

# Los Muñequitos de Matanzas



TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE  
University Musical Society  
2001/2002 Youth Education

This Teacher Resource Guide is a product of the University Musical Society's Youth Education Program and was compiled and written for the 1997-1998 Youth Performance Series by Ben Johnson, Alberto Nacif, and Emily Avers. It was revised and updated for this season by Claire Molloy with additional lessons by Jennie Salmon and Kristin Fontichiaro. Much of this guide is taken from press and publicity materials contributed by Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. All photos are courtesy of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas and its management unless otherwise noted.

The Saturday evening performance is co-presented with the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. This is a Heartland Arts Fund Program, with major support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

We would like to give special thanks to the sponsors of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas and the UMS Youth Education Program:

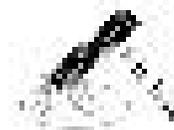
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# University Musical Society 2001/2002 Youth Education



## Los Muñequitos de Matanzas

(loh-s moon-yeh-KEE-toes day mah-TAHN-zuss)

Youth Performance  
Friday, March 15, 2002  
11:00am - noon  
Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor

# Table of Contents

## About the Performance

- 6 The University Musical Society
- \* 7 Coming to the Show
- \* 9 An Overview of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas
- 11 History of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas
- \* 12 This Performance's Program

## Background Information

- 14 History of Cuba
- 16 Map of Cuba
- \* 17 Styles of Cuban Music
- \* 18 About the Rumba
- \* 20 Three Primary Styles of Rumba
- 21 The Rumba Group
- \* 22 Yoruban Influences in Cuban Music

## Lesson Plans and Activities

- 26 Introduction/Learner Outcomes
- 27 Standards and Benchmarks
- \* 29 Lesson 1: Listening Activity
- 30 Lesson 2: Make Your Own Drum
- 31 Lesson 3: Cuban Cooking
- 34 Lesson 4: Poetry
- 36 Lesson 5: Fact or Opinion?
- 38 Lesson 6: Creative Writing
- 39 Selected Discography/World Wide Web Resources
- 40 Community Resources



# About the Performance



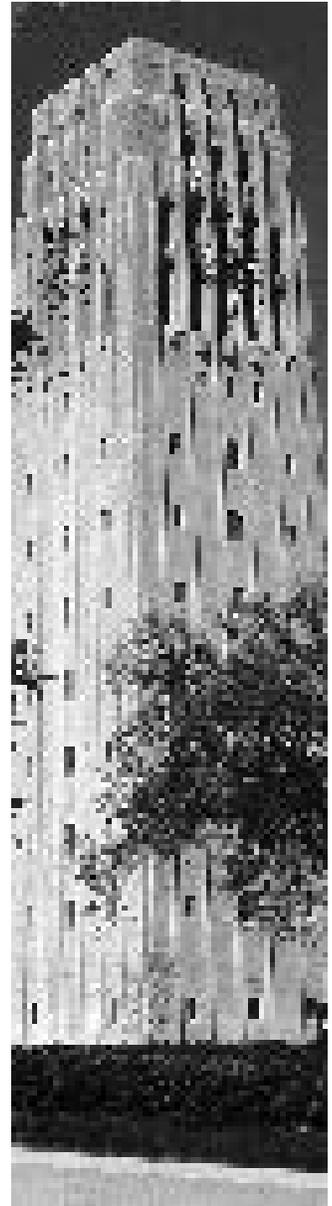
# The University Musical Society

The goal of the University Musical Society (UMS) is to engage, educate and serve Michigan audiences by bringing to our community an ongoing series of world-class artists who represent the diverse spectrum of today's vigorous and exciting live performing arts world.

Over its 122 years, strong leadership coupled with a devoted community have placed UMS in a league of internationally-recognized performing arts series. Today, the UMS seasonal program is a reflection of a thoughtful respect for this rich and varied history, balanced by a commitment to dynamic and creative visions of where the performing arts will take us into this new millennium. Every day UMS seeks to cultivate, nurture and stimulate public interest and participation in every facet of the live performing arts.

Since its first season in 1880, UMS has expanded greatly and now presents the very best from the full spectrum of the performing arts: internationally renowned recitalists and orchestras, dance and chamber ensembles, jazz and world music performers, opera and theater. Through educational endeavors, commissioning of new works, youth programs, artists, residencies and other collaborative projects, UMS has maintained its reputation for quality, artistic distinction and innovation. The University Musical Society now hosts over 90 performances and more than 150 educational events each season. UMS has flourished with the support of a generous community that gathers in Ann Arbor's Hill and Rackham Auditoria, the Power Center, the Michigan Theater, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, the Museum of Art and the Lydia Mendelssohn Theater. Additional performances are presented in various theaters in Detroit.

While proudly affiliated with the University of Michigan, housed on the Ann Arbor campus and a regular collaborator with many University units, the Musical Society is a separate non-profit organization that supports itself from ticket sales, corporate and individual contributions, foundation and government grants and endowment income.



Burton Memorial Tower, home of the University Musical Society

# Coming to the Show

We want you to enjoy your time in the theater, so here are some tips to make your youth performance visit successful and fun!

How do we get off the bus? You will park your car or bus in the place marked on your teacher's map. Park first, then unload. Only Ann Arbor Public Schools students and students with physical disabilities will be dropped off and picked up in front of the theater.

Who will meet us when we arrive? UMS Education staff will be outside to meet you. They might have special directions for you, so be listening and follow their directions. They will take you to the theater door, where ushers will meet and seat your group. You will not receive tickets.

Who shows us where we sit? The usher will walk your group to its seats. Please take the first seat available. (When everybody's seated, your teacher will decide if you can rearrange yourselves.) If you need to make a trip to the restroom before the show starts, ask your teacher.

How will I know that the show is starting? You will know that the show is starting because you will see the lights in the auditorium get dim, and a member of the education staff will come out on stage to begin the show. He or she will introduce the performance.

What if I get lost? Please ask an usher or a UMS staff member for help. You will recognize these adults because they have name tag stickers or a name tag hanging around their neck.

What do I do during the show?

Everyone is expected to be a good audience member. This keeps the show fun for everyone. Good audience members...

- Are good listeners
- Keep their hands and feet to themselves
- Do not talk or whisper during the performance
- Laugh at the parts that are funny
- Do not eat gum, candy, food or drink in the theater
- Stay in their seats during the performance

How do I show that I liked what I saw and heard? As a general rule, each performance ends with applause from the audience. This is how the audience acknowledges the performers. Applause says, "Thank you! You're great!" The louder and longer the audience clap, the greater the compliment it is to the performers. In dance performances, it is traditional to applaud at the end of each piece and sometimes after impressive solos. Group numbers are also rewarded with applause. For example, it is common for the audience to applaud after an exciting or especially beautiful section. At the end of the show, the performers will take a bow or curtain call. This is the performer's chance to be acknowledged by the cast and rewarded with audience applause. If audience members really enjoy the performance, they may stand and clap in what is called a standing ovation.



Students outside the Orfeo ed Euridice Youth Performance November 2001

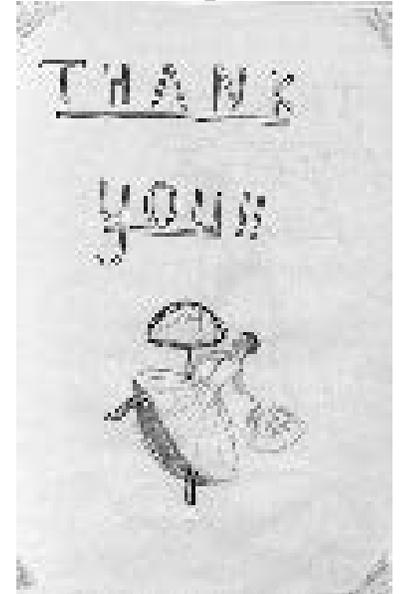


Students at the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange Performance October 2001

What do I do after the show ends? Please stay in your seats after the performance ends, even if there are just a few of you in your group. Someone from UMS will come onstage and announce the names of all the schools. When you hear your school's name called, follow your teachers out of the auditorium, out of the theater and back to your buses.

How can I let the performers know what I thought? We want to know what you thought of your experience at a UMS Youth Performance. After the performance, we hope that you will be able to discuss what you saw with your class. What did your friends enjoy? What didn't they like? What did they learn from the show? Tell us about your experiences in a letter, review, drawing or other creation. We can share your feedback with artists and funders who make these productions possible. If you had a wonderful time or if you didn't enjoy the experience, we want you hear your thoughts. Please send your opinions, letters or artwork to:

Youth Education Program  
University Musical Society  
881 N. University Ave.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1011  
Fax: 734-647-1171



Student Response to  
Alvin Ailey  
Youth Performance,  
February 2001

# An Overview of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas

## Los Muñequitos de Matanzas (los moon-yih-KEE-tos day mah-TAN-sas)

Los Muñequitos de Matanzas are an Afro-Cuban folkloric music group that specializes in playing rumbas. Founded in late 1952 as a neighborhood ensemble of musicians, percussionists, and dancers, they are arguably the foremost practitioners of the Cuban rumba. The group first performed in the United States in 1992 and had three subsequent tours, all to rave reviews. Literally translated, Los Muñequitos means “Sunday cartoons,” and Matanzas is the name of the area where the group was formed. Matanzas means “slaughter,” for this was a region where livestock was processed and shipped abroad to other countries.



Los Muñequitos de Matanzas  
[www.ibiblio.org/mao.cuba/munequitos.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/mao.cuba/munequitos.html)

## Rumba (ROOM-buh)

The word “rumba” is derived from Castillian Spanish and eventually became the word used to describe the complex rhythms and dances which were born in the latter half of the 19th century in Cuba. Although these dances and rhythms had powerful African influences, they also had Spanish elements which make this genre of music a uniquely Cuban creation. The rumba began in areas where there were high concentrations of slaves and ex-slaves, generally the towns or colonies that were near the docks and the sugar cane plantations where most of the workers lived. For a long time, the rumba was considered music for only the lower classes of the people. Now it is enjoyed by all types of people. Rumbas are usually performed in the context of a celebration and rarely for sad situations. The shape of rumba music holds true for most Afro-Cuban music. One or more performers sing a long lyrical vocal melody above a simple drum pattern. Then suddenly, on a cue from the leader, the rhythm tightens up, and the chorus joins in. The quinto (lead drum) improvises to the dancers’ movements and the singer’s emotions.



Claves  
[www.storesonline.com/site/253872/page/28900](http://www.storesonline.com/site/253872/page/28900)

## Claves (CLAH-vays)

The rumba is played based on a rhythmic pattern called clave that is usually played on an instrument called claves. Claves are two cylindrical wooden sticks that are held, one in each hand, and struck together to make a wooden sound. The pattern they make is called the clave — which means “key” — to which all the other rhythms relate.

## Rumba Drums

Along with the claves, rumba is also primarily played with three conga drums. The largest and lowest-sounding drum is called the tumbadora (tuhm-buh-DORE-uh). The medium and mid-range tone drum is the conga. The solo, or lead drum, which typically follows the dancers’ footsteps, is the quinto (KEEN-toh), a high pitched drum. Also, a wooden box or a piece of bamboo called the cata or seis por ocho (say-s pore OH-cho) is played with sticks. There are also various percussive instruments including a metal shaker and wooden boxes called cajones (kai-OH-nays). These boxes were used by the slaves during an era when they were not allowed to play drums. The slaves found that by



Conga Drums  
[www.cam.org/~raybiss/rhythms/instrum.html](http://www.cam.org/~raybiss/rhythms/instrum.html)

turning these wooden boxes (used to pack fish for shipment to Spain) upside down they were able to reproduce the sounds of drums fairly well, and thus they were used during rumbas. These instruments in any combination can be used in the rumbas.

## Traditional Performance

Los Muñequitos de Matanzas are considered traditional performers and are specialists in folkloric dance traditions, Yoruba, Palo, Kongo-Angolan, Arará, rumba, son, and comparsa. Los Muñequitos are part of a “core” group of performers who set the standards of folkloric dance — “core” meaning the source of living tradition. The core artists are often studied by professional and amateur dancers as the authorities of tradition. Members of traditional groups represent generations of experts in rumba singing, drumming, and dancing. Very often, whole families are in a group. Traditional rumba ends with the setting of the sun, or, if there is little audience involvement, after four or five songs. On days when the crowd is small, family members dance and sing and encourage the beginners to perform in public. Sometimes, traditional performances even continue all night.

## Musical Cuba

Cuba is a melting pot of many different cultures and musical backgrounds and has created one of the most vibrant and influential dance and music cultures in the world. Cuba gave the world rumba, the mambo, the chachá, and the habañera: dances that have traveled all over the new world, the old world, and back to their roots in Africa thanks to the strong influence of Cuban music on West African bands. The musicality of Cuban rhythms, part of daily life, reflects a culture of survival, resistance and ritual in the sugar cane plantations. Nowhere in the Caribbean is the African influence on music so pronounced.

# History of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas

In early October 1952, a group of young men were relaxing in the “El Gallo” bar in the barrio of La Marina (lah mah-REE-nuh) in the city of Matanzas. They were listening to a son (SOHN - a popular Cuban song style) on the bar’s Victrola.

Inspired by the rhythms and the contagious melody, the young men began to play percussively on the bar, on the glasses and on the bottles, accompanying the record with their own rhythm. The other patrons of the bar, together with passers-by, stopped to listen, and the young musicians, to their astonishment, received their first applause.

In the whirl of enthusiasm someone said, “Why don’t we form a group and play on Sundays and holidays at the fiestas (parties) and dances in the barrio (neighborhood)?” Someone else knew of a musician who had the experience to put a group together: Florencio Calle Peraza (“Catalino”), who lived in their neighborhood. They met with Catalino and discussed what each person would do, how the group would dress, what their genre would be (rumba), and the name of the group: Guaguancó Matancero. They would interpret the rumba of Matanzas; Columbia, the rural rumba only danced by men, which used knives and machetes; and guaguancó, the contemporary urban rumba originally from Havana and Matanzas.

Once the group was in shape with the necessary instruments, they began to perform at religious and non-religious activities in the barrios of Simpson and La Marina, extending to all the city and later to the rest of the province of Matanzas.

In 1953 they visited Havana, playing at fiestas that were taking place in different barrios. They appeared on radio and television and recorded their first 78 rpm record with “Los Bedos” (lohs BAY-dohs) on one side and “Los Muñequitos de la Calle” (lohs moo-nyuh-KEE-tohs day lah CAI-yay) on the other. The latter number told in its lyrics the antics of comic-strip characters that appeared on Saturdays and Sundays in the newspapers. This number was such a hit that the population of Havana and Matanzas stopped calling them Guaguancó Matancero and from then on referred to them as Los Muñequitos de Matanzas (meaning “Sunday cartoons from Matanzas”), the name by which they are now known around the world.

The musicians and dancers of Los Muñequitos are recognized by Cubans and throughout the world as members of one of the most vital ensembles to sustain and popularize the roots of Cuban culture. People say, “Without rumba, there is no Cuba, and without Cuba, there is no rumba.” Since 1989, Los Muñequitos has included Yoruban music and stories from the Yoruba tribe in Eastern Africa in their stage repertoire. The group presents examples of contemporary and traditional forms of Afro-Cuban heritage

Los Muñequitos are not simply preserving a past tradition of rumba; the members are choreographers and composers who continue to create new work, including recent explorations and collaborations with other genres such as tap dance.



The coast at Matanzas from [www.ibiblio.org/mao/cuba](http://www.ibiblio.org/mao/cuba)



# This Performance's Program

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The program will feature three categories of performance:

- The three styles of rumba, for which Los Muñequitos are best known:

1. Yambú
2. Guaguancó
3. Columbia

- Traditional Afro-Cuban music and dance;

- Experimental work incorporating tap into the Los Muñequitos style, based on collaborative efforts with tap artist Max Pollard.

Selections will be announced from the stage.

# Background Information



# History of Cuba

Christopher Columbus encountered a native tribe, the Ciboney, when he landed on Cuba on October 28, 1492. Beginning in 1511, Diego Velazquez founded several settlements to colonize the island for the Spanish. Spain used these settlements in Cuba to support its efforts to colonize Mexico and Florida. The Spanish treated the native people so severely during this time that by the mid-1500s, the Ciboney nearly became extinct<sup>1</sup>. The colonists then began to import slaves to operate their mines and plantations. These slaves came mostly from the West African coast and by the 1840s made up nearly half of Cuba's population. Much of Cuba's music reflects this mixture of cultures with deep roots in African rhythms and rituals.



Christopher Columbus

During the 19th century, Spanish rule became increasingly oppressive<sup>2</sup>; there were several attempts at revolution<sup>3</sup>. An uprising of black slaves was suppressed<sup>4</sup> in 1844, as well as efforts between 1848 and 1851 to annex Cuba to the United States. Offers to purchase Cuba by the United States were repeatedly rejected by Spain. In 1896 patriots lead by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes declared Cuba's independence and began the Ten Years' War. This struggle ended in 1878, resulting in many concessions<sup>5</sup> to the Cubans but not their independence. Slavery was abolished<sup>6</sup> in 1886, and in 1893 the equal civil rights of Blacks and Whites were proclaimed<sup>7</sup>. However, the Cubans were still dissatisfied and continued revolting in February of 1895. The United States supported the revolutionaries beginning in April 1898, and in December of the same year, Spain gave up control of the island. The American military governed Cuba until the Cuban Republic was formally established on May 20, 1902.

The United States continued to be heavily involved in Cuban affairs throughout the first half of the 20th century. During the 1920s and 1930s, the music and entertainment industry flourished in Cuba, as its capital, Havana, became a popular destination for American tourists and Mafia members to escape prohibition<sup>8</sup> laws. American companies bought up much of Cuba's resources, especially in the sugar-growing industry. U.S. soldiers occupied the country on several occasions to protect their interests during the continuing civil unrest. Corrupt<sup>9</sup> and unstable government and troubling inflation<sup>10</sup> led to several changes in leadership. In 1959, a revolt lead by Fidel Castro overturned a regime<sup>11</sup> supported by Cuba's military. Castro established a communist government in Cuba. A communist government tries to plan and control its country's economy so that it can divide all its goods and property equally among its citizens. It will not allow large amounts of property to be privately owned. Because of this Castro's government took control of approximately \$1 billion in American-owned properties the next year. The United States responded by imposing a trade embargo, and by January 1961 all diplomatic relations were cut off between the two countries.



Cuban Revolutionaries in 1898

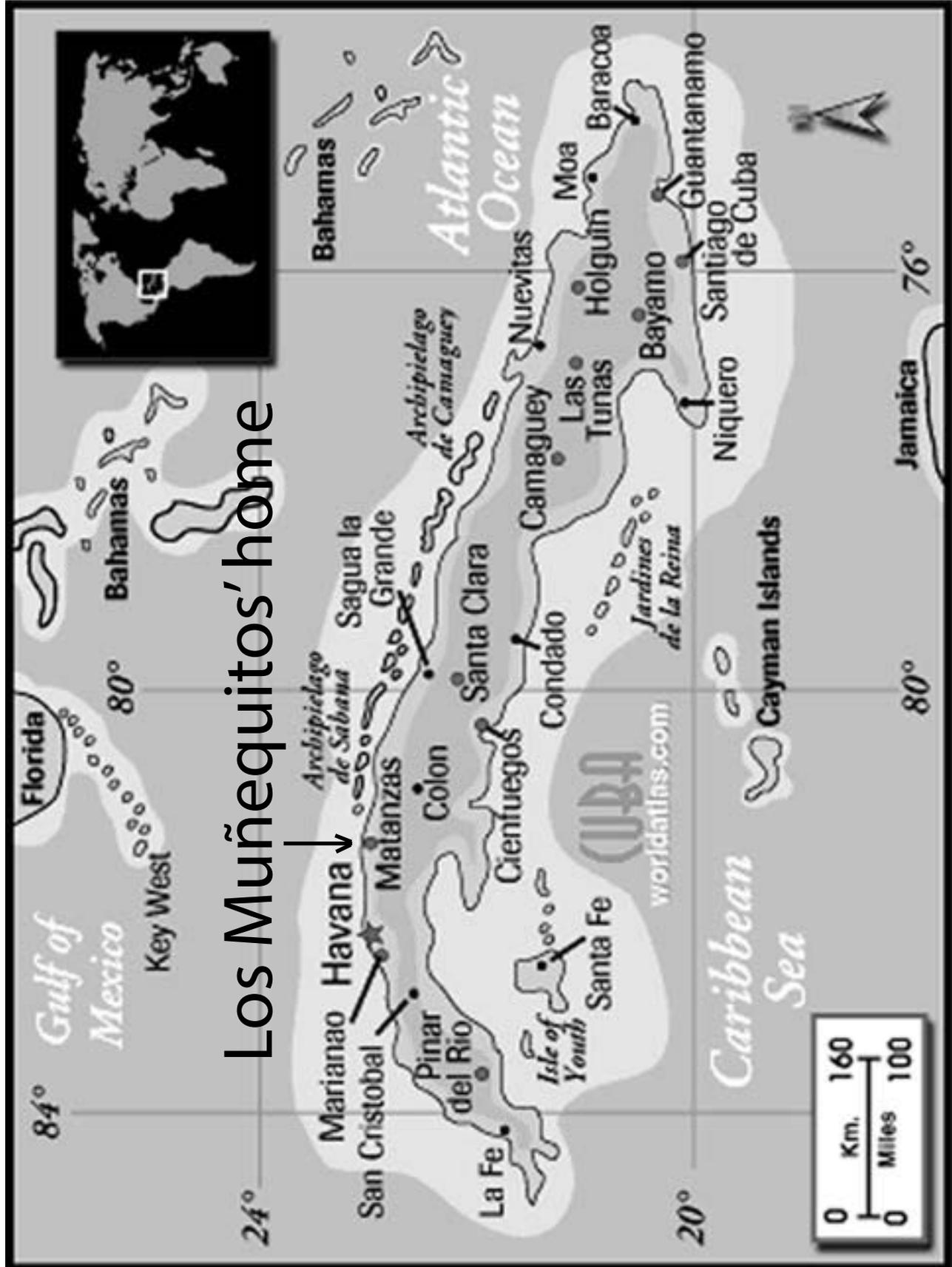
The U.S. boycott has greatly limited Cuba's interactions with much of the Western world. For Cuban musicians, it has reduced opportunities to record and sell records or tour abroad. However, improving relations in recent years have allowed more and more Cuban artists, like Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, to travel and share their authentic musical culture with people around the world.



Castro  
as a revolutionary  
[www.encycarta.msn.com](http://www.encycarta.msn.com)

- 
1. extinct - no longer existing or living
  2. oppressive - difficult to bear or tyrannical, exercising power unjustly or arbitrarily
  3. revolution - an overthrow of one government and its replacement with another
  4. suppressed - ended or stopped by using force
  5. concessions - rights and privileges yielded or granted reluctantly
  6. abolished - did away with or ended completely
  7. proclaimed - announced officially
  8. prohibition - period of time (1920-1933) when the manufacture and sale of alcohol was illegal in the United States
  9. corrupt - dishonest, immoral, or depraved
  10. inflation - persistent increases in consumer prices
  11. regime - a form of government

# Map of Cuba



Los Muñequitos' home

Map of Cuba taken from <http://worldatlas.com/atlas/namerica/crbmaps/cuba.htm>

# Styles of Cuban Music

Please note: this is not a comprehensive list.

## I. Folkloric

- A. Rumbas
  - 1. Yambú
  - 2. Guaguancó
  - 3. Columbia
- B. Comparsa
- C. Bata Rumba
- D. Guarapachangeo

## II. Popular Music

- A. Son (Tumbao)
- B. Guajira
- C. Cha-cha-cha
- D. Mambo
- E. Guaracha
- F. Songo
- G. Afro
- H. Bolero
- I. Danzon
- J. Changui
- K. Nueva Trova
- L. Charanga
- M. Mozambique

## III. Religious Music

- A. Yoruba
  - 1. Bata
  - 2. Bembe
- B. Arara
- C. Palo
- D. Tumba Francesa
- E. Abakua
- F. Makuta
- G. Iyesa
- H. Gaga

# Recommended Artists\*

Latin Jazz  
Tito Puente  
Eddie Palmieri  
Jerry Gonzalez  
Puerto Rican All-Stars  
Machito  
Mario Bauza  
Paquito D'Rivera  
Giovanni Hidalgo  
Irakere  
Gonzalo Rubalcava  
Emiliano Salvador  
Stan Kenton  
Dizzie Gillespie  
Bronx Horns  
Arturo Sandoval

Cuban Son  
Sierra Maestra  
Rumbavana  
Oscar D'Leon  
Celia Cruz  
Ritmo y Candela  
Adalberto Alvarez  
Isaac Oviedo  
Jose Alberto  
Van Lester  
Afrocuban All Stars  
Cubanismo  
  
Folkloric  
Conjunto Folclorico  
Nacional de Cuba  
Ilu-Ana

Songo  
Van Van  
Batacumbele  
  
Changui  
Elio Reve  
Grupo Changui de  
Guantanamo  
  
Rumba  
Los Muñequitos de Matanzas  
Clave y Guanguanco  
Los Papines  
Rumba (Real Rumba  
on the Corason label)

\* This list is provided by Alberto Nacif, host of Cuban Fantasy on WEMU 89.1FM.

# About the Rumba

by Alberto Nacif

Rumba developed during the 1850s and 1860s in places where free Blacks gathered to communicate their feelings or comment on their struggles and where enslaved Africans were permitted to congregate after work. Particularly with the abolition of slavery in Cuba after 1886, poor Afro-Cubans moved to urban areas and joined poor white Cubans looking for jobs, which were more plentiful near the ports than in rural areas. Both light- and dark-skinned groups adjusted to the particular conditions of free women and men in a society based on color and class and participated together from time to time in communal gatherings such as the rumba. This was the Rumba event, spontaneous, "real" rumba. (For clarity, the Rumba event will be referred to with upper-case R and the dances with music with lower-case r.)

Rumba is also the name of a dance, a rhythm and a group of related dances, together called the rumba complex, which evolved in the nineteenth century. The rumba dance complex was transported from Cuba through much of the world: to Spain in the nineteenth century, to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s and to Africa in the 1940s and 1950s. Related dances are found in other Caribbean and Latin American settings, but though they share similar feelings and patterns, they are not part of the rumba complex of Cuba.

Rumba was and is associated with African communities in the Americas; however, it has also been associated with an American style of ballroom dancing called rhumba or rumba de salon. While both dances use traditional rumba rhythms, the popularized ballroom style does not resemble the original Cuban dance.

Rumba may have come from of songs and dance steps remembered by groups of people from West Central Africa who had been transported to Cuba. It is suggested by experts that the dance came from the Sara people of northern Nigeria, who sometimes dance with rows of boys in front of rows of girls, getting closer and closer until they touch and then separate from one another. In present-day Zaire, there seems to be a history of similar dances; an old traditional BaKongo dance called vane samba seems to relate directly to rumba's earlier forms. In this dance, men and women dance in a circle with cloth strips attached to waistbands around raffia skirts. As the performer kicks and throws his or her legs, the cloth is thrown up in the air and toward another dancer. This is an invitation to the person to dance in the circle. When they finish dancing, they stay in the circle and choose the next performer by throwing or "giving" the cloth again.

Another characteristic feature of the dance occurs when the bodies of a dancing pair meet or almost meet at the navel, a movement that relates directly to rumba's vacunao. From the musical perspective, there are additional connections between Kongolese traits and Cuban rumba. For example, drummers characteristically use wrist shakers in both yuka and rumba, particularly when boxes are played as drums.

The rumba grew out of the social circumstances of Havana, Cuba's capital city. Havana was the center for large numbers of enslaved Africans by the end of the eighteenth century, and slave barracks<sup>2</sup> became focal points of anguish and protest. Rebellion was difficult and dangerous, but protest in a disguised form was often expressed in recreational music and dance. These recreational events were planned occasions, and many of the Cuban slaves imitated and made fun of elite<sup>3</sup> society through dance and music.

With the end of slavery, poor black workers continued to express their frustrations and joys, through dance and music. Solares, the large houses that were divided into crowded living quarters and where poor Cubans were forced to live, served also as meeting places to relax, play and dream in song, dance and poetry. These solares offered a safe haven for poor blacks, separated from the unfair realities of the outside world, such as continuous racial prejudice and reminders of their political powerlessness. Rogelio Martinez-Furé, the current authority on Cuban dance traditions, says that rumba came from the solares and was "a vehicle of liberation<sup>4</sup> and protest." From the solares, Afro-Cubans expressed their personal successes or failures in love relations, satirized government practices and gradually fashioned the dance/music complex called rumba. Poor Cubans, both dark-and light-skinned, created a music and dance of their own, neither totally African nor totally Spanish, that utilized singing, drumming and dancing in specific configurations and within specific rules.

Different types of rumba evolved depending on the circumstances of particular communities. One type, which developed in the urban areas of Havana and Matanzas provinces, involved couple dancing. Another type, a solo male form, appeared in rural areas; it may have reflected the huge imbalance between males and females during the slave trade. This type of rumba may be the result of the influence of the Crabalí (southeastern Nigerian male secret societies), which brought a tradition of male dancing to Cuba, or it may be part of the tradition of competitive male dances from Africa.

The rumba complex spread slowly throughout and beyond the country. Almost seventy years after its supposed beginnings in Cuba, rumba was taken to a trade fair in Seville, Spain. At the Chicago world's fair in 1933-34, rumba gained its first recorded performance outside Cuba. Rumba, along with other Latin American dances, gained great popularity in the United States and Europe in the 1930s. Latin dance surfaced again in the international popular dance fads of the 1950s, and again in the 1970s and early 1980s.

1. spontaneous - happening or occurring without any apparent particular reason
2. barracks - large, plain buildings used for military or temporary housing
3. elite - a group or class of people given superior intellectual, social or economic status
4. liberation - the act or process of trying to achieve equal rights and status

# Three Primary Styles of Rumba

## Rumba Yambú (Yahm -BOO)

This is the most ancient rumba of the Afro-Cubans. It is of urban origin and is considered to be a rumba from the times of Spanish rule in the nineteenth century. It is usually performed with cajones (wooden boxes) and with the conga drum. In the past they used candle crates and codfish crates, the sides of a wardrobe dresser and spoons on the small drawers of a night table. In this dance the woman shows off more than the man. It is a smooth and lilting music, called de viejos (of the old ones). The rhythm is typically slow, and the soloist plays very sparse parts, typically following the moves or the activity of the dancers. The dancers in the yambú usually dance in a very slow, subtle, elegant way, usually meant to denote two older people dancing, hence de viejos.



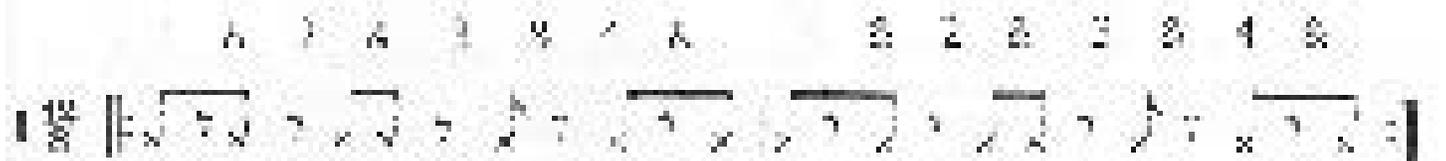
## Rumba Guaguancó (Waa-wahn-KOH)

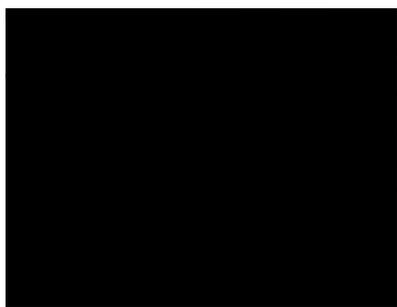
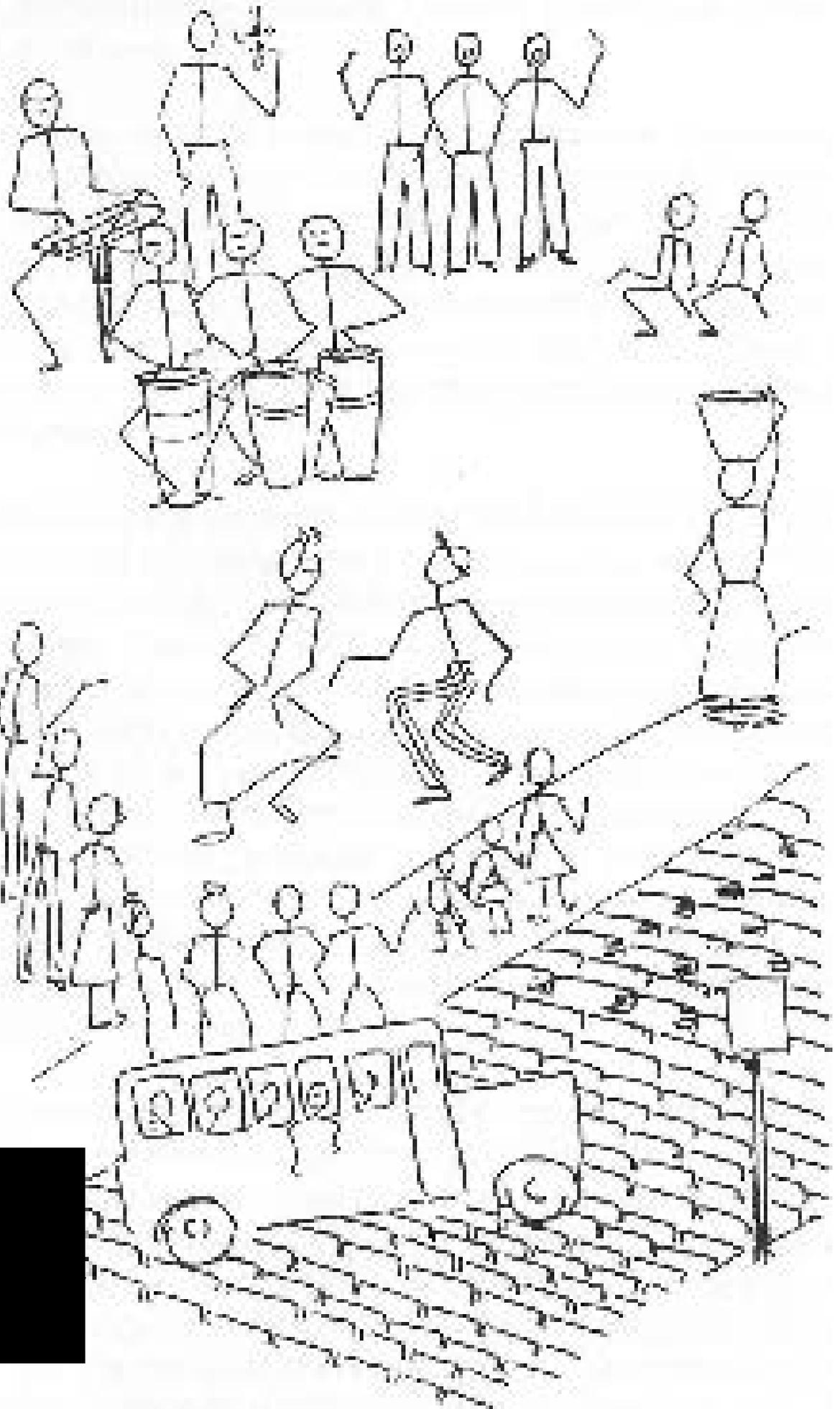
Rumba Guaguancó is a contemporary urban rumba originally from Havana and Matanzas. It is faster than yambú and is played with tumbadoras (conga drums). The soloing of the quinto is more rapid and complex, and the dancers typically also dance much faster. This dance depicts the chase between a rooster and a hen, where the rooster is attempting to possess the hen. This possession typically involves the male dancer attempting to impress the female dancer by means of a pelvic thrust, reaching out with his hand, foot, hip, hat, etc. and the female dancer attempting to rebuff the male dancer's advances by covering herself or turning her back on him as he attempts to do this. This is called a vacuano, and it is notably absent in the yambú.



## Rumba Columbia (Coh-LOOM-bee-ah)

This is an old rumba originally from rural Matanzas. It is very fast in its delivery and danced only by men, who developed a competition among themselves using movements from sports, dangerous movements with knives and machetes, modern gymnastic dance and the dangerous bottle dance. This contest is typically meant to demonstrate one's virtuosity at their craft. Its name comes from the Columbia bus stop close to Matanzas. While the beginning is a song of lament with African phrases, the end becomes a danceable montuno. This rhythm is based on a 6/8 time signature, whereas the previous rhythms are in 4/4 time signatures.





# Yoruban Influences in Cuban Music

## Music, Dance, and Afro-Cuban Santería

The Afro-Cuban religious tradition called Santería or the Regla de Ocha focuses its ritual practice on maintaining a balance between the supernatural and natural worlds. These two worlds are linked by the presence of aché, the power to accomplish. Aché resides in certain stones, beings, people, plants, and the blood of animals. The deities, called orishas, channel aché for their followers, and the aché carries blessings of every form. Songs, music, and dance are used to praise the orishas.

The praise songs, called *suyeres*, name the powers of the deities and worship them. Many of the songs greet the orishas in traditional ways and then list attributes of their personalities and histories. An extremely common song for the orishas of the sea, Yemayá, greets her and then articulates one of her central powers:

Yemayá, Asesu Asesu Yemayá Yemayá Olodo Olodo Yemayá  
(Yemayá Asesu, Asesu Yemayá, Yemayá, Owner of the River, Owner of the River, Yemayá)

Here the continuities and changes that have transpired in the Americas can be seen clearly. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin, Yemayá is the “ruler” of a river; in Cuba her domain has shifted to the immense sea. Asesu is the name of a particular kind, or “road” of Yemayá.

People sing the songs to various manifestations of the orisha, who exist in consecrated stones and cowrie shells, plants, and geographical features. For example, Ochún rules rivers, honey, lettuce, eggs, and love. Singing a song for Ochún activates her aché, empowers her, and moves her to action. Her actions assist her worshipers.

The drum rhythms are powerful channels to contact the orishas. All orishas “own” specific rhythms which are played to call them down into the bodies of followers. When the drums are played, worshipers dance. The orishas have certain prescribed steps associated with them, and individuals become famous for their abilities to “dance” specific orishas. In some places, the different rhythms of a single orisha have different steps.

A drumming ritual peaks when the orishas possess the bodies of practitioners. Here the supernatural and human worlds are fused for a short time. The orishas advise, cleanse, heal, bless, and prescribe sacrifices to their attendants. Without some kind of music, either singing or drumming, the orishas will not come.

Through ongoing relationships with the orisha, practitioners maintain a fluid balance with them. In turn, the orishas offer blessings of all kinds. Through this reciprocity, aché flows back and forth between the worlds: People are blessed and the orishas survive in glory.

## Sacred Yoruba Music of Cuba

The sacred music of the Yoruba is one of the world's great classical repertoires. It is fundamental to Cuban music, and Cuban music is fundamental to the present-day popular music of the Americas, Europe, and Africa. This music, which often features multiple musicians performing different rhythms or melodies at the same time, is preserved in Cuba today not in a museum but in the daily lives of the people, who practice the religion and keep the music alive and flexible with their hands and breath.

The orishas, who are literally ancestors, first came to the New World in slave ships from West Africa. Known variously in Cuba as the Regla de Ocha, Lucumí, or santería, the religion which honors the orishas is today part of the spiritual life of millions of people in many countries.

To the Yoruba, or Lucumí as they are known in Cuba, each orisha has dominion over a different aspect of life. Some orishas are:

**OLOFI:** the supreme god

**ELEGUÁ:** Eleguá guards the doorways and crossroads. He is saluted first in order to open the ways. He is a warrior and a trickster and often creates great confusion.

**OGGÚN:** Ogún is the orisha of iron and war. He is a hunter, a warrior and a blacksmith.

**BABAÚ-AYÉ:** The orisha of sickness and healing, Babalú-Ayé was originally associated with smallpox and leprosy but more recently has been identified with AIDS and other blood diseases.

**OBATALÁ:** The supreme orisha, he is the god of creation, morality and purity.

**DADÁ:** Brother of Changó, he is the patron-god of newborn babies, especially those with curly hair.

**AGAYÚ:** Agayú is symbolized by the volcano. He is the ferryman who takes people from the land of the living across the river to the land of the dead.

**CHANGÓ:** Orisha of thunder and lightning. He is very flamboyant and is a great warrior, lover, drummer and dancer.

**OYÁ:** Orisha of the wind. Her personality ranges from soft and calm to powerful and violent. She is associated with the cemetery.

**OCHÚN:** A river deity, Ochún is the goddess of love, beauty, femininity and prosperity.

**YEMAYÁ:** A river goddess in Africa, Yemayá is known in Cuba as the orisha of the ocean. She is associated with motherhood and fertility.

## Batá Music

Of all these various forms of music one of the most unique and beautiful has to be the music of the batá drums of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Batá drums are of special significance to the Yoruba, who use them for religious ceremonies only.

A set of batá consists of three drums of different sizes. The drums are carved of wood in the shape of an hourglass or truncated cone, resulting in two heads of different size and tone: the smaller (the chachá) produces a very sharp, high-pitched sound and the larger (the enú) produces both a resonant and a muffled tone. Together the six differently tuned heads are able to reproduce the tonal Yoruba language and speak directly to the Yoruba deities (orishas), praising and invoking them.

The iyá is the largest drum and leads the group. It plays long, complex patterns with many variations and initiates conversations with the other two drums. The itótele is the middle-sized drum. It plays long, but less complex, patterns with some variations as well as answering and occasionally initiating conversations. The okónkolo, the smallest of the three, plays mostly short, simple patterns with occasional conversations and variations. All batá drums, with the exception of the smallest, have tuning paste on their large heads. Sometimes the two smaller drums can be joined together so that they can be played by one performer. This pair is said to be the ancestor of bongo drums, which are so popular in Latin America.

# Lesson Plans and Activities



# Introduction/Learner Outcomes

The following curriculum offers suggestions intended to be used in preparation for attending the Youth Performance. Teachers may pick and choose from the cross-disciplinary activities and can coordinate with other subject area teachers. The lesson plans are meant as aids or guidelines for creating specific lesson plans. You may wish to use several activities, a single plan, or pursue a single activity in greater depth, depending on your subject area, the skill level or maturity of your students, and your intended learner outcomes.

## Learner Outcomes

- Each student will develop a feeling of self-worth, pride in work, respect, appreciation and understanding of other people and cultures, and a desire for learning now and in the future in a multicultural, gender-fair, and ability-sensitive environment.
- Each student will develop appropriately to that individual's potential, skill in reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, listening, problem solving, and examining and utilizing information using multicultural, gender-fair and ability-sensitive materials.
- Each student will become literate through the acquisition and use of knowledge appropriate to that individual's potential, through a comprehensive, coordinated curriculum, including computer literacy in a multicultural, gender-fair, and ability-sensitive environment.



Royal Shakespeare Company Education Staff Member Mary Johnson in a workshop with Clonlara students, January 2001

# Standards and Benchmarks

## English Language Arts

### Standard 5: Literature

All students will read and analyze a wide variety of classical and contemporary literature and other texts to seek information, ideas, enjoyment and understanding of their individuality, our common heritage and common humanity, and the rich diversity of our society.

- **Later Elementary:** Describe how various cultures and our common heritage are represented in literature and other works.
- **Middle School:** Identify and discuss how the tensions among characters, communities, themes, and issues from literature and other texts are related to one's own experience.
- **High School:** Describe and discuss archetypal human experiences that appear in literature and other texts from around the world.

### Standard 6: Voice

All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

- **Later Elementary:** Identify the style and characteristics of individual authors, speakers, and illustrators and how they shape text and influence their audiences' expectations.
- **Middle School:** Compare and contrast the style and characteristics of individual authors, speakers, and illustrators and how they shape text and influence their audiences' expectations.
- **High School:** Analyze the style and characteristics of authors, actors, and artists of classical and masterpieces to determine why these voices endure.

## Social Studies

### Standard I-2: Comprehending the Past

All students will understand narratives about major eras of American and world history by identifying the people involved, describing the setting, and sequencing the events.

- **Later Elementary:** Identify and explain how individuals in history demonstrated good character and personal virtue.
- **Middle School:** Select conditions in various parts of the world and describe how they have been shaped by events from the past. Use historical biographies to explain how events from the past affected the lives of individuals and how some individuals influenced the course of history.
- **High School:** Select events and individuals from the past that have had global impact on the modern world and describe their impact.

### Standard I-3: Analyzing and Interpreting the Past

All students will reconstruct the past by comparing interpretations written by others from a variety of perspectives and creating narratives from evidence.

- **Later Elementary:** Use primary sources to reconstruct past events in their local community.
- **Middle School:** Analyze interpretations of major events selected from African, Asian, Canadian, European and Latin American history to reveal the perspectives of the authors.
- **High School:** Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by formulating experiences of how different choices could have led to different consequences.

### Standard I-1: Patterns

Students recognize similarities and generalize patterns, use patterns to create models and make predictions, describe the nature of patterns and relationships, and construct representations of mathematical relationships.

- **Elementary:** Use patterns to describe real-world phenomena.
- **Middle School:** Describe, analyze and generalize patterns arising in a variety of contexts and express them in general terms.
- **High School:** Use patterns and reasoning to solve problems and explore new content.

### Standard II-1: Shape and Shape Relationships

Students define spatial sense, use shape as an analytic and descriptive tool, identify characteristics and define shapes, identify properties and describe relationships among shapes.

- **Elementary:** Recognize and name familiar shapes in one, two and three dimensions such as lines, rectangles and spheres and informally discuss the shape of a graph.
- **Middle School:** Derive generalizations about shapes and apply those generalizations to develop classifications of familiar shapes.
- **High School:** Compare and analyze shapes and formally establish the relationships among them, including congruence, similarity, parallelism, perpendicularity and incidence.

## Science

### Standard II-1: Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge

All students will analyze claims for their scientific merit and explain how scientists decide what constitutes scientific knowledge; how science is related to other ways of knowing; how science and technology affect our society; and how people of diverse cultures have contributed to and influenced developments in science.

- **Elementary:** Show how science concepts can be interpreted through creative expression such as language arts and fine arts.
- **Middle School:** Show how common themes of science, mathematics, and technology apply in real-world contexts.
- **High School:** Show how common themes of science, mathematics, and technology apply in real-world contexts.

### Standard IV-3: Motion of Objects

All students will describe how things around us move and explain why things move as they do; demonstrate and explain how we control the motions of objects; and relate motion to energy and energy conversions.

- **Elementary:** Describe or compare motions of common objects in terms of speed and direction.
- **Middle School:** Qualitatively describe and compare motions in three dimensions.
- **High School:** Describe that whenever one object exerts a force on a second object, the second object exerts an equal and opposite force on the first object.

# Lesson 1: Listening Activity

## Objective

This lesson is designed to enhance students' listening skills and appreciation of rumba. Students will become familiar with the repertoire of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas and will be able to identify characteristics in their style of playing and music. They will also be able to distinguish the three main styles of Cuban rumba: yambú, guaguancó, and columbia.

## Materials

Audio tape, Side A

Cassette player

## Procedure

### Day One: Yambú

Listen to an example of the Yambú: "Congo Yambuma" on the audio tape.

- Teach students the rhythm pattern of the Yambú (see page 21). Listen to the music and identify the rhythm.
- Find boxes (wooden or cardboard) or create drums in Lesson 2 and play along with the music. An alternative for boxes would be student desks.

### Day Two - Guaguanco

Listen to an example of the Guaguancó: "Oddie" on the audio tape.

- Teach students the rhythm pattern of Guaguancó by first clapping their hands, and then using drums or their desks as drums.
- Refresh their memories on how play the Yambú pattern.

### Day Three - Columbia

Listen to an example fo the Columbia: "Toc or ora" on the audio tape.

- Teach the students the rhythm pattern of the Columbia by first clapping their hands, and then using their desks or various instruments in the class.
- Refresh their memories on how to play the Yambú and the Guaguancó.

# Lesson 2: Make Your Own Drum

## Objective

For students to create original percussion instruments from daily household objects and explore different types of sounds and rhythms that can be made on them.

## Materials

For drums: empty oatmeal boxes, cleaned coffee or tin cans, heavy duty plastic wrap

For shakers: cleaned plastic bottles (with tops) or small plastic eggs; rice, beans or plastic beads for shaker sounds

For mallets: wooden dowels, unsharpened pencils or chopsticks

Other materials: rubber bands, markers, glue, collage materials (pompoms, glitter, feathers, etc.), tape, other decorative or craft materials.

## Procedure

1. Use the materials to make and decorate homemade percussion instruments. Use rubber bands to secure the heavy duty plastic wrap over the tops of oatmeal and coffee cans, and fill the bottles with the rice, beans or beads to make shakers. Allow the students to decorate and personalize their instruments.

2. After the instruments are made, have the group experiment with different types of sounds. Have them play loudly then softly,; fast then slow. As they begin to get a feel for what their instruments are capable of, challenge them to play a steady beat all together, in unison. Divide the class into two smaller groups and teach them to alternate beats between the groups. Many different combinations of volume, speed and group size can be used. Students may also enjoy clapping, stomping or snapping along with the instruments.

# Lesson 3: Cuban Cooking

## Objective

Students will learn to follow recipes to make popular Cuban dishes and to appreciate diverse cooking styles. Cuban food is an interesting combination of several food cultures. It was influenced by Spanish settlers, African slaves and neighboring Caribbean peoples, as well as the ingredients that were available in Cuba. Ideally, students would visit a Cuban restaurant as well.

## Materials

Cooking utensils and kitchen area  
Ingredients as specified by recipes

## Directions

1. Ask the students about what types of food they like to eat. How many of them enjoy eating foods specific to different cultures? What types of ethnic food have the students tried?
2. Explain that a particular culture's geography, agriculture, economy and tastes influence the development of their food. For this reason, different cultures have different traditional foods.
3. Use the information on the following page as a starting point for teaching your students the history behind Cuban food.
4. Select recipes that the children can help prepare. Make sure that each student has a job to do. Give them each a copy of the recipes to have for themselves. Have fun cooking and eating!



# Handout: History of Cuban Food

The following is an excerpt from !Cuba Cocina! by Joyce LaFray:

Before the arrival of Columbus and the Spanish, the Cuban island was inhabited by the Carib and Arawak natives. Their fish-based diet was supplemented by game, yucca, and corn. The Caribs were a fierce group; the Arawaks a peaceful lot. The Arawaks, an agricultural society, cultivated many fruits and vegetable such as corn, tomatoes and squash that were either unknown or considered poisonous by the Europeans.

In 1511, the Spanish established their first settlement. A year later the first permanent town was founded at Baracoa. This led to the rapid development of additional settlements, including Santiago de Cuba and Batabano. San Cristobal de la Habana was founded near Batabano and the name was eventually shortened to Habana, known to us today as Havana.

African slaves were brought in as laborers for the Spanish colony after the conquistadores decimated the native population. Those unwilling immigrants brought with them memories of their traditional foods and cooking methods, adapting them to the ingredients of their new home.

By the mid 1500s, agriculture was bolstered by the cultivation of sugarcane, cocoa and coffee from nearby islands such as Jamaica, Haiti, Puerto Rico and Dominica. Cuba became a trade center for the Spanish fleet, and by 1558 Havana was the official capital and one of the New World's most important commercial centers. About two decades later, tobacco was first grown in commercial quantities. Tobacco substantially increased the already flourishing economy and its importance to the Spanish empire.

For many years, thousands of Spaniards arrived from all regions of their homeland. The now native Cubans embraced the methods and traditions of the Spanish provinces but interpreted them in their own special way, using the products indigenous to the island. Other immigrants to the island included many from China. The Chinese did not contribute significantly to the cuisine of the island; rather, as farmers and great fishermen, they helped supply local markets with fresh fish, fruits, and vegetables. Probably their most notable contribution was the Chinese bok choy, or white cabbage, together with fried rice, which became more elaborate as a paella-style dish served with plantains.

The province of Oriente in Cuba attracted many immigrants from Haiti and Jamaica, beginning in the 1790s and reaching large proportions in the 1930s. This province is well known for its contribution of spicier, more robust dishes to the cuisine of the island.

Today in Cuba, under the regime of Fidel Castro, food is rationed. Few ingredients are widely available, but native cuisine is preserved both in Cuban homes and restaurants. Cubans living in the countryside can sometimes farm small crops and grow ingredients not available in the cities.

conquistadores (kon -KEE-stuh-DORE-es) - Spanish conquerers  
decimated (DESS-ih-may-tid) - wiped out; eliminated  
indigenous (in-DIDJ-ih-nuss) - native to; naturally grown in  
paella (pie-AY-yuh) - a Spanish-style rice dish with meat or seafood  
plantains (PLAN-tins) - a tropical fruit much like a banana  
robust (roh-BUST) - strong, hearty  
cuisine (kwi-ZEEN) - a style of cooking  
regime (ruh-JEEM) - a form of government  
yucca (YUCK-uh) - a flat-leaved plant that grows to bush size

The following are recipes for traditional Cuban appetizers or snacks and were selected for their relative simplicity of preparation. If you are looking to prepare more elaborate Cuban meals, we recommend the source of these recipes, ¡Cuba Cocina! by Joyce LaFray for both traditional and more contemporary Cuban dishes.

## Fried Almonds

Almendras Fritas, or fried almonds, are a tantalizing way to tune the palate for the feast that follows. Almonds are a favorite of Cuban children and highly valued for their oil, held by many to be as medicinal as chicken soup.

In this easy recipe, slivered almonds are combined with olive oil and just a little hot sauce to enhance the luscious nuttiness. It's important to use fresh almonds and to watch them carefully so as not to overcook. Also, the better the quality of the olive oil, the more fragrant and better the taste.

3/4 cup olive oil  
1 (8 oz) package raw blanched slivered almonds  
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce  
Salt, to taste  
(Serves 8-10)

Place olive oil, almonds and Tabasco in a large skillet. Turn heat on low and slowly bring up to high heat until the oil is very hot. When almonds start to brown, remove from oil with a large slotted spoon and drain in a large strainer or colander over paper towels. Be careful not to over cook. Sprinkle with salt. Cool slightly and serve.

## Grilled Pineapple Rings

Cuban families often serve pineapple at the beginning of a meal - a centuries-old sign of hospitality and a harbinger of the fragrant feast to follow. Buy the ripest pineapple available, since it will not ripen once harvested. You can test for ripeness by sniffing at the bottom end of the fruit for a full fruity aroma; also a slight give indicates it is ripe. This recipe also works well under the broiler, but be careful to place 3 to 4 inches from the flame.

1 fresh pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into 8 equal rings\* (see note to the right)  
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon brown sugar  
2 tablespoons butter or margarine  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1/2 cup light sour cream  
(serves 4)

Dip pineapple rings into the 1/2 cup brown sugar to coat evenly. Heat a large skillet and add the oil and butter. When butter has melted and oil is fragrant, saute the rings until golden brown. Using tongs, place on a hot grill for a few minutes to finish. Remove from the grill and place a dab of sour cream in the hole of the pineapple and a pinch of brown sugar on top of the cream. Serve hot.

## Unripe Plantain Chips

Plantain chips are popular today throughout the United States and the Caribbean. There are many packaged varieties available today, but they don't compare to the fresh crisp taste of just-cooked chips.

4 green plantains, peeled and cut lengthwise into paper-thin slices\* (see note below)  
4-5 quarts fresh vegetable oil, for deep-frying  
Salt, to taste  
(Makes 4-5 cups)

Soak peeled and sliced plantains in cold water with ice for about 30 minutes so that plantains are very crisp. Preheat a deep-fryer filled with vegetable oil to 375 degrees F. Drain plantain slices and place on paper toweling and blot to absorb any excess moisture.

Place a few slices into fryer basket and fry until golden brown. Drain on paper toweling and keep warm in oven until the rest of the batch is done.

Serve in a bowl lined with absorbent paper. Season with salt and serve sour cream or cilantro dipping sauce on the side.

## Preparation Hints:

### How to Cut and Peel a Plantain

Plantains can be difficult to peel because the tough skin clings firmly to the fruit. First slice off 3/4 inch from each end of the plantain and discard. Next cut the fruit in half lengthwise. Make four evenly spaced slits lengthwise, cutting through the peel from the top to the bottom. Beginning at the corner of each slit and using a sharp paring knife, pull the skin away lengthwise, one strip at a time. Depending on the recipe, slice the fruit lengthwise or diagonally.

### How to Slice a Pineapple

Place the whole pineapple on a cutting board with the leafy stem toward you. Place the knife at the end farther from you and using a firm stroke, pull the knife toward you to cut the pineapple in half. Cut each of the two pieces in half lengthwise.

Cut off the base tip of each piece. Hold the fruit straight up and slice off the fibrous center core with a downward stroke. Stand it up again and cut away the fruit close to the skin. Place the fruit back into the rind and cut into slices about 1 inch apart. Divide those slices in half by cutting down the center of each of the four pieces. Cut chunks in sizes specified by recipes or serve out of the "boat."

# Lesson 4: Poetry

## Background Information

Obatala, the Creator is a traditional Yoruban Poem. Obatalá is considered the supreme orisha (deity), the god of creation, morality and purity. The Yoruba people believe Obatala is almighty and eternal, but remote. Most of the religious life of the Yoruba centers around the orisha, divine beings of a complex nature who are manifestations of certain aspects of the supreme deity. An orisha is a force of nature on one level — thunderstorm, wind, river, rock, sea, disease. On another level, the orisha is a historical figure — a king, culture hero, founder of cities.

## Objective

For students to explore the connection between literary imagery and culture.

## Materials

Xerox copies of the poem on the following page  
Highlighters

## Procedure

1. Distribute copies of the poem.
2. Tell the students that you will read the poem to them; as you read, they should highlight the words or phrases that they found most interesting, most powerful or most emotional.
3. Read the poem aloud as students mark their favorite lines.
4. Tell the students that you will read the poem a second time. This time, ask the students to join in and say their highlighted parts aloud as you read.
5. Read the poem again. You should hear different voices joining you at different parts. Some moments may be silent, but other phrases might be read aloud by the whole class.
6. Lead the class in a discussion.
  - Why did certain phrases affect the majority of the class?
  - What made them choose particular phrases?
  - Do any of the phrases have anything in common?

Poetry can be a powerful form of creative and cultural expression. Discuss such items as metaphor, imagery, symbolism and cultural expression. What can you infer about Yoruban culture, values and daily life from the images used in the poem? After the performance, have your students write poetry, songs, stories or journal entries about it, their own lives and the society in which they live. You may also want to explore the religious aspects of this poem. How does it and the performance reflect the religious beliefs of the Yoruban and Cuban people? How does religion effect cultural expression and/or daily life here in the United States?

# Poetry Handout: Obatala, the Creator<sup>35</sup>

---

He is patient.  
He is silent.  
Without anger he pronounces  
his judgment.  
He is distant,  
but his eye rests on the town.  
He kills the initiate<sup>1</sup>  
and rouses<sup>2</sup> him to a new life.  
He is playful like death  
he carries the child away.  
He rides the hunchback,  
he spreads out his arms  
the right and the left.  
He stands by his children,  
he lets them succeed.  
He makes them laugh—  
and they laugh.

You, father of laughter,  
your eye is laughing.  
Immense<sup>3</sup> granary<sup>4</sup> of the sky.  
Old man with the strength of youth,  
you rest in the sky like a swarm of bees.  
The rich owe their riches to you.  
The poor owe their poverty to you.  
You take from the rich and give to the poor.  
Take from the rich and give to me.  
Obatala:  
you turn blood into children  
come and create the child in my belly.  
I own but a single cloth to die with indigo<sup>5</sup>.  
I own but a single headtie<sup>6</sup> to dye with camwood<sup>7</sup>.  
But I know:  
you have twenty or thirty children waiting for me,  
whom I shall bear!

---

1. initiate: someone recently admitted to a group, organization or religion after participating in a ritual or ceremony

2. rouses: wakes [someone] up

3. immense: very large in extent or degree

4. granary: a warehouse or storeroom for grain or a region where grain is abundant

5. indigo: a blue dye previously made from plants

6. headtie: a piece of cloth worn wrapped around the head popular in West African women's fashion

7. camwood: a red dye made from a West African tree of the same name.

# Lesson 5: Fact or Opinion?

## Objective

For students to learn more about Los Muñequitos through examination of excerpts from critical reviews and to improve their ability to distinguish fact from opinion

## Materials

Handout: Fact or Opinion?

Pens, pencils, markers or highlighters in two different colors

## Procedure

1. Review the difference between fact (something everyone agrees upon as truth) and opinion (someone's belief that might be different from someone else's). Examples:

FACT:	Her sweater is blue. (Everyone can see that it is blue.)
OPINION:	Her sweater is pretty. (Some people might not think it's pretty.)
FACT:	He set the Olympic record. (A fact that can be looked up and proven.)
OPINION:	He is the best athlete ever. (Some people might choose someone else.)
FACT:	She danced quickly around the stage. (Everyone can see and agree on this.)
OPINION:	She was the best dancer onstage. (Some might disagree.)

2. Distribute the handout and explain that the managers of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas send this sheet to performing arts presenters like UMS to encourage them to bring the group to their city. On the handout, the managers have taken excerpts from many newspaper reviews that say wonderful things about the group. When UMS receives a handout like this, its staff has to decide what is a fact and what might just be the reporter's opinion. That helps them sort out how good the performers are.

3. Ask students to color in the key on their handout, choosing a color for fact and another for opinion.

4. Students should read the reviews and color phrases as either fact or opinion. This can also be done as a class or in small groups.

## KEY



Fact



Opinion

## Los MUÑEQUITOS DE MATANZAS

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season 2002

### CRITICAL ACCLAIM

"Authenticity in music often doesn't mean anything at all, but in the case of the Cuban group Los Muñequitos de Matanzas it means quite a lot. Expect wild machete play, spectacular sensual dancing and some of the most complex drumming to be heard in this hemisphere. It's exotica for those looking for exotica, music for those looking for music."

-Peter Watrous, The New York Times

"...the kind of raw energy and vibrant emotion rarely seen on the stage. More than a performance, the extraordinary music and dance troupe presented a way of life."

-Kip Richardson, The Oregonian

"And when it comes to representing the essence of Cuba's musical soul, there is no better musical showcase than Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. The drum and dance ensemble is acknowledged worldwide as the premiere ambassador of Cuba's rumba origins."

-Ernesto Portillo Jr., The San Diego Union-Tribune

"...a hypnotic, soulful rumba recital performed by the all-time masters of the genre, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas... By the end of the evening, when Los Muñequitos de Matanzas invited the audience to become part of the show by joining them and dancing to the last tune, the sea of people onstage, old and young, graceful and clumsy, was a defining message of unity as inspiring as the music itself."

-Ernesto Lechner, The Los Angeles Times

"Electrifying, evocative, and compelling, and the unequivocal masters of Afro-Cuban ritual percussion and dance for more than 40 years, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas not only preserve and protect ancient traditions and the indissoluble bonds from which they arise, but also create a new and important repertory of music, dance, and song that strengthens and reasserts the power of Afro-Cuban religion and culture throughout the island."

-The Smithsonian Associates

"The best set to be heard during the festival – if not the heaviest music to be heard anywhere on the planet – came from the Cuban folkloric group Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. The group's dancers and singers perform with a spiritual intensity that brings these ageless rituals back to life, while the percussion section puts just about any touring salsa or Latin-jazz band to shame."

-Rick Mitchell, Houston Chronicle

# Lesson 6: Creative Writing

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## Objective

For students to learn more about the orishas of Yoruba culture by creating a story involving them as characters

## Materials

Copies of pp. 23-25 of this guide

## Procedure

1. Review the information on pp. 23-25 about Yoruba culture and review what orishas are, how they are summoned by humans and how achè works.
2. Using the list of orishas on p.24, students can create a story using the orishas as characters.

# Selected CDs by Los Muñequitos

Live in New York (1998)

Ito Iban Echu: Sacred Yoruba Music of Cuba (1996)

Vacunao (1995)

Oyelos de Nuevo (1994)

Congo Yambumba (1994)

Rumba Caliente (1993)

Cantar Maravilloso: Rumba Origi (1992)

## World Wide Web Resources

[www.ums.org](http://www.ums.org)

Official website of the University Musical Society. Extra copies of this study guide are in PDF format and may be downloaded.

[www.ibiblio.org/mao/cuba/munequitos.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/mao/cuba/munequitos.html)

Photos of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas

[www.ibiblio.org/mao/cuba/matanzas.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/mao/cuba/matanzas.html)

Photos of the Matanzas region of Cuba

[www.afrocubaweb.com/munequitos/muneq.htm](http://www.afrocubaweb.com/munequitos/muneq.htm)

Comprehensive information about Los Muñequitos, including discography, early photographs, and a list of musicians

[www.afropop.org/multi/feature/ID/80/](http://www.afropop.org/multi/feature/ID/80/)

Diary of a trip to Matanzas, Cuba

<http://library.thinkquest.org/18355/historyns.html>

An award-winning site on the history of Cuba created by high school students for the Thinkquest competition

# Community Resources

Cuban American Student Association (CASA) of the University of Michigan  
3909 Michigan Union  
530 S. State St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Contact: [casa.mail@umich.edu](mailto:casa.mail@umich.edu) or [fcabrera@umich.edu](mailto:fcabrera@umich.edu)

CASA is an organization of students who have come together to nourish and promote Cuban culture within the University of Michigan. It is also dedicated to establishing the presence of Cuban and Cuban-American students with the University community, while creating a sense of unity and pride amongst Cubans and Cuban-Americans as well as Latinos in general. CASA wishes to promote educational activities which deal with Cuban issues, and is accessible to any and all persons interested in Cuban issues.

Mexicantown Bakery  
4300 W. Vernor  
Detroit, MI 48209-2114  
313-554-0001  
Latin-American baked goods, including Cuban pastelitos.

Susan Filipiak, Swing City Dance Studio  
1960 S. Industrial  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
734-668-7782  
Susan is trained in Afro-Cuban dance and is an experienced artist-in-the-schools.

University of Michigan Latin and Caribbean Studies Department  
2607 School of Social Work Building  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1106  
734-763-0553  
Studies in Latin and Caribbean Studies.

Alberto Nacif, WEMU 89.1FM  
[www.wemu.org](http://www.wemu.org)  
Alberto hosts Cuban Fantasy, a two-hour program beginning at 7pm Mondays, that features the best in Cuban and Afro-Cuban music. As the concert date approaches, he continues to play works by Los Muñequitos de Matanzas on a frequent basis. Mr. Nacif, who was a principal author of this guide, has studied with Los Muñequitos de Matanzas in Cuba.