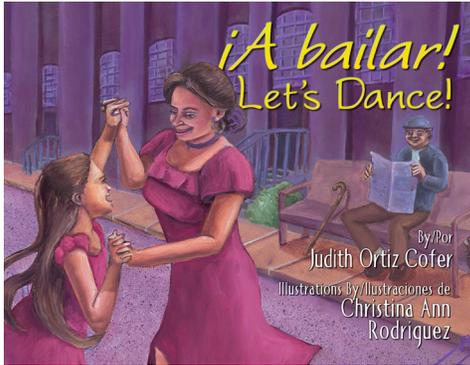


¡A BAILAR! LET'S DANCE!

By Judith Ortiz Cofer
Illustrated by Christina Ann Rodriguez



SUMMARY

Renowned author Judith Ortiz Cofer steps into the world of children's literature with her first bilingual picture book, *¡A Bailar! Let's Dance!*

"*A bailar!* There's music in the park today—let's dance!" Marita and her mother are finishing their Saturday chores and anticipating Papi's salsa concert in the park, so Mami makes the broom her dance partner to show her daughter how to dance to the music. "Listen to the *claves*, the bongos and the cowbells. Listen to the *maracas*, the *timbales* and the *güiro*, they will tell you how to move your shoulders, your hips, your feet."

That afternoon, they put on their best dresses and dancing shoes and lead a parade of neighbors and friends, dancing and singing, to the concert. At the park, Papi plays notes on his trombone that are a secret between him and Marita: *te veo, te ve-o, te ve-o*. I see you, I see you, I see you!

Judith Ortiz Cofer's lyrical text combining English and Spanish is complemented by Christina Ann Rodriguez's vibrant images of the neighborhood's unique characters—*viejitos*, fruit sellers, boys on skateboards and even babies—reveling in the beat of the music. Families will delight in reading together this warm, energetic look at one community's enjoyment of the sights and sounds of music for everyone!

ABOUT THE BOOK

GENRE: Fiction
Hardcover
978-1-55885-698-1
32 pages, 11 x 8 ½
AR QUIZ: 147135
ATOS ENGLISH: 3.3
INTREST LEVEL: LG

THEMES

AFRO-LATINO INSTRUMENTS, BEAT, CELEBRATION, COMMUNITY SPACES, CREATIVITY, DANCE, FICTION, FRIENDSHIP, HUMOR, LATINO/HISPANIC INTEREST, MUSIC, NEIGHBORS, OPTIMISM, POETRY, RHYTHM, SALSA, SONG-WRITING

VOCABULARY

¡A Bailar! Let's Dance! 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

Salsa, *claves*, bongos, cowbells, *maracas*, *timbales*, *güiro*, *clave's* beat, *barrio*, *cantar*, *reír*, *bailar*, *adiós*, trombone, *mi hijito*

Academic

Rhythm, dance partner, parachutes, whooshing

ELL / ESL Teaching Strategies

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

Make sounds for the following names of instruments found in the text: *claves*, bongos, cowbells, *maracas*, *timbales*, *güiro* and trombone. 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? What music do you like to dance to? Where do you dance? Who do you dance with?
2. What kinds of fun things do you do in your neighborhood? With who? When?

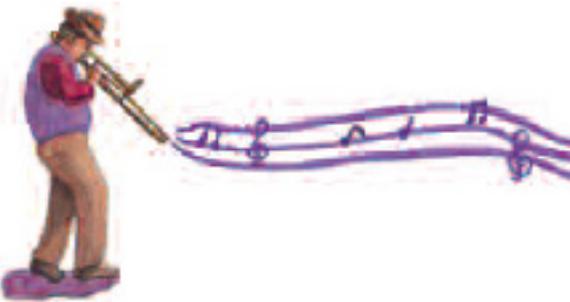


Exploring the Book

(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, *¡A Bailar! Let's Dance!*, means. Ask who and what they think this book might be about. Encourage 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, illustrations, back matter, dedications, author's and illustrator's notes.



Establishing a Purpose for Reading

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

Ask students to read to find out:

- How music and dance create community
- How we use language in creative ways



Encourage students to consider why the author, Judith Cofer Ortiz, wants to share this story with young people. Judith was a well-known poet, so it is important to notice how the story is told. Lastly, ask students to think about why the story has both English and Spanish words in the text.

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 the 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. What kind of rhythm does Mami tap on the floor?
2. What do the red dancing dresses ballooning out look like?
3. What do the taxi drivers do after they are invited to dance?
4. What do Mrs. Kim and Mrs. Martinez say after they are invited to dance?
5. What can Marita hear from in front of Don Ramón's bodega?
6. What makes everyone stop dancing?
7. What were the police doing first? How does the dance change the policeman? What was he doing?
8. What does the artist do when he sees the dancing line?
9. How are Marita and Mami moved by the crowd?
10. How does Papi's trombone call Marita?

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, who lives in Marita's neighborhood?
2. Why do you think the author repeats words, such as "move" and "faster"? How does this contribute to the mood of the story?
3. What can you learn about salsa dancing from this book? Give examples from the text and illustrations.
4. Why does Marita think everyone wants to dance? Is this true? Why or why not?
5. How does Judith Ortiz Cofer describe the sounds for the bongos, *maracas* and *güiro*? How would you describe the sounds these instruments make? How would you describe the sound for the *claves*, cowbells, *maracas* and *timbale*?
6. How does music help create or encourage community?

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 were on your way to a special event and what happened.
2. How does Marita feel in the crowd? Why? How do you feel when you are in a big crowd? Describe a time when you were in a big group. Explain where you were and how you felt.
3. How important do you think music is for Marita and her family? How can you tell?
4. What role does music play in your life? What kind of music do you listen to? When? Why?
5. Judith Cofer Ortiz writes “I can hear Papi’s trombone calling us to dance.” This is one example of how the author uses personification throughout the story. Look for other examples of personification of the trombone throughout the story.

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. Ask students to 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 of 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 pronunciation of the Spanish text.
3. Ask each student to write three to five 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. Share with the students that salsa uses Afro-Latino instruments such as bongos, *maracas*, *güiro*, *claves*, cowbells and *timbales*. Ask students to research and present on one of the instruments mentioned in the story. Allow students to use photos, props and maps to help their presentation.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: 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, advanced readers and 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. Explain that an onomatopoeia is a ‘sound word’: a word that is pronounced like the sound you are describing. Encourage students to go through the story and find as many examples of onomatopoeias as they can. Then ask them to create a list of onomatopoeias related to dancing or music. Here is a link to a short video that gives fun examples of onomatopoeia:

<https://youtu.be/f1b5kCvVBo8>

2. Ask the students to re-read the story and identify the word or words author Judith Ortiz Cofer repeats. Explain to the students that repetition is a way to emphasize and/or clarify an idea and can also produce emotional effect. Explain that Judith Ortiz Cofer also uses hyperboles to make her writing fun. Invite students to select a page or two of *¡A Bailar! Let's Dance!* and rewrite the text using hyperbole. Here's a link to a fun song that explains and gives example of hyperbole:

<https://youtu.be/kuzWLDWm6Zs>

3. Judith Ortiz Cofer began her writing career with poetry. Here's a link to some of her poetry:

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 students general information about different forms of dance found around the world. Working in small teams or pairs, ask students to research dances from different parts of the world and present their findings to the class.

2. Connect the music of salsa to Caribbean peoples with a focus on Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti and St. Lucia. Find a link to a lesson plan on Caribbean Beats and Blends here:

<https://folkways.si.edu/caribbean-beats-blends/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>

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. Judith Cofer Ortiz personifies the trombone throughout the story. Invite students to study the trombone and write a song personifying the trombone. Here is a link to a short video that gives examples of personification: <https://youtu.be/VqBZMR83wCg>

2. Encourage students to research the music genre of salsa. As a class, generate a list of questions to guide their research on salsa, such as where it comes from, what instruments are used in salsa and how salsa is danced. You can find a link on instruments used to play salsa here:

<https://www.allaroundthisworld.com/learn/u-s-and-canada-2/the-u-s-and-canada-salsa/salsa-instruments/#.XPB7YdNKjBI>

Then have students share their favorite salsa song and try to dance salsa. You can find a link on how to dance salsa here:

<https://www.allaroundthisworld.com/learn/u-s-and-canada-2/the-u-s-and-canada-salsa/salsa-dancing/#.XPB6utNKjBI>

3. Marita and Mami made up their own words to Papi's salsa music. Ask students to pick a salsa song and write words for your own song about dancing, celebrating family and/or friends.

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. Encourage students to research a salsero or salsaera: either a singer, musician or composer. Have students answer the following questions: Where does he/she come from? What did he/she study? When did he/she begin to sing or play an instrument? What is he/she known for in the world of salsa? What is his/her most famous salsa song?

2. Ask students to search her or his home for a musical instrument and bring it in to school. Invite each student to share information about their instrument, such as who plays it, how to play it and what they like the best about this instrument.

3. Invite students to interview a family member or caregiver and ask them about their favorite music, musical memory and songs. As a class, have an 'Oldies but Goodies' music party and listen to their favorite songs.

4. Invite students to look around their homes for clothes and props so that they can dress up as a salsero or salsaera. Have a Latin Grammy class party; lip sync to favorite salsa music and give out awards.

CONNECT WITH THE INTERNET

Blick Art

Face Book

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/face-book/>

Poetry Foundation

Children

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/70281/childrens-poetry>

Judith Ortiz Cofer

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/judith-ortiz-cofer>

Smithsonian

Create-It: Making Musical Instruments

http://latino.si.edu/Content/Images/Education/Create-It_Wind_Instruments_English_Final.pdf

Lesson Plans

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

All Around This World

<https://www.allaroundthisworld.com/learn/u-s-and-canada-2/the-u-s-and-canada-salsa/salsa-overview/#.XPB8T9NKjBI>



MEET THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

**JUDITH ORTIZ COFER**

was the Regents' and Franklin Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Georgia, and an award-winning poet, novelist and prose writer whose work deals with her bilingual, bicultural experience as a Puerto Rican woman living on the Mainland. She is the author of numerous books, including *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood* (Piñata Books,

1991), included in The New York Public Library's 1991 *Best Book For The Teen Age* and recipient of a PEN citation, Martha Albrand Award for non-fiction and a Pushcart Prize; and *An Island Like You* (Peter Smith Publisher Inc., 1999), recipient of the Pura Belpré Award and named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year and an ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers. Other books for young adults include *Call Me María* (Orchard, 2004), *The Meaning of Consuelo* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003) and *If I Could Fly* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

**CHRISTINA ANN RODRIGUEZ**

obtained her BFA in illustration from the University of Hartford. Her work has been included in various publications, including *Spider Magazine*. She lives and works in Jackson, New Jersey.

ABOUT PIÑATA  BOOKS

Piñata Books is an imprint of Arte Público Press, the oldest and largest publisher of contemporary and historical literature written by US Hispanics: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans and others. Piñata Books is dedicated to the publication of children's and young adult literature focusing on US Hispanic culture and has made giant strides in filling the void that exists in American publishing and literature: books that accurately reflect themes, characters and customs unique to US Latino culture. Books published under the imprint are designed to serve as a bridge from school to home and to support family literacy and elementary school education. Discover more surprises at <https://artepublicopress.com/about-pinata-books-2/>.

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