



WHAT'S ON HAVANA!

**NOV
2013**

**Christopher Baker's
motorcycle diaries**

**The Marabana:
Run Charlie run...**

**Havana's new entrepreneurs:
A Rollercoaster ride**

Festival de La Habana de
Música Contemporánea
Nov 24-30 **p 29**

The Lucas Music Video
Awards
Nov 23-24 **p 22**

Espacios Ibsen 2
Cuban-Norwegian Theater
Days in Havana
Nov 5-10 **p 36**



A large, ornate, light-colored building with multiple towers and arches, identified as Hotel Nacional, sits atop a rocky hill. A tall flagpole to the right flies the Cuban flag against a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

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Hotel Nacional

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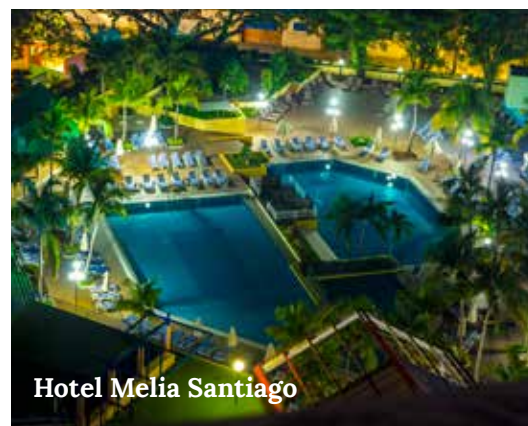
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Cuba Absolutely is an independent platform, which seeks to showcase the best in Cuba arts & culture, life-style, sport, travel and much more...

We seek to explore Cuba through the eyes of the best writers, photographers and filmmakers, both Cuban and international, who live work, travel and play in Cuba. Beautiful pictures, great videos, opinionated reviews, insightful articles and inside tips.

HAVANA GUIDE



The ultimate guide to Havana with detailed reviews of where to eat, drink, dance, shop, visit and play.

Unique insights to the place that a gregarious, passionate and proud people call home.



Le Chansonnier. J entre 15 y Linea. Vedado



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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

We are deeply indebted to all of the writers and photographers who have shared their work with us. We welcome new contributors and would love hear from you if you have a Cuba-related project. You can contact us at CubaAbsolutely@gmail.com.



Paco de Lucía at Teatro Karl Marx (Oct 2, 2013)
by Alexander Mene

Cover photo by Alex Mene

The bronze sculpture titled 'La Conversación' by French artist Etienne and donated to the City in September 2012 by Vittorio Perrotta, it represents the need for dialogue in contemporary society.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to What's On Havana – November 2013. We hope you like the changes, additions and new features in this issue. Please keep providing us with your feedback to CubaAbsolutely@gmail.com

Thanks to our star cast of writers this month. Christopher Baker, Conner Gorry, Chen Lizra – it doesn't get much better. Christopher takes us around Cuba with *The first Yankee motorcycle touring group since the Revolution*, Chen tells us what it means to be leaving Cuba in *Until Next Time Havana* and Conner Gorry describes Havana's new wave of entrepreneurs (*cuenta propistas*): *A Rollercoaster ride*.

We also have reviews and features on the best events from last month including Paco De Lucía's concert at the Leo Brouwer Festival, Guantanamo's brilliant *Danza Fragmentada* and what may be Alfonso Menéndez Balsa's swansong *Back to Musicals* at Old Havana's Amphitheater

Get your running shoes on – you have two weeks to get ready for the 2013 Marabana, which will be held on Sunday, Nov 17, 7am start (English time). Nov 16 will mark 494 years since the founding of the City of Havana. To find out what this means, go the night before at 11pm to El Templete in Old Havana.

November is packed with events for music lovers. The Lucas Music Video Awards takes place at the Karl Marx theatre on Nov 23 and 24 at 8.30pm. Closing out the month, the Festival de La Habana de Música Contemporánea, chaired by Maestro Guido López-Gavilán (Nov 24-30) takes off where Leo Brouwer left off bringing sounds of Romanticism to Havana.

Elsewhere, the brilliant Roberto Fonseca performs at La Zorra y el Cuervo Thursday nights from 10pm. Silvio Rodríguez, Augusto Enríquez and the National Symphonic Orchestra perform on Nov 29 and Mexican Grammy award winner Lila Down on Nov 8.

Espacios Ibsen 2: Cuban-Norwegian Theater Days in Havana takes place from November 5-10, 2013. Don't miss the closing party on Sunday, Nov 10 at Café Cantante Mi Habana.

For Kids, we recommend *La muchachita del mar* based on the fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen to be performed at Teatro de Títeres El Arca from November 8-10, 15-17, 3pm

Finally, thanks to Cuba Libro (24 and 19 in Vedado) who will upload this Guide to your pen drive for free when you buy a coffee/mango juice at this unique oasis of nature and literature.



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NOT TO MISS *during November 2013* WHAT'S ON HAVANA



Mon		4 Opening of FiHav at Expocuba (4-9th)	11 Roberto Carcassés at Café Jazz Miramar 10.30pm	18 Inauguration of <i>Noviembre Fotográfico</i> at Biblioteca Pública Rubén Martínez Villena	25 Time to visit the in-laws. Take a large bottle of rum	Mon
Tue		5 Opening of <i>Espacios Ibsen #2</i> at Norwegian Embassy Qva Libre at Café Cantante Mi Habana 5pm	12 Presentation of the <i>Catalogue of Flemish Painting Collection</i> at Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes - 4pm	19 José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda at Casa de la Música de Galiano 11pm	26 <i>Festival Internacional de Coros</i> in Santiago de Cuba (26-30)	Tue
Wed		6 Adalberto Álvarez y su Son at Casa de la Música de Miramar 11pm	13 <i>Lutherie sauvage</i> workshop for children, Vitrina de Valonia 4pm	20 Quiet night in at home with bottle of wine	27 <i>Semana de Autor</i> at Casa de las Américas (26-29)	Wed
Thu		7 <i>El Constructor y la princesa</i> at Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht 8.30pm	14 Tribute to Gabriel García Márquez at Casa de las Américas	21 Roberto Fonseca at La Zorra y el Cuervo 10pm	28 <i>XIX Festival de las Artes Benny Moré</i> in Cienfuegos (Nov 28-Dec 1)	Thu
Fri	1 Yasek Manzano at Pabellón Cuba 6pm	8 Silvio Rodríguez at Café Jazz Miramar 9pm <i>Pecados y milagros</i> by mexican singer Lila Down at Teatro Nacional 8.30pm	15 <i>The Flying Dutchman</i> Opera at Teatro Nacional 5pm Ceremony to mark Havana anniversary 11pm at Templete	22 <i>Antigonon, un contingente epico</i> by Teatro El Público at Teatro Trianón 8.30pm Frank Delgado at El Sauce 10pm	29 <i>Te doy una canción</i> , Silvio Rodríguez, Augusto Enríquez and the National Symphonic Orchestra at Teatro Nacional 8.30pm	Fri
Sat	2 <i>Ballet Nacional de Cuba</i> at Teatro Nacional 8.30pm <i>Danza Contemporánea de Cuba</i> in Teatro Mella 8.30pm	9 <i>Teatro de Títeres El Arca</i> 3pm Performance <i>La mujer de carne y leche</i> at C. C. Bertolt Brecht 8.30pm	16 Anniversary of Havana's birth <i>The Flying Dutchman</i> Opera at Teatro Nacional 5pm	23 Opening concert <i>Festival de Música Contemporánea</i> 6pm Lucas Music Awards, Teatro Karl Marx 8.30pm	30 Closing concert <i>Festival de Música Contemporánea</i> at San Francisco de Asís 6pm	Sat
Sun	3 <i>Conjunto Folklórico Nacional</i> in Teatro Mella 5pm <i>The Magic Flute</i> Opera at Teatro Nacional 5pm	10 Performance <i>La mujer de carne y leche</i> at C. C. Bertolt Brecht 8.30pm Closing of <i>Espacios Ibsen #2</i> with Djoy de Cuba at Café Cantante 10pm	17 Marabana 7am <i>The Flying Dutchman</i> Opera at Teatro Nacional 5pm	24 Lucas Music Awards, Teatro Karl Marx 8.30pm		Sun



Havana's new wave of entrepreneurs (cuenta propistas): A Rollercoaster ride

BY CONNER GORRY

I know more than a little about 'cuenta propismo,' which in Cuba means freelancing ([see note 1](#)). I've been a cuenta propista writer since my grad school thesis was published and while writing is qualitatively different from slinging soggy pizzas from a Centro Habana tenement, many of the same principles apply. Tax burden and penalties; supply and demand; competitive advantage; 7-day work weeks and phantom vacations; plus a good dose of self-discipline, accountability and responsibility all come in to play when you're your own boss. You also need to hone or have a knack for selling your product.

Here in Havana, where small businesses are sprouting like zits on a teenager, the learning curve is steep. Marketing is largely limited to twinkly lights, decals, and flyers and it's not uncommon to see half a dozen or more cafeterias selling the same greasy grub on a single block. To date, over 400,000 people have solicited licenses to run or work at private businesses (tellingly, statistics released by the government fail to mention how many of these businesses have closed or failed since the licenses became available), the majority for food sales, preparation and services. It's an experiment in market capitalism unfolding as I write this and it's changing the face and feel of the city.

Some of the transformations are good, others are bad, and a few are ambiguous – for now anyway. Like a 'sleeping shrimp,' I've been swept along, but Havana is starting to feel vastly different for both individual and societal reasons and whenever I get this 'oh shit, the roller coaster is about to dip and bank' foreboding, I know it's time to write about it.

Because I'm consciously, doggedly trying to emphasize the positive, I'll start out with the good changes first.

The Good

More choice – For too long, Cubans have had to settle for what was available, when and if it was available. This is a result of severe scarcity on a national scale, for reasons well known ([see note 2](#)), coupled with centralized control of every sector of the economy. Today, you can choose from where you buy (state or private) and from whom – a friend, neighbor, family member, the muchacha you have a crush on, or the little old man trying to make ends meet. Both purveyors and consumers are still learning about how competition combines with supply and demand to drive choice, but at least now there is a choice – for those who can afford it (more on this under 'The Bad,' later).



Higher quality goods and services – The quick learners fast realized that they needed to provide quality products and services if they were going to survive. The savviest of Havana's new small business owners – many from the Diaspora returning to the island to get a jump on the post-socialist Gold Rush – provide guarantees for their services and inculcate in their staff the philosophy that the customer is always right (not an easy feat in the Independent Republic of Saben lo Todo). On the consumer end, Cubans are starting to appreciate the value of paying more for higher quality – in other words, 'you get what you pay for' is starting to take hold.

Greater control and room to breathe/dream – One of the benefits to all this private enterprise – as intangible and unquantifiable as it may be – is that people working in the cuenta propista sector feel they have a modicum of control over their lives and destinies. This isn't very practical in the state sector where the rule of thumb is 'we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us (a pittance),' and decisions can be made without explanation and seem absurdly arbitrary as a result. Striking out on your own, meanwhile, takes courage, fortitude, and a semblance of vision; how you dream your future can't be arbitrary. It's particularly nebulous, this 'dare to dream' benefit of the new economy, but I think it's one of the critical changes we're undergoing here. I've been hanging out with a lot of 20-somethings lately and this craving to 'create your own reality' is especially relevant to them. Working in the private sector puts money in their pocket – decent money, often for the first time – and habilitates dreams of how to spend it, teaches them to budget and save, and plants the seed that if you work hard, you'll have the means to make bigger dreams a reality.

Now The Bad...

Haves vs Have Nots – All those choices and quality goods, not to mention that entrepreneurial get-up-and-go? It's only available to those already with the means. Sure, the government has started

providing small business loans, but what's really driving the new economy is that part of the population with the money to buy what's on offer, invest in a great idea, or renovate a killer location for their new venture. Examples abound: fancy private gyms and spas; lounges a la London or New York serving \$25 highballs; multi-bay car washes; and dog boutiques (yes, you read that right). And on the consumer end, we have 'tweens with the latest iPhones, packed 3-D movie theaters, even paintball at \$10 a pop. It's the classic burgeoning middle class, but for every giddy kid with a new tattoo he'll surely regret (I know of what I speak!), there's a sad-eyed child wanting one of the fancy pastries in the window and an angry youth playing soccer barefoot. While I hardly register the flashy moneyed folks, each grim-faced granny and struggling single mother sticks with me. And I'm seeing more and more of them these days.

Life on fast forward – It's amazing how slow, lethargic Havana has picked up speed of late. New cars hightail it through residential backstreets as if kids weren't playing there; cafeteria patrons drum the counter top saying 'I'm in a rush, hustle it up'; and 'time is money' is taking root as an economic/life concept. The digital boom fuels this and while I'll be the first to champion faster internet, I worry the day will come (for some it's already here), when we no longer make the time to spend time with the ones we love. I have to admit I've been guilty of this from time to time.



Prices are outrageous – Since the free(ish) market is brand new, charging ‘what the market will bear’ is being taken to absurd new heights. Agricultural cooperatives charge 10 pesos for four plantains (just a year or two ago these cost half this or less), while young men with bad hair charge 10 CUC for fixing a cell phone on the fritz; total labor: 15 minutes, meaning they make in a quarter hour what many make in a month. Service-based businesses are especially guilty and often don’t post prices, preying on the desperation of the customer who needs their phone fixed/car washed/business cards printed. I actually had this happen recently and when I took the guy to task, he said: ‘next time I’ll tell you the price beforehand’. I let him know there wouldn’t be a next time because I would be taking my business to the (more transparent) competition.

Key items go missing – When products suddenly disappear from store shelves here, we say they’re

perdidos – lost or missing. And many things are missing of late since private restaurants and the general population shop at the same stores. This is a real point of contention for cuenta propistas who (rightfully) complain that they have to buy all their materials at retail prices, heavily compromising their profit margin. For the rest of us, certain items are increasingly hard to find – coffee, butter, cheese, toilet paper – as they get snatched up by restaurateurs stocking their larders. This creates even more societal friction and deepens the rift between the haves and have nots.

I don’t know how The Good and The Bad will eventually shake out, but I think we’d all be wise to buckle up because I predict The Bad is bound to get Worse. On the positive tip, there are a whole lot of creative, resourceful, intelligent and determined forces being released and connected right now which I admire. Whatever happens, you can bet I’ll be writing about it. Until then...

Notes

1. The literal translation is ‘by one’s account’ and in today’s changing Cuba refers to all small businesses from grannies selling bras and barrettes to Olympic stars running chic, expensive bars. These small business endeavors are permissible under what’s known in English as the Economic and Social Policy Development Guidelines, which began to take effect about two years ago.
2. Namely, the US blockade, the collapse of the Socialist bloc and ensuing Special Period, scarce resources in general and mismanagement.



[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



Conner Gorry is one of the most insightful writers about Cuba. Author of Here is Havana blog (<http://hereishavana.wordpress.com/>), she also puts together the Havana Good Time iPad/Phone/Touch application <http://itunes.apple.com/app/havana-good-time/id385663683?mt=8> (Android version) http://sutromedia.com/android/Havana_Good_Time - essential guide to What’s On in Havana.

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HAVANA

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http://sutromedia.com/apps/Havana_Good_Time



Galerías Collage Habana y Galería Galiano

THROUGH JANUARY 2014

Post-it, exhibition and sale of works resulting from the competition of the same name, which aims to present the artistic production of young Cuban artists. Fifty-six pieces (prints, paintings, sculptures, photographs, video art and installations) were chosen among students from the San Alejandro Art Academy and the Visual Arts Provincial Academies, as well as three self-taught artists, all under age 35.



Evocación lírica

MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES.
EDIFICIO DE ARTE CUBANO
THROUGH JANUARY 14

Evocación lírica exhibits, for the first time ever, 18 paintings by National Visual Arts Prizewinner 2012 Ever Fonseca, indefatigable maker of fables and recreator of legends from the Cuban countryside.



VIII Encuentro Nacional de Grabado 2013

CENTRO DE DESARROLLO DE LAS
ARTES VISUALES, OPENS NOVEMBER 1,
PLAZA VIEJA

8th National Printmaking Meeting 2013 seeks to provide printmakers from Cuba and abroad a space to meet and exchange views, promote spaces for creation, as well as assess the situation and validity of this artistic expression. It will open on the 1st of November with an exhibition of competing works. The printing techniques used include chalcography, lithography, xylography, linocuts, silkscreen and mixed techniques.

Galería El Reino de este Mundo, Biblioteca Nacional José Martí

THROUGH NOVEMBER 20

Rodando se encuentran exhibits new pieces in different techniques, formats and styles by important figures of Cuban art today. Installations may only be seen in their original locations: Una docena by José Emilio Fuentes (JEFF) at ISA and Jardines itinerantes by Rafael Villares at El Sauce. The artists whose works are on display include Pedro Abascal, Lidzie Alvisa, Douglas Argüelles, Abel Barreto, Abel Barroso, Adigio Benítez, Osmany Betancourt, Jacqueline Brito, Luis Enrique Camejo, Iván Capote, Yoan Capote, Sandra Ceballos, Rafael Consuegra, Raúl Cordero, Humberto Díaz, Ernesto Fernández, Adonis Flores, Julio Girona, Luis Gómez, Javier Guerra, Aizar Jalil, Ruperto Jay Matamoros, Tomás Lara, Alicia Leal, Liudmila y Nelson, Janlet Méndez, Michel Mirabal, René de la Nuez, Gilberto de la Nuez, Pedro de Oraá, Marta María Pérez, René Peña, Eduardo Ponjuán, Wilfredo Prieto, Sandra Ramos, Ricardo Rodríguez Brey, René Francisco Rodríguez, Oscar Rodríguez Lasseria, Lázaro Saavedra, Esterio Segura, Reyneiro Tamayo, Julia Valdés, Eliseo Valdés, Lesbia Vent Dumois, Antonio Vidal and Hilda Vidal.

GALERÍA LA ACACIA

**Through
November 25**

Mariano en contemporáneo is an exhibition of 41 drawings by the Cuban painter Mariano Rodríguez (1912-1990), one of the most important artists of the so-called Havana School.

CENTRO HISPANO AMERICANO DE CULTURA

**Opens
November 5**

Group show *En viaje con Calvino* in honor of the renowned Italian author Italo Calvino, born in Santiago de las Vegas, Cuba, on the 90th anniversary of his birth. Several artists of different generations reinterpret the work of the famous Italian writer.

VISUAL ARTS

CENTRO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO WIFREDO LAM

**Through
December 1**

Memorias de la obsolescencia is a selection of videos from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection with works by artists of different nationalities and styles dating from the beginnings of this manifestation to the present day, including Mariana Abramovic, Francys Alÿs, Magdalena Fernández, Ana Mendieta, Song Dong, Cao Fei, Jimmie Durham, Miguel Ángel Ríos and Francesca Woodman. Special emphasis is made on Latin American contemporary art.

MUSEO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES.

**Through
November 14**
Edificio de Arte
Cubano

Mario Carreño: donde empieza la luz, dedicated to Cuban painter Mario Carreño, one of the principal figures of Cuban and Latin American avant-garde, exhibits 30 oil paintings and drawings made by the artist between 1937 and 1957, considered his most productive period.

CASA VÍCTOR HUGO

**Through
January 18**

In Picassum Tremens artists Eduardo Abela, Alicia de la Campa, Sinecio Cuétara, Hilda María Enríquez, Arístides Hernández (Ares), Pedro Pablo Oliva, Ángel Rivero (Andy) and Reinerio Tamayo offer their own personal view of Pablo Picasso.

ALIANZA FRANCESA DE LA HABANA

**Throughout
November**
Sede Sartre

Singer-songwriter Ireneo García has put his guitar away for a while and has taken up drawing. His production may be viewed through the exhibition *Atrevimientos II*.

GALERÍA DE LA BIBLIOTECA PÚBLICA RUBÉN MARTÍNEZ VILLENA

**Opens
November 6**

Los días del agua, an exhibition by Orlando Montalván Soler as part of the VIII Encuentro Nacional de Grabado.

PALACIO DE LOMBILLO

**Opens
November 8**

Group show *Preámbulo* by young artists from Santiago de Cuba Juan Salazar Salas, Jorge A. del Toro Torres and Hailen Kifle Sánchez as part of the 8th National Printmaking Meeting. The pieces were made using different printing techniques, such as collagraphy, lithography and silkscreen

SALÓN DEL MONTE, HOTEL AMBOS MUNDOS

**Opens
November 20**

Con visión de género delves into gender relations from a social point of view through paintings, prints and photographs.

CASA DEL ALBA

**Through
November 15**

Confluencias espirituales India-Cuba is an exhibition by well-known Cuban artists Zaida del Río and Ernesto García Peña, along with Narendar Reddy, one of the most renowned and prizewinning artists in India, and Sanjiv Nath.

Gracias cerebro por dejarme en paz.
Remedies for insomnia
Idania del Río

D'DISEGNO

Respuesta cubana!

D'DISEGNO. Respuesta cubana! curated by Concha Fontenla is a collection of pieces by artists involved in artistic design. The title of the show, DISEGNO, refers to the origin of “designed” as defined by Leon Battista Alberti in the 15th century as a “plane that was born out of the spirit, and implemented in lines and angles.” The designers chosen for this exhibit are Adriana Arronte, Marlén Castellanos, DeKuba, Daniel DeMilán, Liliam Dooley, Mayelín Guevara, Gabriel Lara (Gabo), Celia Ledón, Octavio César Marín, Gean Moreno, Fabián Muñoz, Ernesto Oroza, Nelson Ponce, Luis Ramírez, Yimit Ramírez, Roberto Ramos, Idania del Río, Edel Rodríguez (Mola), Jorge Rodríguez (R10), Eduardo Sarmiento, Eric Silva, José Ángel Toirac, Raúl Valdés (Raupa) and Arantza Vilas.

Factoría Habana
Galería Sargadelos
Habana

O'Reilly 308 entre entre
Habana y Aguiar, Habana
Vieja

**Through
November 30**

Lectures

Nov 5, 2pm **“Art of posters, posters in art”** Lecturer: Pepe Menéndez. **Topic:** Graphic design in Cuba today, its frontiers, conflicts and challenges. Individual creation and collective trends.

Nov 12, 2pm **“Design in independent initiatives”** Lecturer: Sandra de Huelbes Ocaña. **Topic:** The value of design and its revaluation in line with the new economic situation. The experience of small private businesses: the case of Píscolabis. With the participation of the Píscolabis team.

“Design in independent initiatives” Moderator: Carlos Labori. **Topic:** The value of design and its revaluation in line with the new economic situation. Production and commercialization strategies of industrial and graphic design: the case of Grupo Índice. With the participation of the Índice team.

Nov 19, 2pm. **“The space of home readapts its concept”** Moderator: Alejandro Rosales. **Topic:** A new use and role of interior in Cuban homes. With the participation of Omara Ruiz.

Nov 26, 2pm. **“Kinetic design and its promotional variants”** Moderator: Raúl Valdés (Raupa). **Topic:** Audiovisual design (spots and music videos). With the participation of Edel Rodríguez (Mola).

NOVIEMBRE FOTOGRAFICO



FOTOTECA
DE CUBA

Mercaderes 307, Plaza Vieja,
Habana Vieja

EXPOSICIONES
CONFERENCIAS
MESAS REDONDAS
PRESENTACIÓN DE PROYECTOS
REVISIÓN DE PORTAFOLIOS
VISITAS GUIADAS

INAUGURACIÓN

1 de Noviembre

6:00pm



Sponsored by the National Council of Visual Arts, the 6th *Noviembre Fotográfico* will open on November 1st at the Fototeca de Cuba on Plaza Vieja. Over 20 galleries and cultural institutions in the capital will host this photographic event, which will be inaugurated with the opening of *Salón de Autorretratos Los sueños del alma* (Self-Portraits Hall Dreams of the Soul), organized by the *Fábrica de Arte Cubano* project. The event will include the Fototeca de Cuba Symposium 2013,

which will take place from November 18 to 22 at the Rubén Martínez Villena Library on Plaza de Armas, Old Havana, exhibitions, lectures, panels, meetings with artists and critics, and screenings at Plaza Vieja every Friday night. *Noviembre Fotográfico* aims to diversify and extend the visual horizon of the Cuban public through photographs with the participation of Cuban and international photographers.



Mi Cuba 2008-2012

CASA DE ÁFRICA
THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

Reencuentro, by Sergio Leyva Seigle, is a photographic documentation of two families, one in Cuba and the other in Sierra Leona, who were separated due to the slave trade during the 19th century.



Inventario íntimo

PALACIO DE LOMBILLO
THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

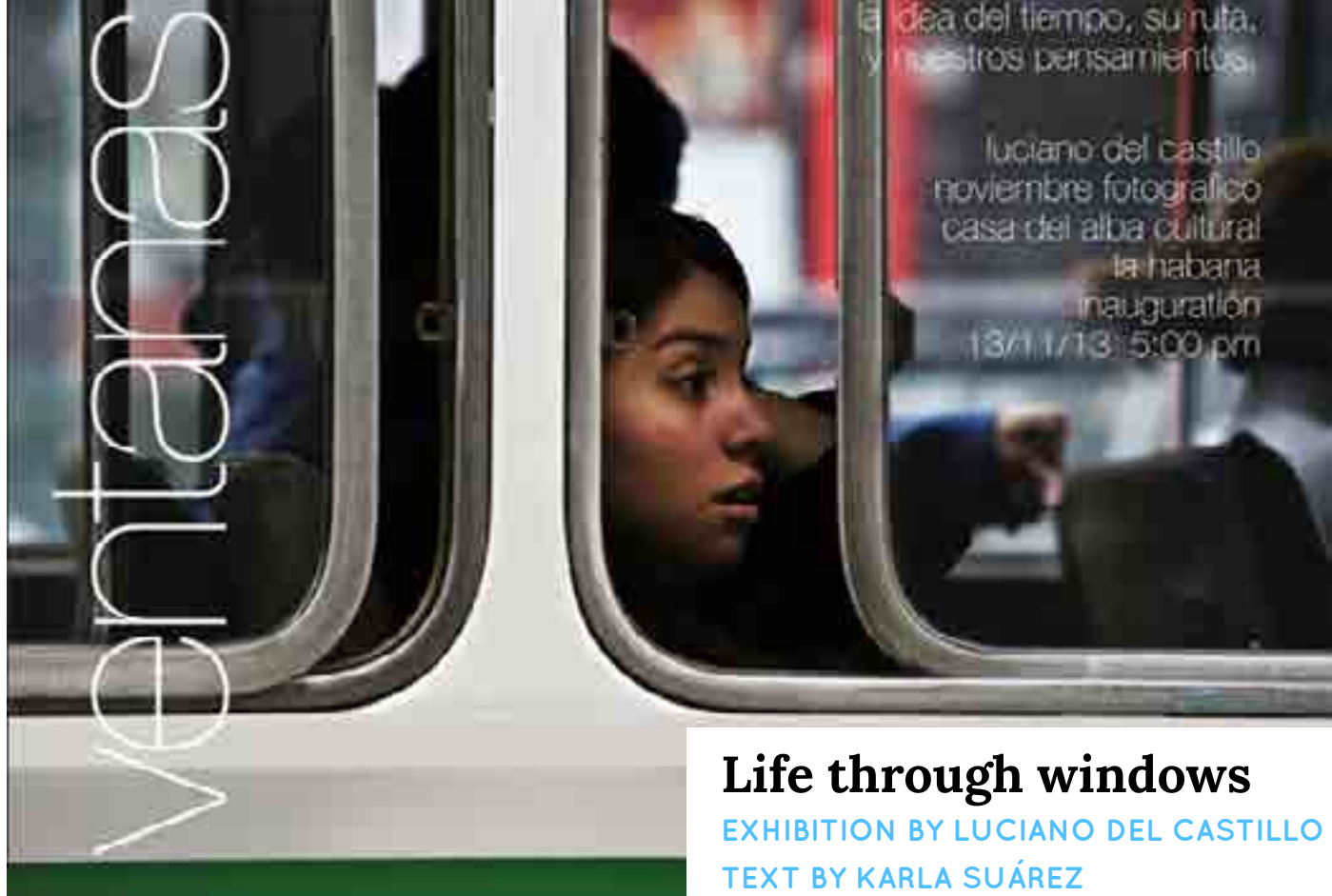
Architect and photographer María Eugenia López exhibits 18 small and medium-sized pictures created through digital printing.



D'Prensa

CASA OSWALDO GUAYASAMÍN
THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

Pablo Víctor Bordón Pardo, a student at the University of the Arts, questions "objective reality" through his own realities.



Life through windows

EXHIBITION BY LUCIANO DEL CASTILLO

TEXT BY KARLA SUÁREZ

Dreams and laughter pass by. The surprise, the discovery of something we saw and barely had time to understand also pass by. A hard day's work and the plans of things that need to be done once we get home pass by. The next chapter of the book we just can't put down passes by, as well as the voice on the phone of the person we want to continue hearing. Boredom, loneliness, wanting to cross to the other side, to escape far away pass by, too. And joy and wanting to feel good and never stop laughing. Everything passes by. Life passes by outside my window.

I've known Luciano del Castillo for many years now and what I like best about his work is that his pictures always tell a story. All of these anonymous faces that pass by on buses, staring out of windows or riding with their eyes closed speak about themselves and of what they see or what they're not looking at. They speak and trigger the imagination. What is an employee thinking of as he leans his head on the window of a bus? Who is

that girl talking to? In what tone of voice? Why is she laughing? Scores of possible stories, ideas and questions come to my mind. Suddenly, the silence in the picture becomes a hubbub. The passengers all begin to talk. They're not simple faces anymore looking out the window, while life passes by to see if there's anything interesting out there. Now they have become the stories. They are the life that is passing by.

A window is a frontier from where we look out onto the world, unable to avoid the world looking at us too. I can imagine the place—buses passing by, the street noise, the cloud of dust raised by the buses. And standing on a corner is Luciano del Castillo armed with his camera and his patience. Waiting for the right time when a window will pass by in front of his lens. And he will know—he knows, as every good photographer knows—that beyond the window there's a story worth telling. And he looks and clicks and doesn't let it pass.

CASA DE LAS AMÉRICAS

**Throughout
November**

Vidigal, retrato de una favela

The writer and photographer Bruna Fonte examines the transformations of a favela in Rio de Janeiro, which after a process of pacification in 2010, it redefined its spaces and the way its inhabitants present themselves.

GALERÍA VILLA MANUELA

**Through
November 15**

What you see, what you get

Ernesto Javier Fernández aims to question realism associated to documentary photography in this solo show through photographs which he has intervened, showing them on different materials and mediums.



Cine Charles Chaplin

SABADO 9 / 8:30 pm

Inaguración de la Semana

Con el Filme Totó el Héroe

del director Jaco Van Dormael

DOMINGO 10

5:00 pm / Totó el Héroe

8:00 pm / Quiero ser famosa

LUNES 11

5:00 pm / Quiero ser famosa

8:00 pm / La memoria del Asesino

MARTES 12

5:00 pm / La memoria del Asesino

8:00 pm / El despertar a la vida

MIÉRCOLES 13

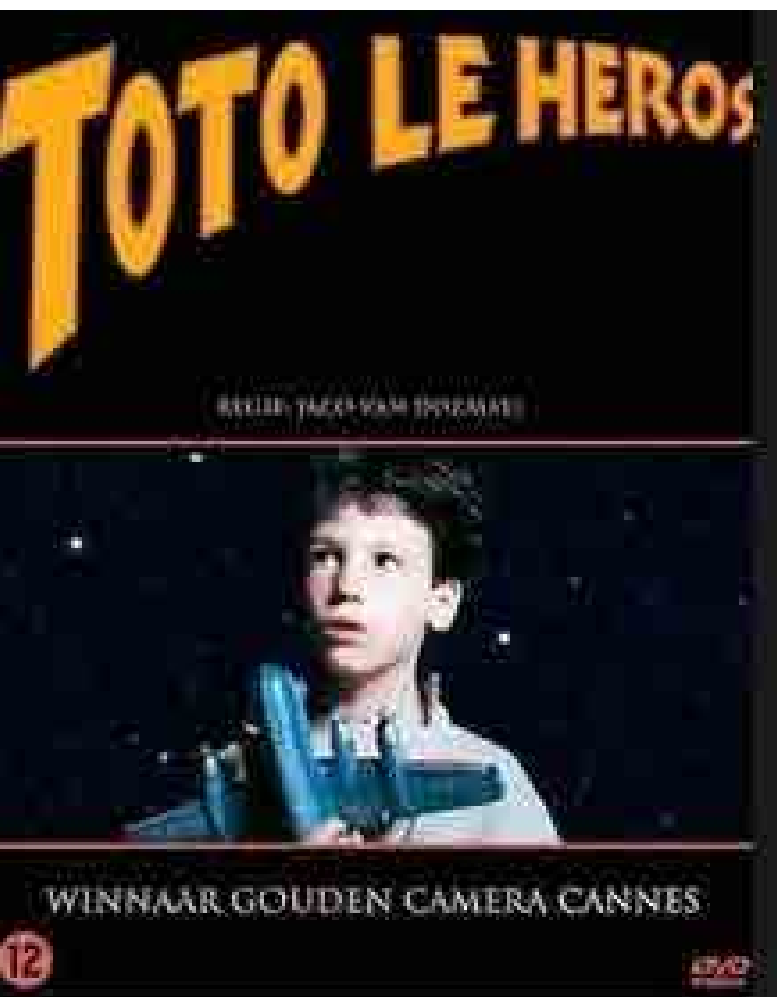
5:00 pm / El despertar a la vida

8:00 pm / Rumba

JUEVES 14

5:00 pm / Rumba

8:00 pm / Totó el Héroe



Toto the hero

1991 Belgium film by Belgian film director and screenwriter Jaco Van Dormael.

Ostensibly set in the near future, the film tells the life story of an elderly man named Thomas Van Hazebrouck (who has dubbed himself Toto, after a childhood fantasy), looking back on his ordinary, apparently uneventful life in a complex mosaic of flashbacks, interspersed with fantasies about how events might have turned out differently.

Thomas firmly believes his life to have been “stolen” from him by Alfred Kant, born at the same time as Thomas, who Thomas believes was inadvertently switched with himself as a baby (characteristically, the film remains ambiguous as to whether this substitution ever actually happened, with Thomas’ only substantiation being his apparent vivid memory of the day he was born). Thomas’ jealousy of Alfred has overshadowed all his life, often with tragic consequences for his loved ones, and he is plotting revenge. Throughout most of the film, his intended revenge takes the shape of a plot to kill Alfred, but in the end Thomas finds a more creative and surprising way to “take back” his life.

DANCE

BALLET



Ballet Nacional de Cuba

SALA AVELLANEDA, TEATRO NACIONAL

November 2, 8:30pm, November 3, 5pm

Concert program: *En las sombras de un vals* (choreography by Alicia Alonso, music by Josef Strauss), *Umbral* (choreography by Alicia Alonso, music by Johann Christian Bach), *Umbral* (choreography by Alicia Alonso, music by Johann Christian Bach), *Acuarela* (world première, choreography by Alicia Alonso), *Pas de dix* from *Giselle* (choreography by Alicia Alonso, based on the original by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, music by Adolphe Adam), *Desnuda luz del amor* (choreography by Alicia Alonso, music by Ernest Chausson), *Impromptu Lecuona* (choreography by Alicia Alonso, music by Ernesto Lecuona), scenes from Act Two of *Giselle* (choreography by Alicia Alonso based on the original by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, music by Adolphe Adam).



Danza Contemporánea de Cuba.

TEATRO MELLA
NOV 2, 8:30 PM

Concert program by Danza Contemporánea de Cuba.

DANCE

SPANISH DANCE



Ecos Flamenco

SALA AVELLANEDA. TEATRO NACIONAL
NOV 8-9, 8:30 PM; NOV 10, 5 PM

Performance by the Ecos Flamenco dance company.

The Ecos Flamenco Company was founded in 1999 with the objective of fostering the learning, development and spread of flamenco dance and music. The name of the group was chosen to reflect the “echoes” of the Spanish past found throughout Cuba today. Those echoes of music and dance and of peoples and culture continue to resonate with the musicians and dancers, providing them with the emotions and strength that characterizes Cuban artists.

Under the artistic direction of Ana Rosa Meneses, Grupo Ecos stages large shows and tours the biggest theatres throughout Cuba. In Havana, they regularly hold shows in the 2,500 seat Mella theatre. On a more intimate level, they can be seen performing their tablaos at smaller venues like the Meson de la Flota restaurant in Old Havana.

FOLKLORIC DANCE



Conjunto Folklórico Nacional

TEATRO NELLA
NOV 3, 5 PM

Concert program by the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional: Abakuá, Eshu, Danza de las Canastas, Ayanu, Ga-gá, Tumba Francesa and Danza de los Apalencados.



Danza Fragmentada: Guantnamo's brilliant dance company

BY VICTORIA ALCALÁ

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

The celebration of a dance company's 20th anniversary in Havana always makes the news, but the fact that a dance company from Guantnamo, Cuba's easternmost province, situated almost 1,000 km from the capital, and where there is no tradition of professional dance, should hit the front page makes it a little more newsworthy.

Danza Fragmentada was created on October 7, 1993 by dancer, teacher and choreographer Ladislao Navarro Tomasen, who has directed the company ever since then. For his graduation exercise at the Higher Institute of the Arts (ISA), Navarro proposed an experimental project that drew from different techniques, styles and manifestations. Initially made up of physically fit young people with a vocation for dance but without any academic training whatsoever, the company also became an educational center for training the young inexperienced dancers in ballet techniques, modern and contemporary dance, folklore elements, acting, self-expression through movement and choreographic composition. Although requiring more work, this gave Navarro great creative freedom to personally mold his dancers. And he still enjoys this freedom, even now that his troupe receives professional dancers trained in art schools.

In addition to the training of the future dancers, Ladislao had to deal with another challenge: finding an audience for the company. So Navarro incorporated regional cultural elements, such as changüí, voodoo and tumba francesa dances into the training, as well as his own concept of movement. His choreographies dealt with the troubles, feelings and longings of human beings and he fostered a type of art that was increasingly interactive. All this was supplemented with intense community work, carried out especially with children, who were seen not only as potential artists, but also as part of future audiences capable of enjoying contemporary, complex dance expressions.

Navarro, who for many years was the company's sole choreographer, has offered opportunities to young talents from his own company and guests dancers. An example of this was the short season of Danza Fragmentada at Havana's Mella Theater (October 2013) when the company produced *A ras de vuelo* and *Esquizofrenia* by Yoel González. In its endeavor to represent the stress in everyday life, *Esquizofrenia*, resorts to different resources, which are in line with the open spirit of the company.

Further celebrations took place in Guantnamo from October 7th to 13th, 2013. Performances included several premieres and other emblematic pieces from its repertoire, as well as performances by guest companies. We sadly were not there but look forward to seeing the group back in Havana before too long...

Eme Alfonso's *Buscando la inspiración* (Looking for inspiration) was the winner of Video of the Year in 2012



The Lucas Music Video Awards

BY VICTORIA ALCALÁ

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

Lucas, the Cuban TV show dedicated entirely to national music videos, will have been on the air for 16 years in 2013. Passionately championed by some and flatly rejected by others, almost no one remains indifferent to the show, let alone the annual live television coverage of the awards ceremony in which the winners of the best videos in different categories are announced.

Founded in 1997 by the director and member of a once popular comedy group, Orlando Cruzata, the purpose of Lucas was to sponsor and promote the fledgling Cuban production of music videos. Exhibiting a tight balance between the purely commercial intent of some videos and the proximity to video art of others, between the promotion of Cuban musicians and the promotion of video makers, between the so-called “highbrow” and what is considered “popular,” between those who exalt music videos and those who brand it as banal, the show and its crew have undoubtedly (virtually single handedly) raised the profile of the Cuban nationally produced music video.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that Lucas faces today is the absence of the late critic, essayist, professor and charismatic communicator Rufo Caballero, who in his appearances on the show always managed to stimulate ideas around the merits and features of videos. Rufo praised what he

considered were virtues and criticized, gracefully yet in a straightforward manner, what he felt were failures, and at the same time helped viewers to understand the complexities and demands of the world of music videos.

Rufo's fans have missed his witty and sharp commentaries regarding one of the nominated videos in the category of reggaeton and a strong contender for the popularity prize—“El chupi chupi.” The song in question unleashed sharp criticism in a debate in which even the Minister of Culture was forced to take part. Considered by its critics as rude, vulgar and other similar adjectives due to the explicit erotic content in the song's lyrics, it would have been interesting to analyze why a song like that became so popular in a society with such a high level of literacy as the Cuban society. Eventually, the song was disqualified, yet the question still stands.

Beyond the Chupi Chupi incident, however, the 2011 awards testified to the variety and quality of the nominations to the Lucas prize. The ceremony, which took place at Tropicana's Arcos de Cristal, was a veritable showcase for the diversity of intentions, strategies, production aesthetics and music genres present in the show throughout the year.

MUSIC

CONTEMPORARY FUSION & ELECTRONIC



The contemporary fusion and electronic music scene has fragmented somewhat over recent months as new bars and clubs have opened and a number of promoters of one off parties have established themselves. While we have made a few suggestions and reviewed some of last month's best parties really you will simply have to keep your ear to the ground and try and get and get on the text list. We will post on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cuba-Absolutely/117958641550184> details when we have them.

Over the last month some of the best parties have been at the Sunday afternoon matinee at the newly renovated Rancho Palco (Cubanacan) followed by a pulsating and buzzing El Sauce which is literally back to back. Definitely worth making the trip out to the Western suburbs for this double-header. For lovers of El Yonki he has been turning up in various locations including the ever popular Neptuno-Triton matinee parties.

CAFÉ CANTANTE MI HABANA

Wednesdays,
5pm

Performances by Qva Libre

CASA DE LA MÚSICA DE MIRAMAR

Mondays, 5pm

Performances by El Micha

CENTRO CULTURAL BERTOLT BRECHT

Sundays, 10pm

Performances by Déja-vu.

CENTRO CULTURAL FRESA Y CHOCOLATE

Mondays,
10:30pm

Wichy D'Vedado, one of the most famous DJs in Havana, who plays the best of world music.

CENTRO VASCO

Fridays,
midnight

Performances by Karamba.

PABELLÓN CUBA

Nov 3, 6pm

Special performance by the popular singer Raúl Paz.

EL SAUCE

Nov 16, 9pm

Performance by one of the most popular singers today, Adrián Berazaín and his group, plus the performances of Karamba and D'coraSon.

PIANO BAR HABANECIENDO

Thursdays,
11pm

Performances by Candy-Man.

MUSIC

SALSA / TIMBA



CASA DE LA MÚSICA HABANA

Mondays, 11pm	Havana Show (audiovisual show) and guests
Tuesdays, 5pm	Havana Show (audiovisual show) and guests
Tuesdays, 11pm	José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda
Thursdays, 5pm	Pupy y los que Son Son
Thursdays, 11pm	Charanga Latina.
Sundays, 5pm	PMM en Discotemba
Sundays, 11pm	PMM (audiovisual show) and guests.

EL JELENGUE DE AREÍTO

Wednesdays, 5pm	Trovando, with favorite trova singers.
Thursdays, 5pm	Guaracheros (traditional music)
Fridays, 5pm	Rumberos de Cuba (rumba)
Saturdays, 5pm	El Son del Indio (traditional music)
Sundays, 5pm	Timbalaye (rumba)

CASA DE LA MÚSICA DE MIRAMAR

Mondays, 11pm	Sur Caribe
Tuesdays, 11pm	Pedrito Calvo y La Justicia
Wednesdays, 5pm	Juan Guillermo
Wednesdays, 11pm	Adalberto Álvarez y su Son
Sundays, 5pm	Lázaro Valdés y Bamboleo

DIABLO TUN TUN

Mondays, 11pm	PMM (audiovisual show), open bar night
Thursdays, 11pm	José Luis Cortés y NG La Banda

LA TROPICAL

Nov 3, 4pm	Enrique Álvarez y La Charanga Latina
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The 2013 Jo-Jazz Festival was scheduled for Nov 14-16 – although we are still waiting confirmation of details.



Jo-Jazz Festival

BY VICTORIA ALCALÁ

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

As a prelude to the International Jazz Plaza Festival that is held in December, JoJazz is a competition for young jazz musicians. Bright young hopes of a genre that was born over a century ago in New Orleans, and which has accumulated over its history a few debts to Cuban music and musicians, performed before audiences who were excited to be present at the possible birth of future jazz stars, both as composers and performers.

The 2012 festival was held from November 22 to 26, 2012. Hosted by the Bertolt Brecht Cultural Center, this competition is an opportunity for new generations of young jazz musicians from throughout Cuba to become visible to the public. The awards ceremony showed--luckily--a breach in the "Havana-centeredness" of previous competitions. Along with jazz players and composers from Havana, musicians from other provinces won prizes in the different categories (see list of winners below).

The concerts at the Mella Theater and the jam sessions at the Mella Gardens and La Zorra y el Cuervo nightclub delighted the numerous jazz fans in Havana. The opening ceremony held at the Mella Theater included the performance of two pieces from the two albums that were launched that evening: Sueños del pequeño Quin (2012 Cubadisco

prize), by Joaquín Betancourt's jazzband, and En la espera, by young saxophonist Michel Herrera and his band Joven Jazz.

The awards ceremonies on November 24 and 25 were accompanied, respectively, by the performances of the excellent percussionist and composer, 2010 and 2011 JoJazz prizewinner Yissy García along with Jorge Reyes and guests; and the also JoJazz prizewinner Yasek Manzano with his band Habana Jazz Collective.

This second concert was memorable for several reasons. Yasek Manzano, who became a JoJazz prizewinner when he was only 15, and completed his professional training at the Juilliard School in New York with the American trumpet player, living legend Wynton Marsalis, decided to form a band with outstanding young Cuban jazz musicians, including pianist Alejandro Falcón, saxophonist Michel Herrera, trombonist Yoandry Argudín and singer Yanet Valdes. With this talented team, Manzano has ensured that the individual contribution by each musician to the seamless cohesion and fusion of the band does not limit their creativity and virtuosic brilliance. Along with the ubiquitous Jorge Reyes and drummer Ruy Lopez-Nussa, Habana Jazz Collective gave a lesson in good taste, excellence and vitality.

Café Jazz Miramar (Cine Miramar)

CALLE 5TA ESQUINA A 94, MIRAMAR PLAYA.



Opens 2pm – Shows: 10:30pm – 2 am – Cover: 50.00 MN or CUC 2.00

This new jazz club has quickly established itself as one of the very best places to hear some of Cuba's best musicians jamming. Forget about smoke filled lounges, this is clean, bright – take the fags outside. While it is difficult to get the exact schedule and in any case expect a high level of improvisation when it is good it is very good. A full house is something of a mixed house since on occasion you will feel like holding up your own silence please sign! Nonetheless it gets the thumbs up from us.

CAFÉ MIRAMAR

Saturdays, 11pm

Roberto Carcassés (pianist), his trio and guests

CASA DEL ALBA CULTURAL

Nov 10, 8pm

Performance by Ruy López-Nussa (percussionist) and La Academia

CENTRO HISPANO-AMERICANO DE CULTURA

Nov 9, 5pm

Performance by Yadasny Portillo (pianist) and guests.

LA ZORRA Y EL CUERVO

Thursdays, 10pm

Roberto Fonseca (pianist and composer).

UNEAC

Nov 14, 2pm

Peña La Esquina del Jazz, hosted by showman Bobby Carcassés.

JAZZ CAFÉ

Nov 1, 9:30pm

Emilio Morales (pianist and composer).

Nov 1, 11:30pm

César López (sax and composer) and Habana Ensemble.

Nov 2, 11:00pm

César López (sax and composer) and Habana Ensemble.

Nov 3, 11pm

Roberto Fonseca (pianist and composer).

PABELLÓN CUBA

Nov 1, 6pm

Yassek Manzano (trumpet)

Nov 2, 6pm

Julito Padrón (trumpet)

MUSIC

BOLERO,
FOLKLORIC,
SON & TROVA



Special concert by Silvio Rodríguez

CAFÉ MIRAMAR
8 DE NOVIEMBRE, 9 PM

Special concert by Silvio Rodríguez, the iconic figure of Cuban Nueva Trova. This is an opportunity to enjoy his beautiful songs in an intimate and informal atmosphere.

ASOCIACIÓN YORUBA DE CUBA

Fridays,
8:30pm

Performance by the folkloric group Obiní Batá.

Sundays, 4pm

Performance by the folkloric group Los Ibellis.

CAFÉ CANTANTE, TEATRO NACIONAL

Saturdays,
4pm

Performance by Waldo Mendoza, one of Cuba's most popular singers today.

CAFÉ CONCERT ADAGIO

Thursdays,
10pm

Performances by Maylú, the all-round singer of the moment, whose repertoire goes from arias of famous operas to Cuban, Latin American and international pop hits.

CAFÉ CONCERT EL SAUCE

Fridays, 10pm

Performances by the popular singer-songwriter Frank Delgado with his ironic view of society.

CAFÉ TEATRO BERTOLT BRECHT

Nov 2, 4pm

An informal get-together with singer Omar Amehd.

Nov 30, 4pm

Un Bolero para Ti, with Rafael Espín and guests

Fridays, 10pm

Tony Ávila, a favorite of the young generation thanks to his lyrics and sense of humor.

CASA DE ÁFRICA

Nov 2, 4pm

Performance by the rock/folkloric band Síntesis

Nov 9, 4pm

Performance by the folkloric group Obiní Batá

CASA DE LA A

Nov 10, 3pm

Get-together with the vocal quartet Génesis

Nov 17, 3pm

Get-together with Maureen Iznaga, whose select repertoire includes favorite Cuban and international love songs.

MUSIC

BOLERO, FOLKLORIC, SON & TROVA

CASA BALEAR

Nov 15, 5pm

Tardes de Boleros, hosted by singer Maureen García.

CASA DEL ALBA

Nov 1, 8pm

With his beautiful and powerful voice, Eduardo Sosa and guests perform highlights of the best Cuban trova of all time.

CASA DE LA MÚSICA DE MIRAMAR

Saturdays, 5pm

La Utopía combines live performances by troubadours, impromptu performances by the audience, and videos of important domestic and international musicians of the past 50 years.

CASA MEMORIAL SALVADOR ALLENDE

Nov 29, 6pm

Peña La Juntamenta, with trovador Ángel Quintero and guests.

CENTRO CULTURAL FRESA Y CHOCOLATE

Tuesdays, 7pm

Performances by Fernando Bécquer, singer-songwriter of piquant humor and contagious rhythm.

Wednesdays,
9pm

Performances by the young singer Milada Milhet.

Saturdays,
10:30pm

Performance by Yeni Sotolongo, a young singer who boasts an exceptional voice and varied repertoire.

Sundays, 6pm

Performances by pop idol Adrián Berazaín, who combines pop and rock with Cuban song.

CENTRO CULTURAL PABLO DE LA TORRIENTEBRAU

Nov 30, 5pm

A Guitarra Limpia is a meeting with trovadors accompanied only by their guitars.

CASA DE LA CULTURA DE PLAZA

Nov 9, 7pm

Peña with Marta Campos, renowned singer of contemporary songs with a trova feel to them.

CENTRO IBEROAMERICANO DE LA DÉCIMA

Nov 2, 3pm

Performance by the duet Ad Libitum.

Nov 24, 4pm

El Jardín de la Gorda with the performances of trovadores from every generation.

HOTEL TELÉGRAFO

Fridays,
9:30pm

An informal meeting with the versatile contralto Ivette Cepeda, who has been much celebrated thanks to the subtleties she brings to her voice and her wide repertoire of Cuban and international music.

HURÓN AZUL, UNEAC

Nov 9, 10pm

Mundito González is one of the most popular Cuban bolero singers.

JARDINES DEL 1830

Tue & Thu,
8:30pm;
Sun, 5pm

Performance by one of the most popular bands in Cuba, Moncada will play an extensive repertoire of Cuban and Latin American music.

PIANO BAR TUN TUN

Thursdays,
5pm
(Casa de la
Música de
Miramar)

Peña with trovador Ray Fernández.



Festival de La Habana de Música Contemporánea

NOVEMBER 24-30, 2013, HAVANA

Aldo López-Gavilán
(son of Guido López-Gavilán)
Photo by Ivan Soca

When the echoes of the Leo Brouwer Festival of Chamber Music can still be heard, the Havana Festival of Contemporary Music is just around the corner. This is a healthy attempt to familiarize audiences—who sometimes seem to be tied to the sounds of Romanticism—with the latest production in contemporary concert music. Several venues will host the concerts, lectures, recitals, master classes and workshops during this 27th festival: Basílica Menor del Convento de San Francisco de Asís, Ignacio Cervantes and Ernesto Lecuona concert halls of the National Lyrical Theater, Casa de las Américas, UNEAC's Villena concert hall and the Covarrubias concert hall at Nacional.

The organizing committee, chaired by maestro Guido López-Gavilán, has already confirmed the participation of the Swiss flutist Antipe da Stella; the Danish guitarist Mikkel Andersen; the Spanish chamber ensemble Cosmos 21, a pioneer in Europe in the design of concerts as shows that increase the value of stage lighting, costumes and movement for the sake of better communication with the audiences; the Mexican composer Isaac

de la Concha, who is interested in improvisation with several instruments; the Puerto Rican pianist Kimberly Davis; the Russian-Cuban cellist living in Belgium Makcim Fernández Samodaiev, prize-winner at several international competitions; the Romanian pianist Monica Florescu, who also has a history of important awards and who according to the Dutch media, she “touches the stars in the sky” with her music; and the Cuban composer, who now lives in Denmark, Louis Aguirre, who has had a successful international career since 2002.

In addition, the most outstanding soloists, chamber orchestras and instrumental ensembles will play works of renowned Cuban composers, such as Leo Brouwer, Harold Gramatges, Juan Blanco, Carlos Fariñas, Roberto Valera, Héctor Angulo, Juan Piñera, Alfredo Diez Nieto, Guido López-Gavilán, Jorge Garciaporrúa, Jorge López Marín, José María Vitier, Magalys Ruiz, Louis Aguirre and Eduardo Martín. Pieces by young Cuban composers, such as Teresa Núñez, Elvira Peña, Yanier Hechavarría, Siegrid Macías, Maureen Reyes, Jeysi León Molina, Waldo Lavaut and Víctor Gavilondo.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

Festival de La Habana de Música Contemporánea program details

NOV 23

Basílica Menor del Convento de San Francisco de Asís, 6pm Opening ceremony, Concert by soloists and vocal and instrumental groups of different formats.

NOV 24

Sala Covarrubias, Teatro Nacional, 11am Matanzas Symphony Orchestra with guest soloists Makcim Fernández Samodaiev and Antipe da Stella.

Sala Cervantes, 11am Cosmos 21

NOV 25

Conservatorio Amadeo Roldán, 10am Cosmos 21

Sala Rubén Martínez Villena, UNEAC, 4 & 6 pm Concert

NOV 26

Sala Gonzalo Roig del Palacio del Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba, 4pm Music and Poetry

Basílica Menor del Convento de San Francisco de Asís, 6 pm International Music

NOV 27

Sala Manuel Galich, Casa de las Américas, 3pm National Electro-Acoustic Music Laboratory with guest musician Isaac de la Concha.

Sala Che Guevara, Casa de las Américas, 6 pm Recital by Mikkel Andersen and Antipe da Stella

NOV 28

Sala Gonzalo Roig del Palacio del Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba, 4pm Music and Poetry

Basílica Menor del Convento de San Francisco de Asís, 6 pm Recital by Kimberly Davis

NOV 29

Sala Rubén Martínez Villena, UNEAC, 4 & 6pm Concert

NOV 30

Sala Gonzalo Roig del Palacio del Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba, 4pm Texts by National Literature Prize-winners set to music by Roberto Valera and Guido López-Gavilán.

Basílica Menor del Convento de San Francisco de Asís, 6 pm Closing concert with symphony music.

MUSIC

CLASSICAL



BASÍLICA MENOR DEL CONVENTO DE SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS

Nov 2, 6pm	Concert by the Solistas de La Habana chamber orchestra, conducted by Iván Valiente.	Nov 23, 6pm	Opening concert of the 26th Havana International Contemporary Music Festival (XXVI Festival de La Habana de Música Contemporánea) of Cuban chamber music.
Nov 9, 6pm	Soprano Bárbara Llanes and pianist Karla Martínez will dedicate their performance to the 110th anniversary of Tchaikovsky's death.	Nov 25, 5:30pm	The Italian pianist and director Antonio Ballista will share the stage with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba.
Nov 16, 6pm	The Camerata Romeu, conducted by Zenaida Romeu, has announced a program of Belgian and Cuban music.	Nov 26, 28 & 30, 5:30pm	Concerts during the 26th Havana International Contemporary Music Festival.
Nov 21, 6pm	Performance by Schola Cantorum Coralina, conducted by Alina Orraca.		

ORATORIO SAN FELIPE NERI

Nov 9, 4pm	Entrevoces Chorus, conducted by Digna Guerra.	Nov 16, 4pm	Recital by Orfeón Santiago.
Nov 14, 7pm	The guitarist and composer Luis Manuel Molina will play works by many friends.	Nov 26, 7pm	Concert of Italian music by young Cuban musicians.

SALA IGNACIO CERVANTES

Nov 3, 6pm	The Música Eterna chamber orchestra, conducted by Guido López-Gavilán, will play Vivaldi's The Four Seasons with Liliana Serrano, Braulio Labañino, Carlos Suárez and Javier Cantillo as soloists.	Nov 22, 6pm	The German viola player Roland Glassl, pianist Karla Martínez, clarinetist Arístides Porto and viola player Anolan González will play works by Bach, Mozart and Hummel.
Nov 10, 6pm	Concert by the Harold Gramatges and Roberto Catalá chamber orchestras of the Amadeo Roldán Conservatory, conducted by Laura Mazón and Noila Ortega, in a program made up of universal works, and pieces composed by students from the University of the Arts. The last piece of the concert will be performed by the Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil, conducted by Guido López-Gavilán, and the young pianist Gabriela Piñeda.	Nov 24, 6pm	The Cosmos 21 group (Spain), directed by Carlos Galán, will play Monográfico de Carlos Galán, and the Verdehr trio (violin, clarinet and piano) will play works by Bartok, Stravinsky and Poulenc, among other 20th-century composers.
Nov 17, 6pm	Evelio Tiele (violin), Anolan González (viola) and Alejandro Martínez (cello) have selected works by Mozart for this concert which will have Cecilia Rosales (violin) and Michael Elvermann (clarinet), both from the Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente, as guest musicians.	Nov 29, 6pm	Musical tribute on the 50th anniversary of the death of Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona and on the upcoming 100th birthday of soprano Esther Borja, with Nelson Camacho (piano) and Lucy Provedo (soprano).

IGLESIA DE PAULA

Nov 1, 7pm	The Orquesta de Cámara de La Habana, led by guest conductor Tomas Gabrich, will play works by Emanuel Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Max Reger.
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CASA DEL ALBA CULTURAL

Nov 3, 5pm	Performance by Haskell Armenteros and his Ensemble Nueva Camerata	Nov 17, 3pm	Tarde de Concierto, conducted by the soprano Lucy Provedo.
Nov 9, 5pm	En Confluencia, conducted by guitarists Eduardo and Galy Martín.	Nov 24, 5pm	De Nuestra América, conducted by pianist Alicia Perea.

SALA AVELLANEDA DEL TEATRO NACIONAL

Nov 29, 8:30pm	Te doy una canción Silvio Rodríguez, Augusto Enriquez and the National Symphonic Orchestra at Teatro Nacional
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SALA COVARRUBIAS, TEATRO NACIONAL

Sundays, 5pm	Concerts with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional.
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Paco De Lucía at the Leo Brouwer Festival

BY VICTORIA ALCALÁ

We cannot thank Leo Brower enough for his contribution to Cuban culture. Not only for his work--possibly the most extensive and solid of all time of any Cuban composer--but also for the time he has devoted to cultural projects including organizing what I consider to be the most important concert music festivals in Cuba over many years.

I recall the International Havana Guitar Festivals and Competitions as happy years when I would ask for a few days off from work and take up residence at the National Theater. The competition performances allowed me to enjoy countless interpretations of *Concierto de Aranjuez*; applaud Cuban contestants who would later become maestros, such as Rey Guerra and Joaquín Clerch; predict a brilliant career for Argentinean Victor Pellegrini (who would end up staying in Cuba); or discover that Digna Guerra, in addition to being a magnificent chorus conductor, was also a fantastic accompanist pianist. Thanks to the concerts, I thrilled to the performances of guitar giants, such as Ichiro Suzuki, María Luisa Anido, Costas Cotsiolis, Alirio Díaz and David Russell, who made audiences roar with such enthusiasm that anyone could have mistaken the concert for a football match. His performance of *Theme and Variations* on the *Aire Marlborough*, by Fernando Sor, is one of my most treasured musical experiences.

When the International Guitar Festival disappeared it left a void in its faithful followers that seemed difficult to fill, until many years later when Leo himself provided us with a source of comfort--the Leo Brouwer Chamber Music Festival which has established itself as one of Cuba's annual cultural highlights attracting brilliant performances from national and international soloists and ensembles.

And as a bridge between both festivals--a happy union of two kinds of intelligent music, which owe their popularity to Brouwer's undeniable prestige and charisma--Paco de Lucía arrived in Havana for



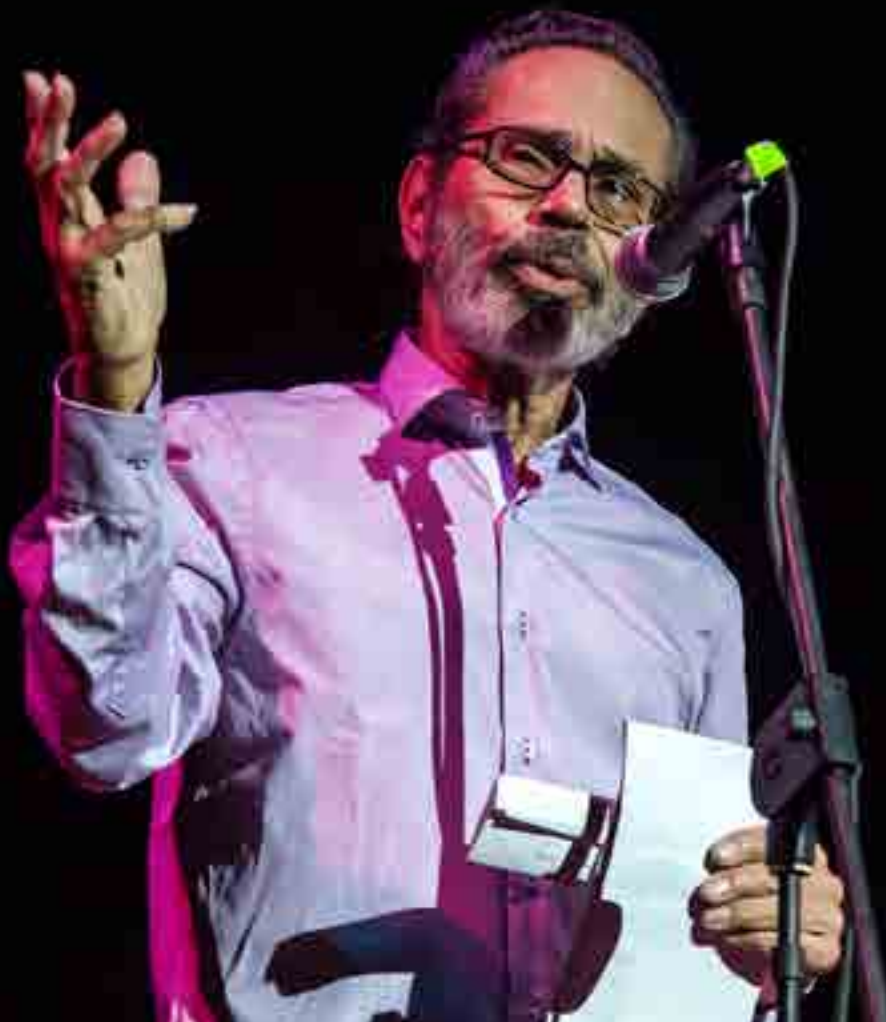
the 2013 Chamber Music Festival. Twenty-six years after his last performance in Cuba, the world's premier flamenco guitarist played to a packed Karl Marx Theater on October 2. Some people in the audience, including me, had "discovered" him in one of Havana's guitar festivals from a bygone era, while others had been able to listen to his music only through recordings. The younger generations wanted to savor a live performance by this leading proponent of flamenco while the not-so-young were also curious about what time had done to this great guitarist.

Paco de Lucía dazzled the audience in a program that little by little mixed the "purest" flamenco with jazz, Latin rhythms and Son. This he accomplished thanks to his intact virtuosity and artistry acquired through years of training and an intense international career. The great musician from Cadiz and his accompanists, Antonio Sánchez (guitar), Antonio Serrano (harmonica), Antonio

"Rubio de Pruna" Flores, David "Da vid de Jacoba" Maldonado (flamenco singers), Alain Pérez (bass), Israel "El Piraña" Suárez (percussion) and Antonio "Farru" Fernández (flamenco dancer), rocked the audience who wanted more and more and let them know with their endless rounds of applause. When he delighted us with *Entre dos aguas*, it seemed like time had not passed at all, neither for him nor for those of us who were lucky enough to have listened to him play for the very first time some 30 years ago.

It was rumored that he would return to Cuba after his upcoming tour of Latin America and spend some time in Havana. For now, I'm happy to have enjoyed another live performance by this "titanic figure in the world of flamenco guitar" as described by Richard Chapman and Eric Clapton. And for this almost indescribable emotion, I say "Thank you, Leo!"

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



Leo Brouwer, Oct 2, 2013



The Magic Flute

SALA AVELLANEDA, TEATRO NACIONAL
NOV 2-3, 5PM

The Magic Flute by Mozart. Soprano Olivia Méndez, who has shown her talent in the difficult role of Queen of the Night, will now sing the role of Pamina, while Laura D' Mare will appear as the Queen of the Night. Other roles will be sung by tenor Bryan López as Tamino; bass Marcos Lima as Sarastro; and baritone Eleomar Cuello as Papageno. They will be accompanied by the chorus of the Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba, conducted by Claudia Rodríguez, the Symphony Orchestra of the Amadeo Roldán Conservatory, and guest performers from Gigantería, directed by Roberto Salas. The wardrobe has been especially designed by Rossemberg Rivas and the set design by Eduardo Arrocha, double National Prizewinner for Design and Theater.



The Flying Dutchman

SALA AVELLANEDA, TEATRO NACIONAL
NOVEMBER 15-17, 5PM

The Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba premieres The Flying Dutchman (or The Phantom Ship) in a coproduction between Germany, Austria and Cuba, directed by Andreas Baesler from Germany. The stars of Cuba's national operatic company will be accompanied by the chorus of the company, the chorus of the Cuban Radio and Television Institute, and the Symphony Orchestra of the Gran Teatro de La Habana. The wardrobe was designed by Tanja Hoffman (Germany); set designs by Harald Thor (Austria), with the collaboration of Cuban artist Alexis Leyva (Kcho); and light design by Stefan Bollinger (Switzerland).

Expo Colectiva

MUNCH 150

LA PARTE MALDITA

MARTES 05
6:00 p.m

5 - 10 Noviembre de 2013
Nueva Sede Embajada de Noruega en Cuba
21 e / H e I. Vedado, La Habana

Espacios Ibsen, a joint cultural project between the Cuban Council of the Performing Arts and the Norwegian Embassy in Cuba, aims to promote the artistic exchange between the two countries, and channel the work of Norwegian playwright and poet Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906).

Henrik Ibsen is considered the most important playwright of his country and is one of the founders of Modernism in the theater. Referred to as "the father of realism," he is the most frequently performed dramatist after Shakespeare.

The Laboratorio Ibsen, a theatrical platform for social experimentation has joined Espacios Ibsen this year in the coordination of the event. The group won the 2012 International Ibsen Fellowship with their project Las herramientas de la sociedad (The Tools of Society).

The theoretical sessions are in charge of Universo Ibsen, and will be held at Fundación Ludwig on November 6, 8 and 9, at 10 and 2pm. The meeting will focus on theater projects between Cuba and Norway in the past three years and the work policies of these projects. A volume with articles from the prior meeting will be published.

This year, Espacios Ibsen will pay tribute to Edvard Munch on the 150th anniversary of the Norwegian painter. The exhibition will focus on the interpretation that several Cuban painters have made of the work of the author of *The Scream*. The opening will take place at 6 pm, November 5, at H y 21, El Vedado, at the future location of the Norwegian Embassy in Havana.

Program Espacios Ibsen 2

Cuban-Norwegian Theater Days in Havana November 5-10, 2013

TUESDAY 5TH NOVEMBER

Norwegian Embassy in Havana, H y 21, El Vedado, 6pm	Opening of the group exhibition Munch 150 - La Parte Maldita. (Open to the public until Nov 10, from 10am to 5pm)
Café Teatro Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 6pm	Suvenir: la repetición de la experiencia (I), directed by William Ruiz
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 8pm	Los días raros (premiere), first production of critic and researcher Karina Pino based on the play The Wild Duck. The play delves into the topic of suicide.

WEDNESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER

Fundación Ludwig de Cuba, 10Am	Presentación of Brochure. Theater projects between Cuba and Norway. A look into the past three years.
Fundación Ludwig de Cuba, 2pm	Presentation of theater projects with the collaboration of the Embassy of Norway in Cuba.
Café Teatro Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 6pm	Suvenir: la repetición de la experiencia (I), directed by William Ruiz

THURSDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

Centro Cultural Fresa y Chocolate, 2pm	Video screenings (Cuba) Nani y Tati / Oslo / La trucha / Volverse isla
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 4pm	Solness, el maestro (Bygmester Solness) (Work in progress, Cuartel Theater Company)
Café Teatro Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 6pm	Fiodor en el fiordo (premiere), by Fabián Suárez, is a sort of cross between cultures.
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 8:30pm	El constructor y la princesa (premiere) by William Ruiz, interdisciplinary work that takes The Master Builder (Bygmester Solness) as point of reference.

FRIDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

Fundación Ludwig de Cuba, 10am	Ibsen Policies. Creative practices and social-aesthetic research
Centro Cultural Fresa y Chocolate, 2pm	Video screenings (Norway) Orfeus / Para de echarle la culpa al iceberg / Tuba Atlantic / Prematuro / El salón de baile del diablo
Embajada de Noruega, 4pm	In Vitrio: stage inventory
Café Teatro Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 6pm	Fiodor en el fiordo (premiere), by Fabián Suárez, is a sort of cross between cultures.
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 8:30pm	El constructor y la princesa (premiere) by William Ruiz, interdisciplinary work that takes The Master Builder (Bygmester Solness) as point of reference.
Karachi, 10pm	Café IbZen

SATURDAY 9TH NOVEMBER

Fundación Ludwig de Cuba, 2pm	Ibsen among cultures (Lecture by Ba Clemetsen)
Café Teatro Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 6pm	Churrerías (premiere) by Alessandra Santiesteban, leans towards happenings.
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 8:30pm	La mujer de carne y leche by Leire Fernández. (Proyecto MCL)
Karachi, 10pm	Café IbZen

SUNDAY 10TH NOVEMBER

Café Teatro Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 6pm	Churrerías (premiere) by Alessandra Santiesteban, leans towards happenings.
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, 8:30pm	La mujer de carne y leche by Leire Fernández. (Proyecto MCL)
Café Cantante Mi Habana. Teatro Nacional de Cuba, 10pm	Café IbZen. Performance by Djoyvan de Cuba and the Camerata (closing ceremony of Espacios Ibsen, by invitation)



Antigonón

FRI & SAT, 8:30PM; SUN, 5PM

Antigonón, un contingente épico, by Rogelio Orizondo, staged by Teatro El Público. With only two actresses on stage, this reworking of the myth of Antigone uses recourse such as dance, fragmentation of the discourse and the intersexuality to delve into present-day concerns.



Fíchenla si pueden

FRI & SAT, 8:30PM; SUN, 5PM

Argos Teatro premieres Fíchenla si pueden, a version by its director, Carlos Celdrán, of La Putain Respectueuse by French dramatist and novelist Jean Paul Sartre, the major exponent of the philosophy of existentialism, with Yuliet Cruz in the leading role escorted by Alexander Díaz, José Luis Hidalgo, Waldo Franco and Marcel Oliva. The viewer once more will face the challenge of elucidating where truth, justice and ethics truly lie.

SALA TITO JUNCO CENTRO CULTURAL BERTOLT BRECHT

Fri & Sat,
8:30pm; **Sun,**
5pm

Mefisto Teatro, directed by Tony Díaz, presents Muerte en el bosque, based on the novel Máscaras by Cuban novelist Leonardo Padura.

TEATRO RAQUEL REVUELTA

Fri & Sat,
8:30pm; **Sun,**
5pm

Teatro de la Luna presents Matrimonio en blanco, by the well-known Polish playwright Tadeusz Rozewicz, a complex play that revolves around sexuality.



Alfonso Menéndez's Back to Musicals keeps singing despite the occasional rain

BY VICTORIA ALCALÁ

Among the many sculptures and commemorative plaques we come across in Old Havana, Alfonso Menéndez Balsa well deserves to have one. Ever since he made his professional debut back in 1984, he has defended musical theater in the most important venues in Havana—Mella, Gran Teatro de La Habana, Nacional and America Theaters; in Spain at the Centro de la Villa de Madrid; and in Venezuela at the Teresa Carreño Theatre. And to prove himself, he took a leap and directed a memorable *Rigoletto* at the Bellas Artes Theater in Mexico City and the Degollados Theater in Guadalajara.

Someone could argue that musicals are a thing of the past or that Menéndez undertook the great operettas and zarzuelas at an auspicious hour in the Cuban stage, but his work at the Amphitheater of the Historic Center from 1997 to date dispels any possible doubts: *Yo mismo te doy la A* (authored by Menéndez) and *The Best in Spanish Musicals* (1998), *Las Leandras* and *Something Else* (1999), *Cecilia Valdés* (2000), *The Phantom of the Opera* (premiere in Cuba, 2006), *The Merry Widow* (2007), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (premiere in Cuba, 2008), *Beauty and the Beast* (premiere in Cuba, 2009), *Around Musicals* (2010), *Cats* (premiere in

Cuba, 2011), *The Lion King* (premiere in Cuba, 2012) and *Back to Musicals* (2013). Alfonso Menéndez has made the Amphitheater the principal stronghold of the musical theater in Havana, despite obstacles that may seem insurmountable, like the huge open-air stage, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and devoid, for this very reason, of any piece of stage machinery, and even the very young and inexperienced casts Menéndez works with given that other experienced figures cannot commit themselves to long seasons.

Those of us who have followed Alfonso Menéndez work in recent years have seen how he has molded his youthful actors, some of whom get up on a stage for the first time without any prior notion of the art of drama or dancing techniques. Menéndez also deserves praise for taking under his wing young people who are dropouts or come from dysfunctional families and turning them into an organized company who rehearse night after night for months, undeterred by heat waves or cold fronts. Beyond the artistic result of their efforts, one is moved by the spiritual transformation of his troupe, who the feeling of belonging to the Amphitheater of the Historic Center has given meaning to their lives.

Although Menéndez claims to know nothing about the subject, it is rumored that he will be entrusted with the management of the Martí Theater, whose reopening is announced for December after long years of capital repairs that will give back the theater the splendor of its belle époque. Should this be the case, then Back to Musicals would be his farewell to the Amphitheater, and he does so in style.

For around an hour, the young performers led by Menéndez—who is also in charge of the stage design, the script, the Spanish version, the choreography and lighting—sing and dance great moments of film and theater musicals: “Masquerade” (The Phantom of the Opera); “Over the Rainbow” (The Wizard of Oz); “Septimino” (The Merry Widow); “When You’re Good to Mama,” “We Both Reached for the Gun,” “All that Jazz” (Chicago); “Two Ladies” and “Maybe this Time” (Cabaret); “Yo me acaricio” (Cantando desnudos), “Singing in the Rain” (Singing in the Rain), “I Dreamed a Dream,” “Do You Hear

the People Sing?” (Les Miserables), “Don’t Cry for Me, Argentina” (Evita), “New York, New York” (New York, New York), “I Could Have Danced All Night” (My Fair Lady), “Memory” (Cats), “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend” (Moulin Rouge!), “One” (A Chorus Line) and “Mamma mia” (Mamma mia!). At first, this mixture of eras, authors and styles could seem a tour de force, yet the production flows smoothly thanks to the talent of Menéndez who knows how to harmoniously structure diversity and articulate the songs with each other through stage resources that practically go unnoticed.

Back to Musicals ensures the audiences that usually fill the Amphitheatre an hour of enjoyment in a show that ratifies that what appeals to the general public has nothing to do with vulgarity, that good taste and elegance are not exclusive to “high culture” on behalf of which not few works of poor quality have unfortunately made their way to film and theater.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



De vuelta al musical [Back to Musicals]

Amfiteatro del Centro Histórico
Throughout October, Sat & Sun, 9pm

Alfonso Menéndez’s revitalized troupe returns to the stage of Havana’s Amphitheatre in the Historic Center for a medley of famous songs from musical theater and films. Beautiful and suggestive music, excellent performances by young actors and singers, and splendid costumes enhance this production that includes selections from well-known musicals, such as “Masquerade” (The Phantom of the Opera); “Over the Rainbow” (The Wizard of Oz); “Septimino” (The Merry Widow); “When You’re Good to Mama”, “We Both Reached for the Gun”, “All that Jazz” (Chicago); “Two Ladies” and “Maybe this Time” (Cabaret); “Yo me acaricio” (Cantando desnudos), “Singing in the Rain” (Singing in the Rain), “I Dreamed a Dream”, “Do You Hear the People Sing?” (Les Miserables), “Don’t Cry for Me, Argentina” (Evita), “New York, New York” (New York, New York), “I Could Have Danced All Night” (My Fair Lady), “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend” (Moulin Rouge!), “One” (A Chorus Line) and “Mamma mia” (Mamma mia!).

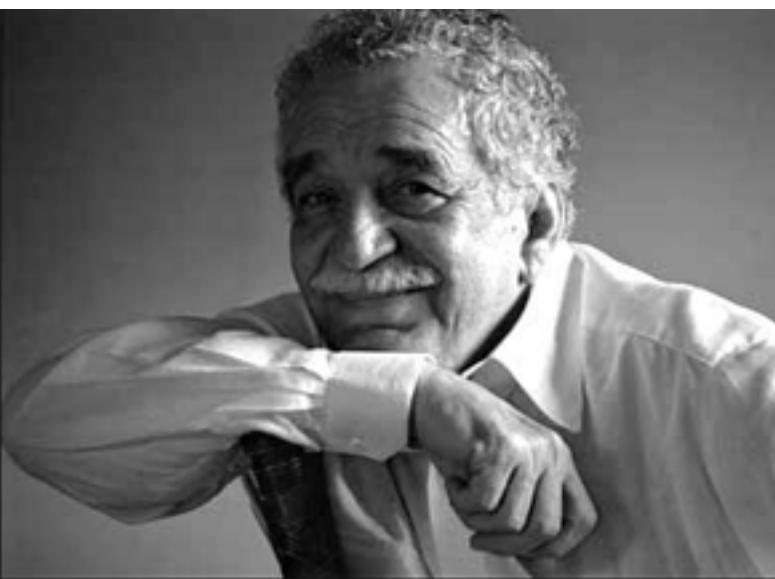


Semana de Autor

CASA DE LAS AMÉRICAS

NOV26-29

Continuing a tradition that began more than 40 years ago, Casa de las Américas organizes this annual meeting focusing on a prominent figure of Latin American letters. This year the meeting is dedicated to the renowned Mexican narrator and essayist Juan Villoro. The compilation of short stories and chronicles *Espejo retrovisor* will be put on sale during the event.



Tribute to Nobel Prizewinner for

Literature, Gabriel García Márquez

CASA DE LAS AMÉRICAS, NOV 14 & 15

Exhibition of illustrations on his literary work; workshop on his works, with the participation of the Colombian scholar Conrado Zuloaga; screening of every documentary ever filmed about the author; dramatized reading of García Márquez's first play *Diatriba de amor contra un hombre sentado* by the Laura García, who first opened the play.

CASA DE LAS AMÉRICAS

Nov 27,
2:30 pm

Architects Severino Rodríguez and Miguel Coyula will lecture on Diversity of Architectural Styles in El Vedado.



Teatro de Títeres El Arca

NOVEMBER 8-10, 15-17, 3PM

The Retablos Group from the city of Cienfuegos presents *La muchachita del mar*, based on the fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* by Hans the Danish author Christian Andersen.

November 18, 3pm

Presentation of *Peruso*, based on toy theater. Fifth grade children from an elementary school in Old Havana were in charge of decorating the paper theater with photographs of the city and manufactured paper.

November 22-24, 29-30, 3pm

Rerun of *Dos cuentan tres* with puppeteers Miriam Sánchez and Edith Ibarra.



En Buena Compañía

CARPA TROMPOLOCO

NOV 2, 3, 9 & 10, 4PM & 7PM

The magical and adventurous world of the circus continues. Cuba's prime circus venue, Carpa Trompoloco, presents "En Buena Compañía" (In Good Company), the new show featuring, among other acts, tightrope walkers, acrobats, clowns, gymnasts, trained animals, and the fascinating flying trapeze, which was awarded the Grand Prix during the past CIRCUBA 2013 Festival.



El Arca – where new puppets are born

BY MARGARET ATKINS

Ever since an old popular song fixed in the memory of every Cuban the tragic death of Lola, a woman of questionable moral who was killed by her lover at 3pm, this hour in the afternoon would forever be dubbed “the time when Lola was killed.”

Today, however, at least for the kids who live in Old Havana, this time of day has a completely different connotation--it's puppet show time.

“After the kids have played out in the sun in the nearby park, they come to El Arca and take refuge here,” says director Liliana Pérez Recio as she welcomes us to Teatro de Títeres El Arca--The Ark Puppet Theater--where in a lovely room the actors are rehearsing a puppet version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

With a capacity for 64 spectators, El Arca is located on the ground floor of Casa Pedroso, whose upper floors are home to the Office of the City Historian of Havana. Liliana takes us around the place, which includes the theater, the typical central courtyard of Cuban colonial homes, and the area of the future puppet museum to be opened to the public in 2014. El Arca is located right across the Bay of Havana and the environment is the pretext for the name: El Arca--The Ark--is the refuge where the puppets come to life and where they travel from one show to another.

When we asked Liliana how El Arca came to be, she tells us about her student days at the Higher Institute of the Arts (ISA) when a group of students gathered round researcher, playwright and theater expert Freddy Artiles who devoted his career to the validation of the at times misunderstood art of puppetry; of the nearly ten years she spent with the Guiñol National, Cuba's national Puppet Theater and of her relationship with Roberto Fernández, a director with a lengthy and fruitful stage career who was her teacher and friend. And of course, she tells us about Eusebio Leal, Historian of the City of Havana, heart and soul of the revitalization project of Old Havana, who never forgot a project suggested to him by a group who wanted to set up a street puppet theater. “Several years had passed and you might think he wouldn't remember, but one day we met here on the corner and Leal said, ‘What are you doing? Are you free? Come with me.’ He took me by the hand and showed me this place, recited some verses by Calderón de la Barca and asked me, ‘It's a theater, isn't it?’ And that's how it all began,” Liliana tells us clearly showing her emotions knowing that at her dream came true.

From the very beginning, the project included a puppet museum. “I asked Eusebio,” Liliana recalls,



“How can we have a museum if we don’t have a collection?” And he replied, “Don’t worry, We’ll have one somehow. However, we have no money, so where will we get the puppets? We’ll have one somehow,” he said again. Liliana’s eyes shine when she speaks of the City Historian. She can’t hide her respect and admiration for Leal. The adventure of traveling throughout the island knocking on the doors of puppet theaters everywhere in search of pieces for the museum began in 2008. “First we went to the provinces,” says the director of El Arca, “and told everyone that we were going to create a museum and that we wanted all the puppeteers and puppet troupes in the island to be represented in this museum.”

It was neither a quick nor an easy task. Some groups that had been important in the history of Puppetry in Cuba no longer existed and many pieces were in the hands of people who had already retired, or of family members who usually had no idea how to preserve them properly. “So, step by step, we began to create a Cuban collection,” and Liliana continues, “I believe that right now our collection has an acceptable level of representation, which reflects certain features that allow us to speak of Cuban puppetry. We owe our international collection to donations made by friends from Belgium, Africa, Spain, India, Brazil, Peru, Mexico. And while some puppets, for some reason or another, may not be extremely valuable as museum pieces, for us they do have an educational value.”

The idea is to have an interactive museum, where the children will be able to understand and learn the different puppetry techniques and to handle puppets. “Our aim is to make it fun,” assures Liliana, and announces that the UNIMA (International Puppetry Association) Council Meeting will be held in Matanzas, Cuba in April 2014 and that the museum will be opened for the occasion.

El Arca Theater opened with “Lilo’s Cat,” a shadow play. This technique was not common in Cuba and Liliana explains further: “Many people thought that El Arca was a theater for shadow plays. And

I always say, ‘No, El Arca is a laboratory, today it’s shadow plays and tomorrow something else.’”

And in justification of these words, she tells us about the premiere of *The Musicians of Bremen* adapted for paper theater, also called toy or model theater. This is the result of a paper theater workshop for children and adolescents who live in the Historic Center. Like many other institutions in the area, El Arca gives participation to the local community in the cultural process that is part of the revitalization and preservation program of Old Havana’s Historic Center.

At the time of our interview, the company was preparing *Sueño de una noche de verano* based on William Shakespeare’s immortal *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. This show has become a hard learning process especially for the less experienced actors who have had to work with rod puppets for the first time, in addition to the text by Shakespeare, quite different from the everyday language they are used to working with.

Like the biblical Ark, El Arca is a refuge and a place of promise where new puppets are born to help populate the rich world of Cuban puppetry.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



November 8-10, 15-17, 3pm

The Retablos Group from the city of Cienfuegos presents *La muchachita del mar*, based on the fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* by Hans the Danish author Christian Andersen.

November 18, 3pm

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November 22-24, 29-30, 3pm

Rerun of *Dos cuentos tres* with puppeteers Miriam Sánchez and Edith Ibarra.



VIII Week of Belgium Culture

NOV 8-16, 2013

FRIDAY, NOV 8

Vitrina de Valonia, Plaza Vieja, 5 pm

Opening of the exhibition of Belgian cartoonists Jazz in Vignettes with the performance of the band Habana Sax

SATURDAY, NOV 9

Chaplin Theater, 8:30 pm

Premiere of a series of Belgian films (see cinema section)

Mariana Grajales Park (Calle 23 entre C y D), 9:30 pm

DJ Party with DJ Dirk from Belgium and Djoy de Cuba

MONDAY, NOV 11

Vitrina de Valonia, Plaza Vieja, 3-4 pm

Opening of the lutherie sauvage workshop for children, conducted by the Belgian luthier Max Vandervorst

NOV 11-15

Library Showcase Wallonia, Plaza Vieja

Library of Vitrina de Valonia, Plaza Vieja

Work carried out by the Belgian cartoonist Etienne Schreder along with Cuban cartoonists in the preparation of the book *Soñar La Habana* (Dreaming Havana), a collaborative effort between OHCH (Historian's Office of the City of Havana) and Wallonie-Bruxelles International.

TUESDAY, NOV 12

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Edificio Arte Universal, 4 pm

Presentation of the Catalogue of Flemish Painting Collection of the National Museum of Fine Arts in the presence of the director of the Rubenshuis (Rubens House) museum in Antwerp.

Vitrina de Valonia, Plaza Vieja, 3-4 pm

Lutherie sauvage workshop for children, conducted by the Belgian luthier Max Vandervorst

WEDNESDAY, NOV 13

Alianza francesa, 10 am

Lecture on the bilateral relationship between Belgium and Cuba from 1902 to 1959 by Dr. Servando Valdés Sánchez.

Vitrina de Valonia, Plaza Vieja, 3-4 pm

Lutherie sauvage workshop for children, conducted by the Belgian luthier Max Vandervorst

THURSDAY, NOV 14

Hotel Nacional

Seminar on economic and trade exchange between Belgium and Cuba

Vitrina de Valonia, Plaza Vieja, 3-4 pm

Concert by the Belgian luthier Max Vandervorst accompanied by the children who participated in his workshop.

SATURDAY, NOV 16

Basílica Menor de San Francisco de Asís, 6 pm

Concert by Camerata Romeu with works by Belgian and Cuban composers

Camerata Romeu

In 1993 under the auspices of the Fundación Pablo Milanes creates the Camerata Romeu, as the first female string orchestra in Latin America and in the world. With this chamber orchestra, Zenaida Romeu has made numerous international tours and numerous recordings of Cuban and Latin American music for orchestra strings, often unpublished, collected in the phonograms

La Bella Cubana (Chamber Music Award and the Critics Award CUBADISCO 1997), Cuba Mia, Dance of the Witches, Tampa Havana Oslo, Raigal (Cubadisco) and Non Divisi, Roberto Valera monograph, Latin Grammy nominee, stamps Bis Music, Hummingbird.





The Marabana: Run Charlie run...

BY CHARLIE THOMPSON

The start of the race (is a marathon really a race for a middle-aged plodder?) is at the Capitolio. It is an impressive building, which gives some legitimacy to the typical Cuban casualness outside. Numbers are pinned onto shirts. The more enthusiastic push forward to get in the front of the pack. I am in no rush: my training schedule fell off a cliff some months ago, replaced by an acceleration of drinking and late nights. Even my associates are now looking professional, limbering up, stretching, rubbing oils and potions, drinking energy drinks. I guess that a pre-race cigarette would not be de rigueur.

It is dark outside, 5.30am. Wishful thinking that I could simply sleep in and let the Havana marathon wait another year. I have, after, all been signed in various times over the years and never quite made it. Unfortunately, I have a pick-up arranged and the phone wakes me from my slumber to let me know that the car is waiting outside—around the corner, to be precise. We pick up a couple more people (Elena, Rob). I only ever see them drinking so how serious can this be after all?"

The start of the race (is a marathon really a race for a middle-aged plodder?) is at the Capitolio. It is an impressive building which gives some legitimacy to the typical Cuban casualness outside. Numbers are pinned onto shirts. The more enthusiastic push forward to get in the front of the pack. I

am in no rush: my training schedule fell off a cliff some months ago, replaced by an acceleration of drinking and late nights. Even my associates are now looking professional, limbering up, stretching, rubbing oils and potions, drinking energy drinks. I guess that a pre-race cigarette would not be de rigueur.

We are into the countdown: 10, 9, 8... and the race begins. As I say to my kids, 'Hup 2, 3, 4'. It is a gentle start down the wide Prado Avenue (hints of Barcelona's Prado but only the faintest hint) down onto the Malecón. There is sufficient space now to accelerate past people. We rush past the family with two six-year-olds in tow, cruise past the man with one leg on crutches and then are locked into a bitter battle to get past some members of the



female Cuban walking team. Onwards along the gorgeous ocean boulevard. There is a loud cheer for an Italian's call of nature into the sea and another one for the same Cuban walking team—"Oye, linda, ¿qué vas a hacer más tarde?"—from the Cuban lads.

Stepping up the pace now, the fading colonial facades rush by. Well, crawl by would be a better description. The first water break, cheap plastic bags of water and squash, the 5 km mark. So far, so good. Bystanders start asking for the squash bags. This must be the only marathon in the world where the runners give refreshments to the spectators. The sun is starting to come up; it is going to be a long morning.

At the end of the Malecón, we go around the 1830 Restaurant and I see my running partner, Michaela, accelerate away into the blue yonder. We tack back into the city and up one of the few (and pretty moderate) climbs up 10th Street heading to the Charles Chaplin cinema. Around me are a motley collection of runners. It is difficult not to be depressed with my own running abilities when I am running alongside people who seem more like they are running for a bus than finely honed athletes. It is Cuba, so perhaps I should not be too surprised that running gear is a little basic.

At the 10 km mark, a flush of satisfaction rushes through me as many people wrap up their

participation with a 20-meter sprint. I am in for the long haul(ish). We are running down 26th Avenue. This is a much less attractive part of the city. Vedado into Nuevo Vedado past the seriously downbeat city zoo. Little old ladies shout out for agua/jugo. Bags go flying in their direction—I don't look. I am still annoyed that the guy with holes in his shoes who keeps stopping, always manages to get back ahead of me. He looks like he might be a rubbish collector on a regular round.





now has me passing people left and right. The other runners appear a little bemused now by the charging, puffing elephant roaring up behind them into the final 2 kilometres. This is feeling better.

Shirt back on to cross the finish line, down to the last 100 meters and ultimate triumph is mine as I thunder past Michaela, my original running partner. She is devastated. A forlorn scream of "No!" is left behind as the finish line approaches. I guess that I was her one-legged guy. After all, if the middle-aged fat bloke beats me, what is left?

I look anxiously for my kids to cheer me onto the line. Nothing. Still, 2 hrs and 12 minutes have passed and I have finished for the day. Funnelled into a cold building, we are awarded gold medals and a little gift bag. Out into the bright sunshine to see the finish of the marathon proper. These guys are serious runners who have been around the course twice in only a few minutes more than it took me to go around once. And the tall lithe Cuban runner crosses the finish line easily with a bounce in his step. Other runners start round for their second lap—I do not envy them. Traffic has now resumed and a second lap looks like a lesson in masochism as the sun beats down.

I have a few missed calls from my wife—I guess she was not so convinced I would finish and was waiting to rescue me on a breakdown call. I am out of here, straight to my physio to inspect the damage.

The 2013 Marabana will be held on Sunday November 17th – 7am start

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Down to the Ciudad Deportiva (a sports complex with a large indoor stadium which hosts indoor events—volleyball, basketball, etc.) situated alongside a busy roundabout. The traffic has not really been stopped as much as temporarily paused as we go by. It makes me feel guilty as the line of cars waits for us to struggle across. And around the associated sports fields of the sports complex. This now feels like the back of beyond. A distinct lack of glamour. I am cheered up though as I pass a friend who justifies his crawl by a requirement to keep his girlfriend company who is walking now. The 15 km mark goes by; I wonder how far it is that we really have to go. I am committed to a half marathon, which means there can't be so much more left. I still haven't collapsed and that must be a good sign although my shirt has come off much to the outrage of Cuban officials. We are coming up a slow climb to Plaza de la Revolución—that great barren expanse in the heart of the city that hosts the annual Labour Day parade into which a million people regularly pack. Not now, I am with a steady stream of runners, nothing more.

And now it is the home stretch through the rundown commercial district of Central Havana. Past the downbeat Carlos III shopping mall and back towards the Capitolio, which is present in the distance. A somewhat surprising burst of speed



Approaching the future from Havana's past around the ceiba tree at El Templete (Nov 16th)

BY VICTORIA ALCALÁ

"Someone asked me once to explain why we walk around the ceiba, as if poetry, which is the spice of life, could be explained. Yes, it is essential that we walk around the tree and, in that spiral, ask time to stretch out its hand...and know that the future can be only approached from the past."

Eusebio Leal (Historian of the City of Havana).

The Templete is a small neo-classical building constructed in the early 19th century to commemorate the first mass and council held in the town of San Cristóbal de La Habana on November 16, 1519. Each year this event is celebrated by a series of commemorative events the most notable of which is the custom of walking three times around the ceiba tree that is planted at the entrance of the Templete.

Hundreds of people wait at the door of the former Palace of the Captains General, today Museum of the City, for a curious procession to begin. The motley crowd is composed of smiling youths and solemn elderly people, couples with their children and grandparents with their grandchildren, lovers and lonely hearts. Many are wearing their everyday clothes; others, their Sunday best and even new clothes for the occasion.

It's 6 o'clock and the chimes of the bells from the Castillo de La Real Fuerza announce that the ceremony is about to start. Preceded by children from nearby schools who carry the silver maces that once belonged to the council of Havana, and accompanied by a group of his collaborators, Eusebio Leal Spengler, Historian of the City of Havana, exits the Palace of the Captains General. Someone cries: "Here comes Leal!" and the people who have been waiting hours for this moment quickly join the procession and walk across the Plaza de Armas to the Templete.

The Templete is a small neo-classical building constructed in the early 19th century to commemorate the first mass and council held in the town of San Cristóbal de La Habana (the fifth one founded by the Spanish) on November 16, 1519.



Although according to tradition, waiting in line must be done in absolute silence and is not wholesome to make known what you are going to ask the tree for, it is almost impossible for a Cuban to keep quiet so long, and pretty soon you can hear absolute strangers telling each other their reasons for coming this night to Old Havana: cures for illnesses, happy endings to unrequited loves, prosperity for newly started businesses, the solution to lengthy immigration procedures, success in infertility treatments, good results in university entrance examinations, finding prince charming... Those with a more pragmatic approach to life simply ask what the Spaniards sum up as “health and wealth.”

The details of the ritual have never been really established. No one can say for sure if you only ask for one wish or a different one with every turn; if you throw a coin every time you go round the tree or only one coin or several at the end. The two currencies in Cuba also pose new concerns. What will be most effective, an offering in the domestic currency or in convertible pesos? Others are suspicious about the destination of the money left under the tree or inserted in the tree trunk and the well-known answer is that it is used for social works in Old Havana.

So, amidst, conversations, questions and suspicions, the hours go by and with the break of day, the line begins to grow with workers before they head off to their jobs in schools, banks, stores, offices... They also wish to dedicate some time and make a wish at the ceiba of good fortune.

The clock is ticking down to the 500th Anniversary on November 16, 2019.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

Although Leal's words are always received with pleasure, the crowd seems to be impatient. The historian, who for many years has headed the procession, has sensed this and is brief. He reminds his listeners that the actual founding of what is now the capital of the Republic of Cuba took place in 1514 to the south of the island in Batabanó. Commenting on the fact that Havana will commemorate its half millennium in a few years, Leal said: “I sincerely hope that all of us may be here in 2019 to celebrate Havana's 500th anniversary. But now let us rejoice that we are here today celebrating the relocation of that initial camp to the south which was transformed into a town and became San Cristóbal de La Habana.”

At the mere mention of the ceiba, which recalls the tree that existed back in the 16th century and under whose shade the first mass was held, a stir took hold of the long line of people, sensing that the time was near for the procession round the tree to begin. Indeed, a few minutes later, Leal himself walked three times round the tree throwing a coin on every turn. Then, the historian invited the public to follow suit and the ritual began and continued all night and into the morning of the 16th.

EVENTS IN THE REST OF CUBA



Festival Internacional de Coros

November 26-30, 2013, Santiago de Cuba

Escorted by the country's highest mountains and the sea, Santiago de Cuba, the most Caribbean of all Cuban cities, has remained true to a legacy that goes back to the 18th century when the priest Esteban Salas, a native of Havana, composed Christmas carols, hymns and shepherds' plays (pastorelas) for his cathedral. These religious compositions are the first known written musical documents in Cuba.

Santiago's choral tradition is fueled by choirs founded by Spanish immigrants and their descendants, and

reaffirmed by the continuing work of Maestro Electo Silva, who in 1961 founded the National Choir Festival. Eventually, thanks to the participation of choirs from different countries, the festival, which is held every two years, became international.

An intensive program of morning and evening concerts in theatres, schools, factories, hospitals and public squares will characterize the five days of the festival. The most awaited concert, however, is the one held during the closing ceremony in which all the participating singers perform at Santiago de Cuba's principal plaza

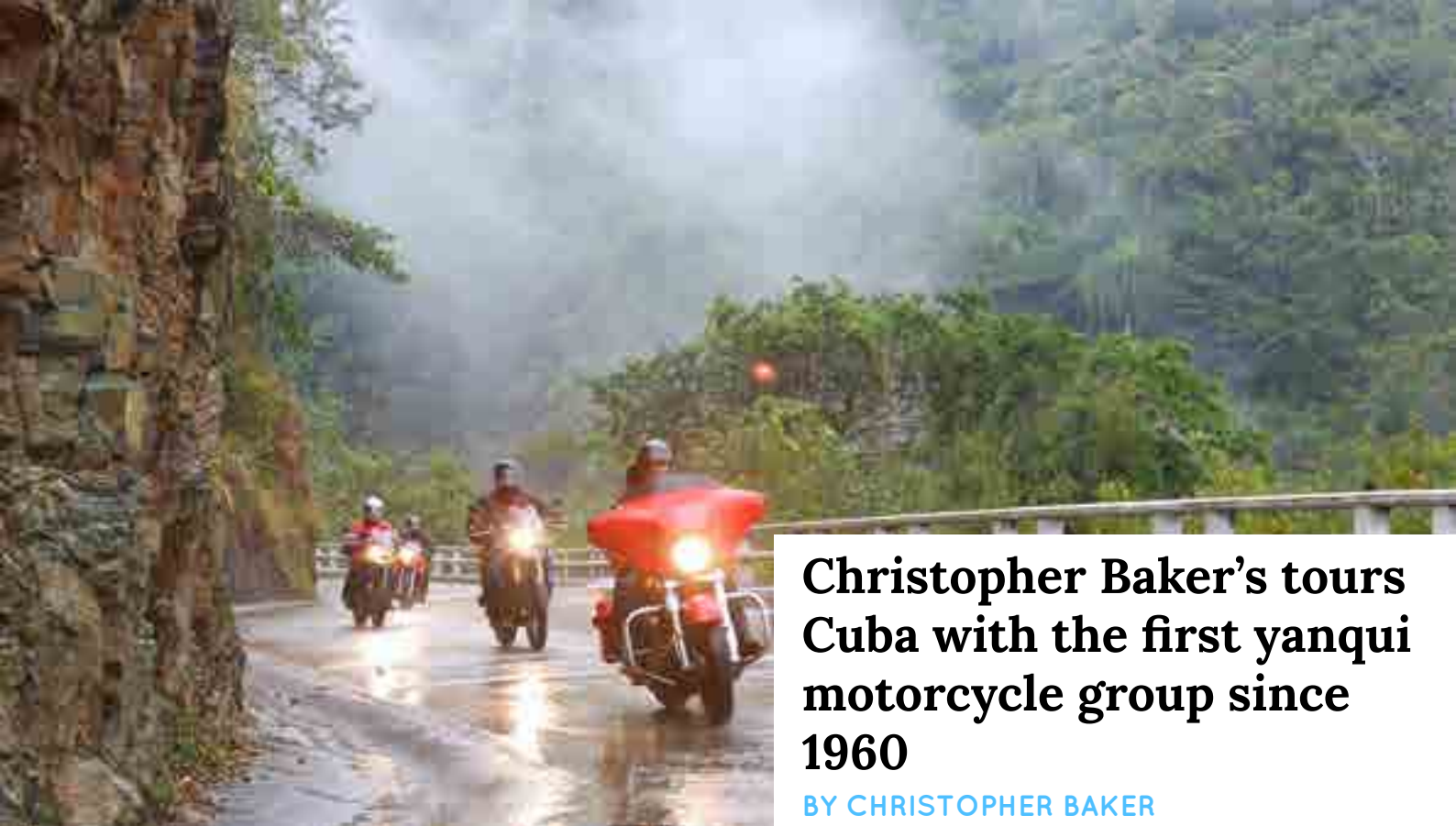
XIX Festival de las Artes Benny Moré

NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 1, 2013, CIEN-FUEGOS AND SANTA ISABEL DE LAS LAJAS OPENS OCTOBER 4

Two cities that the exceptional singer Benny Moré sang to: Santa Isabel de las Lajas (Lajas, my beloved soil / town where I was born) and Cienfuegos (Cienfuegos is the city / I like the most) will be the venues of the Festival of the Arts, that is named after the beloved artist and is held every two years. The 19th Festival of the Arts Benny Moré, which is presided this year by the versatile and innovative Cuban musician Augusto Enríquez, will be the launch pad of a cycle that will end in 2019, on Benny Moré's 100th birthday. This musician, who died in 1963, continues to be as popular as ever among every generation of Cubans thanks not only to his warm, well-pitched voice and accurate tuning, but above all for his charisma and identification with the people.



The organizing committee has emphasized their interest in attracting young people to this celebration, and will open spaces for rock, Afro-Cuban folklore, peasant, electronic and classical music, trova and jazz. This will be accompanied by other art manifestations such as theater, dance, visual arts and literature in projects designed by and for young people. Enhancing art for the people and leaving behind vulgarity seems to be the motto of this festival.



Christopher Baker's tours Cuba with the first yanqui motorcycle group since 1960

BY CHRISTOPHER BAKER

Eighteen years have passed since I first rode my R100GS to the Bay of Pigs during a three-month-long, 7,000-mile exploration of Cuba as a professional journalist. Eighteen years spent dreaming of leading the first U.S. group motorcycle tours of the island.

Finally... I'm so stoked, I can't suppress my glee any longer

"Weeeeeheeee!"

As the group files in one by one, I direct the participants to park their Beemers and Harleys outside the Bay of Pigs Museum and line up beneath the wings of a British-made Sea Fury that saw action defending Cuba against the CIA-sponsored invasion, in April 1961, by a Cuban-American exile army. Then I ride my F800GS into the midst of the group and have a museum guide shoot a photo for posterity beside a giant billboard that reads: "PLAYA GIRÓN [Cuba's term for the Bay of Pigs]. THE FIRST ROUT OF U.S. IMPERIALISM IN LATIN AMERICA."

"Congratulations!" I exclaim. "You've just made history. You're the first yanqui motorcycle group to explore Cuba end-to-end since the U.S. embargo was enacted in 1960."

Only 90 miles separate Key West from Havana, yet in many ways the Florida Straits is the widest moat in the world. Not least, Uncle Sam bars U.S. citizens from solo travel to Cuba (exemptions exist for Cuban-Americans, journalists, and humanitarian and religious travel, etc.). Fortunately, in January 2011, President Obama inched the door open by creating a new license category permitting any U.S. citizen to legally travel to Cuba for educational cultural exchanges run by companies and institutions that could now apply for such a mandate.

In 1995, I contacted Skip Mascorro, founder of Texas-based tour company MotoDiscovery, for advice on planning my journey. We stayed in touch. Last year he asked me to draft a license application and sample itinerary. Bingo! In January 2013, 14 eager motorcyclists flew south from Miami to participate in a 14-day all-Cuba program under a special license issued in April 2012 by the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), which oversees all regulations related to travel and trade with Cuba.

Since the P2P ("people-to-people") license prohibits recreation and "tourism," our motorcycles were used for the purpose of transportation between our requisite P2P exchanges. Those slice-of-life engagements with Cubans—from tobacco farmers to harlistas, owners of pre-revolutionary Harleys—



Harley-Davidsons—were supplied by a Danish company, Motorcycle Tours Cuba, that has been offering two-wheel tours for Europeans since 2009 (U.S. citizens are barred from participating). The company also supplied a support van to carry our gear.

Wherever we stopped, Cuban males coalesced to give us high fives and marvel at the exotic Beemers. “Phew!... hombre!” they exclaimed. “What marque is this? How big is the engine?” And, inevitably, “How fast does it go?” You’d have thought we’d landed in flying saucers.

Prior to the Revolution, Harleys were standard issue for Cuba’s police and the military. Then Cuba spun off into Soviet orbit. No more Harleys were imported, thanks to the U.S. embargo (Cubans call it *el bloqueo*, the blockade) that still hangs like an axe over Cuba. Thereafter, Soviet bloc Urals, MZs and Jawas flooded Cuba during four decades. Keeping them going is a testament to Cuban resourcefulness, ingenuity, and indefatigable optimism in the face of shortages and other difficulties we can barely imagine.

guaranteed a richly rewarding immersion with Cuba’s profound history and culture as we rode a 2,000-mile counter-clockwise circuit from Havana to Baracoa, at the eastern tip of the island.

Time-worn Baracoa was founded in 1511 as Cuba’s first city. Cusped within a bay spreadeagled beneath a huge flat-topped formation surrounded by rainforest, it resembled a mini Macondo, the surreal setting for Gabriel García Márquez’s novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. (Socialism and sensuality. Secret police and sexy showgirls. Cuba is nothing if not surreal.)

Arriving at Baracoa was its own adventure as we roared up La Farola, the steep mountain highway (completed since the Revolution) with nerve-wracking bends that switchback up and over the Sierra Cristal via the valley of the Río Yumurí. With its bridges cantilevered magically from the mountainside, La Farola struck me as a marvelous piece of engineering. Beyond the summit the world fell away as the road spiraled down to Baracoa, hovering on the distant horizon beneath a brooding twilit fusion of valley and molten sky.

Cuba is the flattest isle of the Greater Antilles. Our route was mostly level; the roads well-paved. West from Baracoa, however, the shoreline highway whittled down to an unpaved scrambler trail—a real roller-coaster—pitted with potholes brimming with a bouillabaisse of blood-red mud accumulated after recent rains. This 40-km-long enduro section added a welcome and adventurous challenge sandwiched between two full weeks of non-technical riding. I rode the trail standing up as I hauled along in third gear. I’m normally a 1200GSA rider. By comparison, the F800 seemed so incredibly light and responsive—a bike tailored for touring Cuba.

Since shipping a motorcycle across the Florida Straits is virtually impossible, our bikes—a combination of BMW F650s and F800s, plus four





arrive at the climactic spot where socialism and capitalism squared off in 1961. Cuban families and Canadian package tourists slathered with suntan oil splash about in the shallows. It's difficult with the sun beating down on a beach as silvery as mountain snow to imagine that blood and bullets had mingled with the sand and the surf here five decades before.

Further east we stop to get 'Sugar 101' from macheteros—sugarcane harvesters—in coarse work clothes and straw hats, slashing at the tall cane with short blunt-nosed machetes. Hard, dirty work. We pass thatched homesteads—bohios—and ox-drawn ploughs tilling the palm-studded land. Then Trinidad comes into view. Founded by conquistador Diego Velázquez in 1514, this cobbled colonial town—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—has sidestepped the currents of time. We slip uphill through maze-like cobbled streets that echo to the clip-clop of hooves. 'Horse-whisperer' Julio Muñoz even brings his horse inside his 18th-century colonial home to demonstrate 'New Age' equine techniques with which he hopes to change Cuba's macho cowboy culture.

"El cubano inventa," said Luís Enrique Gonzáles Saenz, President of Cuba's harlista club, explaining how Havana's proudly fanatical owners of antique Harleys go to extreme (even absurd) lengths to keep their hogs running. We began our tour at Luis' workshop adjoining his home in Havana's once tony Vedado neighborhood. "What we can't fix or cannibalize from other motos or cars we make ourselves," explained Luis, who co-guided with me throughout the tour. "We tailor pistons and virtually any other part you can think of right here. Hecho en Cuba, chico!"

The visitor's first reaction is of being caught in a 1950s time warp. Cars from the Eisenhower era are everywhere: Chrome-laden DeSotos. Corpulent Buicks. Stylish Plymouth Furies. And other relics of Mafia-era ostentation putter along beside modern Japanese taxis, sober Russian-made Ladas, and dour 650cc Urals with sidecars. It's hard to stay focused on the road as we head out of town along the Malecón boulevard sinuously fronting Havana's shoreline.

I ride sweep at the rear. Luis Enrique rides lead. The Doobie Brothers' 'Taking it to the Streets' surges from the speakers of his blood-red Street Glide as we hit the Autopista Nacional, Cuba's only freeway, and crank up to 120 kph, heading east. The concrete eight-laner runs through open countryside flat as a carpenter's level. We have it virtually to ourselves save for the occasional yanqui jalopy, Soviet tractors, and creaky wooden carts pulled by oxen, dropping long stalks of cane as they go. I'm thrilled to be back in the saddle, retracing my journey through a country I've grown to know well and love dearly. Enraptured, I cook down the highway, the F800 purring sexily as it eats up the hardtop in a sensuous intertwining of glorious harmonics and warm, perfumed air.

After 142 km we turn south for the Bay of Pigs and

Our route is a magical mystery tour of such fascinating people-to-people encounters: A visit to a rural clinic to learn about Cuba's community health system... a santería religious ceremony... a family-run marble-sculpting cooperative. In Guantánamo, we even pick up a tránsito (motorcycle cop) escort through the Cuban military zone and over La Farola to Baracoa. The taciturn Policía Nacional Revolucionario trio on their undersized Yamaha Viragos eventually thaw as Luis and I coax them to spill the beans about tránsito training.



“The enemy shall not pass our frontier!” screams a billboard outside Guantánamo. (Others reading “Patriotism or Death!” and “Long live socialism!” leave us no doubt that we’re in a Communist nation. Che Guevara’s visage is everywhere, too, alongside that of Fidel.) Yet everywhere we go, we’re feted. It seems a strange juxtaposition. Rousing anti-imperialist murals offset by three generations of Cubans—most well-nourished, well-shod and clothed, and beaming benignly—sending reassuring waves to us Yanks. It seems so innately Cuban: The considerate expression of a people uncommonly gracious and generous to a fault.

And sensual too.

Music is the pulsing undercurrent of Cuban life. Troubadors serenade us at every meal stop, causing ‘Junior’ (our support van driver) and Enedys (our local guide assigned to us by Cuba’s Havanatur tour agency) to get up and dance, a little closer than groin to groin. I’m amazed the birth rate isn’t higher. We can learn from the Cuban instinct for gaiety; the fun-loving way they turn adversity on its ear.

Arriving for a final night in Havana, Luis and I surprise the group by arranging for a ride to dinner

at Le Chansonnier—a superb paladar (private restaurant)—in a fleet of ‘50s classic convertibles. Then on to the Tropicana, the world-famous cabaret now in its eighth decade of Vegas-style stiletto-heeled paganism.

Sure, as far as adventure motorcycling goes this was tame. But just 90 miles from the malls and McDonalds of Florida, we’d journeyed to the soul of a haunting realm full of eccentricity, eroticism, and enigma.

Socialism and sensuality. Eighteen years after I first attended, the open-air extravaganza had lost none of its erotic

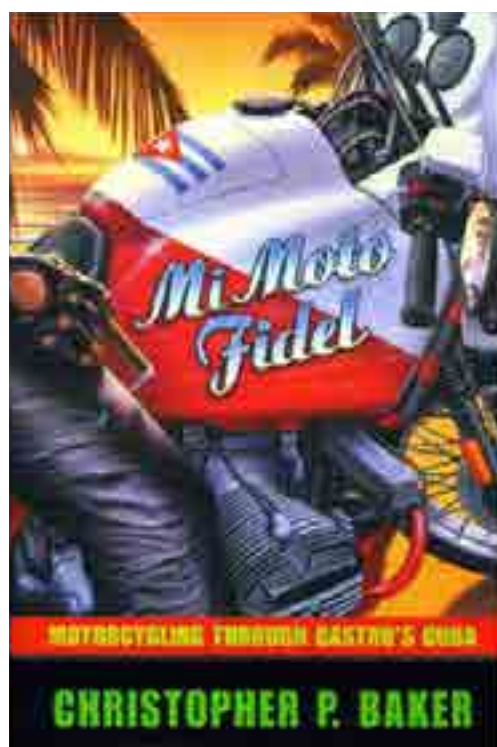
This story first appeared in the September/October edition of Adventure Motorcycle Magazine. adventuremotorcycle.com

“Christopher P. Baker is a professional travel writer, photographer, and tour leader. His six books about Cuba include MI MOTO FIDEL: MOTORCYCLING THROUGH CASTRO’S CUBA (National Geographic Adventure Press), winner of two national book awards.

<http://christopherpbaker.com/mi-moto-fidel>

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In 1996 Christopher shipped his BMW R100GS motorcycle to Cuba and rode 7,000 miles during a three-month journey to research the Moon handbook to Cuba. His award-winning literary travel book – *Mi Moto Fidel: Motorcycling through Castro's Cuba* – describing the journey was published by National Geographic Adventure Press.

Awards

Travel Book of the Year

Lowell Thomas Awards

"This is a wonderful adventure book... a meditation on philosophy, politics, and the possibilities of physical love. It has the depth of a novel and the feeling of a great love story."

Judges, Lowell Thomas Award

also NATJA Grand Prize

Rave reviews...

"Mi Moto Fidel is a satisfying and complete portrait of Cuba It's all here: money, sex, politics, geography, history, cigars, marlin, and, of course, Fidel. Serious travel writing is often intricate and complex. Bikers, it seems, do it better."

Tim Cahill – *Pass the Butterworms and Road Fever*

"Baker's kiss-and-tell account of his romps across Fidel's island offers a bittersweet glimpse of life inside the last Marxist utopia."

Jon Lee Anderson – *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*

"Chris Baker's chaotic pilgrimage-by turns sharp-eyed, lustful, poetic, feverish and joyful-brings a tropical nation of 10 million to vivid, pulsating life. The motorcycle proves itself, once again, a brilliant, ice-breaking instrument of true travel."

Ted Simon – *Jupiter's Travels: Four Years Around the World on a Triumph*



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Until Next Time, Havana

FROM MY SEDUCTIVE CUBA BY CHEN LIZRA

On the afternoon of the last day of my last two-month visit to Cuba, I found myself in Centro Habana, walking back to my hotel following dance classes. To my right were kids playing with an old ball that hardly had any air. It didn't matter; they were having fun. A mom appeared on the balcony and called her daughter in. I kept walking; Cuban men were coming on to me saying sweet things as usual.

Nowadays, kids play Nintendo or sit and chat on Skype or MSN. If your mom needs you, she'll call your cellphone. The world has changed a lot, but is it better? I don't know. We've lost so much of our simplicity for the sake of comfort and technology. They should come hand in hand, but in reality one seems to come at the expense of the other.

Why is it that we want everything to be so new when the old is so charming? I wondered if they'd get rid of the old cars when Cuba changes. I used to come here and be fascinated with every car. They have so much character. Now it's just part of the landscape. It seems silly to take pictures of them all the time. But without them, it would feel like something's missing. Another thing I love about Cuba is that no one ever asks how old you are and classifies you according to your answer. You just live and enjoy the moment.

Later in the evening I went with Orly – my talented French-Israeli singer friend who lives between Paris and Havana – to grab a bite and share some deep conversation. She walked me back to my hotel after dinner. It was really hard to say goodbye. So many hugs. I just couldn't let go, so we just stood there. I looked at her and said, "Orly, where am I going? I live here, no?" and I laughed. It did feel strange to leave, like leaving home. I love Cuba. It's always so hard for me to leave it. Meeting Orly on that trip made it even harder, because we became so close and shared such a deep friendship, like two sisters.

Eventually my eyes were shutting down. We squeezed each other one last time and I was off to bed. I lay there, eyes shut, trying to fall asleep. Around 1 a.m., I heard an SMS come in and had the feeling I knew who it was from. I opened my eyes, rolled over heavily, and read it. It was Orly saying one last goodbye and how much all of this meant to her. I sent her a text message back saying the same. My eyes were all watery, the best kind, when you love people. I flipped over and fell asleep immediately.

In the morning I woke up way too early. I was too emotional to sleep. The Malecón was so calm at dawn and the colors were so pretty. I'm never



awake at this time. Car headlights and street lamps reflected in the water, yet there was already enough light to distinguish the sea with its unique colors. So calm, so peaceful. There's never a reason to rush anywhere in Cuba. Where to? What for? That's part of the beauty of this place. I packed my things and went to say goodbye to Melba and Alberto, my friends who own a beautiful casa particular. It was time.

Then I took a taxi to the airport. When I asked the driver to turn on the air-conditioning, he laughed and said, "You are getting ready for the change in climate?" Yes, I said, laughing back. It was the first time I had ever ridden anywhere in Cuba and the driver did not exchange even one word with me. I wondered if he was trying to give me the space he thought foreigners needed. At that moment, it felt like I was about to leave; things were already changing back to foreign mode.

Cubans often get confused when I look Cuban; sometimes it creates the strangest situations. For example, taxis don't always stop for me because they assume I don't have money. This time around, while at the airport getting my bags scanned, an official asked to see my passport. When he saw I was Canadian, he said, "Se parece a una cubana" [You look like a Cuban]. I replied, "Casi cubana después de cinco años, pero no" [Almost Cuban after five years, but no]. He laughed with me. I realized that as a Cuban it must have seemed strange that I had so much electronic equipment and videotapes with me – I filmed all my dance classes – but for a foreigner it made complete sense.

I sat at the airport waiting for my flight, this little airport that feels as if you landed in a little village, and you'd get off the plane and walk straight to the local mama's house for a delicious meal. I sat there working on my computer. Every once in a while, some foreigner would come up to me and ask, "Do you have an Internet connection here? How?" And I'd reply, "WiFi at José Martí Airport? Maybe in 10 or 20 years. I am just working on my laptop," and I'd smile from ear to ear.

The Cuban men working at the airport were being typical cubanos, checking me out wherever I walked – to the restrooms, to get some food, even just to stretch. Yes, I for sure will miss this place, my great friends, the dance classes, the seduction, Havana nightlife, the charming messiness, everything.

I got on the plane, and as we took off, the air-conditioning system tried to moisturize the cabin, and it looked like smoke. The pilot told us not to worry. I was certainly leaving, I thought to myself. No one bothered announcing anything on the domestic flight from Havana to Santiago de Cuba when that plane became filled with smoke. But that's how things work in Cuba; you just figure things out on the fly. There's something really charming about constantly living the moment, and it's a nice break from the fast world out there.

My flight to Toronto took three and a half hours, and the flight attendants were so nice and formal. I just kept wishing things would be a little less formal and a little warmer and more personal like in Cuba. But that didn't happen. Step by step, I was leaving Cuba and its warmth, and landing in another more detached world.

After going through passport control in Toronto, I went to get my suitcase. While waiting at the baggage carousel, I felt like I was being bombarded with a million sales pitches. It's shocking to see advertising all around you after two months without it. I got my suitcase and went to find the shuttle to my hotel. Everything was smooth. It felt so strange.

The first thing I did upon arriving at the hotel was order a plate of tomatoes. It sounds strange, but after so long without tomatoes, I had to have tomatoes. The guy at reception, seeing my reaction to everything, said to me, "You're in culture shock." I smiled. I must have looked disoriented.

Everything was so efficient and perfect. Too perfect. I felt no real connection with anyone; I could not even feel the heart of one person. In my room, the toilet paper was soft and there was hot water. I stood under the spray for 20 minutes, not believing there was real pressure. My hotel bed was so comfortable that I felt uncomfortable. It

was too quiet. I had a very hard time falling asleep – no music on the Malecón, no crowds outside. It felt lifeless. Some people might not see anything wrong with this picture, but after two months in Cuba, it all felt wrong. The receptionist was right; I was in complete culture shock.

After a few days, I returned to Vancouver. I managed to fill my refrigerator with just about every kind of food possible. I kept opening the fridge staring at the food and not believing the variety. Going to the supermarket was like going to Disneyland. There were so many options. I was slowly adjusting back to Canadian life and thinking how much I would have loved to have this comfort combined with Cuba's strong sense of community. But it seems that the price we pay for perfection is a loss of connection to the moment and to other people.

Yes, Cuba has many problems. It's not an easy place to live in, and some things need to change. But as a good friend once told me, "The good and the bad about something always come from the same place." In fact, the very things we feel must



change in Cuba are precisely the things we love so much about the island. Cuba truly has something special to offer that no other place I know even comes close to.

Returning from Cuba after two magical months showed me how much we take things for granted. Every year, I let Cuba inspire my heart and remind me to not take things for granted. By the time I start to forget, I go back and let Cuba inspire me all over again. I miss Cuba whenever I'm not there, like home. And as soon as I set foot on Cuban soil again, it feels as if I never left. But don't worry – I'll be back soon.

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)



Chen Lizra, an Israeli-Canadian dancer, TED speaker and entrepreneur, is the best-selling author of *My Seductive Cuba* - an award winning unique travel guide that mixes her personal anecdotes with practical travel advice. Imagine "Eat, Pray, Love" meets the "Lonely Planet!" Chen has been leading boutique tours for only ten people inside authentic Cuba since 2008. Her connection to the arts scene through years of dance training gives her an interesting angle on the island and an interesting network. www.myseductivecuba.com/cuban-tours

Twitter: @ChenLizra, Facebook + Instagram: clizra.



From Our Secret Garden: Cuba Libro

BY CONNER GORRY

“You’re not going to get any walk-in business. It’s too off the beaten track.”

“There’s a place for rent near 23 & G. Why don’t you move there?”

“You can’t have a basket of free condoms. They’ll get stolen in one stroke.”

“What do you mean all the books are in English? You have nothing in Spanish?!”

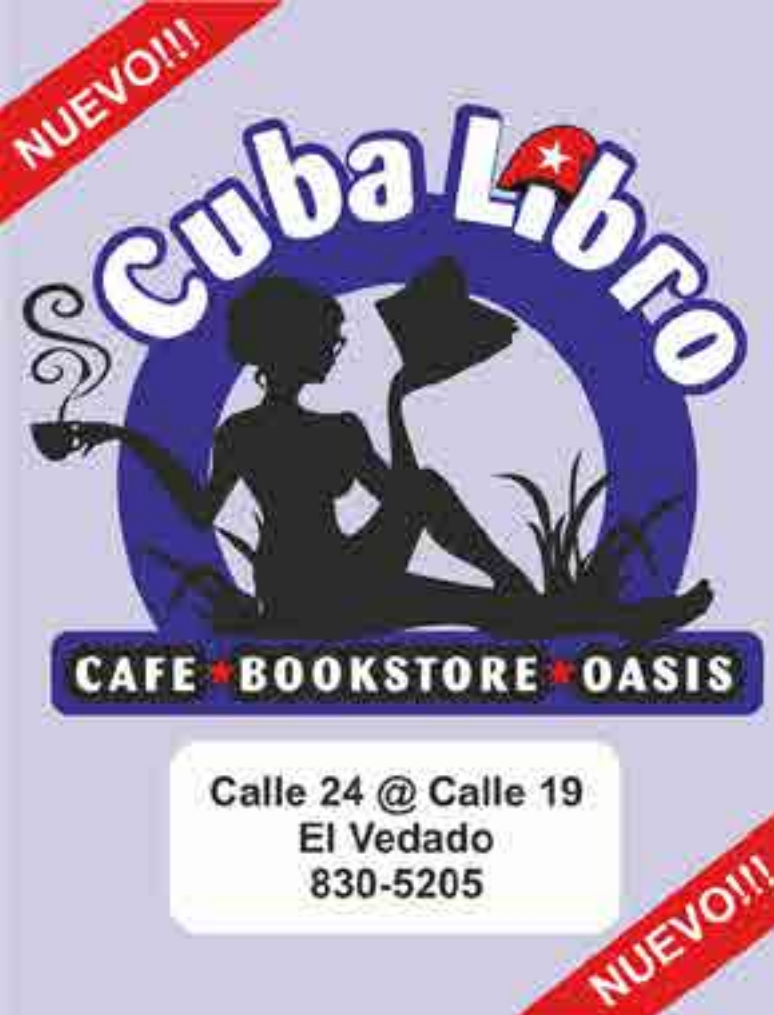
These were some of the comments and observations made by friends and family as we prepared to open Cuba Libro, the island’s first English-language bookstore (and much more). We heard them out – that’s the polite thing to do after all. But in the end, no hicimos caso; we didn’t take their opinions to heart.

We were casting our fate at the corners of Calle 24 and 19 in Vedado, once the home and studio of renowned Cuban photographers Mayito and Marucha (co-founder of Fototeca de Cuba); we knew there was a local and foreign market/passion for books in English; and we wanted to give people the benefit of the doubt – that we could leave out a basket of high-quality, imported condoms and

people would only take as many as they needed (or what they hoped they needed!).

Cuba Libro opened its doors at the tree-lined corner of 24 and 19 barely three months ago and the reception – by neighbors, visitors, and Cubans from all walks of life, economic strata, and ages – has been more supportive, positive, and energetic than we ever dare dreamed.

No one involved in the project is getting rich, mind you (few booksellers ever do, Amazon notwithstanding), but that was never a goal. We set out to create a comfortable, unpretentious, jinetero-free oasis of nature and literature, where foreigners and Cubans (English-speaking or not), could hang out and converse, have a proper ice coffee, listen to good music and lay aside their worries for an hour or three. We were also determined from the start to actively involve as many young, creative Cubans as possible and to have Havana’s nicest public bathroom. We committed ourselves to equity, environmental protection and education, and to welcoming everyone with the good humor and cheer for which Cuba is famous.



“We should have a place like this on every corner.”

These are just some of the comments we’ve received recently. But don’t believe me when I tell you: Cuba Libro is a special, joyful and unique place to pass a spell. Come in and experience it for yourself.

We’ll save a hammock for you!

*Anyone interested in donating dictionaries or other books, please write to cubalibrohavana@gmail.com for details.

Cuba Libro is on Calle 24, on the corner of Calle 19, in Vedado. We’re open daily but Sundays, 10am-8pm. Telephone: 830 5205. Follow us on Twitter (@cubalibrohavana) and Facebook (cubalibroHAV).

[CONTINUE TO READ FULL ARTICLE + SLIDESHOW](#)

The Cuba Libro team – coffee addicts all – was also adamant that the espressos, cortaditos, and cappuccinos served would be the best to be had in Havana. After consulting a Southern belle and an English lass, we also felt confident we’d be offering the tastiest iced and hot tea in the city. Last but not least, our Cuban provider of tropical juices – uncut, with no sugar – guaranteed to provide us the freshest, seasonal juices available.

Just under three months in and we’ve already been likened to Shakespeare & Co. in Paris and City Lights in San Francisco (blush); featured two shows by a pair of incredibly talented young Cuban artists; and started a dictionary donation project with the primary school across the street.*

“That’s a five-star bathroom. There’s a toilet seat and everything!”

“I think this is the best mango juice I’ve ever had in my life.”

“I’ve been taking care of my dying father. I haven’t felt this stress-free in nine months.”

“I wish we’d found Cuba Libro at the beginning of our trip instead of the end.”





Galleries & Studios in Havana

7th & 60th Studio

Unique studio-gallery started showing the work of four young artists

www.cu-bartspace7y60.com

Casa de los Artistas

Works by Zaida del Río, Fabelo, Rancáño, Pedro Pablo Oliva

Calle Oficios #6 (second floor), entre Obispo y Obrapía, Old Havana (07) 862-8986

Casa-Estudio de José Fuster

Fascinating excursion to see Cuba's Gaudiesque

Calle 226, esquina 3A, Jaimanitas (07) 271-3048

Centro de Arte La Casona

One of Havana's leading exhibition spaces

Calle Muralla #107, esquina San Ignacio, Old Havana (07) 861-8544

Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wilfredo Lam

Showcases visual arts in developing countries

San Ignacio #22, esq. Empedrado, Old Havana

Centro Hispano Americano de Cultura

Cultural center

Malecón No 17 e/ Paseo de Martí & Capdevila, Centro Habana (07) 860-6282

Cristo Salvador Gallery

Something completely different in Cuba's burgeoning art world

Calle 11 No 1104 entre 14 y 16, Vedado

Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales

Contemporary art center on Plaza Vieja San Ignacio 352, esq. a Brasil (Teniente Rey), Plaza Vieja, Old Havana (07) 862 3533

Espacio Aglutinador

Run by Sandra Ceiballos, who also lives in the space

Calle 25 #602, entre 6 y 8, Vedado (07) 830-2147

Factoría Habana

Experimental center for present-day artistic creation

O'Reilly 308 entre Habana y Aguiar, Old Havana

Fototeca de Cuba

The largest, most valuable collection of Cuban photographs Mercaderes 307 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Old Havana (07) 862-2530

Fundación Ludwing de Cuba

Penthouse of a five-storey building, with breathtaking view Calle 13 #509, 5to piso, entre D y E, Vedado (07) 832-4270

Galería La Acacia

High-end and well-stocked commercial gallery

Calle San José #114, e/ Industria y Consulado, Old Havana (07) 861-3533

Galería Habana

One of Havana's most established galleries

Línea #460, entre E y F, Vedado (07) 832-7101

Galería Victor Manuel

Mainstream decorative modern paintings San Ignacio 56, esq. a Callejón del Chorro, Old Havana (07) 861-2955/866-9268

Galería Habana

Small gallery next door to Cine Chaplin Calle 23 y 10, Vedado (07) 831-1101

Galería Villa Manuela

Exhibiting some of the best contemporary Cuban artists Calle H, e/ 17 y 19, Vedado (07) 832 2391

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

Cuba's largest and most impressive permanent art collection. Trocadero entre Zulueta y Monserrate, Old Havana

Pabellón Cuba

Modern architectural building, HQ to Association Hermanos Saiz Calle 23 y Calle N, Vedado (07) 835-0822

Taller Experimental de Gráfica de laHabana

Cuba's only engraving workshop Callejón del Chorro #62, Old Havana (07) 862-0979



Dance & concert venues in Havana

Centro Cultural "El Palenque"

Major indoor venues

Gran teatro de La Habana

Stages ballet opera, zarzuela and Spanish dance

Calle Prado entre San Rafael y San José, Old Havana
(07) 861 3077 / 5873

Teatro Nacional de Cuba

Recently renovated, where the best performances are

Paseo y 39, Plaza de la Revolución, Vedado

Teatro Mella

1,500-seat theatre used for dance, folk-lore, circus and variety show

Línea No. 657, entre A y B, Vedado
(07) 833-8696

Teatro Karl Marx

The best-equipped and largest venue in town

Calle 1ra, esquina 10, Miramar
(07) 203-0801

Modern Dance groups in Havana

Compañía de Danza Narciso Medina

Dance-theater, body contact, minimalism in performance style

Cine Teatro Favorito, Belascoáin, esq. Peñalver,
(07) 878-2650

Compañía Rosario Cárdenas

Innovative and creative group gaining fabulous reviews

Centro de Danza de la Habana. Prado No. 111, e/ Genios y Refugio
(07) 878-6765

Danza Contemporánea de Cuba

Cuba's legendary and most celebrated modern dance group

Teatro Nacional de Cuba. Paseo y 39, Plaza de la Revolución
(07) 879-6410

Retazos

Directed by Ecuadorian spitfire Isabel Bustos

Teatro Las Carolinas. Calle Amargura No. 61, entre Mercaderes y San Ignacio
(07) 866-0512

Best outdoor venues

Callejón de Hamel

Cuban rumba in Salvador's shrine to Afro-Cuban religions

Noon-3pm Sun; 10am-noon Sat
Callejón de Hamel, e/ Hospital y Aramburu, Centro Havana

Centro Cultural El Gran Palenque

Mesmerizing show of Afro-Cuban rumba

Calle 4, entre 5ta y Calzada (7ma). Vedado
Saturday 3-5pm

Salon Rosado de la Tropical

Legendary beer garden where Arsenio fore it up. Unrivalled energy, great venue.

Ave.41 esq. 46, Nicanor del Campo

Jardines de la Tropical

Beautiful and unique location in old Tropical brewery gardens. Out of the way but worth it

Calle Rizo y Baire, Puentes Grandes, Municipio Plaza

Cabaret

Cabaret Tropicana

Legendary Vegas-style extravaganza under the stars

Calle 72 No. 4504, entre 41 y 43, Marianao
(07) 267 0110 / 1717-8

Cabaret Parisiën

Beautiful dancers, intimate locale, at Cuba's most historic hotel

Hotel Nacional, Calle O, esquina 21, Vedado
(07) 873 4701 ext. 129

Habana Café

Where Vincent Vega would get his ten-dollar shake in Havana

Hotel Meliá Cohíba, Avenida Paseo, esquina 3ra, Vedado
(07) 833-3636

Cabaret Turquino

Stunning view from 26th floor. Retractable roof, up market.

Habana Libre Hotel. Calle L, e/ 23 y 25, Vedado
(07) 838-4011

Best live music venues in Havana



Classical

Teatro Auditórium Amadeo Roldán

Great space.

Amadeo Roldán Teatro Auditórium
Calzada No. 512, esquina D, Vedado

Basílica Menor de San Francisco de Asís

Beautiful church

Calle Oficios, Plaza San Francisco de Asís, Old Havana

Oratorio de San Felipe Neri

Fabulous acoustics

Calle Aguiar No.412 entre Obrapia y Lamparilla, Old Havana

Sala Covarrubias, Teatro Nacional

Recently renovated

Paseo y 39, Plaza de la Revolución

Jazz

Café Jazz Miramar

Improvised jamming. Funky.

Cine Teatro Miramar
Calle 5ta Esquina A 94, Miramar
10:30pm – 2am

Jazz Café

Quality jazz. Cold atmosphere.

Centro de Danza de la Habana. Prado No. 111, e/ Genios y Refugio

Privé Lounge

Chilled atmosphere – private

Calle 88A No. 306 e/ 3ra y 3ra A, Miramar,
(07) 209-2719

La Zorra y el Cuervo

Intimate and atmospheric.

Calle 23, entre N y O
Tel. 833 2402

Salsa/Timba

Café Cantante Mi Habana

Great musicians. Basement club.

Teatro Nacional de Cuba, Avenida Paseo, esquina 39, Plaza de la Revolución

Casa de la Música de Centro Habana

A bit rough. Great bands.

Galiano, entre Neptuno y Concordia,
Centro Habana
(07) 860 8296/4165

Casa de la Música de Miramar / El Diablo Tun Tun (upstairs)

Best salsa bands

Calle 35, esquina 20, Playa

El Jelengue de Areíto

Matinees on the terrace

EGREM Patio
San Miguel 410, entre Campanario y Lealtad, en Centro Habana

Contemporary

Bertolt Brecht Café Teatro

Cuban hipsters

Bertolt Brecht Café
Teatro Calle 13 e/I y J, Vedado

Don Cangrejo

Beautiful people...cool

Avenida 1ra entre 16 & 18, Miramar

El Sauce

For best in Nueva trova

Avenida 9na #12015, entre 120 y 130, Playa
Tel: +53 (07) 204-6428

Teatro de Bellas Artes

Small intimate venue

Trocadero entre Agramonte y Avenida de las Misiones, Old Havana

Trova & traditional

Barbaram Pepito's Bar

Nueva trova musicians

Calle 26 entre Avenida del Zoológico y Calle 47, Nuevo Vedado
(07) 881-1808

El Gato Tuerto

Fabulous bolero. Intimate

Calle O, entre 17 y 19, Vedado

Hurón Azul (UNEAC)

Students, artists. Hang out.

Calle 17, esquina H

Salón 1930 'Compay Segundo'

Buena Vista. Traditional.

Hotel Nacional de Cuba, Calle O, esquina 21, Vedado



Theatres in Havana

Adolfo Llauradó Sala Teatro

Home of the Teatro Estudio troupe.
Varied theatre program
Calle 11, e/ 11 D y E.
Vedado

América Teatro

Opened in 1941. Art deco style with magnificent interiors
Galiano 253 entre Concordia y Neptuno.
Centro Havana (07) 862-5416

Bertolt Brecht Centro Cultural

Cultural centre houses a modern 300-seat space called Sala Alternativa
Calle 13, esq. I. Vedado
(07) 832-9359

Casa de la Comedia

Also known as the Salón Ensayo, it is the base for the company El Taller
Justiz No. 18, entre Baratillo y Oficios. Old Havana

La Casona

Adapted in 1970 as rehearsal space for the Teatro Estudio theatre company
Calle 11, e/D y E. Vedado
(07) 832-5373

La Colmenita

A theatre group of children for children. Their performances have been widely acclaimed
Sala de la Orden Tercera. Convento de San Francisco. Plaza de San Francisco.
Old Havana

Fausto Teatro

Probably the best place in Havana for variety and comedy acts
Prado No. 201, esq. Colon. Old Havana
(07) 863-1173

Gaia

An arts center that was set up in 2000
Teniente y Rey No. 157, e/ Cuba y Aguiar.
Old Havana
(07) 862-0401

Teatro Nacional del Guiñol

Home to Cuba's leading children's theatre and puppetry company
Calle M, e/ 17 y 19.
Vedado (07) 832-6262

Humbert de Blanck Teatro

Predominantly stages classics of international theater
Calzada (7ma), No. 657, e/ A y B. Vedado
(07) 830-1011

El Sótano Sala Teatro

Home to the Compañía Teatral Rita Montaner. Quite basic
Calle K, e/ 25 y 27.
Vedado
(07) 832-0630



El Sótano Sala Teatro

Home to the renowned theatre company Teatro El Público
Calle Línea e/ Paseo y A. Vedado (07) 830-9648

Havana's best Museums

Arte Corte (Papito's)

Hairdressing salon and "interactive museum"

Aguilar 10 entre Peña Pobre y Monserrate, Old Havana

Cámara Oscura

360-degree panoramic view of Old Havana

Brasil (Teniente Rey), esquina a Mercaderes, Old Havana

Casa Oswaldo Guayasamin

Work by Oswaldo Guayasamin

Obrapia 111, entre Oficios y Mercaderes, Old Havana

Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro

Symbol of Havana and most visited place

North-eastern side of the harbor

Castillo de la Real Fuerza

Fortress

O'Reilly #1, Plaza de Armas, Old Havana

Depósito del Automovil

49 restored vehicles from 1905 to 1989

Oficios 13 esquina a Callejón de Jústiz, Old Havana

Fundación Havana Club

Stages of traditional rum production

Avenida del Puerto 262, esq. a Sol, Old Havana

Maqueta de La Habana

Scale model of Havana (third largest in world)

28 #113 entre 1ra y 3ra, Miramar

Museo Armería 9 de Abril

Firearms and bladed weapons C18th to 20th

Mercaderes 157, e/ Obra-pía y Lamparilla, Old Havana

Museo de la Ciudad

Palacio de los Capitanes Generales

Cuba (Tacón) e/ Obispo y O'Reilly, Old Havana

Museo del Chocolate

Watch chocolates being made

Mercaderes esq. a Amargura, Old Havana

Museo de la Farmacia Habanera La Reunión

The most important pharmaceutical complex in Cuba

Brasil (Teniente Rey) esquina a Compostela, Habana Vieja

Museo del Ferrocarril

Housed in the former Cristina railway station

Estación Cristina, s/n, esq. a Arroyo, Old Havana

Museo Napoleónico

Finest collection of Napoleonic and French Revolutionary memorabilia outside France

San Miguel #1159, e/ Ronda y Masón, Vedado

Museo de la Revolución

Revolutionary history Refugio 1 e/ Monserrate y Zulueta, Old Havana

Museo Armería 9 de Abril

Firearms and bladed weapons C18th to 20th

Mercaderes 157, e/ Obra-pía y Lamparilla, Old Havana

Museo Nacional de la Danza

Objects from Alicia Alonso's collection

Línea y G (Avenida de los Presidentes), Vedado

Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas

Aristocratic wealth, taste and passion

17 #502 esq. a E, Vedado

Planetario

Interactive cultural center

Mercaderes 311 e/ Brasil (Teniente Rey) y Muralla. Plaza Vieja, Old Havana

El Templete

Commemorates the first mass held

Baratillo, esq. a O'Reilly, Old Havana



Best places to eat in Havana

El Atelier CA★5

Contemporary fusion
Calle 5 entre Paseo y 2,
Vedado
(07) 836-2025

Bikos CA★5

Spanish/Mediterranean
Calle 19, No 1010,
esquina a 12, Vedado
(07) 836-3603

Café Laurent CA★5

Spanish/Mediterranean
Calle M No. 257, entre 19
y 21, Vedado
(07) 831-2090/832-6890

Carboncita CA★5

Italian (+delivery)
Ave. 3ra No. 3804 entre
38 y 40, Miramar
(7) 203 0261 / 5 290 4984

La Casa CA★5

Contemporary fusion
Calle 30 No. 865 entre
26 y 41, Nuevo Vedado
(07) 881-7000

Casa Miglis CA★5

Swedish
Lealtad 120 entre Áni
mas y Lagunas. Centro
Havana
(07) 836-7075

El Chanchullero CA★5+

Spanish/Mediterranean
Teniente Rey 457ª bajo
entre Bernaza y El Cristo
(07) 872-8227

Le Chansonnier CA★5+

Contemporary fusion
Calle J No. 257 entre
Línea y 15, Vedado
(07) 832-1576

El Cocinero CA★5+

International
Calle 26, S/N, between
11 and 13, Vedado.
(07) 832-2355

Corte del Principe (Sergio's) CA★5+

Italian
9na esq. 74, Playa
(05) 255-9091

Il Divino CA★5+

International
Calle Raquel, No. 50
e/ Esperanza y Linde
ro. Reparto Castillo de
Averhoff, Mantilla,
Arroyo Naranjo
(07) 643-7734

Doña Eutimia CA★5+

Cuban/Creole
Callejón del Chorro No.
60C. Plaza de la Catedral
(05) 281-5883

La Fontana CA★5+

International
Calle 46 No. 305
esquina a 3ra, Miramar
(07) 202-8337

La Guarida CA★5+

Contemporary fusion
Concordia 418 entre
Gervasio y Escobar
(07) 866-9047

Ivan Chef Justo CA★5+

Spanish/Mediterranean
Aguacate #9, esquina a
Chacón, Habana Vieja
(07) 863-9697

Río Mar CA★5

International
3A y Final # 11, La Pun
tilla, Miramar, Havana,
Cuba

San Cristóbal CA★5

Cuban/Creole
Calle San Rafael No
469 entre Lealtad y
Cam-panario
(07) 860-9109

Santy CA★5+

Sushi/Oriental
Calle 240A No 3023 y
3raC, Jaimanitas
(05) 286-7039

Starbien CA★5

Spanish/Mediterranean
Calle 29 # 205 entre B y
C. Vedado
(07) 830-0711

El Templete CA★5

Spanish/Mediterranean
Avenida del Puerto No.
12 esquina a Narciso
López
(07) 866-8807



Best Bars & Clubs in Havana

Bertolt CA★5
Brech Café Teatro
Hippest Cuban musicians play here for fun.
Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado.

Bohemio Bar CA★5-
Elegant bar with beautiful vibe
Calle 21 No 1065 entre 12 y 14.

La Cecilia CA★4
Big venue, popular, PMM.
5ta Avenida, No. 11010, entre 110 y 112
Miramar

El Cocinero CA★5+
Fabulous setting, great service, cool vibe
Calle 26, e 11 y 13, Vedado

Don Cangrejo CA★5-
Where the Friday night party is.
Avenida 1ra entre 16 & 18, Miramar

Ecaleras al Cielo. CA★4+
Stairway to Heaven. LGBT venue.
Calle Zulueta No. 658 entre Gloria y Apodaca, Old Havana

Espacios CA★5-
Laid back contemporary bar.
Calle 10, e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar

Esenia Habana CA★5
Spacious modern bar
Calle B, entre Linea & Calzado. El Vedado

El Floridita CA★5-
Hemingway's daiquiri bar.
Obispo No. 557 esq Ave. de Bélgica (Monserate), Old Havana

La Fontana Bar CA★5
Stylish Miami style lounge bar.
Calle 46 No. 305, esquina 3ra, Miramar

El Gato Tuerto CA★4+
Fabulous bolero. Intimate
Calle O, e/ 17 y 19, Vedado

Melem Bar CA★5-
Slick and popular bar.
1ra. e/ 58 y 60, Miramar

Melia Habana CA★4
sports Bar
Sports Bar, big screen TV
Melia Habana Hotel
Ave. 3ra entre 76 y 80, Playa

Las Piedras Bar CA★4+
The after party bar (3am+).
1ra y 43, Playa

Privé Lounge CA★5
Mellow intimate (jazz) club.
Calle 88A No. 306 e/ 3ra y 3ra A, Miramar, Playa

Sangri-La CA★5
Contemporary bar. Cool crowd.
Avenida 21, e/ Calle 36 y 42, Miramar.

El Sauce CA★5-
Mellow outdoor club.
Avenida 9na #12015, e/ Calles 120 y 130, Miramar.
(07) 204-6428

Sloppy Joe's Bar CA★4+
Historic traditional bar.
Ánimas, esq. Zulueta, Habana Vieja.
(07) 866 7157

El Tocatoro CA★4+
Expat favorite hangout
Calle Trocadero e/ Agramonte & Avenida de las Misiones. Old Havana

Tovarishch CA★4+
Russian themed bar
Calle 23, e/ N y O
(07) 833-2402