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# From Bomba To Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture And Latino Identity



## Synopsis

Neither immigrants nor ethnics, neither foreign nor "hyphenated Americans" in the usual sense of that term, Puerto Ricans in New York have created a distinct identity both on the island of Puerto Rico and in the cultural landscape of the United States. Juan Flores considers the uniqueness of Puerto Rican culture and identity in relation to that of other Latino groups in the United States as well as to other minority groups, especially African Americans. Architecture and urban space, literary traditions, musical styles, and cultural movements provide some of the sites and moments of a cultural world defined by the interplay of continuity and transformation, heritage and innovation, roots and fusion. Exploring this wide range of cultural expression both in the diaspora and in Puerto Rico, Flores highlights the rich complexities and fertile contradictions of Latino identity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Flores (black and Puerto Rican studies, Hunter Coll.; sociology, CUNY Graduate Ctr.) has written widely on Latino and Puerto Rican culture. In this new book, he focuses on the progression of Puerto Rican culture in the United States over the past half-century. He analyzes developments in music, literature, and other elements of popular culture and compares Puerto Rican culture to that of other Latino groups in the United States. He follows some interesting trends, such as the building of casitas, shacks modeled after the traditional rural homes in Puerto Rico, as cultural centers in urban U.S. settings. Flores also discusses aspects of Puerto Rican musical influence, including the Latin Boogaloo craze of 1966-68. He celebrates Puerto Rican cultural accomplishments while

encouraging further achievement. While academic in format and tone, Flores's writing is accessible to the interested lay reader. For academic libraries or public libraries with a special interest in the subject. DGwen M. Gregory, New Mexico State Univ., Las Cruces Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In his eloquent essay collection... Flores has compiled a decade of research and meditations on 'America's fastest-growing minority,' Latinos. (Suzy Hansen New York Times Book Review) Well written and informative. Anyone wanting insight into Puerto Rican history and culture will find it enlightening. The book also offers solid supplemental reading for graduate or advanced undergraduate students in music history, Puerto Rican history, cultural studies, and sociology classes. (Hispanic Outlook) Flores's invaluable book establishes a new parameter for the field of Latino/a studies. Poignant and full of moving accounts, this volume does an inestimable service to both scholars and general readers. (Choice) The latest work by Juan Flores, the most prominent thinker on the most current topics debated in Latino studies.... indispensable. (Zaragoza Vargas Journal of American History)

Book is not as focused on Hip Hop as I would have hoped and is not a full production but a collage of articles

Great book, very interesting.

The book arrived in new condition. Thank you for processing my book order quickly.

As a beginning graduate student in Latina/o Studies, I have been asking myself a simple question over and over: "Where have I been?" I have gone through public education in the United States for 17 years of my life, and have only recently found that there have been people writing since the start of the 1900s about the issues, experiences, struggles, and passions that I have thought were uniquely mine. Piri Thomas published *Down These Mean Streets* in 1967. I just read it this past summer, my mother--right after I gave it to her. And the thought that has wondered in is, "why wasn't I told about his book earlier?" Is Piri Thomas' experience, a bond with African American culture that Juan Flores addresses in his book, such a marginal experience in American life, that it took a suggestion by .com for a man with 4 years of university education to be aware of the book? As the population of Latino/as in the United States grows to the levels of being the largest minority

group in the country, there will have to be a shifting of Latina/o literature, theory, and any cultural products from the margins of American life to the center contemporary discussion. It is these products that Juan Flores probes and analyses with keen insight that places the Puerto Rican aspect of the Latino experience into mainstream intellectual thought. From "the Madonna incident" in Puerto Rico, to the ties that Puerto Ricans have with Hip-Hop, and the current status of Puerto Rico that he sadly calls a "Lite Colony," Flores' book is one that should be read by anyone interested in the affairs of American culture.

The title of Mr. Flores' book might be a little deceiving for those who are not familiar with the subject matter. Mr. Flores uses music as a jumping off point for some very thought provoking themes that pertain (in my opinion) to all Latino's. Juan Flores goes from scholarly themes like colonialism to thoughts on the funeral of Cortijo and the history of the Boogaloo phenomena in New York City. Mr. Flores makes you stop and think, then think again about issues you may have had preconceived notions about. I really enjoyed being challenged intellectually as I read this book. I recently attended a lecture/performance (at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City) of "From Bomba to Hip-Hop" conducted by Mr. Flores, music historian Rene Lopez and Mike Wallace (who won a Pulitzer Prize for his book, "Gotham.") True to form, it was a very unique, educational and entertaining experience.

While Juan Flores is perceptive in his discussion of the Puerto Rican component of Latino culture, and discusses other major critics like Perez Firmat and Stavans, I was frankly surprised not to see any discussion of William Luis's *Dance Between Two Cultures: Latino Caribbean Literature Written in the United States*, which in my estimation is as important as those written by the critics Flores discusses. The value of Luis's study is that he addresses the same Puerto Rican community mentioned in Flores' book, but Luis also contextualizes this community by considering its relation to the Cuban and Dominican components of Latino culture. Anyone interested in understanding Latino literature and culture should also read *Dance Between Two Cultures*, which contains perceptive readings of Latino Caribbean literature unavailable in any other study.

If you're at all interested in Latin American culture you'll love this book and he's an amazing person. He'll talk to you forever about the subject and he's highly intelligent.

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