

AMAZON

FOLK TALES



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What are the Amazon Folk Tales?

The Amazon rainforest is full of amazing animals, mysterious trees, and incredible stories passed down through generations. In Brazil, where part of the Amazon is located, people have created songs to tell these stories — songs that help us learn about nature, respect it, and protect it.

In this booklet, we'll explore five songs by Brazilian composer Waldemar Henrique, each inspired by magical creatures from the Amazon:

- Bôto Cor-de-Rosa
- Cobra Grande
- Curupira
- Matintaperera
- Uirapuru

These characters might seem a little strange or spooky at first — but don't worry! They're not here to scare us. Each one plays an important role in guarding the forest and reminding people to take care of nature.

We're sharing these stories with you because we believe that music can help us connect with people and places far away. Even though the Amazon is far from Canada, we all share the same planet — and many of these ideas can be found right here, too. Do you know of any animals, forests, or traditions in Canada that are protected or celebrated in special ways?

By learning about the Amazon and its folklore, we can better understand how cultures around the world use stories and music to care for the Earth. We hope these songs inspire you to listen closely, imagine boldly, and maybe even create your own stories about the nature around you!

Happy exploring!

Camila & Yolanda
Obsidiana Duo



BÔTO COR-DE-ROSA

The Pink River Dolphin (Bôto cor-de-rosa) is a magical creature from the Amazon River. People say that at night, the Boto turns into a handsome man who comes out of the water to dance and party. He wears a white hat to hide the hole on top of his head (from his dolphin blowhole!) and is very hard to resist. But by morning, he disappears back into the river, and no one knows where he went. Even though he seems fun, the Bôto is a reminder to be careful with strangers and to stay safe near the water.



LISTEN TO FOI BÔTO, SINHÁ!

Listening Tips:

- Listen to the rhythm → Do you hear how the music goes in circles, like a chant? It repeats and builds, almost like a spell being cast.
- Notice the mood → The sound is mysterious and a little spooky, just like the legend of the Boto. Can you feel the tension growing as the story develops?
- Voice and expression → Listen closely to how the singer tells the story with their voice. Do they sound afraid? Curious? What feelings do you hear?
- Instruments and effects → Some sounds might remind you of the river, or something lurking just under the surface. Can you spot them?



Try this:

When the voice says "Foi boto, sinhá" — try saying it with your own rhythm. Can you make it sound like a secret?

What do you feel when the piano plays low, deep notes? Does it sound like the boto swimming just under the surface?



COBRA GRANDE

The Cobra Grande is a giant, magical snake from the Amazon. Her golden scales shine in the sunlight, and she's so big she can stretch across rivers and twist through the forest like a living path. She's a powerful guardian of nature, appearing when people harm the land or forget to respect the Earth. In some stories, she even transforms into a woman to walk among humans and remind them of nature's power. Mysterious and wise, the Cobra Grande is a symbol of the Amazon's strength and a warning to care for the world around us.



LISTEN TO COBRA GRANDE

Listening Tips: Cobra Grande

- The piano as the snake → Right from the start, listen to how the piano slithers — can you hear it? The notes move in waves, almost like the snake creeping through the forest or water.
- Sudden loud moments → Be ready! The music can suddenly get loud — like a warning, or when the Cobra appears. These moments feel like a shout in the middle of the jungle!
- The voice telling the tale → The singer doesn't just sing — they tell the story like a chant, sometimes soft and mysterious, sometimes strong and fearful. Listen to how the voice changes — is the singer afraid? Is the snake coming?
- Repeating patterns → The music circles around like the body of the snake — with repeating rhythms and melodies that make it feel hypnotic.



Try this:

Close your eyes and imagine the Cobra Grande moving slowly through the rainforest. What colours do you hear? What do you feel when the music gets louder or faster?



CURUPIRA

In Brazilian folklore, the Curupira is a magical guardian of the forest. He protects animals and trees from people who try to harm the forest. If someone hunts more than they need or cuts down trees without respect, the Curupira plays tricks on them, making them get lost, hearing strange sounds, or even going in circles for hours. He's playful, powerful, and a little bit mischievous, reminding everyone that the forest is alive and needs to be respected. So if you're ever deep in the woods and hear laughter or footsteps going the wrong way... you might have just crossed paths with the Curupira!



LISTEN TO CURUPIRA

Listening Tips: Curupira

- The forest comes alive → From the very beginning, the piano sets the mood: wild, and full of magic. Can you hear the rustling leaves or strange forest sounds?
- The trickster energy → Curupira loves to confuse people. Listen for fast, playful rhythms and sudden changes in mood — like he's dashing through the trees or laughing at lost travelers.
- The voice warns and tells → The singer acts like a storyteller from the forest, warning you about this powerful and tricky spirit. Sometimes the voice sounds playful, other times serious — just like Curupira himself!
- Backwards sounds → Some of the melodies and rhythms feel like they turn in circles or move in odd directions — almost like the backwards footprints Curupira leaves to confuse people.



Try this:

Can you hear where Curupira might be hiding in the music?

What instruments or sounds do you think represent his magic?



MATINTAPERERA

Matinta-Perera is a magical old woman who turns into a bird at night and whistles loudly outside people's homes. She only stops when someone promises to give her a gift. The next day, she comes to collect it. But if the person breaks their promise, bad luck might come to their house! Even though she might seem spooky, Matinta-Perera teaches us to keep our promises and respect nature's magic.



LISTEN TO MATINTAPERERA

Listening Tips: Matintaperera

- Whistling sounds → Listen to the piano! It makes high, sharp sounds that imitate Matinta's spooky whistles. Can you imagine her flying around the house at night?
- Spooky atmosphere → How does the music make you feel? Scared? Curious? The rhythms and harmonies create a mysterious mood, just like a nighttime forest.
- Piano and voice → Notice how the piano and voice work together to tell the story. Sometimes the piano leads, sometimes it follows — like a conversation between Matinta and the people in the house.
- Surprises in the music → Do you hear sudden changes? Loud moments? Strange sounds? These help paint the picture of a night full of fear and magic.



Try this:

Can you hear Matintaperera's presence in the piano's high, eerie notes?

Try whispering the whistle sound softly. Can you make it sound spooky like in the song?



UIRAPURU

The Uirapuru is a magical bird from the Amazon forest. People say that when it sings, all the other birds stop to listen. Its song is so beautiful that it can make wishes come true! But... this bird is very hard to find. Some even say that the Uirapuru was once a person who turned into a bird to follow someone they loved. In this song, someone is riding down a river with a very chatty caboclo (a person from the forest), who brags about fighting monsters, catching magical creatures, and even capturing a Uirapuru! But can we believe him? This is the final and most playful song of our Amazon folktales.



LISTEN TO UIRAPURU

Listening Tips – Uirapuru

- Playful rhythm → Notice how the music moves like a boat on the river. It sways and bounces, just like the caboclo talking and laughing!
- Voice acting → Listen to the singer's voice — can you hear the teasing tone, like she's joking or telling a funny story?
- Piano giggles → The piano sounds light and quick, like it's giggling along with the character's tall tales.



Try this:

Picture yourself in a canoe on a river, with someone chatting non-stop beside you — can you hear the bubbly rhythm of their voice in the music?

When the caboclo tells his wild stories, how does the music show if he's telling the truth... or just joking?

Can you tap along when the rhythm gets bouncy?



OUR PROJECTS

01 LIVE CONCERTS PERFORMANCES

For us, performing is about more than sharing music — it's about creating space for stories to be heard. In our concerts, we share the rich world of Ibero-American art song, bringing overlooked voices and histories to light.

Whether we're on a traditional stage or in a more intimate setting, we aim to connect through storytelling, poetry, and sound, inviting audiences to join us on a deeply personal and moving journey.

02 SCHOOL WORKSHOPS MASTERCLASSES

We love working with students of all ages. In our school workshops, we share the vibrant stories and sounds of Ibero-American music in a fun, engaging way — often through folktales, rhythm games, and collaborative music-making.

With older or more advanced students, we explore the nuances of interpretation, the art of collaboration, and why diverse voices in classical music matter more than ever. It's always a joy to open up conversations and spark curiosity.

03 TOURING

Touring gives us the chance to connect with communities across Canada, and it's one of our favourite parts of what we do. Whether we're performing in small towns or big cities, we bring our full selves and our belief in music as a bridge between cultures.

Projects such as AIRE y TIERRA allow us to share new stories through commissioned works, visuals, and music that reflects themes of immigration, belonging, and identity. We're always excited to meet new audiences and build meaningful connections wherever we go.



WHO WE ARE



YOLANDA TAPIA

Co-Founder

Hi, I'm Yolanda, a pianist, collaborator, and explorer of sound and culture. I make music to connect people and stories across genres and backgrounds. Whether it's a punk show or a classical recital (ideally followed by tacos), I'm all in. My cat, Shosti is my manager and emotional support companion. Being a musician helps me to make sense of chaos, celebrate joy, and connect with humans from every walk of life.



CAMILA MONTEFUSCO

Co-Founder

Hi, I'm Camila: a singer, storyteller, and lifelong dreamer. I sing to make sense of the world, to honour where I come from, and to connect with others in a way words sometimes can't. I love dancing samba, cuddling with cute puppies, and chocolate peppermint ice cream. Music is how I share my heart, and I'm always chasing moments that feel real, tender, and a little bit magical.



Pianist Yolanda Tapia and singer Camila Montefusco co-founded the Obsidiana Duo with a clear mission: to celebrate the rich tapestry of Ibero-American musical culture and amplify the voices of historically overlooked composers.

Renowned internationally as a prize-winning collaborative pair, the duo has been featured in CollabFest and Collabaret 2020, and the International Keyboard Collaborative Arts Society in 2021. Noteworthy accolades include the First Prize at the Puerto Rico Collaborative Piano Competition, and a fellowship with the Toronto Summer Music Festival where they worked under the tutelage of Wolfram Rieger, Benjamin Appl, and Steven Philcox. They also participated in the Evolution Classical artistic residency at the Banff Centre, mentored by David Harrington and Paul Wiancko from Kronos Quartet, the Gryphon Trio, Dinuk Wijeratne, Tom Allen, Patricia O'Callaghan, Marie Jossée Chartier, and Pamela Attariwara.

Their previous season marked a milestone with their inaugural national tour with Prairie Debut and the debut of 'Circular Sky,' a commissioned piece by composer Alice Ping Yee Ho and writer Madeleine Thien, supported by SOCAN, Prairie Debut, and the Canada Council for the Arts. This collaboration sparked 'AIRE,' a thematic exploration of immigration and belonging within their repertoire.

In recognition of their artistic vision, the Duo received a Canada Council for the Arts grant, facilitating collaborations with costume designer Madeline LeBlanc and graphic designer Paula Vergara, culminating in the creation of visual elements for 'AIRE y TIERRA'.

Their performances have been showcased on the stages of Music Toronto's Celebration of Small Ensembles Concert Series, Music Monday Toronto, 5 at the First and more. A highlight of their 24/25 season included their second national tour of 'AIRE y TIERRA' with Debut Atlantic.

Yolanda resides in Toronto, while Camila is now based in Montreal. Whether in their solo or collaborative careers, they continue to explore new artistic avenues, driven by a deep commitment to forging genuine and impactful connections with their audiences.





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