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Folkloric Puerto Rican dancing

By: Jitin Hingorani

The Pirates of Puerto Rico has been two years in the making.

The Austin-based [Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance Company](#) is putting on a show with one of the island's oldest and best groups, Paracumbe.

"They've only been here since Sunday and the most exciting thing about this show is that we're putting together a good chunk of the show this week. So, we're having a lot of fun in rehearsals with them," Ana Maria Maynard, of the dance company, said.

The two groups will perform the Bomba and Plena from Puerto Rico's Southern Coast.

"It's drum dance, music and vocal singing. Only the women sing in the Southern coast tradition and only the males will be able to play the drums. So, it's always danced in couples. It's a beautiful dance, very sensual, very exciting to watch," Paracumbe's lead singer Nelie Lebron said.

Puerto Rican dance and music is embedded in history and culture. And the performers, who've researched their music in the fields of their island, feel compelled to pass it down to younger generations.

"When the last one that practiced it or cultivated it will die, the music just goes with him. So, if it's not passed down to the younger generations, it's completely lost," Paracumbe director Emanuel Dufasne-Gonzalez said.

Besides younger generations, they also want to share their culture with Austin.

"We hope that the audience feels like they spent two hours on the islands of Puerto Rico enjoying the richness of our culture," Maynard said.

The Pirates of Puerto Rico is playing this weekend only at the State Theatre. Call (512) 469-SHOW for more information.