

Balia di Sehú

Eduard Toppenberg
Arranged by Rufo Odor

IPA and translation

/ban ba-lje ban zo-je/
Ban balie, ban zoje

/foi ma-in-ta trem-pan/
Foi mainta trempan

/te seis or di man-jan/
Te seis or di manjan.

/ta seis or di ma-in-ta i ma lan-ta trem-pan/
Ta seis or di mainta y m'a lanta trempan,

/ma pre-pa-ra mi mu-tji-la i ma fa-ha mi lom-ba/
Ma prepara mi muchila y m'a faha mi lomba.

/nos tei ba-lja se-hu/
Nos t'ei balia sehú,

/nos tei zo-ja se-hu mi fon/
Nos t'ei zoja sehú mi shon,

/ri-ba rit-mi tam-bu/
Riba ritm'i tambú.

/ma to-pa ku pe-ru-tji i ma to-pa mi swa/
Ma topa cu Peruchi y m'a topa mi swa

/nan tur ku nan bo-tri pin tji nan tam-be ta bai se-hu/
Nan tur cu nan botr'i pin chi nan tambe ta bai sehú.

/hen-de nan hu-mil-de/
Hende nan humilde

/gai-nan di ho-pi ra-sa mi fon/
Gainan di hopi rasa, mi shon,

/nan tei zo-ja se-hu/
Nan t'ei zoja sehú.

Translation

Let's dance it, let's swing
from early morning until 6 am the next day.

It's six in the morning and I woke up early;
I prepare my pack and bind my bag.
We're going to dance and swing the sehú,
my man, to the rhythm of the tambú.

I met Peruchi and my brother-in-law;
everyone has a small bottle they take with them.
Plain people who fight for their rights,
my man, are going to swing to the sehú.¹

Recordings

YouTube: Chicago Children's Choir [Balía di Sehu](#) - note that they dance and use no music – this should be our goal!

Seattle Pro Musica - [Balía di Sehu](#)

Notes

Balía di Sehú was written by Aruban composer ETTY Toppenberg and arranged by Rufo Odor. The language it is composed in is called Papiamentu, which is a mixed language combining traits from African, Portuguese, Spanish, English and Dutch. It is spoken in Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba. "The Sehú is a harvest dance which is sung in April or May when it is time to harvest the corn. . . [this dance can last] for long periods of time, often all day and night."²

Additional Program Notes

We invite you to stand, move and sing the chorus with us if you feel so inclined.

Balía di Sehú

Chorus:

Ban balie, ban zoje

foi mainta trempan te seis or di manjan.

Analysis

Key: G Major

Meter: 2/2

Form: Verse/Chorus

¹ Peter Wordelman, annotator, [Balía di Sehú](#), earthsongs, 2000, p. 2.

² *ibid*, p. 2.

The entire piece is set in 4 measure phrases.

Verses consist of four four-measure phrases 4 + 4 + 4 + 4

Choruses consist of two four-measure phrases, but the chorus is generally sung twice, which makes it balance the verses.

There are only two verses to this piece, but the text and rhythm make them a bit challenging to learn. Practice speaking the text whenever you have the time.

Aside from the rhythmic change, the verses are set identically in terms of harmony. The same is true for the choruses.

Sopranos always have the melody, and the other voices provide harmonic support.

The texture is homophonic and homorhythmic.