Festival of Cuban Culture

Music  Dance  Film  Visual arts
Workshops  Books  Debate
Theatre  Travel  Sports  Food
Sustainable initiatives

2009 FESTIVAL GUIDE
Welcome to the Cuba50 Festival celebrating Cuban culture in this 50th anniversary year of the Cuban revolution.

Cuba overflows with talent across the entire cultural spectrum, and it is nurtured at every level, from the very young to the elderly. For those of you lucky enough to have visited Cuba you will have seen an island vibrant with performance, music, dance and visual arts.

We are so pleased to be able to present the Cuba50 showcase at the Barbican in London in June. From Rumba to Son, Jazz and Salsa, it is a fitting tribute to the wealth of musical creativity continuing to thrive and develop in Cuba.

Yet the Cuba50 festival is so much more. It consists of over 200 events large and small, including film, discussion, sports, dance, poetry, arts and theatre. Cuba50 is the biggest European celebration of Cuba in 2009.

A huge thank you to all our sponsors and supporters.

Enjoy!

Rob Miller, Cuba50 Festival Director

www.cuba50.org
Celebrate Cuban culture in 2009

Cuba50 showcase weekend
Join us on 27 and 28 June for an exhilarating and unforgettable experience.

Cuba’s funkiest dance band **Los Van Van**
Nueva trova singer **Pablo Milanés**
Breathtaking rumba group **Yoruba Andabo**
Supported by the soulful **Son Tropical** and hot jazz pianist **Harold López Nussa**

This guide contains highlights of the Cuba50 Festival throughout 2009. For the latest details and many more events visit [www.cuba50.org](http://www.cuba50.org)
Details of artists to perform on the free stage, workshops, other events and very special guests are to be announced.

Check www.cuba50.org for updates.

Cuba50
at the Barbican
Saturday 27 June & Sunday 28 June

The Barbican and Cuba50 bring you a full weekend of unique concerts, free stage live music, Cuban films, workshops and family events.

Pablo Milanés
+ Harold López Nussa + Son Tropical

Saturday 27 June, 7.30pm Tickets £10/15/20

**Pablo Milanés** remains an undisputed giant of Cuban music. A major figure in the 1960s nueva trova song movement, his unique voice is known throughout the Spanish speaking world, his songs sung by heart. His poetic lyrics and emotive singing have made him one of the most respected Cuban musicians and songwriters alive.

Supporting Pablo will be

**Harold López Nussa** with a mesmerising Cuban jazz piano performance in the tradition of Chucho Valdés plus **Son Tropical**, the 9-piece band from Havana and Santiago playing the traditional son style with a superb singer.
**Los Van Van**
+ Yoruba Andabo

**Sunday 28 June, 7.30pm** Tickets £10/15/20

Juan Formell, bassist and founder of **Los Van Van**, is a key figure in the history of Cuban music since the revolution. Creating their signature songo rhythm he introduced Cubans to the power of funk. Van Van quickly became the number one dance group on the island – and influenced all who followed - later absorbing timba and rap. Their popular songs, with wry observations and street slang, capture the Cuban zeitgeist as seen from the streets of Havana.

**Yoruba Andabo** is a company of singers, percussionists and dancers performing original West African music styles preserved since the 16th and 17th centuries. Their name loosely translates as ‘Friends and followers of Yoruba lands and culture’. From spontaneous musical gatherings at Havana harbour in 1961 of a group of dock workers, they turned professional in 1980. Don’t miss an exhilarating performance.

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**Associated events**

**Cuba50 in Victoria Park: Orquesta Aragon**
+ Changüí de Guantánamo + other artists tba

**Sunday 21 June from 1pm**

An open-air Cuban music spectacular. Admission free
Paradise Gardens, Victoria Park, London E3

Now marking their 70th birthday, **Orquesta Aragon** became international stars during the cha-cha-cha boom of the 1950s. They play charanga style – with strings and flutes giving a lighter, folkier and more rural sound.

**Changüí de Guantánamo**: Guantánamo was the birthplace of changüí, a style of rural music from Eastern Cuba. The group have been performing together since before the revolution and still live in Guantánamo.

**Cuba50 at Hackney Empire:**
**Orquesta Aragon** + Yoruba Andabo

**Thursday 25 June 8pm** Tickets £17.50

A showcase of the African and rural roots of Cuban contemporary music and dance styles.
Hackney Empire, London E8
Box Office: 020 8985 2424

**Cuba50 in Gillett Square:**
**Yoruba Andabo** + Changüí de Guantánamo

**Saturday 27 June 4pm – 8pm**

Open-air performance near home of the Vortex Jazz Club.
Gillett Square, London N16

Associated events produced by the Barbican.

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Concerts at the Barbican Hall, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS  Box Office: 0845 120 7550 www.barbican.org.uk  Tickets on sale now.

Both concerts are produced by the Barbican in association with Cuba50
Cuba50
Film at the Barbican

Friday 3 – Thursday 9 July  Barbican, London

Following the revolution in 1959, Cuban cinema emerged as a unique phenomenon, with directors creating films which reflected their revolutionary ideals and innovative ideas. Returning for the second year and fifty years on from the revolution, the Barbican’s Cine Cuba festival combines contemporary cinematic perspectives on Cuban life and classics from the foremost filmmakers of the post-revolutionary era.

Cine Cuba will feature the re-release of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea’s groundbreaking introduction of gay themes into Cuban cinema, *Strawberry and Chocolate* (Fresa y Chocolate). You can catch this landmark film every night of the Festival. Other highlights include films from Cuba’s leading contemporary filmmaker Fernando Pérez, the ‘enfant terrible’ of post-revolutionary cinema Humberto Solás and the latest releases from Havana; *Personal Belongings*, *Omertà* and *The Horn of Plenty*.

**Opening Gala**
Fri 3 July, 7.30pm

**Personal Belongings**
Ana’s family have left Cuba on a raft, whilst Ernesto has tried and failed to leave the country for years and currently lives in a car. An intimate take on contemporary Cuban dilemmas about the forsaking of homeland and personal relationships to embark on a new life elsewhere.
*Cuba 2008*  Dir. Alejandro Brugués 95 min

**Strawberry and Chocolate**
Winner of a Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival and the first film with an openly gay character to come from Cuba, *Strawberry and Chocolate* is a delightfully provocative and heart-warming story about an uptight student at Havana University, who after breaking up with his girlfriend runs into an extravagant gay artist with an irreverent attitude to the Castro government.
*Cuba 1993*  Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 110 min

**Life is to Whistle**  
(La Vida es Silbar)
A portrait of contemporary Cuba that weaves together three comic stories about people who are looking for love in three very different ways. A film about the search for happiness in Havana where the absurd and the wonderful co-exist side by side.
*Cuba/Spain 1999*  
Dir. Fernando Pérez  110 min

**Suite Havana**
PG
A multi award winning film describes with tenderness and humour a day in the life of 10 ordinary Havana citizens who express themselves through images not words. A documentary without interviews, presents the Cuba of today: complex, intimate and controversial.
*Cuba 2003*  Dir. Fernando Pérez  84 min

**Suite Havana**

Cuba50 Film at the Barbican

Cine Cuba

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Sat 4 July, 6.30pm
The Horn of Plenty (El Cuerno de la Abundancia)
From the writer of Strawberry and Chocolate, this comedy is inspired by real events which saw some 25,000 Cubans maintain they were heirs to a multi-million pound fortune held in a British bank. Jorge Perugorría leads the residents of one town on a mission to claim their inheritance.
Cuba 2008 Dir. Juan Carlos Tabio 90 min.

Sun 5 July, 5pm
Titón de la Habana a Guantanamera
An affectionate look at the life and work of the definitive voice of post-revolutionary Cuban cinema Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, known as ‘Titón’ by his friends and colleagues. The director of Memories of Underdevelopment and Strawberry and Chocolate is remembered by his wife and star of his films, Mirta Ibarra.
Cuba 2008 Dir. Mirta Ibarra 76 min.

Sun 5 July, 6.30pm
Cecilia 18
This sumptuous adaptation of the popular 19th Cuban novel, tells the story of a Cuban woman of mixed heritage against the backdrop of the cruel slavery and racial unrest of colonial Cuba. Dark and opulent.
Cuba 1982 Dir. Humberto Solás.

Sun 5 July, 6.30pm
Guantanamera 15
Alea revisited satire in this his last comedy which highlights both the absurdities of life under the communist bureaucracy, but also the indefatigable, vivacious spirit of the Cuban people. We follow the slow progress of a coffin from Guantanamera to Havana, carrying the body of a famous singer and meet a carnival of characters along the way.
Cuba 1995 Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 101 min.

Mon 6 Jul, 6.30pm
Documentary Showcase
Documentaries exploring Cuba today, evaluating the achievements of the revolution, but also advocating for a sense of renewed purpose to tackle the social inequalities that still exist. An introduction will precede the films.

Tue 7 July, 6.30pm
Lucía 15
In turn tragedy, melodrama and comedy, this witty film follows the lives and loves of three women called Lucía, living at different points in time during the crucial periods of Cuban history.
Cuba 2006 Dir. Humberto Solás 110 min.

Wed 8 July, 6.30pm
Up to a Certain Point (Hasta Cierta Punto)
Documentary filmmaker Oscar is researching male/female dynamics in Cuba and the problems its men have with strong and autonomous women. However as the project progresses he begins to fall for his spirited colleague, played by Alea’s wife Mirtha Ibarra.
Cuba 1984 Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 68 min.

Thu 9 July, 6.30pm
Omertá 12
It’s 60s Cuba and an ageing gangster, now a relic of the Batista years, tries to devise a dignified way of bowing out of the game when he comes face to face with the revolution. Following the success of his first feature La Edad de la Peseta Pavel Giroud returns with this noirish tale of difficult transitions.
Cuba 2008 Dir. Pavel Giroud 82 min.
Festival highlights

Full details and many more listings at www.cuba50.org

05 – 23 May
Havana Rakatan
Peacock Theatre, London.
Box office 0844 412 4322

The result of one Cuban woman’s dream, Nilda Guerra has now taken this show around the world. Mambo, jazz, bolero, son, cha-cha-cha, rumba and salsa all come alive in a dazzling dance display of Cuban passion. Set to live Cuban music courtesy of Cuba’s well-known son band Turquino.

13 – 30 May
Yusa on UK tour
Washington, Kendal, Whitby, Stockton, Belfast, London-Momo’s, Basingstoke, Bristol.

“Listening to the bitter-sweet lyrics of new Cuban singer Yusa and the simple sophistication of her music one knows one is finally hearing 21st century Cuba. Her cutting-edge songs map the contemporary emotional lives of urban Havana.” (Jan Fairley)

16 May
Cuba50: From Latin America to Lincolnshire
Drill Hall, Lincoln

Part of Lincoln Book Festival, featuring poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson in Lincolnshire dialect, music, and readings of work by Cuban National Poet Nicolás Guillén. Hosted by Benjamin Zephaniah.

21 – 28 June
Cuba50: Aleida Guevara talks

Aleida Guevara, daughter of Che Guevara, will be speaking at a series of meetings and film screenings.
Tel 020 8800 0155.
July – September
Cuba50 film festival: Cuban cinema on national tour
A selection of films expected to go on tour to cinemas around the UK, including the re-release of ‘Strawberry and Chocolate’. Watch this space! See www.Cuba50.org for details soon.

9 – 11 July
Carlos Acosta at the Manchester International Festival
The Lowry, Salford
Box office: 0870 787 5780
The greatest male ballet dancer of his generation returns to the Manchester International Festival, joined by the BBC Philharmonic and a number of other awe-inspiring dancers in an exclusive programme of works both classic and modern.

17–19 July
Cuba50 at Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Festival, Dorset
A weekend festival of live music, poetry, comedy and politics. This year the festival will also have a Cuba theme, with live music from Cuban band Omar Puente and Raíces Cubanas. Camp in the grounds of the Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Museum in the West Dorset countryside.

11–14 September
Afro-Cuban Salsa Fiesta
Mundesley, Norfolk.
Book: 01263 721 553
A Cuban Salsa Weekender with live music, top dancers, teachers, DJs.

2 October – 8 November
Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club UK tour
11 piece band including Buena Vista Social Club® stalwarts Guajiro Mirabal, Jesús ‘Aguaje’ Ramos’ & Manual Galbán. They take audiences on a musical excursion from the original Buena Vista Social Club® recordings in 1996 up to the present day.

22 November – 7 December
Eco Study tour to Cuba
Cuba Travel Shop
020 8800 0155

27 – 30 November
4th International Cuban Salsa Congress
Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales

5 December
Latin America 2009
Congress House, London
Tel 020 8800 0155
A conference featuring international speakers from Cuba and across Latin America.
A DAZZLING DANCE SPECTACULAR DIRECT FROM CUBA
‘THE HOTTEST, THE COOLEST, THE SEXIEST BUNCH OF DANCERS IN TOWN. IRRESISTIBLE’
SUNDAY EXPRESS

Havana Rakatan

‘RIP-ROARING ENTERTAINMENT’
TIME OUT

TUE 5 - SAT 23 MAY

‘A STUNNING SLICE OF HAVANA LIFE’
THE INDEPENDENT

with
TOP CUBAN BAND
TURQUINO
live on stage

CUBA’S MOST POPULAR BAND
BAMBOLEO

+DJs Javier La Rosa, Dr Jim, DJ Rich
SATURDAY 18 JULY 8.30PM-2AM

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A DAZZLING DANCE SPECTACULAR DIRECT FROM CUBA
‘THE HOTTEST, THE COOLEST, THE SEXIEST BUNCH OF DANCERS IN TOWN. IRRESISTIBLE’
SUNDAY EXPRESS
Following their last sell out tour, this fantastic thirteen piece band direct from Havana, returns to the UK. Featuring legends of Cuban music from the Buena Vista Social Club album and film, and music from World Circuit’s acclaimed Cuban recordings, the band will transport you to the heat of Havana’s clubs and dancehalls.

**OCTOBER**

2. **BRISTOL**
   Colston Hall 0117922 3686

3. **PLYMOUTH**
   Pavilions 08451 461460

4. **CARDIFF**
   St. David’s Hall 029 2087 8444

6. **CHELTENHAM**
   Town Hall 01242 227979

7. **OXFORD**
   New Theatre 0844 847 1585

8. **BIRMINGHAM**
   Symphony Hall 0121 780 3333

10. **CAMBRIDGE**
    Corn Exchange 01223 357851

11. **IPSWICH**
    Regent 01473 433 100

13. **LONDON**
    Royal Albert Hall 020 7589 8212

14. **BASINGSTOKE**
    Anvil 01256 844244

16. **SALISBURY**
    City Hall 01722 434434

17. **POOLE**
    Lighthouse 08700 668701

18. **PORTSMOUTH**
    Guildhall 023 9282 4355

20. **BRIGHTON**
    Dome 01273 709709

21. **NOTTINGHAM**
    Royal Concert Hall 0115 989 5555

22. **SHEFFIELD**
    City Hall 0114 278 9789

24. **HARROGATE**
    International Centre 0845 130 8840

26. **GLASGOW**
    Royal Concert Hall 0141 353 8000

27. **ABERDEEN**
    Music Hall 01224 641 122

28. **EDINBURGH**
    Usher Hall 0131 228 1155

30. **GATESHEAD**
    The Sage Gateshead 0191 443 4661

31. **LIVERPOOL**
    Philharmonic Hall 0151 709 3789

**NOVEMBER**

1. **LLANDUDNO**
   Venue Cymru 01492 872 000

3. **MANCHESTER**
   Bridgewater Hall 0161 907 9000

4. **PETERBOROUGH**
   Cresset 01733 265705

5. **NORWICH**
   Theatre Royal 01603 630000

7. **TUNBRIDGE WELLS**
   Assembly Hall 01892 530613

8. **HIGH WYCOMBE**
   Swan Theatre 01494 512000

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Presented by Mark Howes and Robert Pratt

[www.buenavistasocialclub.com](http://www.buenavistasocialclub.com)
Cuba’s cultural heritage

A small island seems an unlikely source for such a big culture but Cuba’s secret perhaps lies in its heritage and unique social development.

Ajacó, a traditional Cuban stew of vegetables and meat, is often used as a metaphor for Cuba’s cultural mix: with distinctive flavours. The richest are to be enjoyed in music and dance.

In the 17th and 18th centuries slaves transported from West Africa by the Spanish rulers preserved their animist religious beliefs under cover of Catholicism, linking saints to their orisha gods. The rhythms and dances performed as worship evolved, with European influences, into many distinctly Cuban music and dance forms, such as rumba and son.

US involvement in Cuban affairs in the 20th century brought jazz, rock, Hollywood, modernism and much more to Cuba. Meanwhile, son, rumba and other styles took hold in the US thanks to Cuban legends Miguel Matamoros, Arsenio Rodríguez, Benny Moré and Enrique Jorrín, paving the way for salsa’s development in New York in the ’70s.

The socialist revolution in 1959 brought sweeping changes, not least to the way in which culture was produced, taught and distributed.

Many arts and sport institutions were founded and Afro-Cuban art forms received state support for the first time. Culture centres were opened all over the country, while cinema and theatre were taken into remote rural areas.

ICAIC, the Cuban Film Institute, soon became an important critical space for exploring controversial issues such as bureaucracy, sexism, racism, sexuality and religion.

The experimental music for film group headed by composer Leo Brouwer, became a hothouse for poetic singer songwriters such as Pablo Milanés and Silvio Rodríguez during the 70s.

From the early ‘60s dynamic silkscreen posters were produced to promote films and public campaigns, putting Cuba on the visual arts world map.

Arts education to a professional level became free, opening up opportunities to many young people that had not previously existed. One example is Carlos Acosta, now acknowledged to be one of the finest ballet dancers of his generation.

Cuba has become known for the constant inventiveness of its musicians. The band Los Van Van fused funk with Cuban salsa in the ’70s and ’80s, while NG La Banda upped the tempo to give us timba in the ’90s.

During the same decade, the Buena Vista Social Club took traditional Cuban son around the world. Meanwhile, a younger generation listened to the hip hop of the US to develop their home grown version. While some explore thrash metal others create their own Jamaican dancehall-influenced reggaeton.

In this way the many distinct flavours of Cuban culture have continued to absorb new influences, to innovate and to inspire the world.
Help us to help Cuba

For 50 years the Cuban people have been defending their independence against continual aggression from the US.

The Cuba Solidarity Campaign works to help the Cuban people in their struggle to determine their own future.

Please support the work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign

To join, contact CSC:

Cuba Solidarity Campaign, c/o UNITE Woodberry, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB. Tel: 020 8800 0155 Fax: 020 8800 9844 Email: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

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& GUEST ARTISTS

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5 performances only

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Essential Cuban music collections from Nascente

BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO CUBAN MUSIC (NSBOX061) 3CD
Compiled by Lubi Jovanovic, one of the UK’s most respected Latin music DJs, this 3 CD collection explores the full spectrum of Cuban dance music, from classic son, salsa and timba to hip hop and reggaeton. Featuring a host of top Cuban artists, including Ibrahim Ferrer, Candido Fabre, Los Van Van & Charanga Habanera, this is the ultimate Cuban dance music collection.

HAVANA SI! The very best of Los Van Van (NSDCD003) 2CD
Los Van Van are Cuba’s most popular dance band who have dominated Cuban dance floors for 40 years. Compiled by the UK’s premier Cuban salsa DJ “Dr Jim” Layne, Havana Si! collects together 26 of their most popular & influential tracks on one comprehensive double CD compilation. Essential for all lovers of authentic Afro-Cuban salsa.

CUBAN FUNK EXPERIENCE (NSFUNK001 released May 2009) 1CD
Songo, conga-funk, son-beat, Afro-Cuban, jazz-funk, psych-rock, Mozambique & more – the funkiest Cuban sounds from Cuba & Miami 1973-1988. “Cuban Funk Experience” features music from the golden era of funky Cuban grooves from Cuba’s state record label Egrem as well as Cuban-Funk from the Miami based Sound Triangle label which many Cuban ex-pats recorded for.

BAR CUBA & BAR HAVANA (NSBARCD006/NSBARCD026) 2CD
Compiled by two of the UK’s leading salsa DJs, Lubi Jovanovic & “Dr Jim” Layne, these double CD compilations are an excellent introduction to both classic & modern Cuban dance music, featuring many of the island’s musical legends past & present, from Israel “Cachao” Lopez & Celina Gonzalez, to Los Van Van & salsa/timba stars of today such as Manolito Simonet & Azuca Negra.

All titles available to buy from hmv.com • amazon.co.uk • play.com
The Cuba50 Festival of Cuban Culture brings together Cuban cultural activities across the UK until the end of 2009. It is an initiative of, and coordinated by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and aims to celebrate and promote Cuban culture in the 50th anniversary year of the Cuban revolution.

www.cuba50.org

Sign up to Cuba50 e-news
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Telephone: 020 8800 0155
Cuba50, CSC c/o Unite-Woodberry, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB

www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk