In 1943, Senator Millard Tydings gave Congress a bill that called for Puerto Rican independence, but the bill was defeated.

Although the majority of the population was content with Puerto Rico's status as a Commonwealth of the United States, there were those who wanted complete independence. In October 1950 nationalists led by Pedro Albizu Campos attempted to revolt against the United States in cities around the island, but the U.S. responded with full military force and the uprising was unsuccessful. Campos himself spent several years in and out of American prisons for attempting to overthrow the American government in Puerto Rico. He was revered by most Puerto Ricans as a national hero and referred to as "El Maestro."



Life and opportunities in the United States appealed to Puerto Ricans. They had been immigrating to the U.S. since Puerto Rico was still a Spanish colony, but after the Jones Act was passed in 1917, Puerto Ricans were full U.S. citizens and no longer needed a passport to travel in between the island and the United States, transforming them from immigrants to migrants.

Puerto Rico was strongly affected by the Great Depression, its economy being tied to the U.S.'s, prompting several citizens to migrate in search of work. During World War II yet more Puerto Ricans migrated to the United States to fill job positions while American men were off fighting. The wave of migrants during the 30s and 40s was known as the "Great Migration." In the 1950s the invention of air travel made migrating to the United States even faster and more efficient. Many left Puerto Rico for the United States to provide for their families or simply to obtain better futures for themselves. The peak year of migration was 1953, when 75,000 Puerto Ricans left the island. The densest populations of Puerto Ricans are in New York, New Jersey and Florida.



Puerto Ricans in America faced a lot of discrimination. The assassination attempt on President Truman in 1950 by Griselio Torresola and Oscar Collazo only blackened Puerto Ricans in the eyes of Americans, who believed that they were not full Americans. Despite these hardships Puerto Ricans brought their culture with them and imprinted themselves on their neighborhoods. Especially in the famous South Bronx and Spanish Harlem in New York City.

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Caring for a sick/elderly spouse

It's an accepted fact that everyone gets older. As the years add on and the decades pile up, you inevitably lose the ability to care for yourself, and other people must step in to help care for you. This is the challenge that older couples and children with older parents are starting to face. The physical, financial and emotional tolls on those who care for their elderly loved ones can be very trying.

The strain on married couples is just as bad, if not worse. When one partner experiences difficulty due to increased age, it dramatically changes the lifestyle of the couple. Favorite activities or social events are ceased, resulting in less fun and more annoyance for the pair. The healthy spouse may have to cut back on work and money as well to care for their partner. Couples where one of the partners experiences personality changes due to Alzheimer's or dementia are much worse. A husband or wife watches the qualities they love in their spouse vanish, and may come to resent or even hate them.

To make matters worse, many elderly patients can be incredibly stubborn. One of the easiest remedies for those in need of care and supervision is to place them in a nursing home. Many of the elderly, however, do not want to leave their familiar lifestyles behind. They may be attached to their homes or memories of their loved ones, and moving them can be a very difficult and wrenching process. Some simply can't stand the idea of being in a strange place, devoid of rights and abilities and completely reliant on others. With older generations that value independence and hard work so strongly, such a notion is hard to stomach.



The child will feel an obligation to their parent and one marriage partner will feel the same for the other. The driving force behind many of these people's feelings is guilt. Many do not want to take care of their parents or their partner, but can't stand the guilt of those feelings. When those they care for pass on, many are relieved that the strain is over, and then immediately feel terrible about having those feelings. The emotional strain of watching their loved ones deteriorate physically and mentally can be devastating. Many caregivers report symptoms ranging from simple exhaustion to severe depression. Physical symptoms include rising blood pressure.

As the depression and negative emotions pile up, it can lead to murder and/or suicide. Chances of suicide increase with age, and when a person grows weary of life and feels like they have nothing left to live for, suicide becomes an option. Imagine those feelings magnified by watching helplessly as the person you love spirals downwards. For many it's a sense of madness and frustration they can't escape. Sometimes death appears to be a blessing.

The door, however, does swing both ways. Some studies have shown that couples with one spouse looking after the other experience positive emotions as well. If one spouse actually physically cares for the other – feeding, bathing, etc. – the good feelings are much stronger than a spouse who more passively cares for their loved one. The more interdependent the couple, the stronger the positive reinforcement, as spouses feel joy in caring for those with whom they share such a strong emotional bond. Overall, the physical and mental experience of caring for a sick or elderly spouse is not a positive one, but if the relationship is strong, there can be some unexpected emotional benefits.

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Long-term relationships

Humans are social creatures and almost exclusively desire romantic relationships. If a person is lucky, they will form a relationship that lasts for the rest of their life. That doesn't seem to be so much the case lately. For those who desire to know how to make a good relationship last beyond initial chemistry, there are a few very important things to consider.



The ideal relationship is formed out of love and based on equality. A couple engages in multiple social activities together, and something that affects one will affect the other. Couples where both partners feel like they are on equal ground tend to be much stronger than those relationships with any hint of hierarchy, which is almost exclusively damaging to the relationship. The strongest, healthiest relationships are the ones in which the partners are interdependent on one another.

The one factor that is essential for a good relationship is love. It has become the defining component in forming a relationship (marriage for love replacing arranged marriages in society) and the ingredient to a lasting relationship. Studies in the field of psychology have divided love into three stages: physical attraction or passion; intimacy; and commitment. Relationships most often start by both partners becoming physically attracted to each other. As they grow closer to each other, they bond emotionally as well, which provides the glue to hold the partnership together as the years progress and physical desire diminishes or disappears. The presence of all three of these stages of love makes for the strongest relationships, especially in a married couple. However, a strong sense of commitment to each other is the most assured way for both partners to always be happy, creating a successful long-term relationship. If both know that they are willing to do anything for their loved one, and are always open and willing to forgive, the chances of a life-long relationship are very high. Partnerships built purely on physical attraction stand little chance of long-term success. They are the relationships that both start and end most quickly.

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Military Families

Military service is extremely demanding to those who protect our country. The tension is only magnified when coupled with the stress and expectations of family life. The military and the typical family can both be thought of as extremely greedy institutions that expect undivided commitment from their members. Families where one or even all members serve in the military are very much a part of two worlds, dealing with the stress of constant relocation, deployments, and the very real possibility of the death of loved ones. As a result they undergo many psychological conditions that average American citizens do not, with positive and negative effects.

One of the simplest difficulties that military families face is the stress of moving from base to base around the country and around the world. Families follow one or both parents in service or sometimes parents even follow children. Because of relocation every two or three years, many military families are hindered in forming roots or attachments to communities, maintaining lasting friendships is harder still, and members of a military family can struggle in having any sense of really belonging to a community.



When family members are deployed to war zones, the constant worrying of injury or death is on every family member's mind. Valuable time with loved ones is lost, with the result of children feeling disconnected from their parents, or vice versa. Many children from military families – or “military brats” – complain that their parents are too strict. There are, however, benefits to being part of a military family. The motto of the United States military: “Duty, Honor, Country” has an impact on these families in a real way. People from military families are often more strongly committed to loved ones or to accomplishing tasks. Military brats are more likely to enter into careers involving service to others, such as teaching or nursing. Even the relocation around the world has positive effects: military families are much more accepting and well-versed in foreign



cultures, feeling they can relate to a much wider range of people. What these families feel that many of us do not is pride: pride in those members of their family who do their country such a service, pride in the communities they do belong to.

However, these families also have to deal with what very few non-service families ever have to face: near-constant threat of a loved one's death. For children losing parents and parents losing children, it is a horrible experience. Military families who do lose a loved one are part of a smaller category of families in similar situations that few others can relate to. The most important thing to remember is that they are proud of the loved one they've lost. Through all that they give and all the hardships they face, they give up so much for causes greater than themselves.

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The Bolero

One of the most versatile and adaptable styles of music and dance around, the bolero began its journey as a simple piece of music and has evolved into a dance style popular both in Ballroom dancing competitions and in various clubs around the world.

The bolero style that we are familiar with today originated in Cuba in the 19th century. It was a slow, melancholic style of music that spread from Cuba throughout Latin America, producing famous bolero composers in Puerto Rico and Mexico, among other places. This style later helped to produce a whole new collection of dances out of Cuba, which still put into practice the signature Cuban motion of swaying the hips.

The bolero is still danced today in different forms by professional dancers around the world. You can find it danced in two different forms by the Ballroom community today. In International Latin the bolero is danced under the misnomer of “rumba,” known as the dance of love. In American Rhythm it is still referred to by its original name, but is danced differently; though it still employs Cuban motion in the hips, it is also danced with the rise and fall that is traditional of the waltz.



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Jose Rivera, Playwright



Jose Rivera was born in Puerto Rico in 1955 where he was raised until, at the age of four, his family migrated to Long Island, New York. From a young age Rivera was drawn to the stage and has become one of the more prolific contemporary Latino playwrights. Because of this, his list of awards is astonishing, including two OBIE Awards, a Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays Grant, a Fulbright Arts Fellowship, the Whiting Writers' Award, a McKnight Fellowship, the Norman Lear Writing Award, an Impact Award, and a Berilla Kerr Playwriting Award. As if that were not enough, Rivera helped to found the Los Angeles-based theatre company, The Wilton Project, is the first Puerto Rican screenwriter to be nominated for an Oscar, and was nominated for the Academy Award as a screenwriter for the film *The Motorcycle Diaries*.

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By José Rivera

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