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## Interview w/ Dr. Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard, Director of Puerto Rican Folkloric Cultural Center

September 10, 8:52 PM • [Austin Latino Neighborhood Examiner](#) • Teresa Carbajal Ravet

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The [Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance and Cultural Center](#) is celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a public performance on **Sunday, September 13, 2009, from 2 PM to 5 PM**. Celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary, PRFDance will host a birthday party with cake and candles, as well as public performances of music and dance by the dance company and its performing arts students. The celebration will feature a "Bombazo", bomba dance and a "Taino Areyto", native dance, two Puerto Rican traditions that invite the Austin community to sing and dance before the drums! Bring your tables and lawn chairs, dominoes and briscas, and make new friends on the big, tree-covered lawn of the cultural center, located at [701 Tillery Street](#), #13, Austin, TX 78702.

Tekina-eirú founded Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance in 1997 as an all volunteer-run, nonprofit 501(c)(3), and since then, has become an expert resource on the mainland US for Puerto Rico's cultural traditions. She regularly returns to La Isla for research, ongoing training and mentorship with generous folklore masters such as Modesto Cepeda at the [Escuela de Bomba y Plena de Puerto Rico](#), Joaquin Nieves Caldero of [Guateque Ballet Folklorico de Puerto Rico](#), J. Emanuel Dufrasne-Gonzalez and Nelie Lebron-Robles of [Paracumbe](#), Eric Gonzalez of [Gibaro de Puerto Rico](#), and Tata Cepeda of the [Escuela de Baile de Bomba Dona Caridad Brenes de Cepeda](#). Ana María is mentored in her native traditions by Cacike Ca Ciba Opil (Martin Veguilla) of the [Concilio Taino Guatu-Ma-cu A Boriken](#), and is the recognized Tekina in Austin for the Concilio Taino.



Gracias to Dr. Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard for this interview.

### 1. Please tell us about the journey that guided you to the Austin area.

IBM. IBM Austin was interested in the doctoral dissertation I was working on and invited me to visit the area. The result of this trip is that I fell in love with Austin, and was offered a position. I am a Researcher at IBM Research Human Ability & Accessibility Center in Austin.

### 2. What inspired you to start a dance company in Austin?

Six months after the birth on my first son I volunteered as a ballet folkloric dancer for a cultural celebration in Austin. Puerto Rico was not represented and I felt the need to share my cultural roots with my newborn as well as with others in the community.

### 3. As a parent and corporate researcher, what and/or who motivates you to also direct, choreograph, and run a successful dance company and cultural

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**3.As a parent and corporate researcher, what and/or who motivates you to also direct, choreograph, and run a successful dance company and cultural center?**

The benefits demonstrated by my children and others in sharing my cultural roots and giving them a strong heritage foundation from which to grow.

Faith has also been motivational in growing community support for the

cultural center. It's a center for making new friendships, creating safety for families and children, and generating a miraculous feeling as a safe haven.

**4.Regarding the audition calls for dancers and musicians that PRFDance is currently holding, does any Austinite have the opportunity to audition?**

Everyone is welcomed! PRFDance wants to share the Puerto Rican culture with others and not just ourselves. Puerto Ricans are a mix race of people. Everyone should feel that they belong as no two Puerto Ricans have a distinct and/or particular feature.

**5.To what kind of practice and performance schedule does a PRFDance member commit?**

There are various programs and events that performing members commit to throughout the year. For a history and calendar of performances please visit the [PRFDance website](#).

In practices and productions the roles play to the strengths of the members and students involved. Roles are created





specifically with the members in mind in order to highlight their talent and skill. It is healthy to sing and dance and PRFDance productions bring out the hidden gem within each member and student.

**6.Finally, what is in store for the Austin community?**

**The PRFDance 12th Birthday Celebration and Performance**

**Sunday, September 13th, 2009**

**2 to 5 PM**

**Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance & Cultural Center**

**701 Tillery Street**



**Austin Latino Neighborhood Examiner**

Teresa Carbajal Ravet

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