



## Rumba

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### Introduction

Along with the traditional dance genre *son*, the African-derived music and dance genre called rumba is widely considered to be the foundation of contemporary Cuban popular music. During the late 19th century it was the primary secular party music for poor black and racially mixed Cubans in western Cuba, and during the 20th century its musical features were incorporated into numerous popular genres, such as *son*, mambo, and salsa. Nonetheless, the literature on rumba does not include many in-depth studies, in Spanish or English. None of the pioneering scholars of Afro-Cuban culture gave much attention to rumba, as Fernando Ortiz and Lydia Cabrera focused primarily on Afro-Cuban sacred music. The little that has been written by these scholars, namely Ortiz and Alejo Carpentier, tends to overemphasize the “erotic” nature of the dance, thus reinforcing stereotypes about black culture. Nonetheless, as a member of Grupo Minorista—a group of poets, artists and composers founded in the 1920s who sought to valorize Afro-Cuban vernacular culture—Carpentier did view rumba as an important popular tradition. Among Cuban scholars writing after the Cuban Revolution, the primary in-depth studies of rumba have consisted of bachelor’s theses based on ethnographic research with rumba groups and one biography of important rumba musicians (see Musicians and Groups). There have also been articles on various aspects of rumba, and many Cuban scholars include discussions of the genre within sources on broader topics; the most significant examples of the latter are León 1984 (cited under History, Musical Features, and Musicians: History) and Urfé 1984 (cited under General Overviews and Reference Works). Because sources such as these are considered to be important within rumba literature in Cuba, the first section of this bibliography is dedicated to discussions of the genre within general overviews. Most of these works were originally published in the 1970s and 1980s and are historical and descriptive in nature. The rumba literature in English is at least as significant as the Cuban sources. Dance scholar Yvonne Daniel’s book (cited under Dance) is still a prominent source that provides a close look at rumba performance within the context of socialist Cuba. While not in-depth studies, North American music scholars have written articles analyzing rumba music (see Musical Features). In addition, three English-language dissertations constitute in-depth ethnographic studies on rumba performance (see Contemporary Performance). Lastly, because the term “rumba” took on so many different meanings throughout the 20th century, several of the sections within this bibliography relate to literature on nontraditional/stylized forms of rumba and on global musical styles that have been inspired by the term.

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### General Overviews and Reference Works

Within Cuban music scholarship, while there have not been many in-depth studies of rumba, the genre has been discussed within books and articles that have a broader scope, such as those that concern Cuban folkloric or popular music or African-derived music more generally. Alén Rodríguez 1998, Esquenazi Pérez 2001, León 1991, and Urfé 1984 are good examples of this type of source: all provide broad historical and descriptive narratives about rumba music and dance. The latter two have been important sources for later publications on rumba and Afro-Cuban music, and, correspondingly, the first two (written by second-generation Cuban revolutionary scholars) rely heavily on the work of León and Urfé. Reference works that include encyclopedia-style entries include Elí Rodríguez 1997, which focuses on rumba instrumentation; Frías 2014, a broad survey of all aspects of rumba

performance; and Orovio 2004, which includes entries on rumba musicians and groups. Finally, within the sources discussed are two English-language works, Frías 2014 and Sublette 2004, with the latter constituting an in-depth and journalistic narrative about the genre's history and general features.

**Alén Rodríguez, Olavo. *From Afrocuban Music to Salsa*. Berlin: Piranha Records, 1998.**

A lengthy booklet (roughly 180 pages) that accompanies a CD presenting examples of various Cuban folkloric and popular genres, in which the author presents a broad overview of rumba's history, musical features, instrumentation, and different styles. One unique aspect is the description of colonial rumba dances, the so-called *rumbas de tiempo España* (rumbas from the time of Spain, or the colonial period), which are rarely performed anymore.

**Elí Rodríguez, Victoria. *Instrumentos de la música folklórico-popular de Cuba*. 2 vols. Havana: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Música Cubana, 1997.**

A comprehensive two-volume encyclopedia that details the history and construction of each instrument used in Cuban folkloric and popular music, including all the instruments associated with rumba: the *tumbadora* (conga drum), the *cajón* (wooden box fashioned into a percussion instrument), the *claves* (wooden sticks beat against each other), and the *catá* (a hollowed-out piece of sugarcane on which drumsticks are beaten).

**Esquenazi Pérez, Martha. *Del areíto y otros sonos*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2001.**

Extensive ethnographic overview of Cuban music that includes a section on rumba. Like León 1984 (cited under History, Musical Features, and Musicians: History), this source includes a fairly detailed discussion of the *coro de clave/coro de guaguancó* tradition thought to be a main predecessor of rumba guaguancó.

**Frías, Johnny. "Rumba." In *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*. Vol. 9, *Genres: Caribbean and Latin America*. Edited by David Horn, Heidi Feldman, Mona-Lynn Courteau, Pamela Narbona Jerez, and Hettie Malcomson, 715–726. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.**

In-depth encyclopedia entry on rumba that details its origins and antecedents, its evolving instrumentation, various styles, musical features, and important groups. The article also takes a historical approach by discussing the changes in rumba performance throughout the 20th century and its influence beyond Cuba. Includes a detailed bibliography and discography.

**León, Argeliers. "Notes toward a Panorama of Popular and Folk Musics." In *Essays on Cuban Music: North American and Cuban Perspectives*. Edited and translated by Peter Manuel, 1–23. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991.**

Originally published in Spanish in 1982, this essay presents a classification of popular and folkloric musics into three categories: urban popular music, urban folk music, and archaic peasant or ritual genres; rumba is placed in the second category. Discussed are rumba's instrumentation, the dance steps of the three main styles, and the stylized "cabaret rumba" that emerged within the early 20th-century vernacular theater tradition.

**Orovio, Helio. *Cuban Music from A to Z*. Translated by Ricardo Bardo Portilla and Lucy Davies. Revised by Sue Steward. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.**

Originally published in Spanish as *Diccionario de la música cubana: Biográfico y técnico* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1992), this encyclopedia has a particularly broad scope in that it includes entries on instruments, important musical figures, genres,

national music institutions, and music scholars. Included are entries on rumba as a genre, major rumba groups and musicians, and art music composers (such as Guido López Gavilán) who wrote classical pieces inspired by rumba.

**Sublette, Ned. “Rumba.” In *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*. By Ned Sublette, 257–272. Chicago: Chicago Review, 2004.**

Book chapter within a comprehensive overview of Cuban music that draws on a variety of sources, both primary and secondary, and is written in a journalistic style meant to be accessible to the general public. The author reproduces historical accounts related to rumba’s musical antecedents and details its instrumentation, form, and main styles.

**Urfé, Odilio. “Music and Dance in Cuba.” In *Africa in Latin America: Essays on History, Culture, and Socialization*. Translated by Leonor Blum. Edited by Manuel Moreno Fraginals, 170–188. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984.**

Originally published in Spanish, this essay details all of the major Afro-Cuban practices, both sacred and secular. It presents a brief outline of rumba, similar to León 1991, but, unlike most other sources, this one presents a list of nine distinct types of rumba, including the three primary styles still performed and more stylized versions like *rumba del teatro bufo* or rumba as performed in the comic theater tradition.

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## Selected Audio and Video Recordings

There is a wealth of audio-visual sources related to rumba, much of which has been recorded and released in the late 20th and early 21st century. Traditional rumba performance was not often recorded before the revolution, largely because it was (and continues to be) a music and dance practice associated with poor and working-class Afro-Cubans. In line with the cultural politics of the revolution, rumba has since 1959 been considered an important national tradition and has enjoyed increased dissemination, mainly via audio recordings. In the post-Soviet era (since 1991), rumba has become even more visible, primarily because of the large increase in foreign tourism; correspondingly, many recent CDs and DVDs of rumba performance on the island have been released by North American or European companies. Included here are examples of historic rumba performance, specifically the two CDs by Tumbao Cuban Classics (Grupo Afro-Cubano de Alberto Zayas 2001 and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas 2004) that are re-releases of recordings made in the 1950s. In addition, Valdés 1978 is a documentary about rumba sponsored by Cuba’s national film institute that presents historic performance footage. Daniel, et al. 1992 is a similar source in English that presents documentary footage of rumba performance. In terms of audio recordings of recent rumba performance, the selection here is quite selective because CDs constitute the large majority of extant audio-visual material. An attempt has been made to highlight recordings by groups that have been particularly influential and that are considered by rumba enthusiasts to be “classics.” These include Clave y Guaguancó 1996 and Yoruba Andabo 1993, recordings by Havana’s two prominent rumba groups. DVDs of rumba and Afro-Cuban folklore produced by foreign filmmakers have become an important source as well, and included here are two: Weaver 2007, a live rumba concert by a major rumba and folkloric group from Matanzas, AfroCuba de Matanzas, and Yoruba Andabo 2005, which includes both rumba and Afro-Cuban sacred traditions. Due to the limited number of sources that can be presented here, all of the audio-visual materials pertain to the traditional rumba (and its contemporary performance practice) rather than the altered/stylized forms that are discussed in Stylization and the “Rumba Craze”.

**Clave y Guaguancó. *Déjala en la Puntica*. CD. Havana: Egrem, 1996.**

Founded in 1945, Clave y Guaguancó has been one of the most celebrated Havana rumba groups since the 1980s (along with Yoruba Andabo). The group has long been known for its fusions of rumba with a variety of sacred and secular genres, both Cuban and foreign. Along with songs representing rumba’s three traditional styles—*guaguancó*, *yambú*, and *columbia*—this recording includes songs that fuse rumba with Yoruba-derived *batá* drums and one that incorporates a rap.

**Daniel, Yvonne, Karen Donaldson, and Joel Sax. *Cuban Rumba*. VHS. New York: Insight Media, 1992.**

Documentary about rumba by dance scholar Yvonne Daniel (see Dance). Presents excerpts of various dance performances in Cuba with narration in English and interviews in Spanish.

**Grupo Afro-Cubano de Alberto Zayas. “El Melodioso.” In *El Yambú de los Barrios*. CD. Tumbao Cuban Classics, 2001.**

Originally recorded in 1955–1956, this is one of the few rumba recordings from the pre-revolutionary period. Alberto Zayas was a major composer of rumba songs and this CD features several lead singers, including legendary rumba vocalist Carlos Embale. An interesting detail regarding this and other rumba recordings of the period is that the interlocking conga drum pattern is played on the “three” (instead of the “two”) side of the clave, which is now considered to be an erroneous placement.

**Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. *Guaguancó Matancero*. CD. Tumbao Cuban Classics, 2004.**

Compilation of the first recordings made between 1956 and 1963 by legendary rumba group Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. Heard on this CD, the group’s famous vocal duo, Hortensio Alfonso “Virullilla” and Esteban Lantriz “Saldiguera,” revolutionized rumba vocals by splitting up the soloist role into three parts: one vocalist sang the introduction, two different vocalists sang the body of the song in a harmonized duet, and the first singer returned as the improviser for the call-and-response section.

**Valdés, Oscar, dir. *La Rumba*. VHS. Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos, 1978.**

Documentary about rumba sponsored by the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry. Presents performance footage of major rumba groups and musicians of the 1970s, including Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, AfroCuba de Matanzas, and Carlos Embale. A narrator provides historical and descriptive information about the three main styles and rumba’s antecedents such as *yuka* and *coros de guaguancó*. Also included are interviews of major figures, such as Saldiguera.

**Weaver, Christian. *Afrocuba de Matanzas: Live at El Palenque—Havana 2005*. DVD. Ripponden, UK: La Timbala Films, 2007.**

A live performance of celebrated rumba and folkloric group AfroCuba de Matanzas, founded in the city of Matanzas in 1957. The concert, filmed at a well-known Havana rumba venue, showcases the main styles AfroCuba de Matanzas has been performing since the group’s inception: *yambú matancero* (Matanzas-style *yambú*), *guaguancó matancero* (Matanzas-style *guaguancó*), *columbia*, and the group’s trademark rumba hybrid called *batarumba* (a fusion of rumba and Yoruba-derived *batá* drum rhythms).

**Yoruba Andabo. *El Callejón de los Rumberos*. CD. Barcelona: Ayva Musica, 1993.**

The first commercial album recorded by Yoruba Andabo, founded in 1961 and considered to be one of the most important rumba groups since the 1980s. The CD includes examples of the three main styles of rumba—*guaguancó*, *yambú*, and *columbia*—as well as two *Abakuá* songs associated with the male secret society from the Cross River region of Nigeria. Because of the strong historic links between rumba and *Abakuá*, this inclusion is not uncommon in contemporary rumba recordings.

**Yoruba Andabo. *Rumba en La Habana con Yoruba Andabo*. DVD. Barcelona: Ayva Musica, 2005.**

A performance DVD by Yoruba Andabo. While the group is primarily known for rumba repertoire, Yoruba Andabo also performs various Afro-Cuban folkloric genres that are represented on this DVD, including *orisha* dances from the Yoruba pantheon, a

Congo/Bantu dance, and an *Abakuá* song associated with the male secret society from the Cross River region of Nigeria. Beyond the three main styles of rumba—*guaguanco*, *yambú*, and *columbia*—included is a rumba-rap fusion.

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## History, Musical Features, and Musicians

While there are few full-length books on rumba's history, musical features or musicians, there are a number of articles, theses, and book chapters dedicated to the subject. In terms of Cuban scholarship, these include Acosta 1991 and Grasso González 1989 (both cited under Musicians and Groups) and León 1984 and Martínez Rodríguez and de la Hoz González 1977 (both cited under History). There is also a fair amount of English-language literature on the practice, some of which takes a historical approach, such as Crook 1992 and Moore 1997 (both cited under History), while other sources engage in musical analysis, such as Crook 1982 and Pasmanick 1997 (both cited under Musical Features). The different aspects of rumba literature have been divided into three subsections: History, Musical Features, and Musicians and Groups. Interestingly, the sources that include in-depth musical analysis and transcription are all written by foreign scholars, while the print literature on rumba musicians and groups are by Cuban scholars; this fact suggests two distinct methods of approaching the topic.

### History

The sources included in this category tend to discuss the African musical antecedents of rumba and the genre's emergence in the mid- to late 19th century and to provide a general description of music and dance features. Four of these are in Spanish: Évora 1997, León 1984, Martínez Rodríguez and de la Hoz González 1977, and Moliner Castañeda and Gutierrez Rodríguez 1987. León 1984 is the most in-depth of these sources and has been a very significant publication for later scholarship on rumba. Évora also presents a fairly comprehensive overview of the practice. The latter two sources are shorter and present a more historical narrative. The English-language sources are Alén Rodríguez 2002, which constitutes a genealogy of the conga drum, Crook 1992 and Roy 2002, both of which present good overviews of rumba, and Moore 1997. The latter does not discuss rumba's emergence or antecedents in depth, but it is a relevant source with regards to the genre's history because it discusses the transformations and stylizations undergone by rumba in the 1920s and 1930s.

#### **Alén Rodríguez, Olavo. "A History of the Congas" AfroCubaWeb, 2002.**

Brief article detailing the history of the *tumbadora* or conga drum, the instrument most closely associated with rumba and Cuba's most important instrumental contribution to the world. The author discusses the original performance context of this instrument, which was first utilized not in the rumba ensemble but in *congas*, parading carnival groups; the instrument was not incorporated into the rumba ensemble until the 1930s.

#### **Crook, Larry. "The Form and Formation of the Rumba in Cuba." In *Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and the Evolution of Salsa in New York City*. Edited by Vernon W. Boggs, 31–42. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992.**

Included within an anthology about the roots of salsa, this chapter presents an overview of rumba, discussing its African antecedents and its emergence within the 19th-century *cabildos de nación*, mutual aid societies formed by Africans and their descendants that constituted the main venue where slaves continued to practice their religious and musical traditions. The author also discusses rumba's formal structure and instrumentation.

#### **Évora, Tony. *Origenes de la música cubana: Los amores de las cuerdas y el tambor*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1997.**

This survey of Cuban music includes a chapter on rumba presenting a detailed and broad overview of the genre, including its emergence, musical features, different styles, instrumentation, and its Europeanization beginning in the 1930s (which Évora refers

to “rumbas blanca” or white rumbas).

**León, Argeliers. *Del canto y el tiempo*. 2d ed. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1984.**

One of the major works of Cuban musicology that divides national popular genres into five “generic complexes,” of which rumba is one. The book includes a chapter on the “rumba complex” that discusses its emergence and antecedent genres, its formal structure and instrumentation, and the different dance steps and musical details of the three main styles: *yambú*, *columbia*, and *guaguancó*.

**Martínez Rodríguez, Raul, and Pedro de la Hoz González. “From the Columbia to the Guaguancó.” *Direct from Cuba* 168 (1 May 1977): 1–7.**

Article discussing the emergence of the three main genres within the rumba complex: *columbia*, *yambú*, and *guaguancó*. It provides historical details about the marginalization and criminalization of rumba by 19th-century elites and about early performance contexts in the city of Matanzas.

**Moliner Castañeda, Israel, and Gladys Gutierrez Rodríguez. “La Rumba.” *Del Caribe* 9 (1987): 40–47.**

Important historical source on rumba, as it provides in-depth details about the emergence of the various styles. The article discusses the heavy Bantu influence on rumba, focusing on its primary antecedent, *yuka*, and details the evolving instrumental accompaniment and basic song forms of the three main styles.

**Moore, Robin. *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920–1940*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997.**

A very significant source on the nationalization of various styles of Afro-Cuban music in the first half of the 20th century. Included is a chapter concerning the appropriation and stylization of rumba both within the Cuban *teatro bufo* (comic theater) tradition – which featured actors in blackface portraying stereotypical, racialized characters – and by nationalist art music composers associated with the *afrocubanismo* movement that sought to valorize African contributions to Cuban culture.

**Roy, Maya. *Cuban Music: From Son and Rumba to the Buena Vista Social Club and Timba Cubana*. Translated by Denise Asfar and Gabriel Asfar. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2002.**

Originally published in French, this comprehensive overview of Cuban music includes a detailed chapter on rumba that details its history, instrumentation, different styles, and dance elements.

## Musical Features

This subsection includes literature that presents more in-depth musical analyses or transcriptions of rumba music. All of the sources—Averill 1999, Crook 1982, Friedman 1978, and Pasmanick 1997—are in English, which corresponds to the more general trend in Cuban musicology of focusing on history and general descriptions rather than in-depth musical analysis. Averill 1999 and Crook 1982 focus on analysis and transcription of rumba rhythms and melodies, Friedman 1978 concerns interaction between rumba musicians, and Pasmanick 1997 pertains to rumba’s song and poetic forms.

**Averill, Gage. "Caribbean Musics: Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago." In *Music in Latin American Culture: Regional Traditions*. Edited by John Schechter, 126–191. New York: Schirmer, 1999.**

Although this source focuses on Haitian and Trinidadian traditions, it contains a short but very dense, comprehensive section on rumba. The author presents in-depth musical analyses of the rhythmic patterns in rumba percussion and the song's formal structure, and briefly discusses the export of *son* under the label "rumba" in 1930 (see the Stylization and the "Rumba Craze") and its later influence on Cuban dance music.

**Crook, Larry. "A Musical Analysis of the Cuban Rumba." *Latin American Music Review* 3.1 (1982): 92–123.**

Presents a detailed description and analysis of rumba percussion and song structure, including a discussion of the interaction between and improvisation involved in different conga drum parts. The second half of the article consists of a full transcription (including percussion and singing) of a rumba song called "Una Rumba en la Bodega," recorded by Grupo Folklórico de Alberto Zayas in the 1950s (found on the 2001 CD cited in Selected Audio and Video Recordings).

**Friedman, Robert. "'If You Don't Play Good They Take the Drum Away': Performance, Communication and Acts in Guaguancó." In *Discourse in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of George List*. Edited by Caroline Card, John Hasse, Roberta L. Singer, and Ruth M. Stone, 209–224. Bloomington: Indiana University Ethnomusicology Publications Group, 1978.**

Article focusing on the interactions between different musicians (percussionists and singers) within the performance of the most popular style of rumba, *guaguancó*. The author uses a linguistics-based framework to discuss communication and interaction between musicians, dancers, and audience members.

**Pasmanick, Philip. "Décima and Rumba: Iberian Formalism in the Heart of Afro-Cuban Song." *Latin American Music Review* 18.2 (1997): 252–277.**

This article is unique in its focus on the Spanish influence on rumba; most of the literature emphasizes its African elements. The author examines the use of the *décima* and other Spanish poetic forms within rumba's song and textural structure and presents an important critique regarding the tendency to ignore the genre's Spanish and European elements.

## Musicians and Groups

All of the print sources included in this section are written by Cuban scholars, which suggests that musician profiles and histories have been a focus of the national literature on rumba. Álvarez Vergara 1989 and Grasso González 1989 are bachelor's theses drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with rumba groups from Havana and Matanzas, respectively. Acosta 1991 is an English-language translation of an essay that remembers a prominent rumba composer of the early 20th century, and Mestas 1998 presents profiles of various rumba musicians active in the post-revolutionary period. In addition, three blogs written by foreign rumba enthusiasts are included: *El Cancionero Rumbero* is an excellent source of rumba song lyrics, *La Rumba No Es Como Ayer* is a blog presenting biographies of major rumba musicians, and *¡Vamos a Guarachar!* presents an array of information, videos, and discographies pertaining to the history and contemporary practice of rumba.

**Acosta, Leonardo. "The Rumba, the Guaguancó, and Tio Tom." In *Essays on Cuban Music: North American and Cuban Perspectives*. Edited and translated by Peter Manuel, 49–73. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991.**

Originally published in 1983, this essay profiles an important rumba composer of the early 20th century, Gonzalo Asencio (known

as “Tío Tom”), noting the anti-imperialist sentiment expressed in his compositions. It also addresses the “rumba craze” of the 1930s, and the “adulteration” of the practice when it was exported to the United States. The influence of Marxist ideology is evident.

**Álvarez Vergara, Rosa Esther. “Caracterización de las Agrupaciones de Rumba de Ciudad de La Habana.” B.A. thesis, Instituto Superior de Arte, Facultad de Música, Cuba, 1989.**

This bachelor-level thesis, based on ethnographic research, constitutes a good source of information on the situation of rumba musicians in the 1980s, when many groups gained professional status. The author discusses the history of three professional rumba groups in Havana, including Yoruba Andabo, one of the most prominent rumba groups since the 1980s. Like Acosta 1991, this work shows the influence of Marxist cultural analysis.

***El Cancionero Rumbero* (blog).**

Organized and compiled by three rumba enthusiasts from France and the United States, this blog constitutes an excellent source of rumba song lyrics in Spanish without English translations. All major rumba groups and musicians in Cuba are represented.

**Grasso González, Nancy. “Folklore y Profesionalismo en la Rumba Matancera.” B.A. thesis, Instituto Superior del Arte, Havana, Cuba, 1989.**

Ethnographic study focusing on professional rumba performance in the city of Matanzas, known as the “birthplace of rumba.” Like Álvarez Vergara 1989, this thesis constitutes an important source of information about rumba musicians in the post-revolutionary period, especially because it discusses the history of two major rumba groups from Matanzas, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas and AfroCuba de Matanzas.

***La Rumba No Es Como Ayer* (blog).**

Written in Spanish by the same authors of *El Cancionero Rumbero*, this website is dedicated to presenting biographies of major rumba musicians in Cuba. The entries include biographical information as well as discographies and videographies.

**Mestas, María del Carmen. *Pasión de Rumbero*. Barcelona: Puvill Libros, 1998.**

As the only full-length book published in Spanish about rumba, this work presents profiles of major *rumberos* (rumba musicians) from the 20th century, including biographical details and significant accomplishments of each musician.

***¡Vamos a Guarachar!* (blog).**

By the authors of *El Cancionero Rumbero* and *La Rumba No Es Como Ayer*. Unlike the other two, this blog is not clearly organized but rather is more of a hodge-podge of rumba-related information. In line with the blog’s subtitle, “Sharing Rarities from the World of Rumba,” entries are diverse in nature. They include videos of celebrated rumba groups/musicians, discographies, album covers, interview transcripts, and links to rumba-related websites.

As with most Afro-Cuban traditions, dance and music are equally important aspects of rumba performance, and most rumba histories describe the basic choreography of each style. Dance is perhaps a more complex topic within rumba literature than in the scholarship of related styles like *conga/comparsa* because there are three different types of rumba that are distinguished primarily by their dance steps and the tempo of the music. For example, *yambú* and *guaguancó* are couples dances, while *columbia* is a solo male dance meant to display agility (and is often danced with props). In addition, the two couples dances have very different intentions. The *guaguancó* is characterized by the *vacunao*, a gesture that the male dancer repeatedly makes toward his female partner's groin area to symbolize sexual possession; her goal is to "block" the *vacunao* by covering herself with a scarf or the folds of her skirt. The *yambú*, in contrast, includes no erotic gestures and is often described as a dance that symbolizes the relationship of an older couple. This detail has been included to illustrate that rumba dance is an essential aspect of the tradition and, as such, has been an important topic of the literature. Included here are sources that focus on rumba dance specifically, but all of the sources included in History also discuss aspects of choreography. North American dance scholar Yvonne Daniel (1995 and 2011) has devoted the most scholarship to rumba dance, but details of choreography are also included in Martínez Rodríguez 1998, and Moliner Castañeda 1988 presents important arguments about the origins of *columbia* dance.

**Daniel, Yvonne. *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.**

Written by a dance scholar, this book is significant in that it was the first full-length book to be published on the practice in English or Spanish. The author presents a detailed history of rumba, outlines its main music and dance elements, and discusses the effects of its institutionalization and professionalization in the revolutionary context. Because the focus is on rumba dance, musical features are of secondary concern.

**Daniel, Yvonne. "Caribbean Popular Dance Transformations." In *Caribbean and Atlantic Diaspora Dance: Igniting Citizenship*. By Yvonne Daniel, 93–107. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011.**

Presented as a significant example of the changes undergone by Caribbean popular dances in new contexts, Daniel provides a detailed discussion of rumba dance's history and transformation throughout the 20th century. She discusses the dance elements of the three main styles of rumba and the colonial-era "mimetic" rumbas and details the dance's transformation once it was exported to the United States.

**Martínez Rodríguez, Raul. "La Rumba en la Provincia de Matanzas." In *Panorama de la música popular cubana*. Edited by Radamés Giro, 125–136. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1998.**

Originally published in 1977, this article is similar to Martínez Rodríguez and de la Hoz González 1977 (cited under History) in its description of the antecedents of rumba and its discussion of the three main styles. However, the second half of the article provides detailed descriptions and visual representations of the choreography of *yambú*, *guaguancó*, and *columbia*.

**Moliner Castañeda, Israel. "La rumba columbia." *Unión 4* (1988): 25–48.**

Article focuses on *columbia*, the solo male style that displays heavy African influence. While also discussing musical features, the essay is notable for its claims regarding the *columbia*'s origins: it disputes the traditional notion that its antecedents are in Cross River-derived *Abakuá* dancing, instead arguing that it is primarily influenced by Bantu traditions. The author also presents historical evidence challenging the notion that *columbia* dance was always limited to male participation.

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## Contemporary Performance

There has been almost no research on contemporary rumba performance (i.e., since the 1990s) published in Cuba. The bulk of this literature is by North American scholars, and much of it concerns rumba performance in the Cuban diaspora, including dissertations (Jottar Palenzuela 2005; Knauer 2005) and an article (Knauer 2008) discussing New York's rumba scene. While Knauer 2008 is concerned exclusively with rumba in New York, Knauer 2005 focuses on the transnational relationships between rumba participants in New York and Cuba and is thus based partly on research conducted on the island. Bodenheimer 2010 and Bodenheimer 2013 focus on contemporary rumba performance in various cities on the island.

**Bodenheimer, Rebecca. "Localizing Hybridity: The Politics of Place in Contemporary Cuban Rumba Performance." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010.**

Ethnographic study exploring contemporary rumba performance in the two cities most closely associated with the practice, Havana and Matanzas, with a particular focus on the effects of the Special Period (the decade of economic crisis precipitated by the fall of the Soviet Union). The author highlights the ways that regionalism, local identity formation, and racialized discourses of place are entangled with rumba fusion practices.

**Bodenheimer, Rebecca. "National Symbol or 'a Black Thing'? Rumba and Racial Politics in Cuba in the Era of Cultural Tourism." *Black Music Research Journal* 33.2 (2013): 177–205.**

Article focuses on the continued racialization and marginalization of rumba musicians and performance in the post-Soviet era, despite the state's official rhetoric that discusses rumba as a significant national folkloric practice. The author discusses the contemporary situation of rumba performance in three cities: Havana, Matanzas, and Santiago.

**Jottar Palenzuela, Bertha. "Rumba in Exile: Irrational Noise, Zero Tolerance and the Poetics of Resistance in Central Park." PhD diss., New York University, 2005.**

Performance studies dissertation based on research conducted with participants in the longstanding New York Central Park rumba event. The author focuses on the increased policing of rumba performance and musicians' strategies of resistance during the mayoral reign of Rudolph Giuliani (1994–2001).

**Knauer, Lisa. "Translocal and Multicultural Counterpublics: Rumba and La Regla de Ocha in New York and Havana." PhD diss., New York University, 2005.**

A transnational study examining the relationship between rumba and religious practitioners in New York and Havana and focusing on the challenging social and economic conditions faced by these musicians in the post-Soviet era. As an anthropologist, the author treats rumba primarily as a social practice, in contrast with Bodenheimer 2010, which focuses on musical innovations as well as social conditions.

**Knauer, Lisa. "The Politics of Afrocuban Cultural Expression in New York City." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34.8 (2008): 1257–1281.**

Article examining contemporary rumba performance in New York City. The author views rumba performance as a space where black Cubans, most of whom emigrated in the 1980s, articulate a specific, racially defined identity that is juxtaposed with that of the dominant Cuban-American community in Miami, which is largely white and, unlike more recent immigrants, holds extremely hostile attitudes toward the socialist government on the island.

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## Stylization and the “Rumba Craze”

The term “rumba” took on a whole new meaning when Don Azpiazu’s orchestra performed “El Manicero” (“The Peanut Vendor”) in New York in 1930. The song was marketed as “rumba,” but was actually a *son-pregón* (street vendor’s song in the form of *son*). Many Cuban scholars active at the time roundly critiqued this terminological distortion, noting that the term “rumba” was being used to refer many different Cuban styles and thus presented a homogenized picture of national traditions; Grenet 1939 is a good example of this stance, which is also reflected in the writings of Alejo Carpentier. However, it is interesting to find that there were even North American sources, such as Gottlieb 1992 (originally published 1947) and Leaf 1948, who were cognizant (at least by the late 1940s) of the fact that the music labeled “rumba” was actually closer to *son* and that the term mistakenly lumped together different styles. Roberts 1999 presents a more historical analysis of the rumba craze, discussing some of the differentiations that could be found among bands playing Latin music in 1930s New York. In addition, while not included in this subsection, Sublette 2004 (cited under General Overviews and Reference Works) constitutes a good source on the rumba craze. Moore 1995, Moore 1998, and Rey 2006 differ from the other sources in their focus on Cuban (rather than foreign) stylizations and appropriations of the traditional rumba before the start of the rumba craze. The first article discusses the commercialization of the genre primarily within the Cuban *teatro bufo* (comic theater) tradition, viewing this as a crucial site of musical stylization of rumba and other genres that were later exported to the United States in commercialized forms (see also Moore 1997, cited under History, Musical Features, and Musicians: History). Moore 1998 and Rey 2006 concern the appropriation of rumba themes and music by members of Grupo Minorista, a group of artists, intellectuals, and art music composers who aimed to valorize African contributions to national culture and who were closely associated with the *afrocubanismo* movement. Finally, White 2003 is a biography of one of the major composers associated with this group, Alejandro García Caturla.

**Gottlieb, William. “What Makes Rhumba?” In *Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and the Evolution of Salsa in New York City*. Edited by Vernon Boggs, 25–28. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992.**

Originally published in 1947, this short essay illustrates the different meanings the term “rumba” came to have during and after the rumba craze. The author posits differing gradations of authenticity in “rhumba” music in the United States, disputing white bandleader Xavier Cugat’s claim to be the “King of the Rhumba” and proclaiming Afro-Cuban Francisco “Machito” Grillo as the real king.

**Grenet, Emilio. *Popular Cuban Music: 80 Revised and Corrected Compositions*. Havana: Southern Music, 1939.**

Within a source that divides Cuban popular genres into racialized categories according to the amount of European or African influence, the author discusses the changes made to rumba once it was exported in the 1930s. Grenet was one of the first scholars to assert that the music exported as rumba was really closer to *son* and to note the conflation of the term “rumba” with Cuban popular music more generally.

**Leaf, Earl. *Isles of Rhythm*. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1948.**

A book that discusses various musical and religious traditions from the Caribbean and includes a chapter on rumba. Similar to Gottlieb 1992, this source is written from a mid-20th century North American perspective and is a good illustration of the racial essentialism and reliance on sexualized stereotypes that characterized foreign discussions of rumba and Afro-Cuban music in general at the time.

**Moore, Robin. “The Commercial Rumba: Afrocuban Arts as International Popular Culture.” *Latin American Music Review* 16.2 (1995): 165–198.**

A significant publication on the commercialization of rumba in Cuba, which describes the stylistic alterations undergone by the genre in the early 20th century. The author critiques Cuban musicologists (such as Grenet 1939) who assert that rumba was

“deformed” once it was exported to the United States, instead emphasizing the important role Cubans played in its stylization when it was incorporated into the comic theater and elite salons.

**Moore, Robin. “Poetic, Visual, and Symphonic Interpretations of the Cuban Rumba: Toward a Model of Integrative Studies.” *Lenox Avenue 4* (1998): 93–112.**

Article discussing prominent representations of rumba in the 1920s and 1930s by members of the *afrocubanismo* movement and analyzing a painting (Eduardo Abela’s *The Triumph of the Rumba*), a poem (José Zacarías Tallet’s “La rumba”), and a composition (Alejandro García Caturla’s setting of Tallet’s poem to music). The author argues that, although these works helped encourage acceptance of Afro-Cuban culture, their allusions to rumba relied on essentialist notions and sexualized stereotypes about blacks.

**Rey, Mario. “The Rhythmic Component of ‘Afrocubanismo’ in the Art Music of Cuba.” *Black Music Research Journal* 26.2 (2006): 181–212.**

Addresses the appropriation of Afro-Cuban popular traditions in the art music of nationalist composers such as Alejandro García Caturla and Amadeo Roldán in the 1920s and 1930s. The article highlights specific rhythmic components taken from rumba and other Afro-Cuban genres and argues that Grupo Minorista sought to redefine national identity in more racially inclusive terms.

**Roberts, John Storm. *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.**

Well-known history of Latin music in the United States that includes a chapter on the rumba craze of the 1930s. The author’s analysis is notable for its nuanced distinction between the different Latin music scenes in New York at the time: the downtown scene, catering to Anglo Americans, and the uptown scene, catering to Latinos and involving regular interactions with black jazz musicians.

**White, Charles. *Alejandro García Caturla: A Cuban Composer in the Twentieth Century*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2003.**

Biography of a major Cuban composer and important member of Grupo Minorista that discusses one of García Caturla’s most celebrated pieces, “La Rumba,” which was inspired by the traditional Afro-Cuban genre. The author analyzes the composition’s incorporation of rumba elements and addresses its reception in Cuba and abroad, noting that, while now considered a major work of the period, it was never performed during the composer’s lifetime.

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## Influence in Cuba and the World

The issue of rumba’s influence is an interesting one, in that some of the credit given to the genre in helping inspire new styles is misattributed, precisely because of the use of the term to refer to what were actually other Cuban popular styles, such as *son* (see Stylization and the “Rumba Craze”). Thus, two subcategories are included. The first reflects the important influence that the traditional Afro-Cuban rumba has truly had on other national styles—particularly *son*, Afro-Cuban jazz, and *timba*—and on Latin popular music more generally. The second subcategory concerns the influence that other Cuban genres (misabeled as “rumba”) have had in the global context, particularly in Spain with *rumba flamenca/rumba catalana* and in Africa with Congolese rumba. As is evident in this latter category, the misnaming of *son* and other Cuban popular styles as “rumba” has had long-term consequences and has resulted in an interesting yet rather convoluted expansion of the term’s meaning.

In addition to the literature discussed in this section, there are quite a few other sources that discuss the influence of rumba on *son*, but that are not included here because they are not in-depth examinations of the issue. Acosta 2004a and Acosta 2004b (Acosta is the only Cuban scholar represented here) address different aspects of rumba's influence: the first essay pertains to its relationship with *son*, and the second includes information about rumba's influence on Afro-Cuban jazz. Fernandez 2006 and Sublette 2004 also focus on this New York-based hybrid genre, with the former discussing the incorporation of rumba's rhythmic elements into Afro-Cuban jazz and the latter presenting in-depth historical details regarding its emergence and principal pioneers. Manuel 1994 and Waxer 1994 relate to rumba's influence on *son* and other Latin dance traditions in the first half of the 20th century, with the first detailing Puerto Rican appropriations of Afro-Cuban music and the second discussing musical exchanges between New York and Havana. Perna 2005 and Vaughan 2012 concern the more recent incorporation of elements of rumba within *timba*, contemporary Cuban dance music.

**Acosta, Leonardo. "De los complejos genéricos y otras cuestiones." In *Otra visión de la música popular cubana*. By Leonardo Acosta, 38–72. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2004a.**

Originally published in the Cuban journal *Clave* 4.3 (2003), this essay discusses the intimate relationship between rumba and *son*. One of Acosta's main goals is a critique of various hegemonic trends within 20th-century Cuban musicology, such as the framework of "generic complexes" that tends to see *son* and rumba as two separate musical traditions (see León 1984, cited under History).

**Acosta, Leonardo. "Jazz afrocubano y afrolatino: Etapas y procedimientos estilísticos." In *Otra visión de la música popular cubana*. By Leonardo Acosta, 215–234. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2004b.**

Another essay within an anthology of Acosta's works that provides an overview of the various stages and stylistic evolutions within Afro-Cuban jazz. The author discusses various key figures, such as Arsenio Rodríguez and Chano Pozo, who incorporated elements of rumba and other Afro-Cuban rhythms into their fusions of jazz and Cuban music.

**Fernandez, Raul. *From Afro-Cuban Rhythms to Latin Jazz*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.**

This book presents a history of Latin jazz, examining the influence of traditional Afro-Cuban music such as rumba on its emergence. The second half of the book is particularly relevant as it includes biographies of prominent Cuban drummers, such as Mongo Santamaría and Carlos "Patato" Valdés, who drew on rumba in their Latin jazz innovations.

**Manuel, Peter. "Puerto Rican Music and Cultural Identity: Creative Appropriation of Cuban Sources from Danza to Salsa." *Ethnomusicology* 38.2 (1994): 249–280.**

While not a primary focus of the article, rumba is discussed as a significant influence on the creation of new Puerto Rican styles such as salsa. The author discusses various influences, such as rumba drumming in 1950s New York and the lyrics of salsa songs that extol the virtues of rumba and borrow refrains from traditional rumba songs.

**Perna, Vincenzo. *Timba: The Sound of the Cuban Crisis*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005.**

Important source on *timba*, contemporary Cuban dance music, which discusses the ways that rumba has influenced its musical aesthetics. Important influences include rhythmic patterns taken from rumba percussion and textual allusions to neighborhoods where rumba is practiced. The author argues that rumba's association with blackness has functioned as an authenticating mechanism for *timba* musicians and groups who draw on its musical elements.

**Sublette, Ned. "Nagüe, Nagüe, Nagüe, Nagüe." In *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*. By Ned Sublette, 459–477. Chicago: Chicago Review, 2004.**

Within the most comprehensive survey of Cuban music in English, the emergence of Afro-Cuban jazz and its incorporation of Afro-Cuban elements are discussed. Because of the chronological (rather than thematic) organization of the book, the discussion of this New York-based movement and its pioneers, including Mario Bauzá, Francisco "Machito" Grillo, Chano Pozo (a well-known rumba drummer), and Dizzy Gillespie, is spread out across two different chapters so also see "Life Is a Dream" (pp. 524–546).

**Vaughan, Umi. *Rebel Dance, Renegade Stance: Timba Music and Black Identity in Cuba*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012.**

An in-depth anthropological examination of *timba*, whose analysis highlights the influence of African-derived music, religion, and identity on the practice. Throughout the book the author discusses rumba as a primary influence on *timba*, detailing both music and dance aspects that have been incorporated into the latter.

**Waxer, Lise. "Of Mambo Kings and Songs of Love: Dance Music in Havana and New York from the 1930s to the 1950s." *Latin American Music Review* 15.2 (1994): 139–176.**

Within an article that concerns the bidirectional musical exchanges between dance music in Havana and New York, the author discusses the various elements of rumba that were incorporated into *son* and other dance musics in the 1930s and 1940s.

## Global Influence

Related to the rumba craze of the 1930s and the worldwide fascination with Afro-Cuban music, the term "rumba" was adopted by musicians in various countries to refer to emerging styles. In the case of Spanish flamenco, a new form was created, *rumba flamenca*, that incorporated elements primarily of the Cuban *guaracha*; a distinct regional style called *rumba catalana* also emerged in the 1950s. Folch 2013 and Núñez 1998 discuss this influence of rumba in Spanish flamenco music. *Son-as-rumba* was arguably even more influential on the African continent, particularly in the colonial Belgian Congo, where a new style of popular music called Congolese rumba was created that drew heavily on *son*'s formal structure and aesthetics. This genre, eventually renamed *soukous*, would go on to influence many local African popular styles across the continent. Congolese rumba is the subject of Stewart 2000, Wheeler 2005, and White 2002, with the first taking a broad historical approach, the second focusing on musical analysis, and the third examining the relationship between musical appropriation and identity. Shain 2002 discusses a related subject, Afro-Cuban influences on Senegalese popular music.

**Folch, Enric. "At the Crossroads of Flamenco, New Flamenco and Spanish Pop: The Case of Rumba." In *Made in Spain: Studies in Popular Music*. Edited by Sílvia Martínez and Héctor Fouce, 17–27. New York: Routledge, 2013.**

Book chapter concerning the style of flamenco referred to in Spain as "rumba." The author discusses the early 20th century incorporation of the Cuban popular style called *guaracha* (mislabelled as rumba) into the flamenco repertoire and the birth of a distinct regional style called *rumba catalana* (Catalonian rumba) in the 1950s.

**Núñez, Faustino. "El rumbo de la rumba." In *La música entre Cuba y España: La ida, la vuelta*. By María Teresa Linares and Faustino Núñez. Madrid: Fundación Autor, 1998.**

Within a book that considers the bidirectional musical exchanges between Cuba and Spain, this section details both the emergence of the Cuban rumba and the "return" migration of Cuban musical influences to Spain in the form of the *rumba flamenca*.

**Shain, Richard. "Roots in Reverse: Cubanismo in Twentieth-Century Senegalese Music." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35.1 (2002): 83–101.**

Article discussing the influence of Afro-Cuban music, particularly *son*, on Senegalese popular music. Similar to White 2002, the author explores the reasons why Senegalese musicians drew on Afro-Cuban music, discussing this choice as a reaction against French colonial rule, and details the evolutions of Afro-Cuban influence at different points within the 20th century.

**Stewart, Gary. *Rumba on the River: A History of the Popular Music of the Two Congos*. New York: Verso, 2000.**

A comprehensive, non-scholarly history of the Congolese rumba. The book's opening chapters detail the influence of Cuban music on the emergence of Congolese popular music in the 1940s, as *son* (under the label "rumba") had been disseminated to Africa via recordings in the 1930s and was eventually combined with local traditions to form a new style.

**Wheeler, Jesse Samba. "Rumba Lingala as Colonial Resistance." *Image & Narrative* 10 (2005).**

Online article discussing the influence of rumba (the stylized version), *son*, and Latin music more broadly on the emergence of Congolese rumba. Unlike most sources on the subject, the author provides a detailed musical analysis of the specific features of Cuban music that were adopted by Congolese musicians.

**White, Bob. "Congolese Rumba and Other Cosmopolitanisms." *Cahiers d'Études africaines* 62.4 168 (2002): 663–686.**

Article discussing the influence of Afro-Cuban music, introduced to the Belgian Congo primarily through recordings in the 1930s, on the emergence of Congolese rumba. The author argues that Congolese musicians chose *son* (labeled as rumba) as a primary influence both because of the historical musical connections between the Congo and Cuba and because of Afro-Cuban music's associations at the time with non-European and non-colonial cosmopolitanism.

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