



Center for Thriving
Communities

*A YEAR OF—
ACTION*

» Escuela de Bomba y Plena Tata Cepeda



Bomba and Plena are Afro-Puerto Rican musical and dance traditions deeply rooted in the experiences of enslaved Africans in Puerto Rico. Bomba, which dates back to the island's colonial period, was developed as a form of rebellion and resistance, blending African rhythms with powerful, spontaneous dance. It allowed enslaved individuals to express emotions, communicate, and assert their identity. Plena, an extension of bomba, emerged in the 20th century as a way for communities to narrate stories, social issues, and political movements, earning it the nickname "the newspaper of the people." Both art forms were critical in helping enslaved Africans maintain cultural ties and build resilience through music and dance.

The “Escuela de Bomba y Plena Tata Cepeda”, founded by renowned cultural leader Barbara Liz Cepeda, continues this legacy by offering comprehensive classes in bomba and plena,



preserving Afro-Puerto Rican heritage. Through hands-on lessons and community events like "Bombazos," the school educates students of all ages about these traditions' rich history and their importance as vehicles of cultural preservation and creative expression. Today, bomba and plena remain significant elements of Afro-Latino identity, continuing to inspire and unite communities.

This cultural presentation highlights how these musical forms have shaped Puerto Rican culture and served as a lasting symbol of resilience and expression for the Afro-Puerto Rican communities.

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