Cafecito with Daymé Arocena (2024)

Venue: University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras Campus

Moderator: Errol Montes Pizarro

Translate: Alejandro Álvarez Nieves

Introduction

VÍCTOR:

I am going to introduce Professor Errol Montes Pizarro, who will be the moderator of this activity. Professor Montes Pizarro obtained a Ph.D. in mathematics from Cornell University. He serves as a professor of mathematics at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey. In addition to his research in mathematics, he also studies the history of African and Caribbean music with an emphasis on the ongoing exchanges between Africa and African American cultures. His book *Más ramas que raíces: diálogos musicales entre el Caribe y el continente africano* [More branches than roots: musical dialogues between the Caribbean and the African continent] was published in 2018 by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. Since October 2001, he has been producing a program on Radio Universidad called *Rumba Africana*. So, if I may, please welcome Errol Montes Pizarro.

ERROL:

Greetings. Thank you very much, Nadjah, Víctor, and all the colleagues who are working, who are very important, right, for the success of an activity. I am here to introduce and to facilitate the conversation with Daymé. She is the main figure and so are you. So, I'm going to ask some questions, but feel free to raise your hand at any time. We don't have to wait for the end. This is not a lecture; it is not an exhibition. We are flowing. I'm going to read something, a bit of a tight summary of the... From the work, from Daymé's biography, which says, "Daymé Arocena, born in 1992 and raised in the vibrant city of Havana, embodies the soul of Cuban music infusing it with a fresh and eclectic touch. On her latest album *Cubafonía* [Cubaphony]... which really isn't her last album. She has *Sonocardiograma*, which came out in 2019. She is inspired by both that album *Cubafonía* and *Sonocardiograma* and others that she has published. They are inspired by the rich Afro-Cuban rhythms of the island, combining them with the adaptability of jazz, modern

pop, and the vibrancy of Crescent City. She grew up in a family of 21 people, as she says here, in two rooms. Forgive us for divulging your intimacy. And she studied Western classical traditions, which I'm going to ask her a little about, and she also had an informal musical education, like the vast majority of Afro-descendant musicians in the Caribbean in general, who always have this double training—academic and also street, so to speak, which is no less rigorous. On many occasions, sometimes, it's even more difficult.

She has also sung in English, in Spanish. Obviously, in addition to Spanish, she has sung in English, apart from incorporating in some of her songs of Afro-Cuban religions, such as the Regla de Ocha, which is also popularly known as Santeria. She also incorporates rhythms from the Abakuá Secret Society and traditions of Congolese descent, such as yucca music. I don't know, because I've never heard you, if you use Arará music from the Arará tradition in Cuba.

And for this young woman, as young as she looks, she has had a career with an astronomic rise, really. Since she was 8 years old she was, even before that, singing in public. At the age of 17 she won an important scholarship. She studied under great Cuban musicians, such as Caturla, such as Amadeo Roldán, apart from what I say about the informal education she had. And that's what I'd like to talk to her about.

She has been living in Puerto Rico for two years. You've been collaborating with Eduardo Cabra and Sebastián Otero, haven't you? And other comrades over here. So, again, although that already sounds like a cliché from repeating it so much, we really are Cuba and Puerto Rico, we will be the two wings of a bird, no matter what. But in practice, really, when we leave the Caribbean, when I have spent time in other places in South America, it's not clear to me, sometimes they can't tell if you're Puerto Rican or Cuban. We already have our ears tuned and we immediately notice when the accent is Cuban, and they do when it is ours. But in a lot of other places, really, more than, what I find interesting, more than with the Dominican Republic itself, which is closer, our cultural connections with Cuba are great and they are very old.

So, welcome Daymé, how are you?

DAYMÉ:

Thanks a lot. Very good, thank you very much for the invitation and the introduction.

Astronomic Rise

ERROL:

Well, look, I don't know, people here, among many other things, may be interested in how you have handled that rise, which seems astronomical to me. You are only 32 years old, and in that period of time, you have released four albums: *Nueva Era* in 2015, *One Takes* in 2016, *Cubafonía* in 2017, *Sonocardiograma* inn2019, plus a few singles and also guest appearances in the work of other artists.

DAYMÉ:

I am a singer-songwriter, and I have been one all my life. I never made the decision to write songs. I've always written songs. It's something that goes beyond me. In fact, many of my songs come through my dreams. Therefore, I feel like a bridge of communication between a more ethereal space and more up there or down there, who knows, and this earthly plane in which we are.

And the truth is, yes, for me releasing songs and making albums is more like a way to group and organize my ideas and the processes that I'm going through spiritually, personally. I think my albums talk about me and my life, and how everything has been unfolding.

A House of Music and Healing

ERROL:

Yes, a... Something that I particularly find always interesting when I have had the opportunity to share with people who are dedicated to creative activities such as music and others, is that tension that sometimes exists between discipline and talent. Many times, we think—someone like you, so young that she has been singing since she was a child, is that she already has natural talent, and I am not going to be able to do the things she does because I don't have that natural talent. But I have noticed that even people like you have to manage a training discipline, apart from the fact that talent is not enough. It's a requirement sometimes, but it's never enough. How did you handle that since you were a child? That your training in classical music and also, excuse me, I have met many classical musicians who are incapable of playing anything if they do not have a score in front of them. They have enormous talent with their instrument, but the ability to improvise, to be able

to do something new in the moment, which is what a musician who has this other formation does. Classical education sometimes clips those wings; it is the impression I have had and the testimony of some musicians. How did you handle that when you're growing up?

DAYMÉ:

There are several issues there, there are several topics that come together. But the first thing is that I grew up in a house of Black people, of a lot of people, and I feel that music is a resource that has to do mainly with Black people to heal and mend everything that is going on. And that is a more adult consciousness. I was not aware of this. I just grew up in a house where there were originally 21 of us. When I was born there were 14 of us, but even so in a two-room house, it was outrageous. I shared the same bed with four other people, and basically there wasn't a day in my childhood without any singing in my house. We always sung and danced. There were no instruments or anything, quite the opposite. I learned by watching people in my house that my body is my drum, that every part of my body is a drum, and you can make music with anything. And you did a thing here, you did a thing there, as if every single thing where a musical element.

And despite growing up in that environment where music was the day to day, without being musicians, because it was not a house for musicians, it was a house where we were simply like that... What happens is that if you go to the history of the people, for example, who arrived here... I start to think, and I say, "Look, those people who were enslaved, they put them on a boat, they made them make a brutal journey, they arrived here in the worst conditions, they took away their names, a lot of very strong things. How did those people sing and dance every single night?" I believe that this is our mechanism. I even think that on the point that you mentioned, for example, Osha, religion**,** I think it is maintained thanks to music. Music has been our mechanism to heal, to mend, to say, "Well, I'm going through all this," and the greatest reflection I have of that is my house, that we were in very deep poverty, living in the '90s in Cuba, where electricity came once, once a day at most, and in my house simply the way to isolate and alienate oneself, was singing.

Now, my family noticed something in me that I am not able to... I was not able to perceive because I was a child, but they noticed something in me that, even though it is easy, that is, what she is

doing is imitating what happens in her house every day, they said, “Hey, here’s something to take action on.” And they put me to take music lessons since I was very young.

So, they sensed something in me that wasn’t normal in the house. Everyone singing, and whatever. So, what happens is that the school in Cuba, music school, has a Russian base, where our musical training is bound by great Russian classics. For example, a percussionist, the method of study, instead of being, what do I know, Chano Pozo’s methods, are Potensky’s. So, music is studied from that classical vision, mainly Russian and with those Russian methods. So, they kind of break you and change the way you see music a lot. It becomes impressively technical, and many people who study in music schools in Cuba, reach a brutal technique, but they “burn out,” as we say in Cuba. Like a lot of people don’t even want to, after they graduate, they don’t even want to make music anymore in their lives, because it’s like a very military thing. And I think that the balance I had was to have a house like that, like growing up in a house where music was a resource for healing and expression, far above a method of rigor and militarization of music. Basically.

The First Day Singing in Public

ERROL:
Do you remember the first day you sang outside your house, in front of people?

DAYMÉ:
Shockingly, no, how am I going to remember it? I sang like a parrot. I sang everything, really, my thing was not normal. My grandmother says that when I was little, I used to tell her... In addition, they made me sing to everyone, for me it is, or was... but my grandmother says that she said that she was going to do a spiritual mass for Selena, because she said that I had Selena’s spirit reprimanded, because I sang all of Selena’s songs, like when I was three or four years old, but shouting like that. The truth is that I can’t remember a specific day when I started singing to the public.

The Women in Her Life

ERROL:

But now that you mention your grandmother, in several interviews you have said that your grandmother sings better than you.

DAYMÉ:

I love her.

ERROL:

And what is the... Tell us about the women in your life, about informal learning. I was watching a documentary the other day about how, at least in music in America, children's games of clapping, has been a, one of the mechanisms in which forms of African polyrhythm have been preserved in the places where drumming was banned and how that has come out then in hip hop songs and in, in many musical genres in the United States, when one analyzes them from that point of view, these games of girls appear, mainly, and almost exclusively of girls, through clapping. And I... I remember that in Puerto Rico they played a lot while clapping as well. I don't know, tell us about the women in your life and how, how was that formation like that, even if it was a little unconscious, your reflection now later.

DAYMÉ:

Of the 14 people, 10 were women, and the other 4 were men, I hardly saw them in the house. I saw them at dinner time. I practically grew up in a house of very strong women, with a lot of character in life, who gave me many resources to fight for, for my dreams and for my way of seeing things, and who made me sing everything in key. Like I could sing any song I heard as a child and they would tell me, "Yes, but sing it here [in a specific key]." If you're not able to sing it here, it's not right."

So, there was a great influence of, "Never lose your rumba." In other words, like, "Sing what you want, study what you want—all the classical, all the jazz you want, but if you don't have *clave,* a sense of being on key, here you don't eat, here you don't walk." That was... I think there was significant pressure in mastering the key, but no, not from a point of view that this is like...

ERROL:

Of repression, yes, yes, no.

DAYMÉ:

Yes, if it wasn't more like, hey...

ERROL:

Of play.

DAYMÉ:

Here you always have to enjoy what you do. If there is no joy and such, the music does not work. Music is not theory. Theory did not invent music. Theory is a way of explaining to us humanly what it is, but it is important to preserve that naturalness and that flexibility of communication that music itself has.

Tension Between Formal and Informal Education

ERROL:

Yes, that, then, brings us back to this topic, which I am not going to elaborate too much, unless someone wants to, but that, that tension that exists between formal education, and now that you explain it, which is based mainly on Russian methods, which is a fairly distant music. Not only because it is classical music, because even within classical music, the Russian tradition is different from the Central European tradition, which is the one we use the most. But let's not go down such a technical road, but it seems to me that there must have been a tension. I don't know what kind of teacher... "No, you can't come here playing that key, you have to keep..."

DAYMÉ:

Imagine that in Cuba, I didn't live that era, truly, I'm younger, but people who are 35 and older, lived the time when playing timba, salsa, rumba, was damage to school property. And they could throw you out, they could kick you out of school. It was like a crime at school.

ERROL:

Which is testimony to the resilience of our Afro-descendant cultures, that despite that, Cuba has given the world a number of artists, percussionists and a brutal creation of people, not only of people who learned in the popular neighborhoods, but of people with classical musical training.

DAYMÉ:

Yes, exactly. Of course. I think that the most difficult thing and the greatest mental strength is when you manage to study and graduate from a school like that, is to deal with the school of the street at the same time. Because if you focus too much on school, you're late on the street. People are already playing a lot on the street. So, you have to do double schooling. And for example, I... in my normal school of Classical Music, it is a system in which you go to school from Monday to Saturday from 8:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the afternoon. And you have a bunch of assignments. I had 32 different classes. Of a thousand other things... I studied choral conducting. So, I had a lot of classes of... In short, musical language. A lot of things. And I remember that I had that pressure. I said, "If I don't get ready for the street, no one will do it for me." In other words, I don't have time at the age of 19, when I graduated, to get ready for the language of the street. I have to see how I handle both things at the same time. And what saved me, to be honest, was a big band that...

ERROL:

You mean Los Primos? You mean Los Primos?

DAYMÉ:

Los Primos big band, yes. They let a big band exist at the school, because jazz has become an academic thing as well. And when they let in jazz, the big band and whatever, then I snuck in as a singer. And that's when I was able to take on both educations.

ERROL:

They converged.

DAYMÉ:

To make both things converge.

Interculturality

ERROL:

Cool. And then, in your work, interculturality is also evident. I mean, you move very comfortably between, apart from a young girl leaving Cuba, suddenly arriving in Toronto to collaborate with that, with this saxophonist, whose name I don't remember, Jane.... Bonet. You get there and in your work it is evident. I mean, in several of the concerts you did at the Tiny Desk, in whatever, one can notice that you sing in English, you use vocal techniques, which are not used much in Cuban music and that not even other Cuban singers have used much. Scat singing and that kind of rhythmic issues. That part of interculturality, how did you feed that, being in Cuba, which sometimes, I don't say it for myself, but the general impression can seem that there is a certain isolation?

DAYMÉ:

No, there is, there is. There is, totally. But, I've been... I am a very open person, musically. I don't follow, I always say it, I say it this way, I don't follow musical figures, nor do I follow musical genres, I follow songs. So, basically, I am moved by all kinds of music, and I isolate myself from, "Oh, because it's good, because it's a *bolero*." I know a lot of *boleros* that are not good. "It's good because it's classical music." I know a lot of really bad classical music.

I mean, it's like, the truth, I'm open to everything and that's why I let myself be influenced, influenced, excuse me, by everything. In other words, it is as if I, whatever comes, I hear it with unprejudiced ears. For me music can't, no, it can't understand prejudices. If music is something that they're singing in a language you've never heard, and it moves you. They're playing, a random person in the street, some drums and you dance. Music doesn't understand those, those human tricks of ours of putting everything in a box, in a little box, "It has to be like this." I think that the musical versatility that people can perceive has to do with how open I am musically.

ERROL:

You're telling me who…that 95 percent of the music I listen to is in languages I don't understand.

Current Projects

ERROL:

Well then, what are your, your current projects that you're working on in Puerto Rico? And especially, we are also interested in the fact that we are here sponsored by this idea of this collaboration with the University of Austin. What are you doing in that particular project? Then we talk about others.

DAYMÉ:

Well, that was a surprise. It touched me very, very deeply. It has been a very nice thing, to be awarded a scholarship to the University of Austin, Texas. Which is a scholarship that helps finance and support the artistic projects that certain people are doing.

I... There is a visual artist that we have here, Tessa. There is a, there is a young man who is a journalist. There is another young man who is a writer, and I am a musician. So, we are four fellows, each one focused on their work, and we are receiving support that helps us a lot to be able to carry out our ideas and our dreams.

So those kinds of incentives are always super welcome because music is very unstable, and this world of pushing from art has its ups and downs. So, at the same time, academicism is also super important for me because in that way one communicates and tells and spreads the message that one wants to give through one's music.

And in my own case I'm right now working on a new album, developing a new concept and making a lot of transformations. That's why my album is called *Alchemy.*

ERROL:

Alchemy.

DAYMÉ:

I... Yoruba, and it's like, within all these transformations...

ERROL:

What did you say about Uruguay? I didn't get that well.

DAYMÉ:

From Yoruba.

ERROL:

Ah, Yoruba, I though you said "Uruguay." I said...

DAYMÉ:

Oh, no, no, no...

ERROL:

... Suddenly Uruguay.

DAYMÉ:

And in a way I feel that, nothing, for me all these incentives make one work more calmly.

Making Music in Cuba and Puerto Rico

ERROL:

Well, speaking of work and a little related to what we were talking about before, since you have been living here for a while, you have collaborated with Rafa Pabón, you are collaborating with Eduardo Cabra, how do you compare the way of making music or producing music in Puerto Rico with that of your experience you had in Cuba?

DAYMÉ:

Well, the truth is that in Cuba I don't... In Cuba I still do everything by hand. I write my songs by hand, you know? Having a computer is already a, it is already a privilege. So, it's a big difference. I have learned music technology here, basically, because there it is all about, "Hey, here you enter,

here is the gate to the music." And in Puerto Rico there is a woman, there is a voice that speaks to you in an "in-ear" [headphone] saying, "One, two, three, four." So, like, it's a, it's a radical change. But I'm in the best hands. Eduardo is one of the musicians I admire the most on planet Earth, and I feel that I have learned, I have spent sort of an intensive master's degree working with him and making music with him.

Comparisons with Aretha Franklin and Celia Cruz

ERROL:

And how do you feel when you are compared to Aretha Franklin and Celia Cruz?

DAYMÉ:

No, no, no... No, I think people always try to look for references such as, "Oh, look, it reminds me of this person, or it reminds me of this other person." The thing is that it's a strong combination and it's an interesting combination. I think it's like the combination that happened with Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo. That is, Celia and Aretha Franklin, it's basically talking about Latin Jazz. In other words, I think it comes more because people say, "Oh, it's like gospel and jazz but it's Cuban timba and rumba." I mean, I feel like it's coming very, very from that angle...

Nina Simone and Jazz

ERROL:

I read an interview of yours that you said that the first time you heard Ella Fitzgerald and Elis Regina you didn't like them, and that you didn't want to have those little old voices that they had, but then you made peace with, with... Because what happened was that you were listening to a particular record that was a selection of what the producer of that record thought was the best of...

DAYMÉ:

No, no, no. No, no, no. He was not a producer. It was a burnt record of a friend.

ERROL:

No, no, no, but that was later. But I'm telling you that you heard one first that was *The Best*, you said in that interview *The Best of Ella*.

DAYMÉ:

No, let's see. It was a disc, which was given to me by a friend called Joaquín Sosa, whom I love very much. He burned a lot of music, a lot of songs.

ERROL:

Ah, okay.

DAYMÉ:

And he told me, "Look, listen to this because if you, you want to sing in the Big Band, this is the music you have to hear." And there was Elis, Regina, Ella... But there was no name, there was not, that is, me... It was a burnt record. I was just listening to music. Today I can say, ah, it was so-and-so, it was a this and that, but I didn't, that is, I heard voices and said, "This is what you have to sing in the Big Band. Like, I don't like this at all." Until Nina Simone sounded, and when Nina Simone sang "I Put a Spell on You*,"* I didn't even know who it was either, but I heard that voice sound and I said, this is it. I mean, there, I mean, it's like... It's the things that happen with music, there's a click that isn't conscious, it's like there's something that shocks you, that impacts you, that goes beyond reason. I listen to Nina, or I hear that voice that I said, is this a man, a woman, what, what is this? A person here who is sending me very strong information. In addition, Nina in that song kind of makes some very strong transformations. And I remember that, later, I listen to another song called "I Love You Porgy," and it's Nina's version the same, on piano, very soft, and it moved me very, very, very much. And when he arrived at school the next day, Joaquín told me, "Well, tell me, the disc." And I tell him, "I liked only two songs. One that sounds like this, and one that sounds like that, and I don't know who those people are, but wow, what beautiful songs." And he tells me, "Well, they're both the same person." And from that day on I said, "Well, that person called Nina Simone, I don't know her, but ma'am, I want to be like you." That was my first, my first guide and my first light within jazz. And through Nina, it was then that I began to

step back and say, “Ah, ah, so Ella’s got swing. Ah, then Elis Regina has...” I mean, it was like it was a backward path, but it was through Nina that I was able to connect with everyone else.

Puerto Rican Connection with Nina Simone

ERROL:

That’s cool. Just in case you didn’t know, Nina Simone’s percussionist, for a long time, was a Puerto Rican.

DAYMÉ:

What? Really?

ERROL:

Leopoldo Fleming, a descendant from... His father came here when he was almost a child, from Saint Thomas, who was also called Leopoldo Fleming, who was a bass player, he played with his father, with many bands. He was also a diesel-engine worker, but he was born and raised in the El Falansterio, in Old San Juan, and then he left at the age of 12, they took him to New York, and he started working, and he was a star member of Miriam Makeba’s trio. He was, he was Leopoldo Fleming, William Sattler, and Sivuca, the Brazilian, was Miriam Makeba’s trio. And he was the one who gave the rhythmic basis for the song “Pata Pata*,”* for example, Leopoldo Fleming. He is almost 80 years old. And then you watch the videos, for example, find the song “My Way,” Nina Simone’s version of “My Way,” where there is a double beat on the bongo, that is Leopoldo Fleming, which gives that sense of urgency in Nina Simone’s interpretation of, of, that song. So, in the end they are all connected by those invisible threads, right, of, of...? Because Leopoldo Fleming first started playing Cuban rumba and Afro-Haitian rhythms in a dance school of Catherine Duggan. So, suddenly, you’re listening to, Nina Simone with her Afro tradition from the United States, but, at the same time, surreptitiously it’s also underneath our, our Caribbean connections. Later I’ll pass you on, I’ll give you something about what I wrote. Well, before it’s over, right, because this activity is until 1:00, please, I told you that you could interrupt me at any time, you could interrupt the conversation, so we’re going to take questions and comments and things from people, colleagues, and if you identify for, for...

Doubts and Questions

DAVID GUERRA:

I'm going to cry, I'm going to cry right now.

DAYMÉ:

Oh, don't cry.

DAVID GUERRA:

Well, I want to share something very special to me with you, and I want to share it because she's so modest that maybe, that's why you... You can't leave here without really knowing who she is and the role that Daymé plays for Cuban music. Well, my name is David Guerra, I am a professor here at the UPR, I have the honor of being a professor at the School of Humanities, I teach a course on contemporary art in the Caribbean, another on curatorship... Very committed to the Caribbean, and above all, committed to the Caribbean after I moved to Puerto Rico. In other words, I didn't understand the Caribbean until I left Havana. I'm from Havana, but I didn't understand the Caribbean from Havana. Because of colonization, that is, no, we don't know who we are until we integrate and we see and feel ourselves. So, I came to feel Caribbean moving to Puerto Rico from where I am... But... And I emigrated a lot of years ago, that is, in 2007 I left Cuba, I couldn't tolerate, I couldn't participate and I decided to choose other paths, and Boston was the home for a long time. There is a curve that I don't know, that is the question I am going to ask you, but I want to reach that moment in which one emigrates, and one is uprooted. There are other ways to take root in that process, but you start speaking in English, for example, all the time, and you forget the richness of Cuban Spanish that you learned on the streets of Havana, and so on. And you start to feel like you don't belong anywhere, like you're in a limbo that's been created. And at that moment, you start to question yourself a lot about your identity and you want to know where you're going and what you're going to do with your life, and so on. In the midst of all that, there is a song that sneaks into your head, and it is the voice of Daymé Arocena, who connects me by saying, "The rumbas, that's my name." That there, I said, Long live Cuba! Long live this woman who reminds of many things!" And this is the other issue, La Lupe... Celia... They embraced Puerto Rico, enormously, in their musical careers. Today, when you are out there, what do I know, talking to

people and they ask you, “What do you listen to in Cuba? Who are the best Cuban voices?” I wanted you to leave here knowing that the best Cuban voice, of any genre, is Daymé Arocena. She is the, she is the best Cuban voice.

(Applause from the audience).

And I’m sure that after being in Puerto Rico, she’s going to be one of the best Caribbean voices. So please embrace her, love her, listen to her music. In other words, this woman anchors you to the origin, she anchors you to the root, she anchors you to Africa. And for me, Daymé, I thank you so much, because I met her in Boston, when she had just arrived. And the rumba was me too, because every time you felt that the snow was fucking with you, and that... I had to put on Daymé’s album to save myself again. In other words, it is healing. The power of the music that Daymé produces is healing. So, I wanted to thank you for all that I’ve healed for you. Thank you, really. And today, today I had to come and tell you, that’s why. I was… I’m here with a heart attack, it’s going to explode, but I wanted to thank you. So, the question finally, Daymé, has to do with Caribbeanness. How... What has happened, coming to Puerto Rico, knowing the edges of a new island, feeling the bomba and the plena, which is everywhere. And please, keep amplifying it, because it’s, it’s, bomba for me is the heartbeat of Puerto Rico. So, what’s happened to you since you’ve felt those heartbeats?

Arrival to Puerto Rico

DAYMÉ:

Look, wait, let me change, calm down for a moment. I never decided to come to Puerto Rico, I never had it on my radar, I had no idea. I think that Puerto Rico us hidden a lot from us, Cubans. They hide it from us, “Don’t let’em find out that this island exists.” But that is another issue, it is very complex. When Eduardo says to me, “Look, I can go to Canada.” I lived there, in that snow, that cold, and he told me, “I can go there, but it’s more convenient for you to come here, because I have my studio here,” you know? It was like it was a logistical issue. “We’re going to make an album, you’re going to spend a lot more money looking for a studio in Canada, I don’t know, than if you come here, I have everything over here.” So, that was the only reason why I took

a plane and came. Without any kind of anything, I said, “Damn, the studio, Eduardo, the album, now, bam!” And when I set foot in Puerto Rico, two things happened. In fact, I passed through Boston before I got here. I went to Berkeley to do some things, and I went down, to PR. And I remember that I arrived, and the first thing was that I felt a warmth. I’m very cold-sensitive, and I got up, I got to the hotel where I was going to stay that night, because Eduardo was at the Grammys that week, and he’d arrive the next day. Then, I had to spend a night in a hotel on Loíza Street. I turn on the air conditioning, I’ve never done that in my life, and I stood in front of the air conditioner like that. I said, “What is this?” I mean, I felt like he was going to give me something, because I had been in an impressively cold country for about three years. To top it off, in a pandemic, with a... Locked there in that cold.

And one thing happens, is that music is a spectacular thing. I’m standing by the air conditioner like this, in the middle of Loíza Street, and a low music is approaching that is becoming big, big, big, big, like that... And I look out the window and see a car full of speakers. Gigantic. I’ll never forget what I felt, because that car sounded like this, “Tell him that I met you dancing!” And when it sounded, I said... I felt that it kind of pulled me back and I said, “Ah! I arrived in Puerto Rico.” In other words, like, “Wow!” I went out to the street, well, I had to go down, I went out to the street like this, “Wait, wait! Where, where am I?” It was at night, I mean, even I wasn’t like, it was, it was really crazy. I went down like this, and I say, “Where do you eat here?” And he told me, “Look!” I was like, I didn’t understand anything. He tells me, “Look, on the corner they sell pizza. And I go to the pizza place.” And I tell him, “Give me a pizza with anything!” And he tells me, “The pizza has coconut topping!” And I say, “What?” And a juice, he tells me, “Passion fruit, orange, or hawthorn berry?” I mean, I kind of said, “What is this? Where am I?”

ERROL:

Especially, the orange juice [which in Spanish, Puerto Ricans call “China” juice].

DAYMÉ:

Yes, and I go back to the hotel with my coconut pizza and my, and my... And my *orange* juice. I fell asleep that night. The other day, in the morning, when I wake up, I see the sea in front of me, and I hadn’t even noticed it because it was night the day before. I see the sea and I say, “Wow, what a beautiful thing!” Eduardo arrives to pick me up from the airport with suitcases and

everything, I don't know. And he tells me, "What do you want to eat?" And I tell him, "No! What you eat here, local food. You see, yesterday, wow, I ate coconut pizza, which was delicious, but..." And he tells me, "I'm going to take you to La Casita Blanca [the little white house]." And I remember, Eduardo is not here, but if he were here, he would agree with me. When I tasted the food, I started crying. I said, "I'm finally home!" It was like, "How did they hide this country from me for so long?" I said, "I mean, this is my island. I mean... What was I doing in Canada?" And I was eating, like crazy. I ordered a *bistec* with onions with rice and frijoles, and whatever. As they say here, beans and fried plantain. You call it "yellow fritters." I was eating like this, and he said this. I mean, it was stronger than me. And he tells me, "Let's go to the beach." We went to Ocean Park. We sat there and talked. And I began to have catharsis. This is how it said, "Good God!" And I called my husband, and I said to him, "I'm not coming back to Canada."

ERROL:
Either you come or...

DAYMÉ:
I swear. I mean, I called him and said, "I won't come back to that country." And he told me, "What are you talking about?" And I said, "That I'm not coming back." And he said to me, "Look, you're a little upset." And I told him, "You don't understand me, because you haven't set foot here. But when you step on here, you will understand me. Come, come over here so you can see." It took a month for my husband to come, because he had to file for a visa to come, whatever. And I was more convinced than ever. The only thing that wasn't convinced was him because he was over there. And I remember that he arrived. And since he arrived here he told me, "Of course, we are moving here." And we even left the immigration process that we had in Canada, we abandoned everything, and we came here. And I told my friends, the people I met little by little on the island, I told them, "Every time they called me 'Latina,' I didn't identify with that. I said 'Latino'..." And I looked at the Mexicans, I don't know, the Hondurans. And I said, "But that's not me. I don't know." Here I heard, for the first time, "Caribbean," you know? And I said, "Dude, I am Caribbean." That's what going on. I didn't understand it; I hadn't understood it. This is what it is to be Caribbean." How nice.

From then on... Look, when you said that, it's that until you leave... That is, until you don't realize it, you don't realize it. And in Cuba, there is a very heavy isolation, because it is not that we take our passport and go where we want. In other words, leaving Cuba is... There are people who have died at sea trying to leave that island. So, it's like... Arriving here and finding yourself on a literally twin island. I mean, it's as if we were twins, as if we were little siblings. But, "How did they hide my brother from me? Did they hide my *jimagua* [twin] from me all this life? What the fuck is this?" I mean, you can't... You just can't believe it. In everything—in food, in dances... I see the people, look, in bomba and plena. And I am moved as if I were dancing rumba. It's a different development of music and it's a different musical genre, but for me it's the same thing. There are my ancestors singing, and I with this... I mean, I'm going down that rabbit hole. It's what... I mean, for me that works as if I were being called from beyond. Yes, then... When I am asked, "How are you doing in Puerto Rico? Are you really in Puerto Rico? Do you like Puerto Rico?" And I say, "Are you for real?" I mean, even Puerto Ricans themselves often tell me, "But are you really here? But are you here?" And I... And sometimes, I tell them, "It's that you, you don't realize the island that you have." Basically, I wouldn't wish them at all to go through what we have gone through in Cuba, but they would have to go through it for a little while to understand the island they have here. That is, to say, "What I have is too awesome. It's too much." Besides, it's like a miniature Cuba, because Cuba is a gigantic island. Here the beach is 10 minutes away, in Cuba the beach is 45 minutes away. So, basically you say 45 minutes to someone here in Puerto Rico, and they say, "What town is that?" Like you're going this way, everything... Being smaller, everything feels more, it is more concentrated, it is more, it is tastier, it is closer. Therefore, in my life, this island has made me run. In my life, I was the most sedentary person on the planet, my thing is to dance, but I go out to the beach to run here. Like this island has changed my life in a general sense, and has made me understand what it is to be Caribbean. And that's why many times, when I have conversations with my friends and my Bori friends, I tell them, "People, embrace this island a lot, a lot, a lot. A Cuban sister says so."

ERROL:

Does anyone have any comments or questions? You feel like asking something.

STUDENT 1:

I empathize a lot with you, and with the message you wanted to carry. I didn't know what was happening today. My professor was the one who told me to come. I empathize a lot with you, because I was born in Venezuela and I feel that here many people don't know what they have, literally. My dad is Arab. So, I have a cultural mix there, and as the gentleman said, many times one loses that identity. I would love to make music one day really, because I would love to love to love my Arab culture, my Latin culture, and my Caribbean culture, because I grew up here. I speak like a Puerto Rican. I'm Puerto Rican, basically. And nothing, I'm super impressed. I wanted to make that point. I'm super impressed. I feel that, for some reason, I made community with you today, here talking and I will continue to listen to you.

DAYMÉ:
Here I am.

Desired Collaborations

STUDENT 1:
It's really impressive what you can provoke, your essence. And nothing, I wanted to ask you, um, if you could do a collaboration with someone from the Caribbean, who would you do it with right now?

DAYMÉ:
Beautiful. Look, it's a very nice question because we don't talk about my new album, which comes out on February 23rd, in a few days. And I just wanted a lot, since I understood what it was like to be Caribbean here, I wanted to have a collaboration with a Dominican and a Puerto Rican. So, my collaborations on the album are with Rafa Pabón, who is an urban artist here in Puerto Rico, and with Vicente García, who is a Dominican singer-songwriter. In fact, just yesterday, I was working... that's not going to be for my album, it's going to be later... but I was working with Riccie Oriach on another collaboration. Right now, I feel so Caribbean that I want to collaborate with everyone. I have met many people here on the island, I would like to collaborate with everyone. In fact, I wrote a song for Puerto Rico called "Para mover los pies [So you can move your feet]." All the pleneros are, of course, from here... And Lagarto sang... And Emanuel sang,

and I forgot to mention one thing, you see. The day, aha... I arrived in Puerto Rico; it was on a Friday... On Monday, Eduardo takes me to El Boricua, and I start there to sing, dance, and I danced with Tito Matos, whatever. And days after that, Tito passed away. I had never seen such a funeral in my life. I went to La Goyco, and I... I cried so much that day, but not for Tito, because I met him one day, and I sang, I hung out, but he was not my friend. I didn't know him before, nor did I understand his career. I was moved by all that number of drums and tambourines playing at the same time. And I said, "If they are going to... When I die, I want my farewell to be like this." What a way to sound over here! My weight was lifted. I felt like you were levitating from so many people playing at once. And it seemed like a magical thing to me. So, I couldn't have Tito Matos in my plena, but he was, Emanuel was there and Lagarto was there, and then I have collaborated with the people of Ultra Comando. That is, I know a lot of pleneros, and that's always my game. And my bomba people too and... What's their name?... My people from El Laberinto del Coco, I have made a lot of very nice friends from the "alternative" scene. And through Rafa, for example, I've met a lot of people from the urban genre as well, who never felt so connected to the urban genre as I do now. I love to say sometimes in the finest interviews, when I am asked about classics, about formations, I always say, "I am moved by Bach and by La Jumpa." Because literally, as I said before, I'm so open musically, that I kind of don't care. What I need is for the music to go through me, and I don't question why. If it's connecting with me, that's it. I flow with it. I mean, "Oh, but how rude!" Well, music doesn't even understand languages. So, if I allow for this to move me, and I'm moving with it, well, "let it go." I mean, let it flow. Therefore, let all the collaborations come, with as many people as possible, really.

ERROL:

Ian, then the colleague and then...

IAN:

Greetings, my name is Ian. I wanted to ask you a question. Can you hear me?

DAYMÉ:

Yes.

Collaborating with Eduardo Cabra

IAN:

I find out now, right? I meet you for the first time. I'm going to do my assignment; I'm going to listen to you. What I heard was super nice. But I'm interested in your collaboration with Eduardo. And I'll explain, right? Eduardo is like a great idol for us, since he is doing reggaeton, and many of us grew up with that reggaeton. And an idol, right, because the proposal he brings is very different. Fusion... Band... He's a genius. And well, I wanted to ask you a little bit about the process of collaborating with him. What does Eduardo contribute? What has it contributed to your work, that? And, really, I'm going to make my assignment to study you, but Eduardo for us, for many, for me, is a great reference in music.

DAYMÉ:

Look, I'm going to make you totally honest. I was terrified to work with Eduardo, because I said... I am very bossy, super bossy. I'm an alpha woman, fully, and even more when it comes to my own songs. Then, I said, "Do we love or hate each other here?" Because working with a producer implies that. When you work with a producer, you have... You're like playing with, "Will we understand each other or not?" He might say to me, "We're going to do this." I'm going to tell you, "I don't like it." And that's where things can get stuck. And I said, "If he turns around, and tells me, 'I have 28 Grammys,' and things were going to end up fucked here." Because I was going to tell him, 'I don't care, I don't feel music like that.'" I mean, I was ready for war, really. At the same time, I chose him because I love his music, I love the way he produces, but it's not the same to see him from afar than... That you know, that being in a studio working with someone. And he told me, first of all, he told me, "I'm not a dictator producer." I remember those words like this, very big, ""We are going to work, but the one who is going to defend that music is you. So, what you tell me, for me is going to be paramount, because you are the one who is going to stand in public and show your face, to sing that music. In other words, for me your word will take precedence." And I said, "Ah, we're fine." Not because... Not because I'm super aggressive. I'm always very open musically, but I do defend the identity of my songs and how they come to me. That said, I came to Puerto Rico originally to work on a song for a week. I ended up living at Eduardo's house for four months and recording an album. In other words, we became siblings. In other words, we both work so comfortably with each other. We woke up at 8:00 in the morning,

prepared breakfast, went to the studio there to hit it hard, hard. He spent the entire early hours of the day on me. And after about 5:00 in the afternoon, he sort of entered into his metamorphosis to work with other artists. But his cool time was the mornings working with me day by day. And the truth is that I earned an album and I earned a brother. I mean, it's like working with Eduardo is a privilege because of how great a musician he is, but because of the human being he is as well. The only problem with Eduardo is that he hates light, and you have to work in the dark, in the shadows. I tell him that his inspirational muse is a vampire. And that when you, really, have to work like this, in the dark. So, I tell him that every time someone raised the lights a little bit, I said, "I see the smoke as everything comes out like this." It's the only complaint I have with Eduardo, really. I love him very, very, very much. And I'd like to make a lot more records with him.

PROFESSOR:

Good morning, thank you very much. I don't regret it; I'm working in the College of General Studies. I am a graduate student at the College of Education. So, I stole 30 minutes from work, which means I'll stay 30 minutes later. But I had to come. And this type of meeting is pleasant, because, in my case, I am a native of Peru. I have Japanese ancestry. My great-grandfather was Japanese, one of the many who arrived in Peru at the end of the nineteenth century. And, well, he married a Peruvian woman. That's where my grandmother comes from, my dad... Anyway... I have no, who knows, Japanese features. My mom is Black. So, that kind of thing that happens. I lived in Japan for almost 6 and a half years. And so, they say that one completes a cycle when one lives 7 years or is 7 years somewhere. That's not scientific, is it? But I've been here for almost 9 years. In 2015, I got to do my master's degree and then now my doctorate. I was lucky, last August, for the Day of Afro-descendants I think it was, to see you in the Plaza de la Convalesencia in Río Piedras. And well, I knew, slightly, some things about you, and I'm finding out more and more things. And so, for that reason, I want to ask you three things that are suddenly intertwined, right? When you go to Wikipedia, Wikipedia says you were born in '92, but it doesn't say the month. In a review of one of your albums, I think the portal is "La Salsa es Mi Vida," it says that you were born in October. But if you ask ChatGPT, it says you were born in June. So, well, these are things that are necessary to know for those who follow your music.

What Remains to Be Done

PROFESSOR:

But I also want to know, right? You have said that you follow songs, that it is not that you let yourself be influenced by a specific rhythm or specific genre. But I would like to know if any particular topic is of interest to you, right? And then, I don't know if it's like a debt, but with yourself, obviously, what would you like to do? What do you still have to do? And why haven't you done it until now?

DAYMÉ:

Wow! Wow! Look, let's start at the beginning. I am from the water sign that is air. I'm an Aquarius, and I just had my birthday in February. That is to say... Yes, I love saying that because everyone would think that Aquarius is a water sign, but it's air, it's crazy. I don't know why. Don't ask me. I have no idea. And I don't know why that madness, October, December, January, I've been told I don't know how many months, June. Wow! No, February. The month of love.

Second. The second question was if there was a specific topic, a specific topic... Afro-descendancy. Blackness calls me, and I think it is one of my great missions in life to make us recognize ourselves as Afro-descendants. I think it is a serious problem that the entire Latin American continent has, and it hurts me. Because, do you know what happens? That I have nothing to hide, but unfortunately there is a melanin problem, that people believe that Afro-descendants are the black ones, or those who wear this color, and I like this, "Oh, you don't eat mofongo! Oh, no, guys, you haven't seen, you've never cooked with sofrito seasoning in your life!" Our cultural and ethnic Afro-descendants take us to much deeper points than melanin itself. So, there is an important education in that, and more than that, I believe that it is a space and an ancestral claim that they have been making to us for a long time. I think that many of the social problems that exist are because we do not understand our Afro-descendants and we do not give space to that, to flow and to be. And I'm going to say something rude, but I'm also like that. We all want an ass like this and not be... And not to be Black at the same time. I mean, like... This comes with everything. This is a whole. But you have to live accordingly with that whole. You can't love it in parts, as if we were a disposable thing. That's DNA. Enjoy your DNA. So, one of my missions is for people to

enjoy their DNA and their cultural, ethnic identity, from that Afro-descendant background. And the third question, what was it?

PROFESSOR:
What do you still have to do?

DAYMÉ:
Ah, what's left for me to do? Ouch!

PROFESSOR:
You should know it now, because you may come up with other things later.

DAYMÉ:
I still have to do everything in life, to be honest. I am ready to do whatever comes, whatever it takes. I, I'm the person... I said it, I'm super open. And I want, I want to say that everything that is there to transform me, let it come, that it is welcome. I have everything left to do.

Afro-Caribbean Music and Femininity

ERROL:
My colleague.

DAYMÉ:
Let's mambo!

ROSE:
Hola, [I'm] Rose. A pleasure. I follow your work a lot and, nothing, I wanted to comment that the first song I came across was "La rumba me llamo yo," [rumba is my name] and the same thing, I felt a connection. In my case, I've been more in the corner of bomba and plena, recently rumba. And I think that, sometimes, people don't talk about how important you are to us women in these Afro-Caribbean genres, which are very masculine genres, where there is a lot of male

chauvinism, where it is very difficult to win the corner. And in my case, you have been very inspired in that, and also in that of reclaiming the Caribbean and connecting, as you mention, with our Afro-descendants as well.

I think that, in Puerto Rico, because of the colonial issue, there is also a complexity and this search to whiten ourselves and look to the United States as references, and not to look at our sister islands, right, which are the ones who are here, right. And in that sense, well, your music that connects and that you are here now also helps, that pumps us a lot. But also, it makes us reflect and connect more with our Afro-descendant side, which many of us do have visibly, others not so much, but as you mention, Afro-descendants are there and we cannot deny it.
Ah, the other thing I was going to say, which I think is very great, I don't know, this is a... Maybe a little intimate, but when you're entering these very masculine spaces, you seek to take care of what you wear, how you handle yourself, because you want these men to respect you for your essence and for what you bring and not for your body or, you know, the Caribbean that we carry in our bodies. And I was very shocked when I saw you in La Respuesta, because I had been listening to you... Listening, but I didn't know that you were all this performance and all this sensuality. And I was blown away. I said, "What? Also, the leotard, the "shadow," that you can see everything underneath." I said, "Exactly, because we are all that." In other words, as if you are a star, and you want to show your skin, it does not detract from your project, your proposal, what you are. It's part of who you are, and you are all of that, and we are all of that. So, it was also a reaffirmation that we can stand and be proud of our bodies and show it. And at the same time, that doesn't mean that we should be respected more or less for what we were bringing to the table. And nothing, that you are an inspiration for many of those things.

Celebrating the Body

DAYMÉ:

Wow. I'm going to tell you something.

ROSE:

Nothing, I thank you.

DAYMÉ:

You just killed me with the info, as we say in Cuba.

ROSE:

What?

DAYMÉ:

When they tell you something that hits you deep. I was a super physically insecure person. To the point that I, as a child, if I was walking down a block and saw people on the corner, I would cross and turn around so that they wouldn't see me. I wanted to be invisible, really. Why? Because you, as a woman, receive a lot of violence from all sides. But I think that violence against Black, fat women, is also brutal. I mean, it's at some levels like there are no soap operas, movies, love stories where the beautiful girl is a woman like me. And that creates traumas in you, like, well, "I'm not pretty. I don't have anything beautiful in life, because look, how beautiful this is or how beautiful that is, and I don't represent any of that." And to walk where I have traveled, and I speak very openly about this, because I am even a woman with very strong marks... I have a reduction in my bosom, in my breasts. I have scars on my breasts. I mean, in a way, my body was always a problem, an issue, in my life. Getting to stand up in a leotard on stage, putting my ass in their faces... Girl, that has been a path of a lot, really, of going very inward. That has even led to therapy. In other words, that does not happen by itself, just like that. That has been a lot of work to understand myself, get to know myself, explore myself, enjoy myself and be grateful for what I am. Because today I understand it. Today I say, "Wow, this represents my ethnicity, my people, my roots." A kiss, my king. In other words, this represents a lot. This speaks of who we are, and no one wants to see, and people want to hide. Like, today I understand that I'm physically like that, because one of my missions in life is to show people where it comes from too. And somehow, when I started to integrate that into my essence, I started to want to get angry, to be honest. And at this point, the other day it happened to me on the beach. In my life I had taken off my top on a beach. In addition, I already told you that I have six scars on my breasts. I mean, I'm good... I was very repressed with all that, to top it off, the breast reduction was done to me when I was 12 years old. So, in the middle of adolescence... Many complexes. And I swear to you that I was in the water, and there was a

moment when my bra was heavy. I mean, I took that off, I threw myself like that. And I felt so healthy, so liberated, so... I mean, when you see me with an outfit no matter what, that's not for anyone, that's for me. In other words, I am enjoying myself more than ever.

And those who can't handle that, should look the other way. I can't take care of your eyes. I don't carry your eyes or your fears. I carry my body, and I'm super comfortable and super sexy in it. So, hopefully that's the message that people take away. And I love that you told me. My latest videos are very much about that. And I have been surprised by the number of women who have told me, "How sensual I see you, what a beautiful thing." I say, "You can't imagine what that means to me." That is, from a person who went from wanting to be invisible to wanting everyone to see her.

Female Power

NOELY:

My name is Noely. I feel super happy to see you. The first time I saw you was also in La Respuesta, I know it was a pretty important show for you. And among the many things that impacted me, and that I took away from that night, was the control that you had of all those men who were in the band. And that kind of impacted me and inspired me a lot. And I wanted to ask you what are those little things that you implement for yourself, to stay centered, that if you ever kind of feel scared to talk, or it's like, wait, right? Like, I remember that I am this, like, what are those little things? And also, recognizing that there is a lack of diversity within this genre. How has this process been of looking for women who, well, are ready to collaborate? Do you have future plans to collaborate with people here or within the Caribbean? Yes, I want to know about all that.

DAYMÉ:

Look, it's very interesting because I've stuttered since birth. I am a full stutterer. And I remember that my parents took me to many therapies, until one day the doctor told them, "Don't suffer anymore with her, she thinks a lot. She thinks faster than she can speak. Leave her, she will settle in, but it is her head that is going like a bat out of Hades." And when they tell me that about directing and in my center and my thing, I also understood that women have that superpower. What

happens is that they have... They've severed it off for a long time, you know? But a woman can handle things even with a smile. Men start screaming, so that he feels that there is authority and whatever. And a woman, that is, I who work mostly with men, with a smile, that is, "Don't worry, dear, let's do it this way." It's over. In other words, there is a feminine power that we have to develop, because that is there, that is part of our essence, but it is cut on all sides, they are terrified of that power. So, I live trying to dose it too, to always use it in my favor, and to communicate to other women that they have that. And just yesterday, I was talking to a friend, a musician, and I was telling her, I had the joy of going to the premiere of Bob Marley's film in Miami. I was with Bob's family, anyway. And I was telling him that I was very moved by the role of Rita Marley in the film, and what Rita meant in Bob's life. I told her, "But do you know what impressed me the most about Rita Marley? That, for the first time, I saw a woman like me, physically like me, in such a big role, and pushing a rock star, and giving him that space." Like the film has that thing about understanding that Rita was Rita in Bob's life. I mean, there wasn't Bob without Rita there doing it like this, saying, "Come on, come on." I mean, like that impact that she had, for him to be who he was. And what drove me crazy the most about Rita, that I was like this, said, "I'm marrying that woman tomorrow." It was that she did not feel, at least apparently, she was not intimidated by any other woman. That is a power that they have also taken away from us. Wanting to compete with each other, feeling that, "Oh, this one has the most beautiful legs. Oh, this one has, I don't know what." When you understand your power and your essence, you stand up for the princess of any place, and you are chilling and calm. Your power is yours, and no one else's. This one is yours; hers is hers. So, we also have to educate ourselves as women about that center, when one is like this, one that exists with other women so rich, we hang, whatever. And you're not thinking, "Oh, look, my man, he's looking at that woman." I mean, because also, if he looks at it, he is looking at this right here. You're like, "Really?" That's how it goes. And of course I'm super happy to collaborate with many women. My first band was a woman's band. When they mentioned it there in Punet, I didn't want to make the interruption, but I didn't go to Canada.

ERROY:
She met you in Havana.

DAYMÉ:

She met me in Havana with a band of women called Lami, which was what became Maqueque later. I pushed a lot for women–and I continue to push–for women. My team today, for now, is 80% female. My manager, my booking, my assistants. That is, out of about 10 people, two are men only. I mean, I kind of have young women there with me pushing all the time, because I believe in that power and I need that power by my side. We have to build community, ourselves, and push each other. Really.

ERROL:

Well, we're wrapping up. Let's give another round of applause to our colleague.

DAYMÉ:

Look, before I forget, I brought, I'm going to leave them here for the department. I brought these candles. I only had two in the house, sorry, which are the candles on the record, the *Alkemy* candles. They will be at every concert, and they are a gift to you. They have a QR code of all the music that is coming out. So, I'll leave them with the professor so that you always have access to the candles until the launch concert comes and you can have your own candle. But we decided to make candles for a special thing, and it was so that you would never lack light, people, gentlemen. May you never lack light. Always keep that guidance from you, put it up there where it is. And I feel that it is the best gift that can be given to someone, light. Always enlightened by our ancestors. So, I'll leave them there for the department. And many, many, many thanks!