

# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

# THE ROLES WITHIN THE THEATRE

#### PERFORMERS AND STAGE MANAGEMENT

Actor: A person who performs as a character in a play or musical. Musical theatre actors are unique because they are multidisciplinary artists! These actors are known as the "cast," and they can sing, dance, and act simultaneously to tell the story. However, becoming a cast member in a show is more difficult than just being able to sing, dance, and act. Certain roles require specific skills for the storytelling, like being able to sing a precise note, perform acrobatics, or play an instrument. Within this cast, each actor plays an important role, whether it's a leading character or an "ensemble" part. Ensemble actors play supporting roles in addition to forming a chorus of singers, dancers, and actors.

- Understudy: An understudy is an actor who learns a
  role they weren't originally cast in to cover that character in case the original actor is unable to perform.
- **Swing**: Swings understudy multiple "tracks" (meaning roles, or combinations of roles) in a show. A swing is one of the toughest jobs in theatre: Sometimes they have to understudy every single ensemble track in the performance! When a swing performs in place of the regular cast person, they have to perform the lines, songs, and choreography exactly as the original cast person performs them.
- Dance Captain: A dance captain is a member of the company selected to help the choreographer teach and maintain the dances.
- Stage Management: The stage manager is responsible for handling all rehearsal and production schedules, as well as calling the show during performances. "Calling the show" means that the stage manager is in the "booth," or the technical center of the theater (usually an enclosed room in the back of the theater behind the audience), saying cues over an intercom system to indicate when the lights, sets, and sound should change. The stage manager also takes notes during rehearsals to memorialize all blocking and choreography decisions, and is the communication liaison between the cast, crew, and production team.

#### **TECHNICIANS AND DESIGNERS**

EACH DESIGNER HAS A TEAM OF TECHNICIANS IN THEIR DEPARTMENT WHO HELP EXECUTE THE DESIGNER'S VISION.

- **Set Designer**: A set designer is responsible for developing the physical world of the musical, including scenery, furniture, platforms, flats, and any other item or structure that makes up the physical environment. The set designer works closely with the director and creative team to achieve the vision of the musical.
- **Costume Designer**: A costume designer enhances the story through what the characters wear. They design and create all the clothes, accessories, and footwear with their team. Like the set designer, the costume designer works closely with the director, choreographer, and creative team on the achieving vision of the musical.
- **Lighting Designer**: The lighting designer is responsible for lighting the production. This task includes procuring the appropriate lights or positioning lights on the stage. The lighting designer will also decide the lighting color and whether or not the production calls for a spotlight or other special lighting instruments. The lighting designer might also recruit and train additional light technicians.

 Sound Designer: The sound designer is in charge of all sound components of a production. This task includes securing a sound system and microphones, organizing music playback during rehearsals, and creating any sound effects.

• **Prop Designer**: The prop designer, often referred to as a prop master, creates any non-set or non-costume items that are specifically called for in the script. Typically, props are small handheld items such as books or suitcases. Occasionally, the set designer is also responsible for the props.



- Projection Designer: Projection design is the utilization of images-either still photos or filmed images-to illustrate and visually represent the storytelling of a production. The projection designer creates all of the projections.
- **Technical Director**: A technical director manages all technical aspects of a production, including costumes, sets, props, lights, and sound. This person coordinates and manages the process of loading a show into the theater and troubleshooting any challenges during technical rehearsals.

#### **CREATIVE TEAM**

- **Director**: The director is responsible for directing the show. Their tasks involve providing a cohesive artistic vision of the story, running rehearsals, coordinating the creative elements, and staging the play. This role may also include leading production meetings, working with the stage manager to create the rehearsal schedule, and facilitating communication between all members of the creative team.
- **Producer**: The producer is responsible for the administrative tasks of producing the show: creating a budget, fundraising, securing the creative team, managing marketing, overseeing the box office, and determining a performance space and schedule.
- Music Director: The music director teaches the songs, ensures lyrics are clear, and works with the cast to make sure they're singing in a healthy, comfortable, and sustainable manner.
- Orchestrator: An orchestrator transforms a composer's musical foundation and creates a score for a group-the singers or orchestra-allocating each musical part to instruments and people based on what the composer originally designed.
- Lyricist: The lyricist is a person who writes the lyrics of a musical. The lyricist works with a composer to create songs.
- **Book Writer**: The book writer is one of the authors of a musical who writes the lines (dialogue) and the stage directions. The book writer is also sometimes called the librettist.
- **Choreographer**: The choreographer creates all dance segments in the show, from bring-down-thehouse production numbers to intricately executed ballet sequences and everything in between. The choreographer, director, and music director work closely together when staging all musical numbers.



#### **EXPLORE COSTUMING ACTIVITY: EXPLORING SHAPES** AND ANGLES IN 1950S FASHION **DESIGN**

Examining the shapes and angles of clothing from the 1950s is a fun way to incorporate mathematics into the study of theatrical costumes. The activity below challenges students to create their own costume designs for 1950s clothing while successfully incorporating historically accurate geometric details from the period.

#### **KEY FASHION TRENDS OF THE 1950S**

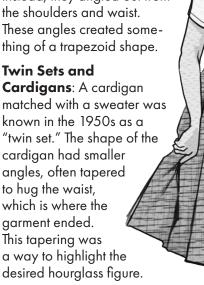
The clothes from the 1950s were elegant and structured, and they featured a number of shapes in their designs. In the early 1950s, a voluminous, flared skirt; a sharply defined waist; and curved shoulders created what we know today as an hourglass figure. This fashion style was known as Dior's "New Look." This hourglass shape would be a touchstone silhouette for the entire decade. Here's a breakdown of the costumes, shapes, and angles of clothing from this iconic era.

Sheath Dresses and Pencil Skirts: These outfits were more angular and featured more lines than the early designs. Instead of soft, billowy curves,

the clothes hugged the lower part of the body and narrowed toward the bottom of the garment, creating a slim-fitting silhouette.

Swing Coats: Swing coats featured an A-line shape. These women's coats were wide and not tight; instead, they angled out from the shoulders and waist. These angles created something of a trapezoid shape.

Twin Sets and Cardigans: A cardigan matched with a sweater was known in the 1950s as a "twin set." The shape of the cardigan had smaller angles, often tapered to hug the waist, which is where the garment ended. This tapering was





Men's Suite more rectange but it wow what and small and cast. Carricast sweet vest up of spool refir made and tast. T-shirt around the cast of the cas

**Men's Suits**: The silhouette for men was more rectangular, sharper, and structured, but it was also designed to be some-

what broad through the shoulders and tapered at the waist, giving the smallest nod to the hourglass shape. Pant legs also featured tapered designs.

Men's Casual Wear: Cardigans and vests were very popular casual looks for men in the 1950s. Cardigans were utilized both for the casual and the athletic look; "letter sweaters" were donned by athletes. Vests were versatile and dressed up or down: Vests under suits and sport coats were considered a more refined look, and vests by themselves made a more casual statement.

T-shirts emerged in the 1950s, and casual short-sleeved shirts often featured colorful geometric patterns.

Men's Accessories: Ties, hats, and glasses were all popular in the 1950s. Ties, both neckties and bow ties, completed the goal of looking snazzy and put together. Neckties typically came to a point, like the tip of a sword instead of a horizontal line, and varied in width depending on the size of the shirt collar. Bow ties were designed much wider at the beginning of the '50s but became slimmer and a little longer by the end of the decade. Men's summer hats included Panama hats and straw boaters. At other times men wore fedoras, which was a bit of an older style, as well as the flat cap, Tremont, trilby, porkpie, homburg, ivy cap, and walking hat. Glasses were also a featured accessory of the 1950s. One of the most popular style of glasses was the browline look.



**DISCUSSION** 

To begin, explore with your students the distinctive fashion of the 1950s. Find and show images of famous American fashion icons like Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, or Marilyn Monroe, or Cuban greats Graciela Pérez Grillo and Celia Cruz, wearing 1950s styles. Then discuss with your students the following iconic shapes and angles featured in 1950s clothing:

Hourglass Silhouette: For women, this was the defining shape of the era. It emphasized a small waist, fuller hips, and bust, creating a curvy yet structured figure. In short, the hourglass silhouette emphasizes sharp waistlines and soft curves.

• **A-line Shape**: Dresses and skirts often flared out from the waist, forming a triangle or A-shape that accentuated the narrow waist while allowing for movement in the skirt.

• Circular Skirts: Many skirts, particularly poodle skirts, were cut in a circle, creating soft, flowing angles that swayed with movement, forming smooth curves. Basically, circle skirts were designed to fall in circular shapes with a smooth drape.

- Tapered and Fitted Lines: Contrasting with the voluminous skirts, some outfits, like the pencil skirt and sheath dress, embraced sharp, straight lines that created a more angular look.
- Dramatic Waistlines: The waist was often the focal point in women's clothing, with belts or tailored seams drawing sharp angles at the waistline, especially in dresses and coats.
- **Structured Angles**: Tailored jackets and dresses used angular lines and darts to create structure.

#### **MATHEMATICS EXPLORATION**

Divide your students into groups of 5 to 6 students. Print off and provide each group with a selection of 1950s costume designs, including dresses, skirts, and tailored jackets. Then have each group of students identify the geometric shapes used in each garment. For example:

- A full skirt might resemble a circle or a trapezoid.
- The bodice of a dress could be formed from triangles or rectangles.
- The A-line skirt features a triangle shape.



Once the shapes have been identified, have the students measure the angles of the garments. Students can use protractors to measure the angles in the images, such as the flare of a skirt or the slope of a collar. Have each group present their findings to the class.

#### **DESIGN**

Now students will use the geometric shapes and angles analyzed above to create their own 1950s-inspired fashion design.

Students should begin by sketching out their initial design ideas. Encourage them to think about what kind of shapes (circles, triangles, trapezoids) they want to include in their clothing design.

Ask them: What angles do you need to correctly execute those shapes?

For example, have them consider at what angle the skirt should flare to match the 1950s circle skirt. If time allows, have students color in their designs.

Once they're finished, have each student present their design to the class, explaining which shapes they used, how they utilized angles in the design of their costume, and any challenges they faced in balancing the look and shape of the garment.





# EXPLORE DIRECTING ACTIVITIES: LEVELS, PLANES, PROXIMITY, AND FOCUS

Directors use staging tools like levels, planes, proximity, and focus to create story-enhancing stage pictures. Explore these concepts below:

- **Levels** refer to the vertical physical relationship of the actors. Example: Actor A kneels beside Actor B, who is standing tall. The audience may perceive Actor B as a leader just because of the levels.
- Planes refers to how near or far away an actor is from the audience. An actor placed downstage, closer to the audience, will draw focus, whereas an actor placed farther away upstage will draw less focus. In the theatre, "upstaging" occurs when an actor moving upstage draws focus from an actor downstage.
- Proximity is the physical relationship of the actors to each other. Actors who are far away from each other could be perceived by the audience as strangers, while actors who are embracing would be seen by the audience as knowing one another very well.
- Focus refers to where the audience and actors onstage are giving their attention. Using focus as a tool, actors can guide the audience's attention for the story's benefit. Actors can also pull focus negatively, distracting the audience's attention from the story.



# IMAGINATION CHALLENGE WITH TABLEAUX

#### Practice staging like a director by creating tableaux!

A "tableau" is defined as a frozen picture that tells a story. Using scenes from *Buena Vista Social Club*, students will work together in small groups to create a tableau of the scenes. Students will use the previously taught staging elements (levels, planes, proximity, and focus) to create their group's tableau. Encourage the students to hear all ideas and to work together as an ensemble.

Begin by dividing students into groups of 2-10 people. Assign students a scene example from *Buena Vista Social Club*.

Potential scenes for selection:

- Eliades Ochoa leads the house band in the opening number
- Juan meets Omara and asks for her participation on the record
- Compay is singing for tourists at the hotel when Omara walks in
- Young Omara meets Young Compay and Young Rubén for the first time
- Young Omara finds Young Ibrahim busking along the coast and they sing together
- Omara meets the recording band for the first time and they sing together
- Young Omara and Young Haydee argue backstage about continuing to perform at The Tropicana Hotel
- Young Haydee enters the club with two bodyguards to persuade Young Omara to leave Cuba
- Man In Suit offers Young Omara a job

Ask students to work together to create four sequential tableaux that tell the scene's story. Take "Young Haydee enters the club with two bodyguards to persuade Young Omara to leave Cuba" for example:

- Tableau 1: Young Haydee first enters the club flanked by bodyguards and sees Young Omara.
- Tableau 2: Young Haydee approaches Young Omara and tries to convince her to leave by grabbing her hands, but Young Omara pulls away. The Bodyguards step in to protect Young Haydee from harm.
- Tableau 3: Young Ibrahim tries to intervene to protect Young Omara.
- Tableau 4: The Bodyguards hit Young Ibrahim.

Remind students that a tableau is a frozen picture and that they should incorporate levels, planes, proximity, and focus. The tableaux cannot move or make any noise. Give each group approximately 10 minutes to create and rehearse their four tableaux. Then, have each group present their four sequential tableaux to the other groups, who should try to identify the story the tableaux pictures are showing. If students are struggling to identify the story, work together to make the pictures clearer. Reflect on both the tableaux that students easily identified and the ones that they worked together to clarify by asking, "Why are strong staging choices essential to interpreting a piece of theatre?"

#### **TAKING IT FURTHER**

Discuss with your students that the original production of *Buena Vista Social Club* was staged in the Linda Gross Theatre, which is a renovated church. Plays don't require a stage or theater for a performance; many plays are staged in "nontraditional spaces," meaning any place that's not a theater building. Find a place in your school where you can take your tableaux, giving students time when they arrive at this new location to reimagine their tableau for the challenges of the nontraditional storytelling space. After students restage their tableaux and present them to the group, lead a discussion about the surprises, benefits, and challenges of working in the new space.



# EXPLORING GLOBAL DANCE CULTURE ACTIVITY: CUBA

While the original production of *Buena Vista Social Club* featured many different styles of dance, Cuban dancing would historically be the dance of choice of characters in the play, like the hotel guests or band members.

Explore with your students two keystone Cuban dance styles: rumba and salsa. Before the Cuban Revolution in 1959, "the son" had been the national dance of Cuba. Fidel Castro and his administration chose rumba as the country's new official dance due to its roots in Cuba's African legacy and tradition. While salsa technically began in New York City, the dance is a convergence of Cuban style, movement, and music with other Latin and American influences and is still widely practiced in Cuba today. Both dances illustrate the heritage of—and contribute to a vibrant, modern artistic culture in—Cuba.

#### **MATERIALS NEEDED**

- Short video clips (3-5 minutes each) from the internet showcasing rumba and salsa. Make sure to select both instructional videos and authentic videos that display traditional performances with clear examples of cultural context (e.g., social gatherings, street dancing).
- A song for dancing rumba written in 4/4 time.
- A song for dancing salsa written in 4/4 time.
- Method for playing music
- Space for dancing



#### **DISCUSSION AND VIDEO**

Begin this activity with a group discussion. Ask your students questions such as "What is the purpose of dance in different cultures?" and "What can dance communicate that other forms of art or expression might not?"

After the discussion, show short video clips (3-5 minutes each) showcasing rumba (basic box step) and salsa. Have students record their thoughts as they watch the videos.

#### REFLECTION ON VIDEOS

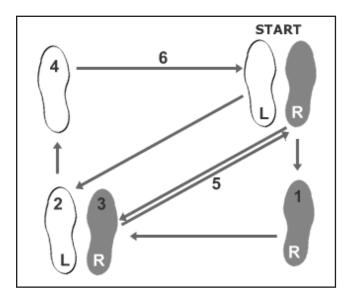
Guide students in a discussion about their impressions from the videos. Some questions to ask might include "What similarities and differences do you notice between these dance styles?" or "How do you think Cuban history and culture have influenced these dances?"

#### DANCE TIME!

Begin with basic stretching to get your students' bodies ready to move.

#### **RUMBA**

Rumba is typically danced to music written in 4/4 time, also known as "common time." This time signature has four beats in each measure. Once you have a good musical selection, demonstrate the basic box step, which is simple and easy to learn. This box step has three basic moves: a slow step that moves forward or backward and two quick side steps.



Before asking the students to move their feet, have the students clap out the rhythm of the steps with their hands: slow, quick, quick. The slow first step stretches over two counts of music, followed by the quick step, which is danced over one count.

Now have students stand and attempt the dance steps on their own, all facing the same direction in a line. Help students who are struggling with individual attention. Once the students are confident in their abilities, pair them up and have them execute the steps together, focusing on rhythm, partner connection, and expression. After a sufficient amount of time, have students trade partners.

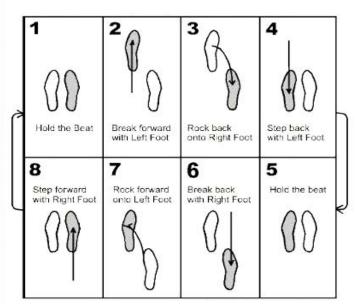
Once students feel comfortable with the steps, add your musical selection to the process. Encourage students to pay close attention to the rhythm and style of the music as they move their bodies through space.

Once the music has been incorporated successfully, return to the videos to watch the hip and arm movements of the dancers. The hips move laterally in a fluid motion from side to side, and the arms flow up by the sides of the body. The movements of the hips and arms form something of a figure-eight shape. Encourage your students to try their best: These are likely very new body movements for your students and might be incredibly challenging!

#### **SALSA**

Much like rumba, salsa is also danced to 4/4 time. The basic steps in salsa stretch over eight counts (two measures), with the steps falling on each beat. The rhythmic sequence is as follows: step, step, step, rest, step, step, step, rest. As you did with rumba, have students clap this beat sequence out with their hands.

Once students are comfortable with this new rhythm, have them line up in rows. Without music, they should stand with their feet together and slowly walk through the step pattern:



- Step forward with the left foot.
- Change weight to your right foot.
- Bring the left foot back to the center again to meet the right foot.
- Pause for a beat.
- Step back with the right foot.
- Change weight to your left foot.
- Bring the right foot back to the center again to meet the left foot.
- Pause for a beat.

Continue repeating this sequence of steps until students are comfortable with the general pattern. Once the students are confident in their abilities, pair them up and have them execute the steps together, focusing on rhythm, partner connection, and expression. After a while, have students trade partners.

Once students feel comfortable with the steps, add a musical selection to the process. Again, encourage students to pay close attention to the rhythm and style of the music as they move their bodies through space.

#### REFLECTION

Wrap up this activity with a brief period for journaling, focusing on the answers to the following questions: "What was your experience learning Cuban dance movements? How do you think dance connects people socially?" Discuss your answers as a group.

Taking it further, research as a group opportunities in your local community where students can further their learning of Cuban dance and culture.

#### **SOURCES**

https://en.rodier.fr/c/mag/the-iconic-twinset/the-iconic-twinset-60.html

https://vintagedancer.com/1950s/history-1950s-coats-jackets/

https://www.vogue.com.au/fashion/trends/everything-to-know-about-the-history-of-the-pencil-skirt/ image-gallery/3281f86962a3dd9f4017bcf1847d0096

https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1950-1959/

https://fiftiesweb.com/fashion/1950s-mens-fashion/

https://www.gentlemansgazette.com/what-men-wore-1950s/

https://artsandculture.google.com/story/christian-dior-the-new-look-the-metropolitan-museum-of-art/ kwWhkHJ-Ok8Ulg?hl=en

https://vintagedancer.com/1950s/the-styles-of-1950s-mens-hats/

https://www.dancing4beginners.com/rumba/

https://www.britannica.com/art/Latin-American-dance/ The-Caribbean#ref1093942

http://www.lameca.org/publications-numeriques/dossiers-et-articles/musique/salsa-music-as-expressive-liberation-at-the-cultural-crossroads-of-the-1970s/

https://www.classpop.com/magazine/how-to-salsa-dance



Founded in 2006 by educator and author Timothy Allen McDonald, and headquartered in New York City, iTheatrics is the world's leading authority on educational musical theatre.

iTheatrics adapts musicals for young performers and creates support materials that make the process of putting on a show achievable and accessible for all. iTheatrics shows are licensed worldwide by Music Theatre International (Broadway Junior titles) and Concord Theatricals (Youth Edition and Young Actors Edition titles). In North America alone, 36 million people see a musical adapted by iTheatrics each year, which is three times the number of people who attend a Broadway show annually. In fact, the majority of people who see a live production in North America are attending a show adapted by iTheatrics.

iTheatrics is committed to ensuring young people everywhere have the same access to the arts as they do athletics. iTheatrics is making impressive progress in achieving this mission through partner-ships with the Shubert Foundation/MTI Broadway Junior Middle School Musical Theater Program, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Turnaround Arts, and the Educational Theatre Foundation (ETF). Each of these partnerships builds sustainable musical theatre programs in underserved schools. iTheatrics's proprietary approach provides teachers, with or without an arts background, the skills required to present a musical. iTheatrics measures success based on whether the school continues to present a musical after five years, and the efforts boast a sustainability rate of 92%.

Additionally, iTheatrics is proud to have partnered with former First Lady Michelle Obama to produce the first-ever White House Talent Show.

In 2017, iTheatrics published *The iTheatrics Method: The Quintessential Guide to Creating Quality Musical Theatre Programs*, the first textbook dedicated to creating sustainable and quality educational theatre programs in schools and after-school settings. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.

In addition, iTheatrics creates study guides and student-focused engagement initiatives for Broadway and West End shows, as well as the The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The White House, The Jim Henson Company, NBC Universal, and more.

iTheatrics also produces Junior Theater Festivals and Celebrations in the USA, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand with an annual attendance of 15,000.

#### iTheatrics.com

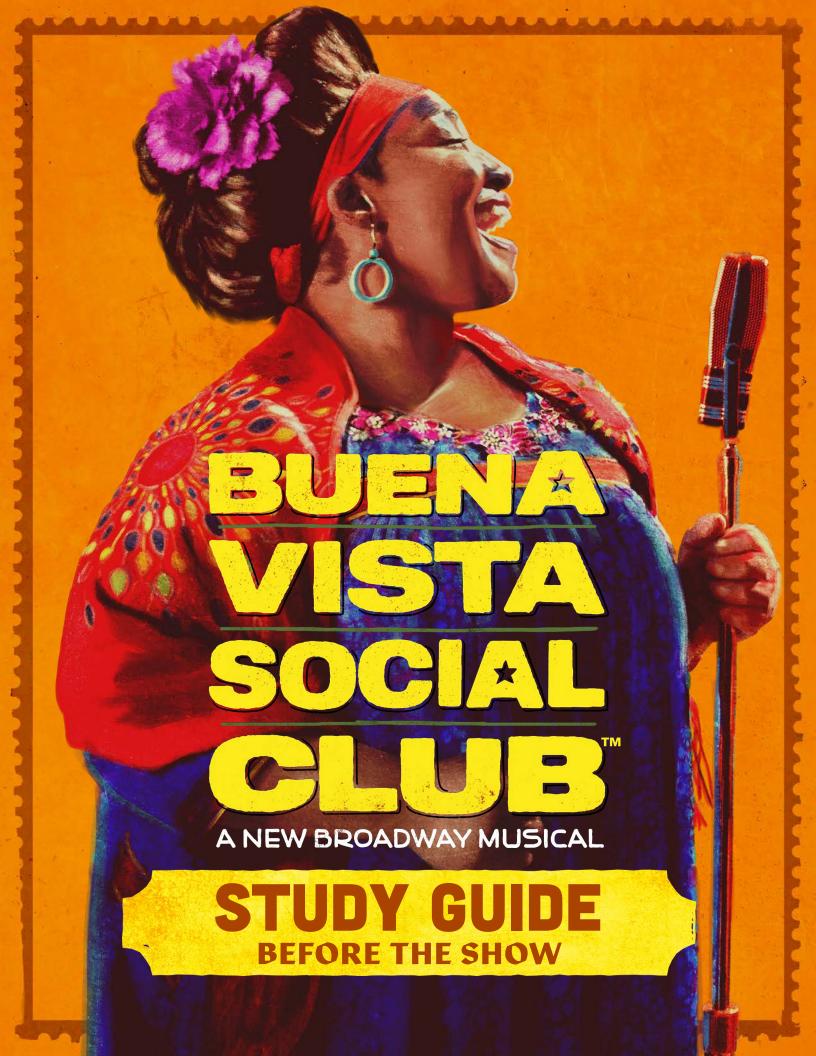
**Buena Vista Social Club** Study Guide content based on *The iTheatrics Method* © 2024 iTheatrics.

Content Created by iTheatrics.



Written by Marianne Phelps and Laura Jo Schuster Contributing Writers Mary-Catherine Chambliss and Jiana J. Odland Senior Managing Editor Susan Fuller

# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL



# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

# **BEFORE THE SHOW**

# WELCOME TO THE THEATER!

Get ready to tap your toes, clap your hands, and experience the golden age of Cuban music—welcome to the *Buena Vista Social Club* Study Guide! This show not only contains fantastic music from the 1997 album, but the story also features characters based on real people and explores the 1950s and 1990s sociopolitical climate in Cuba. *Buena Vista Social Club* went from an album to an Off-Broadway show, all the way to Broadway!

This guide is chock-full of everything you need to know about attending a theatrical production. You'll learn about the different types of theatre and how to be a good audience member, and you'll receive information and perform activities designed specifically for *Buena Vista Social Club*. ¿Listos? ¡Vamos!

#### WHAT IS THEATRE?

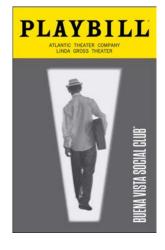
"Theatre" is defined as "a dramatic art form that uses live performers to present a story in front of an audience." For the purposes of this guide, we'll use "theatre" to indicate the art form and "theater" to indicate the physical performance space. Buena Vista Social Club is one of the lucky productions that play on Broadway—but what



is Broadway, you might ask?
"Broadway" refers to a group
of 41 theaters with over 500
seats in the Theater District
of New York City, and, if
you look at a map, the street
Broadway cuts diagonally
right through the district.
Many Broadway shows
begin their theatrical journeys
at Off-Broadway theaters,
like the Atlantic Theater
Company (the "Atlantic"),
which produced Buena Vista
Social Club in 2023. The

Atlantic is an Off-Broadway theatre company, which means that its theaters have between 99 and 499 seats. Many Broadway productions begin their theatrical journeys at nonprofit Off-Broadway theaters like the Atlantic

(like Tony Award®-winning Kimberly Akimbo, which also originated at the Atlantic) and transfer to a Broadway theater after their initial run. Broadway productions can also begin at a regional theater. A "regional theater" refers to a professional theater outside of New York City, and a "community theater" is a nonprofessional theater. After a Broadway run is completed, sometimes shows will go on a national



tour, which means the show will travel around and play in different North American cities. Once the tour is finished, the show will be available to license, meaning that regional theaters and community theaters will have the opportunity to perform the show for audiences.

But none of this would have been possible without the source material: the 1997 album *Buena Vista Social Club*. This album was truly a cultural phenomenon,



bringing together an ensemble of Cuban musicians recording "son music." Son cubano, a type of son music, combines elements of Spanish and African musical traditions. In 1998, the album received a GRAMMY® for Best Traditional Tropical Latin Album, and Tropical/

Salsa Album of the Year at the 1998 Billboard Latin Music Awards. Much of the album's fame came from word-ofmouth; People liked the album and talked about it to other people. In a world where the internet was not a ubiquitous part of every household, it's very impressive that an album featuring lots of improvisation on a small recording label was popular enough to be invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City!

#### WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE THEATER

The theatre has roles both onstage and behind the scenes, but did you know that you play an important role too? The audience is an essential part of a theatrical production—without people watching the performance, even if a story is being told, it's not being heard! While it sounds very simple to sit and watch a musical, there are some "dos" and "don'ts" to being a good audience member.



# AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE STUDENT

# Using some of these rules as inspiration, hold an Audience Etiquette Test!

Choose one member of your group to play the theater's Usher, and give everyone in the group a "bad audience etiquette" prompt. For instance, cue your "bad audience" members to start whispering, one by one, then to speak more loudly. If the Usher can guess the bad behavior, they choose a new Usher and become part of the audience. For an added difficulty level, choose just a few members of your "bad audience" to perform the behavior so the Usher has to pay close attention!

Seeing a theatrical production is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Unlike a movie or a television show, you're at the theater with audience members, performers, musicians, technicians, house staff, and more, sharing this story in real time. By working together to be good audience members, we make sure that we're putting everyone in the theater in a position to have the best experience possible!



# HOW TO BE A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER

#### 1. DON'T TEXT.

No cell phones, no texting, no phone calls, and no social media! Be present with the characters and keep your eyes on the stage.



# 2. DO USE THE RESTROOM BEFORE THE SHOW.

Make sure to use the restroom before the show so you don't interrupt the performance.



# 3. DON'T TAKE PHOTOS OR RECORDINGS.

Photography and filming of any kind are strictly prohibited at the theater. Save your selfie for the stage door where the actors meet the audience members.



# 4. DO KEEP YOUR FEET OFF THE SEATS.

You're not a rowdy patron at a Cuban nightclub in the 1950s. These seats are in a Broadway house, so remember to keep your feet off them.



# 5. DO PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER!

Applaud at the end of the show to show the actors, musicians, and crew proper support for all their hard work.



#### 6. DO HAVE FUN!

Enjoy this wonderful performance and the music that inspired it!

# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE THEATER

The theater is a magical place, and Broadway theaters are famous worldwide! Whether you're in New York or seeing a touring production at a regional theater, it's always a good idea to look up the theater ahead of time. Map out routes, find nearby restaurants, check out the parking situation, and make sure you know where you're going.

It's a good idea to arrive at the theater at least fifteen minutes before showtime. That way, you have time to wait in the ticket line, get your program, check out the show's merchandise, use the restroom, and find your seats before the show. Remember to expect lots of other people!

A show's program is a great resource for learning about the production you're seeing. The program will list the show's creative team, crew, musicians, actors, and company biographies so you can read about everyone. The show's running time and list of songs—and whether or not to expect an intermission—will also be listed in the program.

Once you've settled in and the show begins, enjoy the magic of musical theatre!

# **BROADWAY THEATERS**





#### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF CUBA

Standard: <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7</u> Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Buena Vista Social Club opens in the 1990s with narration from Juan de Marcos. Having a narrator is a great way to make sure the audience is getting the information they need to make sense of the storytelling, especially in a show like Buena Vista Social Club where the story involves real historical events. The show moves between two time periods: the 1950s and the 1990s. The 1950s was when the Cuban Revolution, led by Fidel Castro, established communism, and later, socialism, in Cuba.



Fidel Castro and his men in the Sierra Maestra. From left: Guillermo García, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Universo Sánchez, Raúl Castro (kneeling), Fidel Castro, Crescentio Pérez, Jorge Sotus, and Juan Almeida. By Unknown Author. Public Domain.

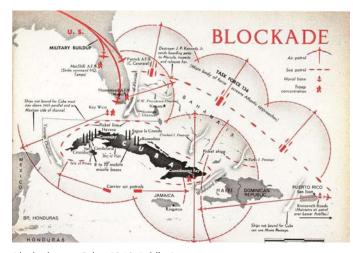
The conflicts that contributed to the Cuban Revolution have roots in colonialism. Spain occupied Cuba beginning in 1492, when Christopher Columbus arrived. Spain would maintain control of Cuba, save for a brief period of British rule during the Seven Years' War, until the Ten Years' War for Independence began in 1868. The Second War of Independence began in 1895, and in 1898 the Spanish-American War began. This war ended when the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris, which gave the United States control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and other Spanish interests. This treaty led to a two-year United States military occupation in Cuba, which ended in 1902 under the Platt Agreement, which stated that Cuba would remain under U.S. protection and gave the U.S. the right to intervene in Cuban affairs. The United States would return to occupy Cuba twice more to quell uprisings before giving up its rights to Cuban involvement in 1934.



Cuban political poster showing Fidel Castro at a rally celebrating the success of the Cuban Revolution. Colección del Museo de la Revolución de La Habana.

#### **CUBAN REVOLUTION**

The Cuban Revolution was an armed revolt led by Fidel Castro against Fulgencio Batista, a U.S.-backed Cuban dictator who was ultimately ousted by Castro's revolutionary government. In 1940, Batista became president of Cuba. His presidency was unpopular and led to unrest, and in 1952, he staged a coup to remain in control rather than being defeated in an election. Fidel Castro, then a young lawyer, founded "The Movement" with his brother Raúl to take back Cuba by revolution. After years of strife, in January of 1959, Batista fled Cuba, and Castro's movement took control of the country. In 1961, Castro declared Cuba a socialist state, and as a result of Castro's reforms and the Cuban government's increased cooperation with the Soviet Union, the United States ended diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 1961. The United States placed Cuba under an embargo in February of 1962, meaning that the United States would not trade goods with Cuba.



Blockade over Cuba, 1962. Publlic Domain.

Then, in October of 1962, the United States placed Cuba under full blockade after the Cuban Missile Crisis, when it was discovered that the Soviet Union was secretly installing missiles in Cuba to launch at the United States.



Horse transport in Cuba. Taken in 1994 near Varadero. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

#### THE SPECIAL PERIOD

Standard: <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.10</u> By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

The turmoil of the 1950s contrasts with 1990s Cuba, with Juan's narration mentioning the difficulty of life under a U.S. blockade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This economic depression, which earned the name the "Special Period" after the government declared it "a special period in a time of peace," began in 1991. The Soviet Union had contributed significantly to Cuba's GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and also offered political and military support, without which Cuba was quickly met with an economic crisis. Hardships like food shortages, energy rationing, and lack of medical care plagued the country. To meet their basic needs, Cubans were forced to creatively solve problems, which led to an attitude known as "inventary resolver" (invent and resolve). Cubaplatform.org describes it perfectly: "The experience of the Special Period highlights the resiliency, empathy, and solidarity of the Cuban people, who, in a time of hardship, became closer and harnessed extraordinary creativity to meet ordinary needs." It was during this period that Buena Vista Social Club was recorded, releasing on September 16, 1997.



# CUBAN REVOLUTION TIMELINE AND ACTIVITY

Standard: TH:Cn11 Connecting. Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists understand and can communicate their creative process as they analyze the way the world may be understood. Essential Question(s): What happens when theatre artists allow an understanding of themselves and the world to inform perceptions about theatre and the purpose of their work?

History can be complicated to understand. In the case of the Cuban Revolution, many relevant events between 1950 and 1961 led to Fidel Castro's takeover. Help students understand these events by creating a visual timeline. This activity will help them conceptualize the societal, cultural, and historical contexts of the Cuban Revolution and deepen their understanding of the background of Buena Vista Social Club.

Split your students into groups, and assign each group a point on the timeline as detailed below. Encourage them to further research the events surrounding their timeline moment and come up with a list of contributing factors. Then, have them research and find visual elements from the moment – photographs, newspaper articles, and political cartoons would work. As a group, build the timeline event by event using the visual elements, and have each group give a brief presentation, in sequence, on their timeline moment.

#### **HISTORY OF CUBA TIMELINE POINTS:**

- Batista's Coup 1952: Batista decided to overthrow the government to avoid being defeated in the 1952 election. Fidel Castro, then a young lawyer, tried to legally oppose Batista's coup. He ran for the House of Representatives that same year, but after that attempt failed, Castro pledged to overthrow the coup with a revolution. Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl founded an organization called "The Movement," which had more than a thousand members and a stockpile of weapons by the end of its first year.
- Attack by "The Movement" July 26, 1953: Castro led "The Movement" in an attack on army barracks also known as the Moncada Barracks. This attack was unsuccessful, and Castro and his brother Raúl were arrested and put in prison. At his trial, Fidel Castro spoke for hours in what is now a well-known speech, defending his actions and condemning Batista. His speech concluded with his now-famous phrase, "History will absolve me."

- Batista Regains Power 1954: Batista was once again elected president without opposition, and despite the way by which he took power, the United States still recognized his regime. Castro's supporters campaigned for Castro to be officially pardoned and released. (source)
- Exiled Castro Brothers 1955: When the Castro brothers were released from prison, they went into exile in Mexico. There, they began to plan an invasion of Cuba and were joined by other Cuban revolutionaries and the Argentine Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, who would later become one of their closest associates. While in exile, Fidel Castro visited the U.S. to raise money for his campaign and trained his revolutionaries, now named the 26th of July Movement, for combat. (source)
- The Movement's Invasion December 2, 1956: Fidel Castro and 81 others landed in Cuba on a yacht named Granma. They were defeated by the Cuban army, and survivors fled to the Sierra Maestra mountains, where they would begin a guerilla campaign. (source)
- Revolutionary Students attack the Presidential Palace - March 13, 1957: The Revolutionary Directorate, a group made up mostly of students, attacked the presidential palace in Havana. Batista suspended the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in response to the attack. (source)

- Battle of La Plata July 1958: Batista launched a military campaign against Fidel Castro's revolutionary group, the 26th of July Movement, but Batista's troops were defeated by Castro's guerillas at the Battle of La Plata. (source)
- Revolutionary Forces Emerge and Capture August 21, 1958-December 30, 1958: Castro's
  forces emerged from the mountains and began to
  advance north, capturing towns as they went. On
  December 30, Che Guevara's revolutionary force in
  Santa Clara captured a supply train that was desperately needed by the government troops. (source)
- The End of Batista's Power January 1, 1959:
   Batista relinquished power in Cuba and fled the country as Fidel Castro and his other revolutionaries seized control. (source)
- U.S. Diplomatic Relations End January 3, 1961: The United States ceased diplomatic relations with Cuba in response to the nationalization of U.S.owned properties in Cuba. (source)
- Socialism April 16, 1961: Fidel Castro declared socialism. The next day, CIA-backed Cuban exiles failed to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. (source)
- U.S. Embargo February 7, 1962: The U.S. imposed a commercial embargo against Cuba, which is still in place today. (source)



Fidel Castro and Huber Matos enter Havana. Public Domain.



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ORIGINAL ALBUM RELEASE

# The musicians of Buena Vista Social Club: That's a lot of "itos"!

The characters in *Buena Vista Social Club* are based on real people: the musicians from the 1997 album. These musicians had long careers before recording the album, and many of them had played together before. While many of these musicians are featured as characters in *Buena Vista Social Club*, what is fact and what is fiction?

Choose a character from the list below to create a profile. Write a short biography for the person, including where they're from, how they contributed to the album, and a few fun facts. Once students finish the biographies, have them present their musician to the class.

• Eliades Ochoa: guitar and vocalist

• Manuel "Guajiro" Mirabal: trumpeter

• Barbarito Torres: laúd (lute)

• Amadito Valdés: percussionist

 Candelario "Cachaito" Orlando López Vergara: bass

Omara Portuondo: vocalist

Compay Segundo: tres

• Ibrahim Ferrer: vocalist

• Rubén González: piano

Jesús "Aguaje" Ramos: trombonist

• Manuel Galbán: guitarist and pianist

• Manuel "Puntillita" Licea: vocalist

Alberto Valdes: percussionist and vocalist

#### **GUESS WHO?**

Once each musician has been presented to the class, test how much they've learned with a "Guess Who?" activity. For this activity, place images of each musician in front of the class. Choose one musician for students to guess, and encourage them to ask questions to determine the mystery

musician. They should ask questions like "Where did this musician grow up?" and "Does this musician sing or play an instrument?" Once they guess the musician, take the image down and start over again with a different musician. This activity can also be modified as a one-on-one activity, with two students competing against each other, or grouped into teams of two or three students.

# "SPECIAL PERIOD" CUBA AND RECORDING THE ALBUM

Standard: <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.10</u> By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

In the show, Juan de Marcos states that life on the island only got harder after the collapse of the Soviet Union and introduces the "Special Period" with the caveat that "there's nothing special about hunger." Though Cuba's economy had been steadily growing since it allied with the Soviet Union, suddenly a significant portion of its support vanished.

Buena Vista Social Club compares these two periods of huge change in Cuban history: The Cuban Revolution, and the post-Soviet "Special Period." Ask your students to think about these two time periods: What challenges might have been similar for each situation? How were these events different? Encourage a discussion comparing and contrasting these time periods. Then, make a list of moments in the show where the effects from the time period stand out. Ask your students: Do you think the album could have been made in the 1950s, pre-Revolution? What about before the Soviet Union collapsed? How might the album be different if it had been recorded in the 1980s? In the 2010s?

#### **TAKING IT FURTHER**

Read this <u>Billboard article</u>, which contains interviews with different creatives on the album. Does anything they say fit in with what you imagined the challenges were of either time period? Do you notice anything that differs from the Broadway show? Do you recognize anything that is used in the Broadway show?



#### **CUBAN MUSIC**

"BUENA VISTA WAS A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME THING. WE KNEW WE'D MADE A SPECIAL RECORD, BUT NOBODY COULD HAVE IMAGINED HOW IT WOULD TAKE OFF."

– Nick Gold, World Circuit Records

Buena Vista Social Club celebrates Cuban music. The album was never supposed to exist; The original idea had been to create a hybrid record bringing together African and Cuban music, but at the last minute, the African musicians could not attend the sessions. Producer Ry Cooder and band director Juan de Marcos were forced to improvise, and they gathered the golden-age Cuban musicians that you see portrayed onstage.

The album includes standards of the trova and filin repertoire, namely sones, guajiras, and boleros typically played by small guitar-led ensembles. Son cubano is one of the basic foundations of Cuban music. This style combines the structure and elements of Spanish canción and the Spanish guitar with African rhythms and percussion instruments of Bantu and Arará origin. Originating in Cuba in the 1920s, son cubano became one of the catchiest and most popular rhythms worldwide for the next four decades.

# CUBAN MUSICAL TRADITIONS IN BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

Consider the song list for *Buena Vista Social Club*. The song list was not planned ahead of time but improvised on the fly in the studio. Ask students to read the definitions of the music genres below. What is the difference between a trova and a danzón? Between a bolero, like Dos Gardenias, and a guajira, like El Carreterro?

Using the definitions below, ask students to choose songs from *Buena Vista Social Club* that fit each genre.

- Son Cubano: combines the structure and elements of Spanish canción and the Spanish guitar with African rhythms and percussion instruments of Bantu and Arará origin.
- Trova: poetic musical form performed by itinerant singer-songwriters who played guitar and sang, often in vocal harmonies.
- Filin: a Cuban, but U.S.-influenced, popular song fashion of the late 1940s to the early 1960s. The word is derived from feeling and is sometimes spelled filin or even el filin. It describes a style of post-microphone jazz-influenced romantic song. The Cuban roots of filin were in the bolero and the canción.

- **Guajira**: a Cuban peasant dance tune or song whose rhythm shifts from ½ to ¾ time while the eighth note retains the same time value. Originally developed in Cuba between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a narrative music style influenced by *Tonada chilena*. Guajiro is slang for "campesino" (peasant), and guajira refers to the countryside origins and themes of the music, which is also referred to as 'peasant music' or 'Cuban country'.
- Danzón: a ballroom dance played by the Cuban charangas. It is a descendant of the popular Spanish danza of the 1800s and the French contredanse (contradanza) brought by the French immigrants fleeing the Haitian Revolution, who settled in Cuba's eastern region. At the beginning of the twentieth century, José Urfé revolutionized danzón music completely by introducing a mountain son using the tres (three-string guitar) style used by musicians in the eastern provinces of Cuba.



# THE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB PHENOMENON

Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Buena Vista Social Club remains the best-selling Cuban album in history. This album captivated the world in an era before social media, and even the internet, was widespread, which means the album gained popularity mostly through word-of-mouth. This feat was even more incredible since the album featured a collective of artists rather than a formal band. Many of the artists went on to release their own individual records, and the world enjoyed a surge of interest in Cuban culture.

Ask your students to discuss and come up with a list of moments that directly relate to the release of the album. These items could be things like Ibrahim Ferrer releasing his own album, the *Buena Vista Social Club* musicians playing at Carnegie Hall, or songs from the album being included in movie soundtracks. Are they surprised that the story, after so much history, has become a Broadway show? Why or why not?

#### **TAKING IT FURTHER**

Standard: <u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4</u> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

In 1999, filmmaker Wim Wenders produced a documentary about the *Buena Vista Social Club*. Play the film, and have students compare and contrast it with the Broadway show. Were they surprised by anything in the documentary? Did they notice anything that differed from the Broadway show? What are the differences between telling a story in a film versus onstage? Encourage students to write down at least five points that they learned in the documentary and five points they already knew from seeing the Broadway show.

#### **SOURCES:**

https://www.buenavistasocialclub.com/story/

https://2009-2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/cuba/85033.htm#:~:text=-Castro%20declared%20Cuba%20a%20socialist%20state%20on%20 April%2016%2C%201961

https://history.state.gov/countries/cuba#:~:text=Following%20the%20 revolution%20of%201959,with%20Cuba%20in%20January%201961

https://cubaplatform.org/special-period

https://worldmusiccentral.org/world-music-resources/musician-biographies/cuban-music/

https://cuba50.org/2022/08/15/trova-the-cuban-sound-of-voice-and-guitar/

https://www.billboard.com/music/latin/

buena-vista-social-club-album-oral-history-9646459/

https://dbpedia.org/page/Filin (music)

https://rateyourmusic.com/genre/guajira/

https://worldmusiccentral.org/2018/01/18/the-cuban-danzon/

https://worldcircuit.co.uk/artists/buena-vista-social-club/#:~:text=Today%20 the%20album's%20sales%20stand,the%20album's%20release%20in%20 1997



# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

BOOK BY MARCO RAMIREZ MUSIC BY THE GRAMMY AWARD WINNING BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB CHOREOGRAPHY BY PATRICIA DELGADO & JUSTIN PECK DEVELOPED & SAHEEM ALI

# **BROADWAY CAST**

NATALIE VENETIA BELCON OMARA

> JULIO MONGE COMPAY

> > MEL SEMÉ IBRAHIM

JAINARDO BATISTA STERLING RUBÉN, U/S IBRAHIM, U/S COMPAY

> ISA ANTONETTI YOUNG OMARA

DA'VON T. MOODY
YOUNG COMPAY

WESLEY WRAY
YOUNG IBRAHIM

LEONARDO REYNA YOUNG RUBÉN

RENESITO AVICH ELIADES

ASHLEY DE LA ROSA YOUNG HAYDEE

JUSTIN CUNNINGHAM JUAN DE MARCOS

ANGÉLICA BELIARD ENSEMBLE **ANDREW MONTGOMERY COLEMAN** 

U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

CARLOS FALÚ
ENSEMBLE

**CARLOS E. GONZALEZ** 

SWING, DANCE CAPTAIN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN

> HÉCTOR JUAN MAISONET ENSEMBLE

> > **ILDA MASON**

ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

MARIELYS MOLINA ENSEMBLE

SOPHIA RAMOS U/S OMARA

ANTHONY SANTOS ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM

> MARTÍN SOLÁ U/S COMPAY, U/S RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

TANAIRI SADE VAZQUEZ SWING, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MURPHY



Founded in 2006 by educator and author Timothy Allen McDonald, and headquartered in New York City, iTheatrics is the world's leading authority on educational musical theatre.

iTheatrics adapts musicals for young performers and creates support materials that make the process of putting on a show achievable and accessible for all. iTheatrics shows are licensed worldwide by Music Theatre International (Broadway Junior titles) and Concord Theatricals (Youth Edition and Young Actors Edition titles). In North America alone, 36 million people see a musical adapted by iTheatrics each year, which is three times the number of people who attend a Broadway show annually. In fact, the majority of people who see a live production in North America are attending a show adapted by iTheatrics.

iTheatrics is committed to ensuring young people everywhere have the same access to the arts as they do athletics. iTheatrics is making impressive progress in achieving this mission through partner-ships with the Shubert Foundation/ MTI Broadway Junior Middle School Musical Theater Program, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Turnaround Arts, and the Educational Theatre Foundation (ETF). Each of these partnerships builds sustainable musical theatre programs in underserved schools. iTheatrics's proprietary approach provides teachers, with or without an arts background, the skills required to present a musical. iTheatrics measures success based on whether the school continues to present a musical after five years, and the efforts boast a sustainability rate of 92%.

Additionally, iTheatrics is proud to have partnered with former First Lady Michelle Obama to produce the first-ever White House Talent Show.

In 2017, iTheatrics published The iTheatrics Method: The Quintessential Guide to Creating Quality Musical Theatre Programs, the first textbook dedicated to creating sustainable and quality educational theatre programs in schools and after-school settings. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.

In addition, iTheatrics creates study guides and student-focused engagement initiatives for Broadway and West End shows, as well as the The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The White House, The Jim Henson Company, and NBC Universal and more.

iTheatrics also produces Junior Theater Festivals and Celebrations in the USA, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand with an annual attendance of 15,000.

#### iTheatrics.com

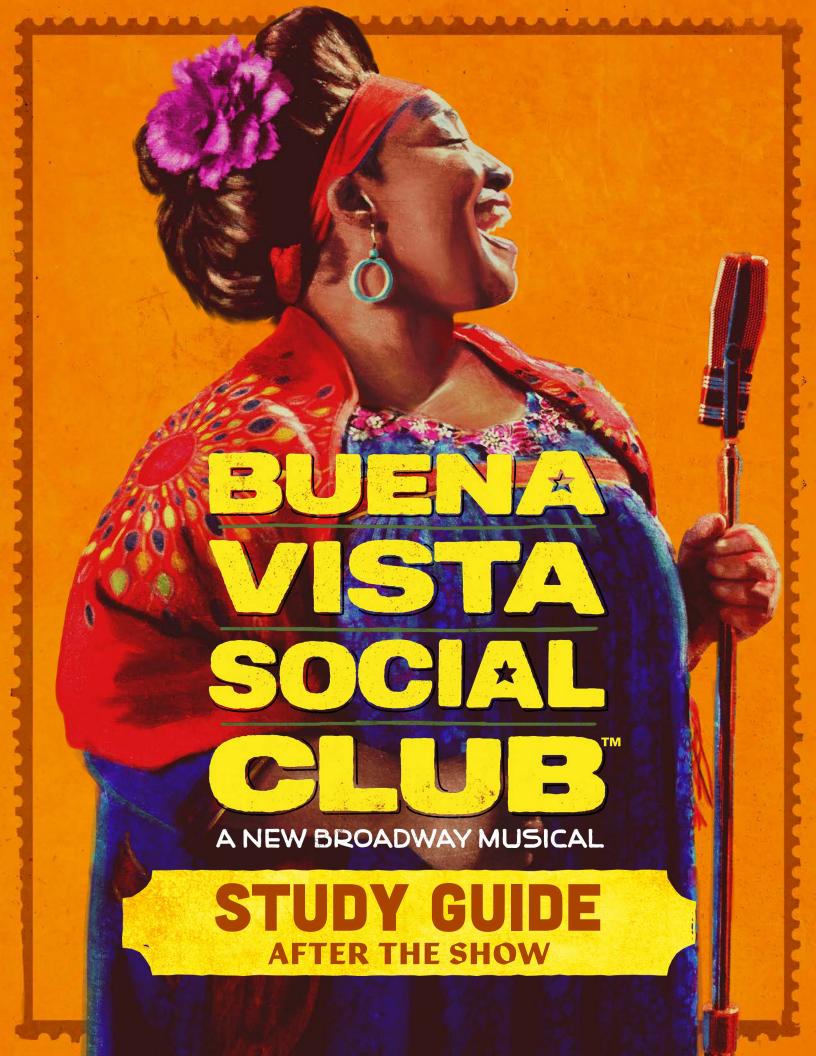
Buena Vista Social Club Study Guide content based on The iTheatrics Method © 2024 iTheatrics.

Content Created by iTheatrics



Written by Marianne Phelps and Laura Jo Schuster Contributing Writers Mary-Catherine Chambliss and Jiana J. Odland Senior Managing Editor Susan Fuller

# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL



# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

# **AFTER THE SHOW**

#### **ACTIVITIES ON PRODUCTION THEMES**



# ACTIVITY

#### Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6-12

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Buena Vista Social Club is inspired by real people and the real album of the same name. Ask your students: What did you learn from watching the show? Perhaps they learned about a new type of music, or learned more about an event in history. When playwrights write scripts, especially with characters and events based on real history, they must take so much into consideration. Truth is no defense for fiction, meaning that even if an event actually occurred, within the world of the musical, everything must contribute to the storytelling.

Buena Vista Social Club uses a narrator. In theatrical storytelling, having a character perform the functions of a narrator can be a helpful way to convey information to the audience that they need to understand the plot. Ask your students: Did Juan de Marcos's narration make it easier to understand what was going on in the show? Why or why not?

Then, using what they've learned from the discussions and activities in this guide, write a brand-new scene for *Buena Vista Social Club* that features a narrator. You can use existing characters in the show, new musicians that you discovered in this guide, or make up new characters. Give students plenty of time to brainstorm their new scenes and create a first draft. Once they have their first draft, ask a few people to share their scenes with the class. Ask how the scenes contribute to the storytelling, and discuss the additional scenes as a group.



## SAY WHAT YOU NEED TO SAY

#### Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4-12

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Sometimes it's difficult to communicate with someone when you have a conflict—especially when that person is a cherished friend, family member, or loved one. Hurt feelings, pride, and communication misunderstandings can all contribute to ongoing conflict and damaged personal relationships. Omara regrets her last conversation with her sister after she and Haydee part ways. What do you think could have gone differently in Omara and Haydee's conversation? How do you think they could have repaired their relationship?

Think about an important person in your life.

- What do you like about this person?
- How has this person positively impacted your life?
- Is there anything you would like to say to this person that you've never said before?
- Is there anything you've already said that you'd like to repeat?
- If you've ever argued with this person, how was the argument resolved?
- Make a list of things you'd like to say to your person.

Using your person as inspiration, write a new scene in which Omara and Haydee discuss their parting conversation. Would Haydee apologize to Omara for leaving? Would Omara still be angry with Haydee? How might the sisters reconcile? If you are comfortable, choose two students from the class to read your scene out loud.

As a reminder, here is the scene:

#### YOUNG OMARA

What are you doing here?

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

You need to come with me.

#### YOUNG OMARA (re: the guards)

Who are they?

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

Protection.

#### YOUNG OMARA

From what?

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

Some men just pulled our father out of his car.

#### YOUNG OMARA

Is he alright?

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

They called him a traitor, they threatened his life, they said he forgot where he came from—

#### YOUNG OMARA

What do you mean "traitor"?

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

Have you been paying attention to anything outside of this club? They're coming for families like ours, people are leaving the country. I've come to take you out of here.

#### YOUNG OMARA

No.

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

The car is outside. We don't have time to argue—

#### YOUNG OMARA

I'm not going with you—

(It gets physical, the Men that came with Young Haydee step in. Young Ibrahim tries to intervene.)

#### YOUNG IBRAHIM

Please, not here-

(The Men HIT Young Ibrahim. The club stops. Young Haydee is embarrassed. She burns a look at the room.)

#### YOUNG HAYDEE

That's enough!

#### YOUNG HAYDEE (CONT'D)

(to Young Omara)

The world is on fire and you're singing pretty songs. ...Let's go.

(Before she goes, Young Haydee looks at her one last time.)

#### YOUNG HAYDEE (CONT'D)

You're not one of them, Omara. You never will be.

(With that, Young Haydee leaves.)



#### **TAKING IT FURTHER**

Write a letter to yourself! Where are you right now in terms of accomplishing your goals? Where would you like to be in ten years?



#### Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6-12

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

We see Omara at two stages of her life in *Buena Vista Social Club*: Young Omara, who we see in the 1950s, and 1990s Omara, who is introduced at the beginning of the show at the recording studio. Ask your students: How does Young Omara's personality change between the 1950s and 1990s? Ask them to make a list of qualities of Young Omara and 1990s Omara. How does Young Omara's relationship with her sister, Haydee, change throughout the musical? What plot point in the show causes Young Omara to stay in Cuba instead of leaving with Haydee? Why was Ibrahim treated differently than the other musicians at the Tropicana? You've heard of racism, but have you ever heard of colorism before?

#### COLORISM

"Colorism" is defined as: prejudice or discrimination especially within a racial or ethnic group, favoring people with lighter skin over those with darker skin. In a nutshell, this is when people with different skin tones within the same racial or cultural group are treated differently based on the historical bias attached to skin color. Ibrahim Ferrer and other dark-skinned musicians are placed beneath the stage at the Tropicana to sing in the chorus, not onstage with the lighter-skinned musicians, which shocks Young Omara. In 1992, author Alice Walker said that until colorism is addressed in communities and within racial and ethnic groups, "we cannot as a people progress. For colorism, like colonialism, sexism and racism, impedes us."



Use this activity to demonstrate that, no matter our differences, there are always commonalities to bring people together, like how diverse sounds, instruments, and voices come together to create music.

Have your students spread out evenly throughout the room. Place yourself in a spot where everyone will be able to see and hear you as you speak the following prompts.

**Prompt One** (this prompt divides the class into individual groups of one): "Get into bands of people who have your same first, middle, AND last name." Ask the "bands" (individual students in this case) to share their names. As you go around the room, the rest of the class observes what makes the "bands" (individual students) unique. With each individual sharing their name, or "music" in this metaphor, they have contributed to the harmony of the group.

**Prompt Two** (this prompt divides the class into about 12 groups): "Get into bands of people who were born in the same month as you." Students form approximately 12 bands. Again, ask each band to share their birth month. As you go around the room, the rest of the class observes as each band shares their "music" with the group at large – but rather than being a group of one, students now have others alongside them in their band, sharing the same music to contribute to the harmony in the room.

**Prompt Three** (this prompt divides the class into six bands): "In *Buena Vista Social Club*, musicians play piano, guitar, upright bass, percussion, trumpet, or sing among other instruments. Ask students to form bands of people who share their favorite instrument from the list. Again, ask each band to share their instrument (taking it further, ask the bands to perform a movement or sound to represent their instrument). Make the rounds to each band as the class observes the instrument, movement, and sound from each band. We have now added literal music to our group harmony.

**Prompt Four** (this prompt will divide the class into four bands): Tell your students: "There are four main voice types when singing. High voices are "sopranos," middlehigh voices are "altos," middle-low voices are "tenors," and low voices are "basses." Ask your students to form bands who share the same voice type. After the students have formed their bands, ask each band to share their voice type (taking it further, ask the bands to sing a lyric that matches their voice type). As the teacher goes around the room, the rest of the class continues to observe and appreciate the music coming from the other bands.

Prompt Five (this prompt will divide the class into two bands): Ask the students to choose whether they prefer sunrises or sunsets and form bands. Once the groups have formed, ask each band to share their sunshine preference (taking it further, ask the groups to make a tableau of a sunrise or sunset). As the teacher goes around the room, the other half of the class observes the active band's tableau of sunshine and can offer commentary on things they appreciate about that light they might not have considered before considering another's (the opposite band's) perspective.

**Prompt Six** (this prompt will unite the entire class together): Ask the students to form a band of people who are in the class. The teacher points out that, while the bands were initially separated and focused on individuality, throughout the process we listened, learned, and worked together to create connections and music across the classroom. For example, maybe two students were in the same band for prompt two, but not for prompt three, and back together again for prompt four. Now, everyone is in one large group, which demonstrates that we can always find something in common, and what makes us different can be acknowledged and celebrated, rather than used to divide us. True harmony comes from finding connection despite and because of our differences. Students then reflect on the exercise.

#### **REFLECTION**

Standards: <a href="https://www.thecorestandards.org/">https://www.thecorestandards.org/</a> ELA-Literacy/RL/11-12/

Ask your students:

- What was it like seeing a Broadway musical?
- Has anyone seen a Broadway musical before Buena Vista Social Club?

For students who had never seen a Broadway musical before: What surprised you about the experience of going to Broadway?

For students who had previously attended a Broadway show, ask them how their experiences differed. Were they in a different theater? Were they seated in the balcony versus the orchestra section?

After the group discussion, make two lists of experiences: one with experiences that the students expected, and one with experiences that were unexpected.

- How was seeing live theatre different from watching a film or a television show?
- What kind of impact did the performances have on the audience?

Ask students to reflect on the entire experience: walking into the theater, finding their seat, seeing the performance, and exiting the theater. Share with them that human beings have been gathering for theatrical performances for thousands of years. Why do they think that people are still drawn to theatre when so many other forms of entertainment exist?



# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

BOOK BY MARCO RAMIREZ MUSIC BY THE GRAMMY AWARD WINNING BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB CHOREOGRAPHY BY PATRICIA DELGADO & JUSTIN PECK DEVELOPED & SAHEEM ALI

# **BROADWAY CAST**

NATALIE VENETIA BELCON OMARA

JULIO MONGE COMPAY

MEL SEMÉ IBRAHIM

JAINARDO BATISTA STERLING RUBÉN, U/S IBRAHIM, U/S COMPAY

> ISA ANTONETTI YOUNG OMARA

DA'VON T. MOODY
YOUNG COMPAY

WESLEY WRAY
YOUNG IBRAHIM

LEONARDO REYNA YOUNG RUBÉN

RENESITO AVICH ELIADES

ASHLEY DE LA ROSA YOUNG HAYDEE

JUSTIN CUNNINGHAM
JUAN DE MARCOS

ANGÉLICA BELIARD ENSEMBLE **ANDREW MONTGOMERY COLEMAN** 

U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

CARLOS FALÚ
ENSEMBLE

**CARLOS E. GONZALEZ** 

SWING, DANCE CAPTAIN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN

> HÉCTOR JUAN MAISONET ENSEMBLE

> > **ILDA MASON**

ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

MARIELYS MOLINA ENSEMBLE

SOPHIA RAMOS U/S OMARA

ANTHONY SANTOS ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM

> MARTÍN SOLÁ U/S COMPAY, U/S RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

TANAIRI SADE VAZQUEZ SWING, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MURPHY



Founded in 2006 by educator and author Timothy Allen McDonald, and headquartered in New York City, iTheatrics is the world's leading authority on educational musical theatre.

iTheatrics adapts musicals for young performers and creates support materials that make the process of putting on a show achievable and accessible for all. iTheatrics shows are licensed worldwide by Music Theatre International (Broadway Junior titles) and Concord Theatricals (Youth Edition and Young Actors Edition titles). In North America alone, 36 million people see a musical adapted by iTheatrics each year, which is three times the number of people who attend a Broadway show annually. In fact, the majority of people who see a live production in North America are attending a show adapted by iTheatrics.

iTheatrics is committed to ensuring young people everywhere have the same access to the arts as they do athletics. iTheatrics is making impressive progress in achieving this mission through partner-ships with the Shubert Foundation/MTI Broadway Junior Middle School Musical Theater Program, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Turnaround Arts, and the Educational Theatre Foundation (ETF). Each of these partnerships builds sustainable musical theatre programs in underserved schools. iTheatrics's proprietary approach provides teachers, with or without an arts background, the skills required to present a musical. iTheatrics measures success based on whether the school continues to present a musical after five years, and the efforts boast a sustainability rate of 92%.

Additionally, iTheatrics is proud to have partnered with former First Lady Michelle Obama to produce the first-ever White House Talent Show.

In 2017, iTheatrics published *The iTheatrics Method: The Quintessential Guide to Creating Quality Musical Theatre Programs*, the first textbook dedicated to creating sustainable and quality educational theatre programs in schools and after-school settings. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.

In addition, iTheatrics creates study guides and student-focused engagement initiatives for Broadway and West End shows, as well as the The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The White House, The Jim Henson Company, NBC Universal, and more.

iTheatrics also produces Junior Theater Festivals and Celebrations in the USA, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand with an annual attendance of 15,000.

#### iTheatrics.com

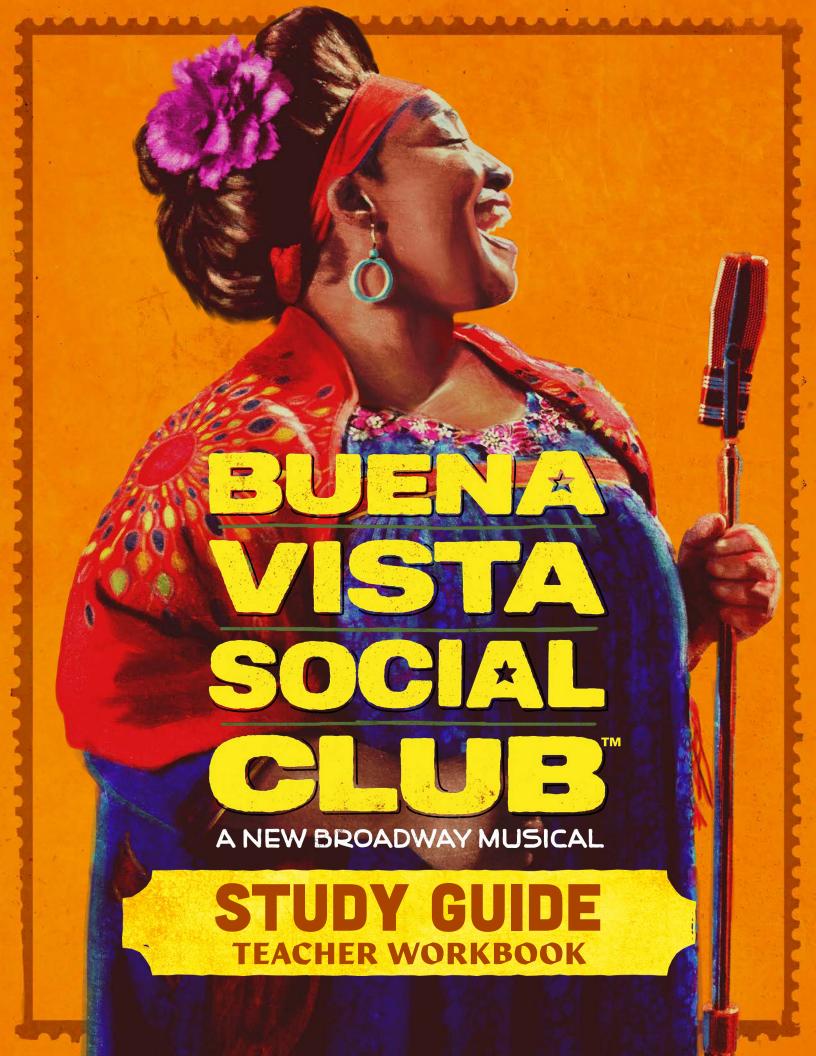
**Buena Vista Social Club** Study Guide content based on *The iTheatrics Method* © 2024 iTheatrics.

Content Created by iTheatrics.



Written by Marianne Phelps and Laura Jo Schuster Contributing Writers Mary-Catherine Chambliss and Jiana J. Odland Senior Managing Editor Susan Fuller

# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL



# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

# **TEACHER WORKBOOK**

#### **PLOT SYNOPSIS**

#### **ACT I**

Set against the backdrop of the crumbling yet charismatic world of 1990s Cuba struggling amidst the circumstances of the U.S. blockade and the collapse of the Soviet Union, *Buena Vista Social Club* tells the exciting and important story of a group of musicians reclaiming and reviving their cultural heritage through music.

The play opens in a 1990s recording studio, where the House Band plays "El Carretero,", a lively and soulful introduction to the Cuban sound. Eliades Ochoa, the bandleader, leads the song, his voice blending with the Company, setting the tone for what's to come. As the music fades, Juan de Marcos, a passionate Cuban musician and producer, steps forward and addresses the audience. He speaks of a small, now-forgotten music studio in Old Havana, a place where history was made—history he intends to resurrect.

Determined to make an album that honors Cuba's lost musical past, Juan has gathered a group of musicians, but one key piece is still missing: Omara Portuondo, one of Cuba's greatest voices. He arrives at Omara's home, where he finds a woman who has long since stepped away from the music scene. Once a celebrated singer, she has been living in quiet obscurity, watching time pass. Juan tries to persuade her to join the project, speaking passionately about restoring the world's appreciation for traditional Cuban music. But Omara is hesitant. She brushes him off, skeptical of his ambitions—until he invokes the name of Compay Segundo, an old friend and collaborator. Something flickers in her eyes, though she refuses to acknowledge it.

With a shift in lighting, we are transported back to 1950s Havana, where a young, dazzling Omara and her sister Haydee prepare for a performance at the legendary Tropicana Club. They are elegant, polished, and full of promise, singing "El Cumbanchero," a fast-paced, infectious number that electrifies the audience. After the performance, Haydee excitedly shares that executives from Capitol Records will be in Havana for New Year's Eve, scouting talent. This could be their big break—a chance to record an album, leave Cuba, and make a name for themselves internationally. But

while Haydee dreams of America, Omara feels a different pull.

That night, Young Omara sneaks away from the Tropicana and finds herself in Marianao, a poorer, but culturally rich, Black neighborhood. There, she stumbles into the Buena Vista Social Club, a small, smoky music hall filled with energy, where people dance freely to the sound of "Qué Bueno Baila Usted." On stage, a young Compay Segundo and Young Ibrahim Ferrer lead the performance. Omara is transfixed—not just by the music, but by the raw, unfiltered emotion in Ibrahim's voice. This isn't the structured, tourist-friendly music of the Tropicana; this is something real.

She meets Ibrahim after the show, and they share a conversation along the Malecón, Havana's famous seawall. As waves crash in the background, he sings "Murmullo," a love song tinged with sadness. They connect deeply over their love for music, but Omara remains uncertain about where she belongs.

The next day, Haydee senses Omara's distraction and warns her about the dangers of associating with the Buena Vista musicians. She reminds Omara that their future depends on impressing Capitol Records. But Omara pushes back—she has found something at the Buena Vista Social Club that feels truer to her than the polished performances at the Tropicana.

As political tensions in Havana escalate, we see the growing divide between the two sisters. On New Year's Eve, the Tropicana Club is at its peak, packed with international guests. Omara and Haydee take the stage again, performing "El Cumbanchero." The crowd erupts in applause. But as the night continues, Omara makes a fateful decision.

She rushes to the Buena Vista Social Club, where a celebration is underway. The room is alive with the sounds of "Dos Gardenias," a song about love and loss. Omara steps on stage with Ibrahim for the first time, their voices blending in an electrifying moment of musical chemistry. As they sing, revolution erupts outside—Fidel Castro's forces take the city, and everything is about to change. The Buena Vista Social Club, the Tropicana, and Cuba itself will never be the same. The act closes with a kiss between Omara and Ibrahim, framed by the uncertainty of the future.

#### **ACT II**

The second act opens decades later, in the 1990s, with the House Band launching into "El Cuarto de Tula," an explosive, fast-paced number that breathes life into the aging musicians. In the studio, Juan is running out of time and money. He has just a few days left to complete the album, and Omara's participation could make or break the project. When she arrives, she is met by Compay Segundo and an older Rubén González, a once-great pianist who now barely speaks. Seeing them again stirs something in her. She has spent decades avoiding this part of herself—can she truly return to it?

As they rehearse, the musicians' memories begin to unfold. We flash back to the 1950s, where the fallout of Omara's choices plays out. The revolution has taken hold, and the world is shifting. The Capitol Records executives leave Havana, and Haydee is devastated. She accuses Omara of ruining their future. Meanwhile, the Buena Vista Social Club faces an uncertain fate. Some musicians

choose to flee the country, while others, like Ibrahim, stay behind, trying to hold onto their art.

Back in the 1990s, Juan suggests recording "Dos Gardenias," and Omara hesitates—this song holds deep meaning for her. As she sings, the boundaries between past and present dissolve. The studio transforms into the Buena Vista Social Club, where Young Omara and Young Ibrahim stand together once more, their voices entwined.

As the recording session progresses, Juan watches history come alive in the studio. The forgotten musicians, dismissed for decades, are reclaiming their voices. The album they are making will go on to achieve worldwide success, proving that Cuban music, long buried by time and politics, can never truly disappear.

The play closes on a celebratory note. The musicians, now old but not forgotten, revel in their music. As Omara sings one final note, it is clear that the Buena Vista Social Club was never just a place—it was a movement, a testament to the power of sound, memory, and resilience.

#### THE FINAL SCENE:

As the last song plays, the stage is filled with both past and present—the young musicians of the 1950s alongside their older counterparts in the 1990s. The Buena Vista Social Club may no longer exist as a physical place, but its spirit, its music, and its people have left a mark on history.



# SONG LIST

## **ACT ONE**

- EL CARRETERO
- · LÁGRIMAS NEGRAS (PRELUDE)
- · DE CAMINO A LA VEREDA
- · VEINTE AÑOS
- EL CUMBANCHERO
- VEINTE AÑOS (REPRISE)
- · QUÉ BUENO BAILA USTED
- BRUCA MANIGUÁ
- MURMULLO
- · DRUME NEGRITA
- CANDELA
- EL CUMBANCHERO (REPRISE)
- DOS GARDENIAS

SOME MUSIC YOU KNOW, BY HEART.

# **ACT TWO**

- EL CUARTO DE TULA
- · LA NEGRA TOMASA
- · CHAN CHAN
- · SILENCIO
- · LÁGRIMAS NEGRAS
- DOS GARDENIAS (REPRISE)
- BRUCA MANIGUÁ (REPRISE)
- SILENCIO (INSTRUMENTAL)
- · CANDELA (REPRISE)



## **CHARACTER LIST**

House Band Eliades Ochoa Guajiro Flute Player David Juan De Marcos Omara Portuondo Young Omara Compay Segundo Young Compay Young Rubén Young Haydee Young Ibrahim Ibrahim Ferrer Rubén González

Dancers Bodyguards (2) Man in Suit Figures

## **CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS**

- The HOUSE BAND includes ELIADES OCHOA, GUAJIRO, a FLUTE PLAYER, and DAVID, among others. These musicians make up the band that plays at the Buena Vista Social Club in the 1950s and that records at Egrem Studios in the 1990s.
- ELIADES OCHOA, a leader of the House Band, is a great friend of the producer Juan De Marcos. He plays the tres with great pizzazz and has a bit of a country streak in him.
- JUAN DE MARCOS is a young music producer whose main focus is business success. He is intelligent, motivated, and a self-starter who isn't afraid to take chances for his dreams.
- OMARA PORTUONDO is a powerhouse singer and presence in any room she occupies—and she knows it.
   She is cuttingly funny and intelligent but carries the weight of her past, despite her commercial success in music.
- YOUNG OMARA is a wealthy young woman dreaming of a world full of music and harmony. She's free in spirit and strong in her convictions, but she gives in under pressure to obtain her goals.
- COMPAY SEGUNDO is a troubadour musician with "old-world" charm. While he can be a bit flirtatious, he's a sensitive man who has lived several deep disappointments in his lifetime.
- YOUNG COMPAY is a stylish, brave, and charming young guitar player and singer. Though he's a bit of a risk-taker, he's a dedicated person—to his friends, his music, and the Buena Vista Social Club alike.
- YOUNG RUBÉN is an energetic, careful, eager, and hopeful pianist. He came from a humble background and dreams of playing on the best instruments with the best musicians. His mind stays focused on two things: safety and music.

- YOUNG HAYDEE is older sister to Young Omara and the driving engine behind the duo's early success as performers. She's logical, no-nonsense, and down-toearth. Not one for sentiment, she faces reality head-on.
- YOUNG IBRAHIM is a dark-skinned young singer
  who has relocated from a difficult life in the country to the
  big city. He relies on busking to make his living and faces
  prejudicial hurdles on the journey to musical success.
- IBRAHIM FERRER is the older version of Young Ibrahim. He is a man with a sweet singing voice and a deeply spiritual presence. His life has been very difficult, and his wariness shows.
- RUBÉN GONZALÉZ is the older version of Young Rubén who comes to listen to the music being recorded in the Egrem Studios. He is still, quiet, and trapped in his own mind until he hears a recording from his youth.
- DANCERS portray the relationship between Young Omara and Young Haydee throughout the musical.
- The 1950s PATRONS AT THE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB watch the performers and enjoy drinks and dancing.
- Two BODYGUARDS accompany Young Haydee to the Buena Vista Social Club to protect Young Haydee as she tries to convince her sister to leave the country.
- The MAN IN SUIT, played by the same actor who
  plays Juan De Marcos, is a former employee of Capitol
  Records who approaches Young Omara in the Buena
  Vista Social Club to attract her to his new record label.
  Young Omara's hesitation is no match for his foresight
  and persuasion.
- FIGURES represent many different characters in the musical, which include, but are not limited to, various people from the 1990s and 1950s, gang members, servants in the Portuondo household, and people who dismantle the social clubs after the Cuban Revolution.



Creating a playlist for a character in a play is an artistic process that can help actors and directors deepen their understanding of the character's emotional journey, motivations, and personality.

This playlist serves as a tool to evoke the character's inner world and can be used during the study of the play, rehearsals, or even in preparation for a performance. Guide students in the steps below to create a playlist for a character in **Buena Vista Social Club**:

First, choose a character from Buena Vista Social Club.

Next, analyze the character's personality: List five to ten adjectives describing the character's key traits, habits, disposition, and beliefs about the world. Once the students identify adjectives, apply concepts of music to these adjectives. Consider ideas such as tempo (how fast or slow a song goes), volume, intensity, and pitch. Ask the students: Describe music that reminds you of someone who is an excitable person. Your students might respond with music that features a fast tempo with a high pitch. Once students marry these musical qualities with their adjectives, have them brainstorm songs they know that match their exploration and write them down.

After analyzing the character's personality, look at the character's themes: What common topics come up in this character's story in the story of *Buena Vista Social Club*? For instance, the theme of family is central to many of the characters in the play. Have students write down themes or overall ideas that arise when considering their

character and then brainstorm songs they know that share a similar theme.

For an extra challenge, have students consider the characters' backgrounds, the emotional journeys the characters undertake, or the era/setting of *Buena Vista Social Club* to discover more music that might fit on the playlist.

Once the students have a good list of songs for their characters, review the songs to ensure they are school-appropriate. Once an adult approves the proposed playlist, have the students utilize a service like Spotify to find and arrange the songs in an order that tells the best story of their character. Spotify also allows students to share their lists for collaboration, should you find students creating playlists for the same characters.

When the playlists are solidified, have the students reflect on and discuss and/or journal the answers to the following questions:

- How can music help you understand the character's emotions?
- What makes certain songs feel more applicable to specific scenes than others?
- Does the playlist capture the full emotional journey of the character? Explain your answer.
- Do you personally identify with any of the songs on the character's playlist? Explain your answer.

If students feel the need to alter the playlist because of the answers to these questions, allow them to do so.

Taking it further, encourage students to share their playlists out loud and have the other students guess which character each playlist represents.



## **KEY VOCABULARY**

**actor**: A person who performs as a character in a play or musical.

**author**: A writer of a play or musical, also known as a playwright. A musical's authors include the book writer, a composer, and a lyricist.

**blocking**: The actors' movement in a play or musical, not including the choreography. The director usually assigns blocking during rehearsals.

**book writer**: One of the authors of a musical. The book writer writes the lines (dialogue) and the stage directions. Also called the librettist.

cast: The performers in a show.

**cheating out**: Turning oneself slightly toward the house when performing so the audience may better see one's face and hear one's lines.

**choreographer**: A person who creates and teaches the dance numbers in a musical.

**creative team**: The author(s), director, choreographer, music director and designers for a play or musical.

**cross**: When an actor onstage moves toward or away from another actor or object.

**dialogue**: A conversation between two or more characters.

**director**: A person who provides the artistic vision, coordinates the creative elements, and stages the play.

**downstage**: The portion of the stage closest to the audience. The opposite of upstage.

**house**: The area of the theater where the audience sits to watch the show.

**house left**: The left side of the theater from the audience's perspective. If something is located "house left," it is to the left side of the audience as they are seated in the theater.

**house right**: The right side of the theater from the audience's perspective. If something is located "house right," it is to the right side of the audience as they are seated in the theater.

**lines**: The dialogue spoken by the actors.

**lyricist**: A person who writes the lyrics of a musical. The lyricist works with a composer to create songs.

lyrics: The words of a song.

monologue: A dramatic speech by one actor.

**music director**: A person who is in charge of teaching the songs to the cast and orchestra and maintaining the quality of the performed score.

musical: A play with songs that are used to tell a story.

**objective**: A goal or purpose to be achieved.

**off book**: The actor's ability to perform his or her memorized lines without holding the script.

**offstage**: Any area out of view of the audience. Also called backstage.

**onstage**: Anything on the stage and within view of the audience is said to be onstage.

**opening night**: The first official performance of a production, after which the show is frozen, meaning no further changes are made, and reviews may be published.

**play**: A type of dramatic writing meant to be performed live on a stage. A musical is one kind of play.

**protagonist**: The main character in a musical. The action centers around this character.

**raked stage**: A stage which is raised slightly upstage so that it slants towards the audience.

**rehearsal**: A meeting during which the cast learns and practices the show.

**script**: 1) The written words that make up a show, including spoken words, stage directions, and lyrics.
2) The book that contains those words.

**speed-through**: To speak through the dialogue of a scene as quickly as possible. A speed-through rehearsal helps actors memorize their lines, and it infuses energy into the pacing of a scene.

**stage directions**: Words in the script that describe the actions of the characters.

**stage left**: The left side of the stage, from the actor's perspective. The same side of the theater as house right.

**stage manager**: A person who is responsible for keeping all rehearsals and performances on schedule.

**stage right**: The right side of the stage, from the actor's perspective. The same side of the theater as house left.

**theater**: when theater is spelled with "er," it is often referring to the physical space where theatre is performed.

**theatre**: when theatre is spelled with "re," it is commonly referring to theatre as an art form.

**upstage**: The part of the stage farthest from the audience. The opposite of downstage.

**warm-ups**: Exercises at the beginning of a rehearsal or before a performance that prepare actors' voices and bodies.



#### TRANSLATION ACTIVITY

Music is a powerful tool that helps us explore our feelings, express our inner world, and expand our empathy for the experiences of others. In this activity, students will explore the music from *Buena Vista Social Club* and the feelings experienced along with the music, even if they don't understand the words.

#### **MATERIALS NEEDED**

- Computer
- Speakers or headphones
- Three songs from the album Buena Vista Social Club. If the majority of your students speak Spanish and will be able to understand the lyrics, choose three instrumental pieces that vary in speed, pitch, and intensity. Below is a list of potential choices from Buena Vista Social Club:
  - "El Carretero"
  - "Lágrimas Negras"
  - "Veinte Años"
  - "El Cumbanchero"
  - "Qué Bueno Baila Usted"
  - "Murmullo"
- Writing materials/journal
- Emotion wheel or chart (used to help students identify emotions; can be easily sourced online via an image search)

#### **EXPLORE MUSIC AND EMOTION**

Start the activity with a discussion with the students about how music and emotion relate. Ask the following questions:

- How does music make us feel?
- Why does music make us feel?
- Think of a song that makes you feel happy. What about the music causes that emotional effect?
- Can music make you feel emotions, even if there are no words? Why or why not?

Then, introduce the components of music, much like you discussed in the Playlist Activity above, that most commonly evoke emotion. Consider the following musical elements:

- Pitch: How high or low are the notes?
- Tempo: How fast or slow is the song?
- Rhythm: What's the main beat in the song?

- Volume: How loud or soft is the song?
- Intensity: How weak or strong is the music?
- Melody: What's the main musical theme of the song?
- Key Signature: Are the notes harmonious? Dissonant?
- Time Signature: How many beats are in a measure, and which note length gets the beat?

#### **GROUP MUSIC EXPLORATION**

Begin with your selection of three songs from the album *Buena Vista Social Club*. With each song, start by having students listen to the song's recording with a journal and emotion wheel in hand. Students should jot down the feelings they experience as they listen to the music.

Once students are finished writing, go around the room and have each student share one or two feelings they experienced during the song. As students listen to their peers' responses, have them write down an emotion they heard from another student that surprised them or directly contradicted their own emotional experience with the song.

Play the song again, and have students examine which element of music (tempo, pitch, etc.) led to their emotional experience.

Repeat this process with all three songs. Once the students have explored the three songs, have them compare the emotional experiences created by the selections.

#### TAKING IT FURTHER

Find translations of the songs online or via a trusted source, which could even be a language teacher in your school. After students listen to only music, have them read the translations to identify the emotional quality the lyrics illustrate in each song. Compare the listening experience to the translation experience: Did similar emotions arise? Were there any surprises, given the emotional experience of the song, as they explored the lyrical content of the piece?

#### WRAP UP AND REFLECT

Take a few minutes at the end of the activity to discuss and reflect. Ask the students: How can we use music to help with emotional regulation? When we are upset, could we use music to help us calm ourselves or change our mood?

#### **TAKING IT FURTHER**

Have students create a playlist of ten songs or so that they can keep with them to help regulate their mood when needed.

## BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

BOOK BY MARCO RAMIREZ MUSIC BY THE GRAMMY AWARD WINNING BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB CHOREOGRAPHY BY PATRICIA DELGADO & JUSTIN PECK DEVELOPED & SAHEEM ALI

## **BROADWAY CAST**

NATALIE VENETIA BELCON OMARA

> JULIO MONGE COMPAY

> > MEL SEMÉ IBRAHIM

JAINARDO BATISTA STERLING RUBÉN, U/S IBRAHIM, U/S COMPAY

> ISA ANTONETTI YOUNG OMARA

DA'VON T. MOODY YOUNG COMPAY

WESLEY WRAY
YOUNG IBRAHIM

LEONARDO REYNA YOUNG RUBÉN

RENESITO AVICH ELIADES

ASHLEY DE LA ROSA YOUNG HAYDEE

JUSTIN CUNNINGHAM
JUAN DE MARCOS

ANGÉLICA BELIARD ENSEMBLE **ANDREW MONTGOMERY COLEMAN** 

U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

CARLOS FALÚ
ENSEMBLE

**CARLOS E. GONZALEZ** 

SWING, DANCE CAPTAIN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN

> HÉCTOR JUAN MAISONET ENSEMBLE

> > **ILDA MASON**

ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

MARIELYS MOLINA ENSEMBLE

SOPHIA RAMOS U/S OMARA

ANTHONY SANTOS ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM

> MARTÍN SOLÁ U/S COMPAY, U/S RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

TANAIRI SADE VAZQUEZ SWING, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MURPHY



Founded in 2006 by educator and author Timothy Allen McDonald, and headquartered in New York City, iTheatrics is the world's leading authority on educational musical theatre.

iTheatrics adapts musicals for young performers and creates support materials that make the process of putting on a show achievable and accessible for all. iTheatrics shows are licensed worldwide by Music Theatre International (Broadway Junior titles) and Concord Theatricals (Youth Edition and Young Actors Edition titles). In North America alone, 36 million people see a musical adapted by iTheatrics each year, which is three times the number of people who attend a Broadway show annually. In fact, the majority of people who see a live production in North America are attending a show adapted by iTheatrics.

iTheatrics is committed to ensuring young people everywhere have the same access to the arts as they do athletics. iTheatrics is making impressive progress in achieving this mission through partner-ships with the Shubert Foundation/MTI Broadway Junior Middle School Musical Theater Program, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Turnaround Arts, and the Educational Theatre Foundation (ETF). Each of these partnerships builds sustainable musical theatre programs in underserved schools. iTheatrics's proprietary approach provides teachers, with or without an arts background, the skills required to present a musical. iTheatrics measures success based on whether the school continues to present a musical after five years, and the efforts boast a sustainability rate of 92%.

Additionally, iTheatrics is proud to have partnered with former First Lady Michelle Obama to produce the first-ever White House Talent Show.

In 2017, iTheatrics published *The iTheatrics Method: The Quintessential Guide to Creating Quality Musical Theatre Programs*, the first textbook dedicated to creating sustainable and quality educational theatre programs in schools and after-school settings. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.

In addition, iTheatrics creates study guides and student-focused engagement initiatives for Broadway and West End shows, as well as the The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The White House, The Jim Henson Company, NBC Universal, and more.

iTheatrics also produces Junior Theater Festivals and Celebrations in the USA, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand with an annual attendance of 15,000.

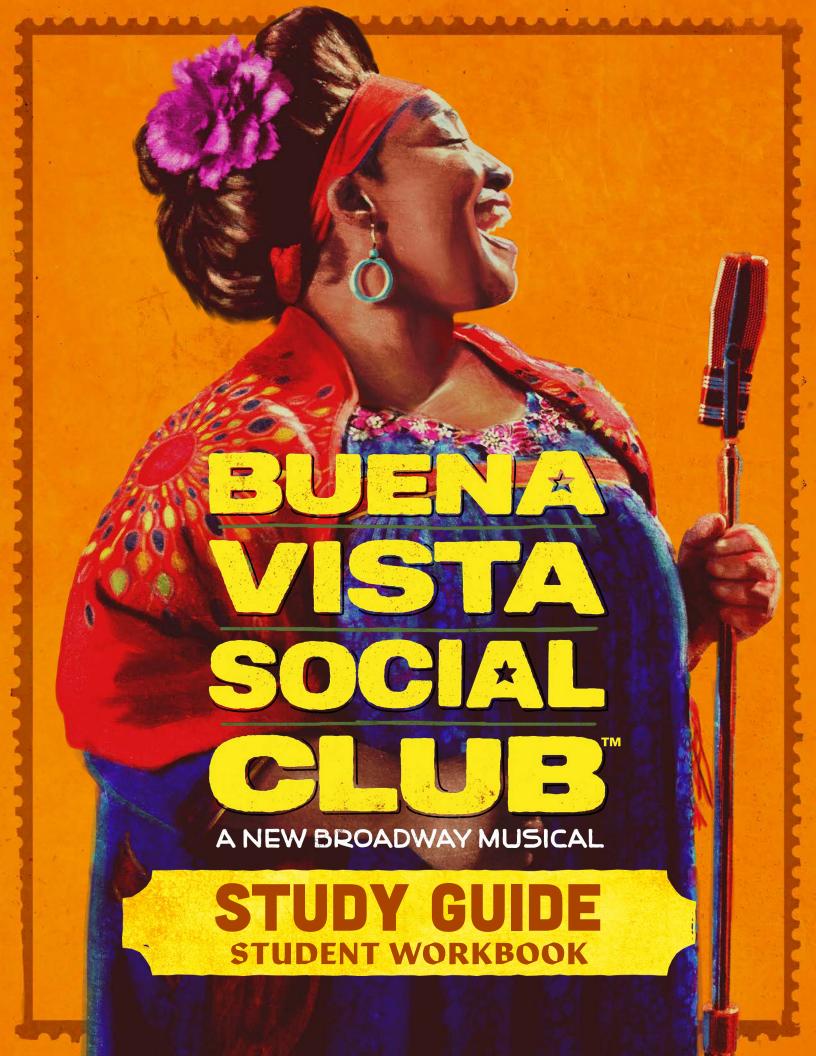
#### iTheatrics.com

**Buena Vista Social Club** Study Guide content based on *The iTheatrics Method* © 2024 iTheatrics. Content Created by iTheatrics.



Written by Marianne Phelps and Laura Jo Schuster Contributing Writers Mary-Catherine Chambliss and Jiana J. Odland Senior Managing Editor Susan Fuller

# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL



## BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

## STUDENT WORKBOOK

#### **PLOT SYNOPSIS**

#### **ACT I**

Set against the backdrop of the crumbling yet charismatic world of 1990s Cuba struggling amidst the circumstances of the U.S. blockade and the collapse of the Soviet Union, *Buena Vista Social Club* tells the exciting and important story of a group of musicians reclaiming and reviving their cultural heritage through music.

The play opens in a 1990s recording studio, where the House Band plays "El Carretero,", a lively and soulful introduction to the Cuban sound. Eliades Ochoa, the bandleader, leads the song, his voice blending with the Company, setting the tone for what's to come. As the music fades, Juan de Marcos, a passionate Cuban musician and producer, steps forward and addresses the audience. He speaks of a small, now-forgotten music studio in Old Havana, a place where history was made—history he intends to resurrect.

Determined to make an album that honors Cuba's lost musical past, Juan has gathered a group of musicians, but one key piece is still missing: Omara Portuondo, one of Cuba's greatest voices. He arrives at Omara's home, where he finds a woman who has long since stepped away from the music scene. Once a celebrated singer, she has been living in quiet obscurity, watching time pass. Juan tries to persuade her to join the project, speaking passionately about restoring the world's appreciation for traditional Cuban music. But Omara is hesitant. She brushes him off, skeptical of his ambitions—until he invokes the name of Compay Segundo, an old friend and collaborator. Something flickers in her eyes, though she refuses to acknowledge it.

With a shift in lighting, we are transported back to 1950s Havana, where a young, dazzling Omara and her sister Haydee prepare for a performance at the legendary Tropicana Club. They are elegant, polished, and full of promise, singing "El Cumbanchero," a fast-paced, infectious number that electrifies the audience. After the performance, Haydee excitedly shares that executives from Capitol Records will be in Havana for New Year's Eve, scouting talent. This could be their big break—a chance to record an album, leave Cuba, and make a name for themselves internationally. But

while Haydee dreams of America, Omara feels a different pull.

That night, Young Omara sneaks away from the Tropicana and finds herself in Marianao, a poorer, but culturally rich, Black neighborhood. There, she stumbles into the Buena Vista Social Club, a small, smoky music hall filled with energy, where people dance freely to the sound of "Qué Bueno Baila Usted." On stage, a young Compay Segundo and Young Ibrahim Ferrer lead the performance. Omara is transfixed—not just by the music, but by the raw, unfiltered emotion in Ibrahim's voice. This isn't the structured, tourist-friendly music of the Tropicana; this is something real.

She meets Ibrahim after the show, and they share a conversation along the Malecón, Havana's famous seawall. As waves crash in the background, he sings "Murmullo," a love song tinged with sadness. They connect deeply over their love for music, but Omara remains uncertain about where she belongs.

The next day, Haydee senses Omara's distraction and warns her about the dangers of associating with the Buena Vista musicians. She reminds Omara that their future depends on impressing Capitol Records. But Omara pushes back—she has found something at the Buena Vista Social Club that feels truer to her than the polished performances at the Tropicana.

As political tensions in Havana escalate, we see the growing divide between the two sisters. On New Year's Eve, the Tropicana Club is at its peak, packed with international guests. Omara and Haydee take the stage again, performing "El Cumbanchero." The crowd erupts in applause. But as the night continues, Omara makes a fateful decision.

She rushes to the Buena Vista Social Club, where a celebration is underway. The room is alive with the sounds of "Dos Gardenias," a song about love and loss. Omara steps on stage with Ibrahim

for the first time, their voices blending in an electrifying moment of musical chemistry. As they sing, revolution erupts outside—Fidel Castro's forces take the city, and everything is about to change. The Buena Vista Social Club, the Tropicana, and Cuba itself will never be the same. The act closes with a kiss between Omara and Ibrahim, framed by the uncertainty of the future.

#### **ACT II**

The second act opens decades later, in the 1990s, with the House Band launching into "El Cuarto de Tula," an explosive, fast-paced number that breathes life into the aging musicians. In the studio, Juan is running out of time and money. He has just a few days left to complete the album, and Omara's participation could make or break the project. When she arrives, she is met by Compay Segundo and an older Rubén González, a once-great pianist who now barely speaks. Seeing them again stirs something in her. She has spent decades avoiding this part of herself—can she truly return to it?

As they rehearse, the musicians' memories begin to unfold. We flash back to the 1950s, where the fallout of Omara's choices plays out. The revolution has taken hold, and the world is shifting. The Capitol Records executives leave Havana, and Haydee is devastated. She accuses Omara of ruining their future. Meanwhile, the Buena Vista Social Club faces an uncertain fate. Some musicians

choose to flee the country, while others, like Ibrahim, stay behind, trying to hold onto their art.

Back in the 1990s, Juan suggests recording "Dos Gardenias," and Omara hesitates—this song holds deep meaning for her. As she sings, the boundaries between past and present dissolve. The studio transforms into the Buena Vista Social Club, where Young Omara and Young Ibrahim stand together once more, their voices entwined.

As the recording session progresses, Juan watches history come alive in the studio. The forgotten musicians, dismissed for decades, are reclaiming their voices. The album they are making will go on to achieve worldwide success, proving that Cuban music, long buried by time and politics, can never truly disappear.

The play closes on a celebratory note. The musicians, now old but not forgotten, revel in their music. As Omara sings one final note, it is clear that the Buena Vista Social Club was never just a place—it was a movement, a testament to the power of sound, memory, and resilience.

#### THE FINAL SCENE:

As the last song plays, the stage is filled with both past and present—the young musicians of the 1950s alongside their older counterparts in the 1990s. The Buena Vista Social Club may no longer exist as a physical place, but its spirit, its music, and its people have left a mark on history.



## **SONG LIST**

## **ACT ONE**

- EL CARRETERO
- · LÁGRIMAS NEGRAS (PRELUDE)
- · DE CAMINO A LA VEREDA
- · VEINTE AÑOS
- EL CUMBANCHERO
- VEINTE AÑOS (REPRISE)
- · QUÉ BUENO BAILA USTED
- BRUCA MANIGUÁ
- MURMULLO
- · DRUME NEGRITA
- CANDELA
- EL CUMBANCHERO (REPRISE)
- DOS GARDENIAS

SOME MUSIC YOU KNOW: BY HEART.

## **ACT TWO**

- EL CUARTO DE TULA
- · LA NEGRA TOMASA
- · CHAN CHAN
- SILENCIO
- · LÁGRIMAS NEGRAS
- DOS GARDENIAS (REPRISE)
- BRUCA MANIGUÁ (REPRISE)
- SILENCIO (INSTRUMENTAL)
- · CANDELA (REPRISE)



## **CHARACTER LIST**

House Band Eliades Ochoa Guajiro Flute Player David Juan De Marcos Omara Portuondo Young Omara Compay Segundo Young Compay Young Rubén Young Haydee Young Ibrahim Ibrahim Ferrer Rubén González

Dancers Bodyguards (2) Man in Suit Figures

## **CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS**

- The HOUSE BAND includes ELIADES OCHOA, GUAJIRO, a FLUTE PLAYER, and DAVID, among others. These musicians make up the band that plays at the Buena Vista Social Club in the 1950s and that records at Egrem Studios in the 1990s.
- ELIADES OCHOA, a leader of the House Band, is a great friend of the producer Juan De Marcos. He plays the tres with great pizzazz and has a bit of a country streak in him.
- JUAN DE MARCOS is a young music producer whose main focus is business success. He is intelligent, motivated, and a self-starter who isn't afraid to take chances for his dreams.
- OMARA PORTUONDO is a powerhouse singer and presence in any room she occupies—and she knows it.
   She is cuttingly funny and intelligent but carries the weight of her past, despite her commercial success in music.
- YOUNG OMARA is a wealthy young woman dreaming of a world full of music and harmony. She's free in spirit and strong in her convictions, but she gives in under pressure to obtain her goals.
- COMPAY SEGUNDO is a troubadour musician with "old-world" charm. While he can be a bit flirtatious, he's a sensitive man who has lived several deep disappointments in his lifetime.
- YOUNG COMPAY is a stylish, brave, and charming young guitar player and singer. Though he's a bit of a risk-taker, he's a dedicated person—to his friends, his music, and the Buena Vista Social Club alike.
- YOUNG RUBÉN is an energetic, careful, eager, and hopeful pianist. He came from a humble background and dreams of playing on the best instruments with the best musicians. His mind stays focused on two things: safety and music.

- YOUNG HAYDEE is older sister to Young Omara and the driving engine behind the duo's early success as performers. She's logical, no-nonsense, and down-toearth. Not one for sentiment, she faces reality head-on.
- YOUNG IBRAHIM is a dark-skinned young singer
  who has relocated from a difficult life in the country to the
  big city. He relies on busking to make his living and faces
  prejudicial hurdles on the journey to musical success.
- IBRAHIM FERRER is the older version of Young Ibrahim. He is a man with a sweet singing voice and a deeply spiritual presence. His life has been very difficult, and his wariness shows.
- RUBÉN GONZALÉZ is the older version of Young Rubén who comes to listen to the music being recorded in the Egrem Studios. He is still, quiet, and trapped in his own mind until he hears a recording from his youth.
- DANCERS portray the relationship between Young Omara and Young Haydee throughout the musical.
- The 1950s PATRONS AT THE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB watch the performers and enjoy drinks and dancing.
- Two BODYGUARDS accompany Young Haydee to the Buena Vista Social Club to protect Young Haydee as she tries to convince her sister to leave the country.
- The MAN IN SUIT, played by the same actor who
  plays Juan De Marcos, is a former employee of Capitol
  Records who approaches Young Omara in the Buena
  Vista Social Club to attract her to his new record label.
  Young Omara's hesitation is no match for his foresight
  and persuasion.
- FIGURES represent many different characters in the musical, which include, but are not limited to, various people from the 1990s and 1950s, gang members, servants in the Portuondo household, and people who dismantle the social clubs after the Cuban Revolution.

## **KEY VOCABULARY**

**actor**: A person who performs as a character in a play or musical.

**author**: A writer of a play or musical, also known as a playwright. A musical's authors include the book writer, a composer, and a lyricist.

**blocking**: The actors' movement in a play or musical, not including the choreography. The director usually assigns blocking during rehearsals.

**book writer**: One of the authors of a musical. The book writer writes the lines (dialogue) and the stage directions. Also called the librettist.

cast: The performers in a show.

**cheating out**: Turning oneself slightly toward the house when performing so the audience may better see one's face and hear one's lines.

**choreographer**: A person who creates and teaches the dance numbers in a musical.

**creative team**: The author(s), director, choreographer, music director and designers for a play or musical.

**cross**: When an actor onstage moves toward or away from another actor or object.

**dialogue**: A conversation between two or more characters.

**director**: A person who provides the artistic vision, coordinates the creative elements, and stages the play.

**downstage**: The portion of the stage closest to the audience. The opposite of upstage.

**house**: The area of the theater where the audience sits to watch the show.

**house left**: The left side of the theater from the audience's perspective. If something is located "house left," it is to the left side of the audience as they are seated in the theater.

**house right**: The right side of the theater from the audience's perspective. If something is located "house right," it is to the right side of the audience as they are seated in the theater.

lines: The dialogue spoken by the actors.

**lyricist**: A person who writes the lyrics of a musical. The lyricist works with a composer to create songs.

**lyrics**: The words of a song.

monologue: A dramatic speech by one actor.

**music director**: A person who is in charge of teaching the songs to the cast and orchestra and maintaining the quality of the performed score.

musical: A play with songs that are used to tell a story.

**objective**: A goal or purpose to be achieved.

**off book**: The actor's ability to perform his or her memorized lines without holding the script.

**offstage**: Any area out of view of the audience. Also called backstage.

**onstage**: Anything on the stage and within view of the audience is said to be onstage.

**opening night**: The first official performance of a production, after which the show is frozen, meaning no further changes are made, and reviews may be published.

**play**: A type of dramatic writing meant to be performed live on a stage. A musical is one kind of play.

**protagonist**: The main character in a musical. The action centers around this character.

**raked stage**: A stage which is raised slightly upstage so that it slants towards the audience.

**rehearsal**: A meeting during which the cast learns and practices the show.

**script**: 1) The written words that make up a show, including spoken words, stage directions, and lyrics. 2) The book that contains those words.

**speed-through**: To speak through the dialogue of a scene as quickly as possible. A speed-through rehearsal helps actors memorize their lines, and it infuses energy into the pacing of a scene.

**stage directions**: Words in the script that describe the actions of the characters.

**stage left**: The left side of the stage, from the actor's perspective. The same side of the theater as house right.

**stage manager**: A person who is responsible for keeping all rehearsals and performances on schedule.

**stage right**: The right side of the stage, from the actor's perspective. The same side of the theater as house left.

**theater**: when theater is spelled with "er," it is often referring to the physical space where theatre is performed.

**theatre**: when theatre is spelled with "re," it is commonly referring to theatre as an art form.

**upstage**: The part of the stage farthest from the audience. The opposite of downstage.

**warm-ups**: Exercises at the beginning of a rehearsal or before a performance that prepare actors' voices and bodies.

## BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL

BOOK BY MARCO RAMIREZ MUSIC BY THE GRAMMY AWARD WINNING BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB CHOREOGRAPHY BY PATRICIA DELGADO & JUSTIN PECK DEVELOPED & SAHEEM ALI

## **BROADWAY CAST**

NATALIE VENETIA BELCON OMARA

> JULIO MONGE COMPAY

> > MEL SEMÉ IBRAHIM

JAINARDO BATISTA STERLING RUBÉN, U/S IBRAHIM, U/S COMPAY

> ISA ANTONETTI YOUNG OMARA

DA'VON T. MOODY
YOUNG COMPAY

WESLEY WRAY
YOUNG IBRAHIM

LEONARDO REYNA YOUNG RUBÉN

RENESITO AVICH ELIADES

ASHLEY DE LA ROSA YOUNG HAYDEE

JUSTIN CUNNINGHAM
JUAN DE MARCOS

ANGÉLICA BELIARD ENSEMBLE **ANDREW MONTGOMERY COLEMAN** 

U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

CARLOS FALÚ
ENSEMBLE

**CARLOS E. GONZALEZ** 

SWING, DANCE CAPTAIN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS, U/S YOUNG COMPAY, U/S YOUNG RUBÉN

> HÉCTOR JUAN MAISONET ENSEMBLE

> > **ILDA MASON**

ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

MARIELYS MOLINA ENSEMBLE

SOPHIA RAMOS U/S OMARA

ANTHONY SANTOS ENSEMBLE, U/S YOUNG IBRAHIM

> MARTÍN SOLÁ U/S COMPAY, U/S RUBÉN, U/S JUAN DE MARCOS

TANAIRI SADE VAZQUEZ SWING, U/S YOUNG OMARA, U/S YOUNG HAYDEE

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW MURPHY



Founded in 2006 by educator and author Timothy Allen McDonald, and headquartered in New York City, iTheatrics is the world's leading authority on educational musical theatre.

iTheatrics adapts musicals for young performers and creates support materials that make the process of putting on a show achievable and accessible for all. iTheatrics shows are licensed worldwide by Music Theatre International (Broadway Junior titles) and Concord Theatricals (Youth Edition and Young Actors Edition titles). In North America alone, 36 million people see a musical adapted by iTheatrics each year, which is three times the number of people who attend a Broadway show annually. In fact, the majority of people who see a live production in North America are attending a show adapted by iTheatrics.

iTheatrics is committed to ensuring young people everywhere have the same access to the arts as they do athletics. iTheatrics is making impressive progress in achieving this mission through partner-ships with the Shubert Foundation/MTI Broadway Junior Middle School Musical Theater Program, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Turnaround Arts, and the Educational Theatre Foundation (ETF). Each of these partnerships builds sustainable musical theatre programs in underserved schools. iTheatrics's proprietary approach provides teachers, with or without an arts background, the skills required to present a musical. iTheatrics measures success based on whether the school continues to present a musical after five years, and the efforts boast a sustainability rate of 92%.

Additionally, iTheatrics is proud to have partnered with former First Lady Michelle Obama to produce the first-ever White House Talent Show.

In 2017, iTheatrics published *The iTheatrics Method: The Quintessential Guide to Creating Quality Musical Theatre Programs*, the first textbook dedicated to creating sustainable and quality educational theatre programs in schools and after-school settings. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.

In addition, iTheatrics creates study guides and student-focused engagement initiatives for Broadway and West End shows, as well as the The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The White House, The Jim Henson Company, NBC Universal, and more.

iTheatrics also produces Junior Theater Festivals and Celebrations in the USA, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand with an annual attendance of 15,000.

#### iTheatrics.com

**Buena Vista Social Club** Study Guide content based on *The iTheatrics Method* © 2024 iTheatrics. Content Created by iTheatrics.



Written by Marianne Phelps and Laura Jo Schuster Contributing Writers Mary-Catherine Chambliss and Jiana J. Odland Senior Managing Editor Susan Fuller

# BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB A NEW BROADWAY MUSICAL