

Produced by ANDREW SCHLOSS,
side A recorded by DAVID ROSS, notes by JOHN SANTOS



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4066

The Cuban Danzon

Its Ancestors and Descendents



Orquesta típica de Enrique Peña, donde tocaba José Urfé en la época en que compuso *El bombín de Barreto*.



Orquesta de Antonio María Romeu una de las primeras *charangas francesas*.

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SIDE 1 Recorded by DAVID ROSS

- Band 1 San Pascual Bailón 1:29
1803 (Contradanza)
- Band 2 El Sungambelo 1:08
1813 (Danza)
- Band 3 Las Alturas de Simpson 3:29
1879 (Danzón) (Miguel Failde)
- Band 4 El Bombin de Barreto 4:03
1910 (Danzón) (José Urfé)
- Band 5 Rompiendo la Rutina 4:29
1929 (Danzonete) (Aniceto Díaz)
- Band 6 Tres Lindas Cubanas 6:23
1926 (G. Castillo & A.M. Romeu) (Danzón)
- Band 7 El Nãñigo 2:25
1921 (Danza)

SIDE 2

- Band 1 Tuthankamen 2:13
(Danza) (Ricardo (Reverón)
- Band 2 La Revoltosa 2:18
(Danza) (Tanito Rojas)
- Band 3 Liliana 5:05
(Danzón) (Ricardo Reverón)
- Band 4 Angoa 6:34
1948 (Danzón) (Félix Reina)
- Band 5 La Engañadora 2:27
1948 (Cha Cha Chá) Enrique Jorin
- Band 6 Que Es Lo Que Hay 3:54
1978 (Onda Areito)

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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THE CUBAN DANZÓN: ITS ANCESTORS AND DESCENDENTS

Produced by Andrew Schloss

Introduction and notes on the recordings by John Santos

These recordings represent a collection of masterpieces which will now be preserved as an important part of the archives documenting the history of Cuban music. We hope that they will be used by this and future generations in the study and appreciation of Latin music.

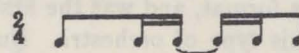
The *danzón* has reigned as Cuba's national dance for over one hundred years. Adapting itself to the tastes and requirements of the people, the *danzón* has emerged as the result of continuous musical and choreographic evolution. A blend of classical European and African elements form the proud *danzón*. It represents true expression of Cuban sentiment of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Today's popular Latin music, known as *salsa*, owes a great debt to the *danzón*. Many rhythms, dances, instruments and styles which are now popular worldwide have their origins in the *danzón* family. Some of these are: the *timbales* (Cuban drums derived from the *timpani* of the European classical orchestra), the *cha cha chá* and the *pachanga* (Cuban music and dance forms very popular during the 50's in the United States as well as in Cuba), the *charanga* (a style and instrumentation that emerged around the time of the last Cuban war for independence from Spain† and is still very popular today), and the *mambo* (a multi-faceted African word of Bantu origin referring to a style of musical arrangement, rhythm and/or dance).

The European element can be traced to the French *contradanza* of the 18th century which is said to have evolved from the English *country-dance* which was introduced into France at the end of the 17th century. It was a simple dance of figures in which a line of women and a line of men face one another, making allegories about the theme of amorous conquest. Arriving in the French colony of Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic/Haiti) during the eighteenth century, the *contradanza* acquired some African flavor from the French Creoles of the island; the choreography, however, remained in the form of line or square dance, maintaining a formal air. Further European influence can be seen in the instrumentation of the orchestras which interpreted *contradanzas*. *Orquesta típica* was the name given to these orchestras which consisted of wind, string and percussion instruments. The wind section included a combination of wood and brass instruments such as the clarinet, the cornet, the trombone, the bassoon, the tuba, and others. Violins and the contrabass constituted the string section. The Creole *timpani* and the *güiro* (an instrument made from a serated gourd or calabash and struck or scraped with a stick) provided the percussion.

As a result of the 1791 slave uprising and revolution in Santo Domingo, a great number of French colonists and slaves came to *Oriente*, the easternmost province on the island of Cuba. With this wave of immigrants came the *contradanza*. The cities of Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo were the most concentrated centers of this immigration and to this day retain their French heritage. Evidence of this French influence lies in the *Tumba Francesa*, an old Black slave music and dance form brought from Santo Domingo, the lyrics of which are sung in French-*patois*. Immigrants from New Orleans and Louisiana also participated in this incorporation of French influences.

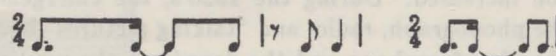
Upon arriving in Cuba, the *contradanza* was quickly assimilated and "Creolized" by musicians, composers and dancers. It was also influenced by other European elements such as *romances*, operatic arias, and Neapolitan songs and dances. Dances of local Cuban Creole extraction may have influenced the *contradanza* when danced in the more common sectors of society. Some of these dances were: *El Chin Chin*, *El Congo*, *El Cariaco*, *El Tumba-Antonio*, *El Papalote*, *La Guabina*, *La Caringa*, *El Juan Grande*, *El Toro*, *El Dengue* and *La Culebra*. Towards the middle of the 19th century, other European square dances such as the *cuadrillos*, the *lanceros* and the *rigodón* were brought to Cuba. These dance-forms also influenced the folkloric urban music, especially the *danzón*. The *contradanza* had a quick tempo and was usually written in 2/4 time, although occasionally it appeared in 6/8 time.

The *contradanza*, on its path of evolution towards the *danzón*, became the *danza*, the *danza habanera*, and then simply the *habanera*, which gained worldwide attention. The Creole flavor, which gradually increased in all of these forms, was referred to as *ritmo de tango*. The famous Argentine *tango* is said to have emerged from this line of development. The most obvious element in this Creole influence is the presence of the rhythm known as *cinquillo*:



(Note: Cuban music is traditionally written in 2/4 time, although today's popular Latin music is generally written in 4/4 time.)

The African-derived rhythm known as *clave*, which is closely related to the *cinquillo*, also plays an important yet subtle rôle in the *contradanza*, the *danza* and the *danzón*. The following *clave*-based rhythm, and variations of it as played on the contra-bass, comprise an essential element of these styles:



clave

typical bass rhythm

†Also known as the Spanish-American war of 1895.

This rhythmic concept is still the foundation of present day Latin music. It can be heard on most of the recordings presented here.

When the musical form of the *danzón* emerged in 1879, it quickly won great popularity. Soon the *danzón* was accepted as the "National Dance of Cuba." It became the favorite vehicle of expression among the Cuban people for channeling all types of political and social comment. In this first stage, the *danzón* established itself as a typical Cuban genre; however, with the ending of slavery in Cuba (1880's), and as the process of social class separation became more pronounced, the *danzón* became affiliated with the upper class and elite sectors. Exclusive clubs and literary societies regularly hired orchestras to interpret *danzones* during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Notice the similarity in sound and orchestration between the *orquesta típica* and the early American jazz bands. New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz, had several influences in common with Cuba. Both places had French and Spanish colonial influence. The military marching bands, of which the French were quite fond, gave birth to the *orquesta típica* in Cuba, and to the Negro brass bands of the 19th century in New Orleans, which were the predecessors of the early jazz bands. Ragtime, noted for its rhythmic nature, was influenced by Cuban music. Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*, which is perhaps the most famous Ragtime composition, has an interesting similarity to the form of the *danzón*. It is written in 2/4 time, with four sections of sixteen bars each (A A B B A C C D D). Ragtime flourished in the United States from about 1896 to 1917.

Around the time of the beginning of the Cuban republic (1898), a new style of *danza* emerged. This new musical form was composed of two sections of 32 measures each, the first written in 2/4 and the last in 6/8. Coinciding with the appearance of the *new danza* was the development of a new kind of orchestra: the *charanga francesa*. It was composed of five-key wooden flute, piano, contrabass, violins, güiro, and the *pailitas*, or timbales, which were a much smaller version of the timpani. Composer-pianist Antonio Maria Romeu (1876-1955) is one of the most important figures in the early stage of the *charanga*. He was an innovative genius, having written over 1500 *danzones*, mostly in the *charanga* format, and was the first to establish the piano in this type of orchestra. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, several revolutions and insurrections indicated a growing Cuban sentiment against Spanish rule. Romeu became very popular with the Cuban people by writing *danzones* with titles that reflected the pro-independence movement.

The *són afrocubano*, which was a very popular Black music and dance form, greatly influenced the *danzón*. The name *danzón* seems to be derived from *danza* and *són*; as time passed, the influence of the *són* increased. During the 1920's, the emergence of the phonograph, radio, and "talking pictures" boosted the *són afrocubano* and the *danzón* in the public and commercial view.

The next important innovations to affect the *danzón* were made by the *charanga* orchestra known as *Antonio Arcaño y sus Maravillas*. These innovations were, for the most part, rhythmic, fortifying the African element in the *danzón*. In 1938, Arcaño, an accomplished flautist who had studied under Maestro José Antonio Díaz, took over the *Orquesta Maravilla del Siglo* which was organized in 1936 by the well-known Cuban singer, Fernando Collazo. At a time when the *danzón* was experiencing a slump in popularity, especially among the Black and working-class communities, Arcaño's band reunited the common people with the *danzón*. The rhythmic concept which the band introduced was at first called *danzón de nuevo ritmo*, and later mambo. It was destined to have a profound effect, not only on the *danzón*, but on all of Latin music. Because of the mambo, by 1940 and throughout the decade of the forties, *Las Maravillas de Arcaño* were the foremost *charanga* in Cuba, reestablishing the *danzón* at the crest of Cuban popular music.

Arcaño's mambo, coupled with innovations made by the great blind black composer and musician Arsenio Rodriguez, gave birth to the big band mambo. Pérez Prado made the big band mambo very famous during the latter part of the 1940's. In 1951, also as a development of Arcaño's mambo, the *cha cha chá* emerged and gained great popularity. Eventually, with the influence of American rock and pop groups of the Sixties, the Cuban *Onda Areito* developed, and added yet another dimension to the *charanga* complex.

BIOGRAPHIES

John Santos is a percussionist/instructor with a special interest and expertise in the areas of traditional Cuban and Puerto Rican music. Over the past ten years, he has compiled an extensive collection of recordings and literature documenting this music and has been very active in sharing this information with San Francisco Bay Area audiences through special radio shows and through regular workshops and performances. He is currently conducting a Latin music program with Mr. Guillermo Guillén at the Mission Cultural Center of San Francisco under the auspices of the California Arts Council and is producing and performing on the debut album of *Orquesta Batachanga*, a ten-piece *charanga* band from San Francisco.

Andrew Schloss is a percussionist/composer with a strong interest in Latin music and culture. He studied Ethnomusicology at the University of Washington for several years before leaving to study computer music at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA) at Stanford University. He is currently working on his Ph.D. dissertation which is entitled "On the Automatic Transcription of Percussive Music - From Acoustic Signal to High-level Analysis." He has made field recordings of Cuban and Guatemalan music; the former are available on a Folkways recording entitled *Carnaval in Cuba 1980* (FE 4065). His next project for Folkways is a study of Capoeira music from Brazil, with capoeira master Bira Almeida.

NOTES ON THE RECORDINGS

NOTE - The dates which appear after the titles represent the year in which the pieces were written. This information was not available for all of the compositions, and in some cases, it is approximate. Where possible, the authors are listed also.

Side One was recorded in 1954 in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Failde's *danzón*. The musical group on these recordings was formed that same year under the auspices of *El Instituto Musical de Investigaciones Folklóricas* (IMIF), and was known then as *La Orquesta Folklórica Nacional Cubana*. This group is known today as *La Charanga Típica Nacional de Concierto*, under the direction of pianist-ethnomusicologist Odilio Urfé. This group is orchestrated to accommodate the interpretation of either the *orquesta típica* style (brass and woodwinds) or the *charanga* style (strings, flute and piano).

SIDE A

1. San Pascual Bailon (CONTRADANZA) 1803 1' 29"

San Pascual Bailon is the earliest known contradanza to be composed in Cuba. Its musical form is an excellent example of the typical contradanza and of the danza in their early stages. It was written in 2/4 time, with two sections of eight bars each, repeated (A A B B, often abbreviated A B). The resulting four sections were each danced with a different step in a very formal square or line-dance manner. The four dance steps were known as *paseo*, *cadena*, *sostenido*, and *cedazo*, respectively. The entire four-section scheme is repeated here three times. Also note the rapid tempo which was common to the contradanza.

2. El Sungambelo (DANZA) 1813 1' 08"

This piece represents the first stage of the danza, when it was commonly written in a rapid 2/4 time. The musical form is identical to the contradanza. In this example, the four-section scheme is repeated twice (A B A B). The danza appeared early in the 19th century as the result of the assimilation of the contradanza. Taking on more of the island flavor, the danza developed an extraordinary melodic, rhythmic, and choreographic richness, thus separating it from the contradanza.

3. Las Alturas de Simpson (DANZÓN) 1879 Miguel Failde 3' 29"

Las Alturas de Simpson is generally accepted as being the first *danzón* to be composed. The *danzón* was a dance which had been used in the Cuban province of *Matanzas* at least twenty years before Failde debuted his musical version in 1879.

Miguel Failde Pérez, father of the Cuban *danzón*, was a Black composer and cornetist, born December 23, 1852 in *Matanzas*. His *danzón* was also written in 2/4 time but was more relaxed than the contradanza and the danza. This was the result of the demands of the dancing public, who were gradually breaking away from the stiffer, up-tempo choreography of the danza, in favor of the more sensual *danzón*. Although the *danzón* maintained a formal air, it later developed into a couple dance which was more expressive than the line or square dance. The *danzón* also incorporated a third part, giving it three 16-bar sections instead of two, as in the contradanza and the danza (A B A C instead of A B A B). This third part distinguished the *danzón* from the other forms by showing further Black influence in its rhythmic syncopation. The three sections were named, respectively: Introduction, Clarinet Trio and Metal Trio, which indicates by instrumentation the presence of a certain type of orchestra (the *orquesta típica*). Failde and trombonist Raimundo Valenzuela (1848-1905) are considered to be the two greatest composers of the *danzón* in its early stages. Failde died on December 26, 1921.

4. El Bombín de Barreto (DANZÓN) 1910 José Urfé 4' 03"

This composition expanded on Failde's *danzón* format by adding two more sections, the last of which incorporated rhythmic aspects of the *són oriental*, (son afrocubano) which was a common Black musical form originally from Oriente province. By this time, the choreography for the *danzón* was well-established as a couple dance, where more contact was made between the partners, in what was described as having "mischievous intentions." This type of dancing was also borrowed from the *són*. A short solo section for cornet was included in this last section, representing further the "loosening up" of the *danzón*. Urfé's (1879-1957) composition did much to define and solidify the structure of the *danzón*, establishing the last section, which was borrowed from the *són*, and making it standard as the *danzón con montuno*.

5. Rompiendo la Rutina (DANZONETE) 1929 Aniceto Díaz 4' 29"

This is the first *danzonete*, appropriately titled, *Rompiendo la Rutina* (Breaking the Routine). Its composer, Aniceto Díaz (1887-1964), borrowed again from the Afro-Cuban *són*, in creating his *danzónete*, which marks the transition of the *danzón* from an instrumental form to a vocal form. This composition also incorporates *claves* and *maracas*, which are essential instruments of the Afro-Cuban *són*, but had not been heard with the *danzón* instrumentation up until this time. Notice how the speed picks up in the section just before the piano solo, where the horns and the solo voice alternate eight-bar phrases. This corresponds with the refrain (which is known as *estribillo* or *montuno*) in the Afro-Cuban *són* format. The singer here is none other than Barbarito Díaz, who through his association with the great composer and pianist Antonio María Romeu, is known as the greatest singer of *danzónetes* in Cuba.

6. Tres Lindas Cubanas (DANZÓN) 1926 Guillermo Castillo and A.M. Romeu. 6' 23"

Without a doubt, *Tres Lindas Cubanas* has become one of the most popular Cuban songs of all time. It is truly a classic, and a standard of every orchestra's repertoire. Originally composed as a *són* by Guillermo Castillo, who was the director of the famous *Sexteto Habanero*, Romeu adapted it to his *charanga* orchestra and permanently engraved it in the annals of Cuban music history. The *Sexteto Habanero*, who were the most popular interpreters of the *són* at that time, won the championship of the *Concurso Nacional* with this composition on May 23, 1926, and recorded it for the first time on September 2, 1926. Romeu composed an entirely original piece in which the *montuno* section returns to the *estribillo*, or refrain, of Castillo's original version. Romeu's version is instrumental, because the *charangas* of the day did not use vocalists. The incredible piano solo on this recording is a rendition of an original solo as recorded by Romeu himself. Of the hundreds of times this piece has been recorded over the years, most recordings retain this solo, or part of it, intact. The tasteful use of the woodblock is executed by the timbales player.

7. El Ñáñigo (DANZA) 1921 2' 25"

Here is a *danza* written in the new style, half in 2/4 time and half in 6/8 time. The first half is fast and reminiscent of the earlier *danzas*. The 6/8 section, however, cuts the feeling in half, creating a very interesting contrast. This composition was inspired by the Afro-Cuban cult known as *Abakuá* or *Ñáñigo* and is based on a song from the ritual music of the cult.

SIDE B

Side B, Tracks 1, 2 and 3, also are interpreted by *La Charanga Típica Nacional de Concierto*. Tracks 1 and 3 were recorded in 1979, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the *danzón*, the hundredth anniversary of the birth of José Urfé, and the fiftieth anniversary of the *danzonete*. The musicians on these two tracks are:

Odilio Urfé - piano and director

Miguel Valdes - violin

Gustavo Tamayo - güiro

Ivan Hernandez - *tumbadora* (conga drum)

Aurelio Herrera - flute

Orestes Urfé - contrabass

Juan Febles - güiro

Rafael Blanco - timbales

Track 4 is an historic recording by *Antonio Arcaño y Sus Maravillas* almost forty years after the founding of the band. Arcaño himself is directing. Track 5 is played by *La Orquesta de Enrique Jorrín*, which is active in Cuba today. Track 6 is a recent (late seventies) recording of *La Orquesta Ritmo Oriental*, who are also active in Cuba today.

1. Tuthankamen (DANZA) Ricardo Reverón 2' 13"

The rapid speed at which the first half is played, while maintaining the feeling and "tightness" of the melody, is a tribute to the mastery of the musicians. It is also representative of the new stage of the *danza*, although the use of the *tumbadora* and the bell in the last two sections would not have been included around the turn of the century, when this style emerged and was popular. The composer, Ricardo Reverón (1895-1947), was a pianist whose compositions are considered to be among the most important in the first stages of the *charanga* style.

2. La Revoltosa (DANZA) Tanito Rojas 2' 18"

La Revoltosa is identical in form to *Tuthankamen*, and also typical of the turn-of-the-century *danza*, being written half in 2/4 and half in 6/8 time. Again, use of the *tumbadora* and the bell (which is played by the *timbalero*-timbales player) indicate more recent influence.

3. Liliana (DANZÓN) Ricardo Reverón. 5' 05"

Liliana is perhaps the most beautiful piece presented here because of the moving sentimentality of Reverón's writing and the feeling with which the members of the orchestra interpret it. This type of danzón, written for the charanga type of orchestra and not containing a montuno (refrain) section, is typical of those composed before Urfé's *Bombín de Barreto* of 1910. However, the two violin solos demonstrate a high level of virtuosity, which is an element identified with the charanga style since it first emerged around the turn of the century. Excellent musicianship, as soloists as well as accompanists, was the trademark of the charangas. Antonio Maria Romeu played an important role in setting this standard.

4. Angoa (DANZÓN) Félix Reina 1948. 6' 34"

Angoa is a classic in Cuban music. This important recording represents the authentic *danzón mambo* as introduced by *La Orquesta de Arcaño y sus Maravillas* during the late 1930's. This 1976 recording marks the first recorded reunion of this orchestra in over twenty years and the thirty-ninth anniversary of the founding of the group.

The mambo was an important innovation because it took the danzón from its exclusive upper-class setting, and brought it into the dance halls of the common people by emphasizing rhythmic, African-based elements. This was the first time an orquesta típica, or a charanga, used the tumbadora which was a significant breakthrough in Cuban music. The use of the cow-bell with the timbales, as executed by Arcaño's timbalero Ulpiano Díaz, also became standard in the danzón format. Arcaño expanded the traditional charanga instrumentation even further by adding 'cello and viola. Interlocking rhythms made of two or four measures, such as the ones notated here, gave the mambo a very appealing swing. These interlocking rhythmic phrases are known as *tumbaos* and *guajeos*, with each instrument playing a part to create the African polyrhythmic effect. These tumbaos and guajeos are based on the African-derived clave and cinquillo rhythms. Rhythmically embellishing on top of it all would be Arcaño with his flute. The *danzón mambo* retained all of the elegance of the earlier danzón, but incorporated the "swinging" mambo section.

The main forces behind Arcaño's mambo were the Lopez brothers, Orestes (1908-) and Israel (the great "Cachao") (1916-), who did most of the composing and arranging for the group, and played the 'cello and the string bass, respectively. "An ace on every instrument" was the motto of the orchestra; the other top-notch musicians in the original group were: Virgilio Diago and Elizardo Aroche on violins, Jesús Lopez on piano, Ulpiano Diez on timbales, Gustavo Tamayo on güiro, and Arcaño on flute; and later, Eliseo Martinez ("El Colorao") on tumbadora; Félix Reina, Elio Valdez, José Sanchez and Enrique Jorrín on violins; Cuco Sanchez on bass, and José Cruz or Eulogio Ortiz on flute, with Arcaño acting as director. Some of the musicians on this recording were members of the group at its height, during the decade of the 1940's. This transcription is from the first mambo section of the piece, before the piano solo.

(enters on fifth measure)

flute

guiro
bell
(timbales)

conga

piano

violin

'cello

bass

A min B7 E7

5. La Engañadora (CHA CHA CHÁ) Enrique Jorrín 1951 2' 27"

After having been a member of *La Orquesta de Arcaño y sus Maravillas*, Enrique Jorrín (1926-) joined the *Orquesta América* with whom he was violinist when he wrote the first cha cha chá, *La Engañadora*. This coincided with the emergence of television and the Long-Playing disc (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM) which aided tremendously in spreading the popularity of the cha cha chá across the island and across the globe.

The cha cha chá was a new dance and a musical extension of Arcaño's mambo. The instrumentation was the same: strings, flute, piano, bass, tumbadora, timbales and güiro. The basic structure utilized tumbaos and guajeos, as in the mambo, to achieve the African polyrhythmic effect. The most notable difference was the addition of human voices singing in unison in a very polished and refined manner. The resulting "sweet" sound of the cha cha chá had tremendous commercial appeal and was adopted by nearly all the musicians in Cuba, inside and out of the traditional charanga format.

Numerous orquestas have varied the original structure of the cha cha chá due largely to the availability of time on radio, television and recordings. They would reduce or add parts and improvisations according to allotted time. Of all the groups that contributed to the evolution of the cha cha chá, *La Orquesta Aragón* and *José Fajardo y sus Estrellas* stand out as being the most important. *Aragón* was formed during the late 1930's and today they continue performing in Cuba and around the world with interpretations of cha cha chá and other Cuban styles. Fajardo still records and performs in the New York area.

Jorrín, whose first compositions were danzones such as *Unión Cienfueguera*, also wrote other cha cha chá's which became very popular. Among them were: *El Alardoso*, *Silver Star*, and *Milagros de Cha Cha Chá*. Cha cha chá is an onomatopoeic name which Jorrín derived from the sound of the brushing feet in the dance step. Eventually, Jorrín became the first to incorporate electronic instruments into the charanga and cha cha chá formats. This interpretation of *La Engañadora* is a recent recording (1970's) of Jorrín's Orquesta.

6. Que Es Lo Que Hay (ONDA AREITO) 3' 54"

This selection is more representative of the evolution of the charanga than of the danzón. *Que Es Lo Que Hay* is performed here by *La Orquesta Ritmo Oriental*, which is one of the most popular groups in Cuba today. Their sound is based on the traditional charanga instrumentation of strings, piano and percussion, but with the bass and usually the piano being electric. Also, they use drums which are closer to the American trap set than to the traditional timbales, although the style of playing is uniquely Cuban. This style is generally referred to in Cuba as *Onda Areito*. The trademark of this band is their innovative, modern arrangements. Their bright, rhythmic sound is common to the groups which play in the Areito style.

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