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The Cuban Spectacular: A Night at the Tropicana

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UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Music

2023 – 2024 Concert Series

The Cuban Spectacular **“A Night at the Tropicana”**

A Multi-Media Celebration
Featuring UR’s Jazz Ensemble
Led by Dr. Mike Davison

Arturo O’Farrill, piano

Guest artists and dancers

Narrated by Ted Peebles

Thursday, April 25, 2024

7:30 PM

Alice Jepson Theatre



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
School of Arts & Sciences™

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

music.richmond.edu

*Please silence cell phones before the concert.
Recording, Taping, Photographing are strictly prohibited.*

The Cuban Spectacular is a multi-media show combining narration, dance, live music, and video.

The Tropicana Cabaret and Casino

During the 1950s, Havana -- known as the “Mob’s Playground” -- was the number one tourism destination for U.S. vacationers. Nightclubs and casinos like the Tropicana, Club Parisien, Cabaret Montmartre, the Shanghai, and the San Souci flowered under the Batista regime and Havana grew to be a prime destination for gamblers, conventioners and pleasure seekers: a city replete with murder, gambling, booze, entertainment, and the three S’s – sex, sun, and sand! The Tropicana Casino opened in 1939 and is the only major nightclub in Havana that stayed open after the Revolution. During the 50s, casino manager Lefty Clark and owner Martin Fox worked closely with the mob bosses to produce paramount productions featuring live music, exotic dancers, and sex shows. It was at the Tropicana that many first heard the blending of American jazz with Cuban rhythms. Black performers could perform on the same stage as white performers – unlike in the U.S. at that time. Elaborate floorshows of the 50s were an electric mix of frolicking, leggy señoritas, conga drums, and bikini-clad dancers sporting four-foot-high stacks of sombreros. The Tropicana became known as the premiere nightclub in Havana, and perhaps the world. In 1957 the casino gave away six brand-new 1956-model American automobiles! The Tropicana drew many famous celebrities and writers, including Frank Sinatra, John F. Kennedy, Nat King Cole, Eva Gardner, Marlon Brando, Errol Flynn, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Dorothy Dandridge, Graham Greene, and Ernest Hemingway. Brando was mesmerized by Cuban music: “Discovering Afro-Cuban music almost blew my mind,” he wrote years later in his autobiography.

Tonight we will capture some of the magic of the Tropicana. Enjoy the show!

-- Mike Davison

-PROGRAM-

Welcome Dr. Mike Davison

Video: The Tropicana “Mambo”

Canal St. Commotion Mike Carubia

I Can’t Stop Loving You Don Gibson
Arr. by Quincy Jones

Welcome from Cuba Daniel Almenares Montero

Video: Desi Arnaz

Video: Conga Filmed by M. Davison,
C. Carmichael & E. Tillett

Guantanamera Joseito Fernandez
Arr. by Michael Philip Mossman

Rumba: Yambu Arara Traditional

Kevin LaMarr Jones and Mirasol Cristina Betancourt, dancers

Video: Dance Josh Grice

Welcome to the Tropicana! Ted Peebles

Mambo Italiano Bob Merrill
Transcr. by Myles Collins

Stephanie Moki, vocal

One Mint Julep Rudy Toombs

Unforgettable

Irving Gordon

Luke Surrusco & Stephanie Moki, vocals

Almost Like Being in Love

Frederick Loewe

Lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner

Ryan Thompson, vocal

Mambo No. 5

Dámaso Pérez Prado &
Lou Bega

Will Hoffman, vocal

Ritmo Fascinante

Arturo O’Farrill

Arturo O’Farrill, piano

Under My Skin

Cole Porter

Ryan Thompson, vocal

Corazón Espinado

feat. Maná and Carlos Santana

Myra Daleng – Dance Class!!

Ran Kan Kan

Tito Puente

Arturo O’Farrill, piano

New York, New York

John Kander

Lyrics by Fred Ebb

Ryan Thompson

UR Jazz Ensemble
Directed by Dr. Mike Davison

Tim Wen	alto sax 1
Keagan McNulty	alto sax 2
Adrian Grubbs	tenor sax 1
Adam Kasti	tenor sax 2
Ben Pinto	baritone sax
Andrew Magrane	trumpet
John Paschold	trumpet
Jack Bricklemyer	trumpet
Walter Ostrowski	trumpet
Eli Chancey	trombone 1/2
Rebecca Buffington	trombone 1/2
Jillian Yates	trombone 3
Ben Shlanta	trombone 4
Mark Johnson	piano
John D'Addario	bass
Nora Cahill	drums
Toby Tate	guitar
Zach Bader	vibes
Stephanie Moki	vocals
Luke Surrusco	vocals
Will Hoffman	vocals
Ryan Thompson	vocals

Guest Artists

Willie Roman	congas
Alfredo Santiago	bongos and percussion
Arturo O’Farrill	piano/composer

Guest Dancers

Edwin Roa	Lynda Megan Buechel
Kevin LaMarr Jones	Mirasol Cristina Betancourt

UR FYS Salsa Meets Jazz Class

Myra Daleng, dance instructor

Jasmin Aberle	Adam Kasti
Jacob Arok	Keagan McNulty
Ethan Callahan	Lena Ondreyka
Jaimon Chaney	Walter Ostrowski
Jessica Espinoza-Flores	Ben Pinto
Evan Gryzlov	Luke Surrusco

The Narrator

Ted Peebles is Director of the Intensive Spanish Language program at the University of Richmond, and a fortunate fellow traveler on the 2019 trip to Santiago de Cuba led by Prof. Mike Davison.

The Dancers

Edwin Roa is a native of Bogotá, Colombia. He has been teaching for over 24 years and is a founding member of the Charlottesville Salsa Club. He is also the director and creator of Zabor Dance.

Lynda Buechel grew up in upstate New York and started dancing ballet, tap, and jazz at seven years old. She gravitated toward partner dancing as an adult, and began teaching in 2018.

Edwin and Lynda started dancing together in 2019. Even though their dance backgrounds are unique, they are both passionate about partner dancing and share a deep appreciation for teaching and performing. They offer various workshops throughout Maryland and Virginia, and are currently pursuing a competitive career in American Smooth

Marisol Cristina Betancourt began her dance training at age three with her mentor, Latin Ballet of Virginia's founder Ana Ines King. She became a member of the Junior Company at age six and performed the lead role of Little Maria in the *Legend of the Poinsettia*. At 13, Marisol began training with LBV's Professional Company. She has performed numerous solo dance roles since 2012, when she was chosen to perform as principal dancer for LBV's World Premiere of *El Pintor*, produced by Antonio Hidalgo and Ana Ines King. *Style Weekly* honored her as one of their annual "16 under 16." Marisol has also performed with renowned Cuban percussionist Melena, La Rumbera, in the production of *MELENA: A Cultural & Musical Journey into my Afro-Cuban Roots*. Although trained in many diverse styles of dance, her pride in her Cuban heritage is reflected in her passion for Orisha dance,

salsa, rumba and flamenco. Marisol was named the Artistic Director of the Latin Ballet of Virginia in 2022. As part of her duties, she is the *répétiteur* for the LBV's company and school of dance, reproducing the original choreography of the company's repertory, maintaining the legacy of LBV's productions.

Kevin LaMarr Jones is a UR alumnus and founder of CLAVES UNIDOS. Since graduating with a B.F.A. in Dance and Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Richmond, he has become a graphic designer, dancer, choreographer, and producer based in Richmond. Jones' dance portfolio includes work as a company member with the Latin Ballet of Virginia, as well as the founding Artistic Director of CLAVES UNIDOS dance community. His choreographic, teaching, and performance work centers around what he has coined African Roots Reunion™, a blending of various dance genres with African influences. Jones studied West African dance with Sister Faye Walker and Judy Lynn Edwards. He stirred his passion for flamenco through teachers such as Ana Ines King, Anna Menendez, Antonio Hidalgo Paz, Miguel Vargas, and other renowned flamenco artists through travels to New York, Washington DC, Jerez de la Frontera, Madrid, and Seville. He has studied Afro Cuban dances with Ifé Michelle Milligan (Orisha), Alberto Limonta Perez (rumba) and other leading instructors in workshops between Miami, Washington, DC, New York, and Barcelona. Jones has studied salsa and partner dancing with artists including Edwin Roa, Steve Greene, Boris Karabashev, and Yamil Boo. He performs regularly with Semilla Cultural, a Puerto Rican Bomba cultural ensemble. He is also a founding member of Black Flamenco Network, a global collective of Black and African-descended flamenco practitioners and aficionados.

The Dance Instructor

Myra Daleng was the Director of Dance at the University of Richmond for twenty-seven years, where she created the dance program, a dance major/minor, and a student performing company which brought in internationally known choreographers. Her position at UR included teaching classes in ballet, jazz, tap, modern, choreography, dance history, and kinetics for dancers, and serving as Artistic Director for the University Dancers, which included creating dance works for the company. In addition, she choreographed numerous musicals for the Department of Theatre and Dance. Ms. Daleng is now recognized as Director of Dance Emerita. Before her career at UR she was Artistic Director and Proprietor of Richmond Dance Center and Co-Director of the Richmond Ballet Contemporary. She was a principal dancer with the Richmond Ballet Civic Company and Virginia Dance Company, and she competed in ballroom dance and performed in numerous musicals. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in dance from the University of Maryland and then went on to receive a Master of Science in dance from James Madison University. Ms. Daleng received a University of Richmond Distinguished Educator Award in 2010, and in 2011 she was the recipient of the Theresa Pollak Lifetime Achievement Award for excellence in the arts. Upon retiring from the University of Richmond in 2013, Ms. Daleng became an Artistry Certified teacher of BeMoved®, an adult dance fitness methodology.

Special Guest from Cuba

Daniel Almenares Montero is from Santiago de Cuba. In Santiago, he graduated in economics and also studied theatre directing at the University. In his youth, Daniel worked for the Cubana Airlines, Cuban tourism, and food service. He has also taught videography at the University in Santiago. From 2019-2023, Daniel worked as a tour guide for a Japanese company, and has recently spent his time producing videos about Cuban music. He also works as a logistics specialist in Santiago, and on many

occasions has helped Mike Davison with his research. In June 2023, Daniel organized a trip for Dr. Davison to Baracoa and Guantanamo, Cuba, for music filming and research. The video you will see tonight of Conga was organized by Daniel in Santiago de Cuba. He presently resides in Houston, Texas, and while on campus, he will work with the students in the FYS – Endeavor “Salsa Meets Jazz” class, talk at the Cuban Spectacular, and teach Spanish.

Special Guest Artist

Pianist, composer, and educator **Arturo O’Farrill** was born in Mexico and grew up in New York City. Arturo’s professional career began with the Carla Bley Band and continued as a solo performer with a wide spectrum of artists including Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Bowie, Wynton Marsalis, and Harry Belafonte. In 2007, he founded the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the performance, education, and preservation of Afro-Latin music. An avid supporter of all the arts, Arturo has performed with Ballet Hispanico, Ron Brown’s EVIDENCE Dance Company, and the Malpaso Dance Company, for whom he has written several ballets. Arturo’s well-reviewed and highly praised *Afro-Latin Jazz Suite*, from the album *CUBA: The Conversation Continues* (Motéma), took the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition, as well as the 2016 Latin Grammy for Best Latin Jazz Recording. In addition, his composition *Three Revolutions*, from the album *Familia-Tribute to Chico and Bebo*, also received the Best Instrumental Composition Grammy in 2018. Arturo’s album *Fandango at the Wall in New York* won yet another Grammy award in 2023. Arturo has been a Steinway Artist for many years and is a Blue Note Records Recording Artist.

The Guest Artists

Will Roman was born in Jersey City, NJ, with native roots from the island of Puerto Rico. He is a self-taught musician who began feeling the Latin pulse playing the congas at the age of 5. Roman's introduction to Latin music took birth while his father would play captivating music that would soon introduce him to some of his greatest musical influences, such as Giovanni Hidalgo, Jose Luis "Changuito" Quintana, and Tito Puente. Roman has performed in varying festivals and concerts throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and has had his talents featured on some of the grandest stages, such as The Kennedy Center and the NPR Tiny Desk YouTube Series. He currently has a YouTube Channel, "Roman Percussion," which has a following of over 4,200 subscribers.

Will Roman is an endorsing artist for Tycoon Percussion, Los Cabos Drumsticks, Saultone Cymbals and Code Drumheads. He is also a Voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) for the Grammy Pro Washington DC Chapter.

Saxophonist, flautist, Latin percussionist, music director, composer, and arranger **Alfredo L. Santiago** is a New York native, but developed his musical talent on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, where he studied flute at the Pablo Casals Conservatory of Music. He's performed in the acclaimed Viñas del Mar International Song Festival, the oldest and largest festival in Latin America, where he accompanied singer/actor Jose Luis "El Puma." He's also played with the famous Cuban singer La Lupe. He's a former member of acclaimed Puerto Rican trumpeter Elias Lopes' orchestra. In 1982 Santiago joined the Army Band, where he performed for presidents and dignitaries from all over the world. He's performed alongside Grammy award winning saxophonists Justo Almario and Dick Oatts, trombonist Bob McChesney, and Tony Bennett's Music Director, pianist/arranger Lee Musiker. He has shared the platform with trumpeter Terence Blanchard, pianist

Yuko Mabuchi, and at the 2019 Richmond Jazz Music Festival, performing with trumpeter Mike Davison's Latin Jazz Messengers. Santiago holds a B. Mus. in Jazz Performance from VCU. He studied saxophone under Professor Albert Regni, the former Principal Saxophonist with the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, and New York City Ballet Orchestra. He also studied arranging with composer/arranger/music educator Doug Richards. He currently heads his own group, Alfredo & Friends Latin Jazz Ensemble, and performs regularly at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Dominion Jazz Café, as well as throughout the greater Richmond area.

The Director, Producer and Conductor

Distinguished trumpeter **Dr. Michael Davison** is a gifted performer, respected professor, published composer, and ethnomusicologist. He is in demand across the country as a classical and jazz performer and educator. As a performer, he has given jazz and classical recitals all over the United States, as well as in France, the Netherlands, Spain, South Africa, China, and Cuba. Davison has recorded four jazz CDs as both a leader and sideman. His classical CD, *Fenster*, received rave reviews from the *International Trumpet Guild Journal*. Widely considered an expert in Cuban music, he performs and teaches Cuban music at the University of Richmond and worldwide. As a jazz musician, Davison has performed with the late tenor saxophonist and eleven-time Grammy winner Michael Brecker, popular jazz trombonist Curtis Fuller, Latin jazz saxophonist Justo Almario, and flutist Herbie Mann. He has also performed alongside some of Motown's most iconic singers and groups, including Natalie Cole, Aretha Franklin, the Temptations, and The Four Tops. As a classical musician, Davison has performed with Rhythm and Brass, a group that plays everything from Bach to Pink Floyd. He has performed with the Wisconsin and Whitewater Brass Quintets, the Rochester Philharmonic, Wisconsin Symphony, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, and the Richmond Symphony. Davison has performed

for Pope John II and George Leonard Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury. He has published two transcription books on famed trumpeter Randy Brecker: *Randy Brecker: Artist Transcriptions/Trumpet* was published by Hal Leonard Publishing Company and *The Music of Randy Brecker: Solo Transcriptions and Performing Artist Master Class CD* was published by Warner Bros. Inc. In addition to transcribing, Davison has also published jazz and Afro-Cuban compositions with Walrus Music. In 1986 Davison accepted a job as head of the jazz and trumpet programs at the University of Richmond. His influence as an educator goes beyond the University of Richmond's campus. Dr. Davison also served as trumpet teacher and head of the brass area at the world-renowned Interlochen International Arts Camp in Interlochen, Michigan for 35 years. Dr. Davison hosted the International Trumpet Guild Conference in 1999 and is an Edwards Instrument Performing Artist. Dr. Davison, along with producer Ed Tillett, completed *Cuba: Rhythm in Motion*, a documentary tracing the musical genealogy between Cuban rhythms and American jazz. The film premiered on the University of Richmond campus in 2007 and has been shown around the world, including Spain, Australia and Mexico. Dr. Davison is creating another documentary on the music of Santiago de Cuba: *The Sound of Santiago* will be completed this summer.

Modlin Center Crew

Production Manager	Sean Farrell
Lighting & Video	Bri Conley
Audio	Kevin Willoughby

Show Credits

Script & Narration	Mike Davison
Show Concept & Design	Mike Davison
Produced & Directed by	Mike Davison
Photos	Brian Ross, Ed Tillett, Myra Daleng, and Mike Davison

Special Thanks . . .

Modlin Center staff; Dr. Andy McGraw, chair of the Music Dept; and our “crew” – Sean Farrell, Bri Conley, and Kevin Willoughby

University of Richmond’s Cultural Affairs Committee for a generous grant to put on the show!

Sage Ober, Associate Director New Student and Transition programs; and Kay MacDonald, the Administrative Coordinator, for their help with the FYS class (“Salsa Meets Jazz”) and for help securing our guest artists, Arturo O’Farrill and Daniel Armaneras Montero.

Thanks to our guest artists – dancers Edwin Roa & Lynda Bueschel, Marisol Cristina Betancourt & Kevin LaMarr Jones; percussionists Willie Roman and Alfredo Santiago; and to our very special guest, Arturo O’Farrill! And last, but not least – Daniel Almenares Montero... coming all the way from Cuba to be with us!!

To all our UR jazz students performing tonight! And to my First Year Seminar class “Salsa Meets Jazz”! Great job! You all Rock! Stay en clave!

Now . . . get up and dance!

Mike Davison





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