



Ritmacuba, since 1989.

## Dance and Music Program 2017

**July 16 (evening) or until the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> to participate. July 17 is orientation day and July 28<sup>th</sup> the day for the final presentations.**

Participants are free to make their own travel arrangements and Ritmacuba can arrange for accommodation in Santiago for the number of nights needed (every year we have people who arrive a week or so early or stay for a while after the program). We reserve rooms in state-licensed B&Bs in the downtown neighbourhood around the Casa Dranguet where the classes take place. The program takes place during Santiago's famous Carnival in which we always participate, our *comparsa* has even been awarded in some years.

Ritmacuba has over 25 years of experience running dance and music programs in Cuba. We welcome students of all nationalities, disciplines and levels from amateurs with little experience to professionals. From what I have seen we have the most flexible, customizable program available and offer a truly authentic cultural immersion. As well as individual dancers or musicians, groups of friends and families, we have accommodated dance companies and a brass band from Martinique. All ages are welcome, though minors will be admitted only if they are accompanied by one of the two parents, participating in courses or not.

How can we accommodate these various needs?

- by offering a choice of levels in some disciplines (i.e. salsa, percussion, etc.)
- by providing an opportunity for participants to practise their own specialty and explore a new one.

Participants may want to take classes solely within their own discipline or vary things up. For example, it could be the opportunity for a musician to take a dance class or a dancer to take percussion or sing as well as take dance classes. Classes are offered within a framework of four one-hour segments each day with 15 minutes between classes.

Classes will prepare participants for participation in two public events:

- Formation of a *comparsa* for official participation in a parade as part of Santiago's famous Carnival. The *comparsa* will consist of two parts, one centred around percussion but with dancers and the other a rueda de casino to be performed before the parade jury. Depending on enrolment we may add a brass band or wind and brass instruments to the *comparsa*.
- Participants in the band workshop will give a public concert. The arrangements will be customized to the participants according to instruments played and skill levels.
- For wind and brass instrumentalists there will be the possibility of playing at least one open air concert as part of the Banda de Concierto de Santiago (with recordings under the name of Banda Municipal)
- On the last day of the program the various classes will present what they have learned.

### **Cultural Program “Abanico Cubano”**

**In complement to the courses and workshops**, there is a program of activities focused on the music and dance of Oriente (eastern Cuba), outside the usual tourist circuit. Each year is unique and adapted to the situation of the moment, details will not be published in advance. These activities may include a rumba, a street party in the neighbourhood of Los Hoyos, home of the oldest conga group in Santiago, a visit to a rehearsal of one of the local *comparsas*, a presentation of tumba francesa, concerts with the Banda de Santiago and/or other groups such as the saxophone quartet Magic Sax and a “beach day” off-the-beaten-path with a barbecue. We bring along instruments and invite the teachers.

There is ample opportunity within this program for participants to explore Santiago independently. Recommended are the Casa de la Trova, Los Dos Abuelos, Artex, Casa de Las Tradiciones, Iris Jazz Club and more. The program takes place during Carnival when the biggest popular Cuban groups (Sur Caribe, Oderquis Reve, etc.) give concerts. There are many places to go dancing.

### **The teachers**

The members of our experienced team are Cuban teachers and assistants who together represent the rich musical and dance heritage of Santiago province (Oriente). We freely choose our teachers and rehearsal leaders without relying on the internal (and limiting) choices of any one institution. They are chosen from such institutions as: Casa del Caribe, Ballet Folklorico de Oriente, Cutumba, Casa de la Trova, Casino All-Stars, Conservatorio Estaban Salas and others.

## Classes and rehearsals

9 days of classes including a final concert or presentation plus 2 days of cultural activities (the « Abanico » program).

### Course Schedule and Options

Flexible program allows many options for example:

- A) Dance\* – 4 hours dance per day or 3 hours of dance and 1 hour of singing or percussion
- B) Percussion\* – 4 hours percussion a day, possibility of one of those hours in the orchestra class, or 3 hours of percussion and 1 hour of singing or dance.
- C) Instrument or voice\* – 1 hour of singing or voice – private, 1 hour collective practice, 1 hour of orchestra, 2<sup>nd</sup> hour of voice or instrument – private, or a class in another area – dance, percussion or voice
- D) Personalised program\* – allows for any kind of combination. A beginner could take level one courses in percussion and dance or a multi-level course such as singing or Afro-Cuban dance.

**\*private lessons require an additional fee of 55 CUC (Cuban convertible pesos, same value as the U.S. dollar). This supplement covers all of the classes in one time slot and is to be paid on site. If the private class is added to the schedule as a 5<sup>th</sup> class the fee will be 110 CUC.**

**Note:** Participants choosing to specialize in a particular area such as dance or percussion or to participate in the orchestra are expected to have a sufficient base in their discipline.

You may register for one course per time slot. Some modifications may be required.

Although people switching classes complicates planning and organization **we allow changes until the 3rd day of classes.**

Lunch is served on the patio, on site, from 12:30-2:00.

The Casa Dranguet also has a recording studio for those who may be interested.

## Class Schedule

9:00 – 10 a.m.	10:15– 11:15 a.m.	11:30 – 12:30 p.m.	2:00 – 3 p.m.
<b>Dance - Afro-Cuban, rumba &amp; comparsa</b> mixed levels: accompanied by percussion & singer	<b>Dance – Casino/Salsa,</b> Level 2	<b>Dance – Popular Cuban (son, cha-cha-cha, etc.)</b> Level A Level B	<b>Dance – Casino Rueda,</b> intermediate and advanced
<b>Private lessons - Dance- salsa/bachata/reggaeton</b> <b>Note:</b> supplement of 55 CUC (for the entire 9 days), payable on site.	<b>Dance –Casino/Salsa,</b> Level 3	<b>Dance - Afro-Cuban</b> intermediate and advanced: accompanied by percussion & singer, dependent on min. of 8 registrants	<b>Dance – Salsa Level 1</b>
<b>Percussion, Afro-Cuban</b> (congas and/or bata and bells) different teacher & material from afternoon (teacher: Mililian Gali , assistant: Regla)	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas) intermediate and advanced (teacher: Manolo Semanat Bell)	<b>Percussion – rumba (congas, claves, cata)</b> intermediate and advanced level (teacher: Silvio Ferrara, director of rumba group Folkloyuma)	<b>Percussion, Afro-Cuban</b> (congas and/or bata and bells, conga Santiaguera) (teacher: Vicente Portuondo)
	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas, small percussion) level 1 – (dependant on min. of 4 registrants)	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> congas, level 1	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas, small percussion) level 1 - (dependant on min. of 4 registrants) (teacher: Manolo Semanat Bell)
<b>Wind instruments</b> (brass band, parade band) - dependant on min. of 4 registrants. Class will be led by Ernesto Burgos, director of the Banda Municipal de Santiago.	<b>Small ensemble</b> according to interest and number of participants, trad.son and/or orchestrated rumba workshop with voice, percussion and instrumentation (piano, bass, tres, etc.)	<b>Son/Salsa Orchestra</b> for instrumentalists, percussionists, voice – soloists and chorus	
<b>Private lessons Instruments/singing</b> <b>Note:</b> supplemental cost of 55 CUC per time slot (for the entire 9 days), payable on site.	<b>Singing soloists and chorus</b> includes preparation for the orchestra	<b>Group singing class (Cuban repertory)</b> leading to integration with the orchestra as backup singers (coros)	<b>Private lessons – all instruments/singing/ steel pan 3 or 4 p.m. depending on availability of space</b> <b>Note:</b> supplemental cost of 55 CUC per time slot (for the entire 9 days)
<b>After 3:00 p.m.</b> certain days there will be rehearsal for carnaval			
<b>After 6:00 p.m.</b> (depending on proposed events): an activity organized by Ritmacuba (Abanico program) centred on traditional music and dance and social events and/or free time.			

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **DANCE**

The teachers will determine appropriate levels on the first day of classes. In the event that the numbers of men and women registered are uneven Cuban partners will be provided for the classes.

#### **Afro-Cuban dance, all levels – accompanied by percussionists and singer**

Yoruba, Congo, Haitian-Cuban, rumba, comparsa

#### **Afro-Cuban dance, intermed. & advanced – accompanied by percussionists & singer**

Yoruba, Congo, Haitian-Cuban, rumba, comparsa, conditional on enrolment of 10 people, repertoire would be divided so that those taking this class could also take the mixed-level Afro-cuban dance class

#### **Salsa Level 1**

With and without partner, integrating popular Cuban styles such as son, rumba, pilon, cha-cha-cha, mambo, casino rueda....) This course is designed for those who have little or no experience and as a program option for musicians.

#### **Salsa Level 2**

In line, in couples and in a circle (rueda).

#### **Salsa Level 3**

In line, in couples and in a circle (rueda). Includes preparation for the rueda class.

#### **Popular Cuban Dance**

Son, rumba, pilon, cha-cha-cha, mambo, danzon; couples and rueda. This may be divided into two groups if there is too much difference in the levels of the people enrolled.

#### **Casino Rueda, intermediate and advanced**

Depending on students' motivation and recent trends in Santiago, elements of rumba, Afro-Cuban dance (regional and national) and popular Cuban dances may be incorporated. A choreographed rueda may be integrated into the comparsa group. Participation in one of the morning salsa classes, level 2 or 3 is recommended for those taking this class.

#### **Dance, private lessons – salsa/regueton/bachata**

Advanced level only. One person or one couple.

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### **PERCUSSION**

The 2 Afro-Cuban classes are taught by different teachers in different time slots so those specializing in percussion may take both. Course A offers written and oral instruction.

#### **Popular Cuban Percussion, Level 1 (beginners and those with little experience)**

Congas, small percussion. Depending on the participants, may be focused more on the congas or on small percussion with option of coordination with dance steps.

#### **Popular Cuban Percussion, Level 2 (intermediate and advanced)**

Putting several rhythms together, variations, breaks, etc. Shekere option possible (bembé de guiro) depending on students' wishes

**Afro-Cuban percussion, polyrhythm, A, intermediate and advanced**

Morning class, congas, bells, sticks, introduction to bata possible: orishas, bembé, congo, conga, afro-haitian, etc. Written reference. Different teacher from afternoon class. Different parts/instruments played simultaneously with different levels of difficulty.

**Afro-Cuban percussion, polyrhythm, B, intermediate and advanced**

Afternoon class, rumba and conga de carnaval, (congas, bells). Depending on students and what is being taught in the morning – batas, orishas, bembé, congo, afro-haitian, etc. Different parts/instruments played simultaneously with different levels of difficulty.

**Percussion – rumba and cajon, intermediate level on congas**

Cajon technique combined with congas or several congas simultaneously. Must have good left-hand technique (or right hand in the case of left-handers)

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**SINGING/INSTRUMENTS/ORCHESTRA**

All of the singing and orchestra students will receive a Cuban songbook or “cancionero cubano”

**Singing, group class**

Afro-Cuban chants in Yoruba, Lucumi, Haitian Creole, etc. and Popular Cuban songs in Spanish. Percussionists may sing chorus while playing an instrument.

**Singing, soloists and chorus**

Preparation for the orchestra and son repertory (if only one singer is registered, there will be a supplement for this course as a private lesson)

**Private lessons, instrumentalists and singers**

Timbales/bongos/congas, piano, bass, violin, tres, guitar, flute, saxophone (corneta china for carnaval an option), trumpet, trombone, singing – offered in 2 different time slots  
These private lessons require a supplement of 55 CUC (Cuban convertible pesos) per series (per time slot) to be paid on location, unless two people share a lesson.

**Instruments, group class**

Preparation for the orchestra. Includes section work (winds), sorting out arrangements, preparation of repertory.

**Son/salsa Orchestra**

Instrumentalists, vocalists, percussionists. Styles could include: son, guaracha, pilon, danzon, cha-cha-cha, mambo.

**Wind instruments (brass band, marching band)**

Arrangements by the arranger for the Banda de Santiago of Cuban standards. This course was designed for the marching band from Martinique participating in 2012 but is open to all Ritmacuba participants.

## **DATES AND TRAVEL OPTIONS**

If you are travelling from Toronto or Montreal you may choose what we have found to be a compatible flight/transportation arrangement or make your own arrangements. To participate in the program you must arrive in Santiago on July 16 at the latest and stay until the morning of the 29th. We can reserve you a room for the length of your stay in Santiago.

The rooms that we book are in private houses (casas) in the neighbourhood where the courses will take place (at Casa Dranguet). You will have a private washroom and an air conditioner in your room. Price is based on double occupancy but you may pay a supplement and have a private room. If you are travelling alone but wish to share a room we will do our best to match you up with another participant. The payment for the casa must be paid directly to the homeowner and will include breakfast.

Lunches are served at Casa Dranguet as part of the program. Dinners are not included. There are many extremely reasonable restaurants in the neighbourhood (some more expensive ones too!) Some casa owners will make dinners for their guests upon request.

**You may request a registration form or ask any questions by emailing [jh-canada@ritmacuba.com](mailto:jh-canada@ritmacuba.com)** or phone me at 519-428-3315. We will send you a document of practical information about Cuban money, food, what clothes to bring, etc. on registration.

## **DONATIONS**

Ritmacuba will be donating supplies to our partners at Casa Dranguet and Cultura Municipal de Santiago. If you want to make a donation we can give you some ideas - for example, school supplies.

## **COST AND PAYMENT DETAILS**

The Cuban convertible peso (CUC) can only be bought and used in Cuba. Online currency converters can be used to get an idea of costs in Canadian or U.S. dollars but keep in mind that you never get that ideal rate, there is a small percentage charged for exchanging currency. It will be posted in any official exchange office in Cuba. Never have your money changed anywhere other than an official CADECA outlet or a bank.

The convertible peso (CUC) is pegged to the U.S. dollar. A 10% tax is charged by the Cuban government on top of transaction fees to exchange U.S. dollars into CUCs so Americans are advised to buy euros or Canadian dollars to exchange in Cuba for CUCs. Credit cards issued in the U.S. or from U.S. banks are not accepted in Cuba nor are travellers cheques.

More details on currency and other practical matters (what clothing to bring, etc.) will be sent to you before departure.

## Cost breakdown 2017

\$ CDN (Feb.3 2017 exchange rate)

### Without flight

A. 700 euros – classes/lunches, concerts/day trip*	995.00 CDN
B. 182 CUC 14 nights lodging w/breakfast	+245.00

based on double occupancy

(private/single accomodation cost is 322 CUC (\$430), room costs are calculated at 20 CUC per room per night + 3 CUC per person for breakfast)

**Total without flight approx. \$1240.00 CDN (exchange rate may fluctuate.)**

**No flight or transport information as yet. The only scheduled direct flights Toronto-Santiago or Montreal-Santiago are on incompatible dates.**

### \* Dinners are not included.

(please note : above costs are to be paid as shown, in euros to Ritmacuba for the program and CUC to the casa owners. The equivalents shown will vary with the exchange rate.)

**For those taking private classes :** 55 CUC to pay on site as supplement; 110 CUC if the private class is a 5<sup>th</sup> class added to the schedule.

You do need a tourist visa for Cuba, most often these are provided by the airline.

### **Payment dates:**

- A. *Ritmacuba: a Paypal request for payment to Ritmacuba will be sent after you register. A deposit of 150 euros will be required to hold your spot. The balance will need to be paid by the end of May. Paypal charges a fee for each transaction fee so you may want to pay all at once and avoid paying two fees. You also have the option of bringing Euros and paying on site.*
- B. *Accommodation: Unless you prefer to book a hotel, we will reserve a house (B&B room) for you: The Cuban government requires that accommodations must be paid (on site) in CUCs directly to the owner of the house where you will be staying.*

For any questions, please contact  
[jh-canada@ritmacuba.com](mailto:jh-canada@ritmacuba.com) (Joyce)