



Ritmacuba, since 1989.

The Ritmacuba program consists of 10 days of **classes** including a final concert or presentation, the formation of a carnival group, plus 2 days of cultural activities (the « **Abanico** » program). The “standard” trip from Toronto will be 14 days, July 9-23 but you are welcome to arrive earlier and/or stay later. We can arrange accommodation for the length of your stay in Santiago. To participate in the program you must arrive on July 8 or 9 and stay until the morning of the 21st. The first class is at 9 a.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> but there will be group activities on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Lodging is in private houses (casas particulares) in the neighbourhood of the Alliance Française where the courses will take place. You will have a private washroom and an air conditioner in your room. Price is based on double occupancy but you may choose to pay a supplement and have your own room. Breakfast will be provided in the house where you stay and lunch will be served at the Alliance Française. Dinners are not included. They may often be arranged where you are staying at low cost. Should you decide to join us we will send you practical information about Cuban money, food, what clothes to bring, etc.

**You may request a registration form and a payment schedule by emailing [jh-canada@ritmacuba.com](mailto:jh-canada@ritmacuba.com). Registration should be made as soon as possible. Please send me an email or phone me with any questions at 416-255-0046. At this time (February, 2012) courses are filling fast and so are plane seats. There is a chance that the plane fare will increase in March.** 28 dancers and musicians are already registered, including a 13-piece marching band from Martinique (a first this year!) who will be participating in Santiago’s Festival Del Caribe which will takes place July 3-9 before the Ritmacuba program starts. Also new this year is the opportunity to take steel pan with the leader of Cuba’s only steel band.

### **“Abanico” Cultural Program**

A program of activities focused on the music and dance of Oriente (eastern Cuba), outside the usual tourist circuit. Each year is unique and adapted to the situation of the moment. Among the plans for this year are a rumba, a street party in the neighbourhood of Los Hoyos, home of the oldest conga group in Santiago, a visit to a rehearsal of one of the local comparsas and a presentation of tumba francesa. We are officially invited by the city of Santiago to participate in pre-carnival activities, this will include the “Invasion of the congas” and participation in the aquatic carnival (to be confirmed). We will also have a day at an off-the-beaten-path beach with some of the teachers and instruments.

## **Ritmacuba classes – general information**

Ritmacuba welcomes students of all nationalities, disciplines and levels from amateurs with little experience to professionals. All ages are welcome, though minors will be admitted only if they are accompanied by one of the two parents, participating in courses or not. The classes are tailored each year to the students who enrol. In turn, the participants tailor their own programs in choosing their classes. You may specialize or create a mixed program. For example, dancers may decide to take a percussion class; instrumentalists or singers might add a dance class.

The courses are offered within a framework of four one-hour segments. You may also join the Ritmacuba comparsa. This year we will not participate in the carnival parade as the dates did not line up with flights, etc. but we will participate in pre-carnival events. For 2012, our comparsa promises to be quite unique with one part organized around a brass band and another centred around percussion in traditional Santiaguera style. At the end of the courses, classes will perform before the other participants, teachers and assistants and the orchestra will give a free public concert at the Alliance Française.

## **Course Schedule and Options**

The schedule allows for a variety of courses from the following options (among others).

- A) Dance – 4 hours dance per day or 3 hours of dance and 1 hour of singing or percussion
- B) Percussion – 4 hours percussion a day, possibility of one of those hours in the orchestra class, or 3 hours of percussion and 1 hour of singing or dance, private percussion lessons may also be arranged
- C) Instrument or voice\* – 1 hour of singing or voice – private, 1 hour collective practice, 1 hour of orchestra, 2<sup>nd</sup> hour of voice or instrument – private, or a class in another area – dance, percussion or voice  
\*private lessons require an additional fee of 50 CUC (Cuban convertible pesos, worth close to the same as Canadian dollars). This supplement covers all of the classes in one time slot and is to be paid on site.
- D) Personalised program – allows for any kind of combination. A beginner could take level one courses in percussion and dance or a multi-level course such as singing or Afro-Cuban dance.

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

## **The teachers**

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

### Course schedule – all in a day

You may register for one course per time slot. Some modifications may be required. **You may make changes until the 3rd day of classes.** Lunch is from 12:30-2:00, served on the patio of the Alliance Française.

9:00 – 10 a.m.	10:15- 11:15 a.m.	11:30 – 12:30 p.m.	2:00 – 3 p.m.
<b>Dance - Afro-Cuban, rumba &amp; comparsa</b> mixed levels: accompanied by drums, percussion & singer	<b>Dance – Casino/Salsa, Level 2</b>	<b>Dance – Popular Cuban (son, cha-cha-cha, etc.)</b> Level A Level B	<b>Dance – Casino Rueda,</b> intermediate and advanced
<b>Private lessons, dance Salsa/regueton/bachata</b> <b>For first person to register only</b> <b>Note:</b> supplemental cost of 50 CUC per time slot (for the series), payable on site	<b>Dance – Casino/Salsa, Level 3</b>	<b>Dance - Afro-Cuban</b> intermediate and advanced: accompanied by drums, percussion & singer; dependent on minimum enrolment of 10 people	<b>Dance – Salsa, Level 1</b>
<b>Percussion, Afro-Cuban</b> (traditional, congas and/or bata and bells) different teacher & material from afternoon	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas) intermediate and advanced	<b>Percussion – rumba (cajon, congas)</b> intermediate and advanced level	<b>Percussion, Afro-Cuban</b> (congas and/or bata and bells, conga Santiaguera) different teacher & material than morning
	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas, small percussion) level 1	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas, small percussion) level 1	<b>Percussion, popular Cuban rhythms</b> (congas, small percussion) level 1
<b>Wind instruments</b> (brass band, marching band)	<b>Instruments group</b> class, preparation for the orchestra, arrangements of Cuban standards	<b>Son/Salsa Orchestra</b> for instrumentalists, percussionists, voice – soloists and chorus	<b>Wind instruments</b> (brass band, marching band)
<b>Private lessons Instruments/singing</b> <b>Note:</b> supplemental cost of 50 CUC per time slot (for the series), payable on site, unless 2 people	<b>Singing soloists and chorus</b> includes preparation for the orchestra	<b>Group singing class (Cuban repertory)</b> leading to integration with the orchestra as backup singers (coros)	<b>Private lessons Instruments/singing</b> <b>Note:</b> supplemental cost of 50 CUC per time slot (for the series), payable on site, unless 2 people
<b>After 3 p.m.:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One to three rehearsals for carnival (music &amp; dance)</li> <li>Spanish courses are offered at the Alliance, cost not included, 5 CUC/hr. Register on site.</li> </ol>			
<b>Later in the day:</b> Depending on the day, after 6:00 p.m. (depending on proposed events): an activity organized by Ritmacuba (Abanico program) centred on traditional music and dance and social events (rumba, watching a conga group rehearse, etc.) or free time.			

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **DANCE**

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

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

Yoruba, Congo, Haitian-Cuban, rumba, comparsa

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

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

#### **Salsa Level 1**

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

#### **Salsa Level 2**

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

#### **Salsa Level 3**

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

#### **Popular Cuban Dance**

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

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

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

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### **PERCUSSION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**SINGING/INSTRUMENTS/ORCHESTRA**

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

**Singing, group class**

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

**Singing, soloists and chorus**

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

**Private lessons, instrumentalists and singers**

Timbales/bongos/congas, piano, bass, violin, tres, guitar, flute, saxophone (corneta china for carnaval an option), trumpet, trombone, singing – offered in 2 different time slots These private lessons require a supplement of 50 CUC (Cuban convertible pesos) per series (per time slot) to be paid on location, unless two people share a lesson.

**Instruments, group class**

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

**Son/salsa Orchestra**

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

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

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

## **IMPORTANT NOTE about L'Alliance Française de Santiago de Cuba – small donation required**

As part of our arrangement with the Alliance Française, each participant will be required to bring a donation for their Cuban students. Each participant should bring: a package of standard-size printer paper/or a package of blank CDs or DVDs/or general supplies such as pens, pencils, paper glue, Scotch tape, thumbtacks, staplers, staples, etc.

The Alliance Française de Santiago de Cuba constitutes the sole European representation in Eastern Cuba. Its role in the cultural life of the region includes the support of local artists. The knowledge of three languages has been made a priority in Cuba. More than a thousand Cubans, mostly young professionals are studying French at the Alliance. The vast majority of the teachers are Cuban. Some of these French courses are directed at Cuban doctors who will be participating in foreign aid missions in places such as Haiti.

The Alliance also houses a documentation centre and is the site for Martinique during the Festival del Caribe (a festival that takes place before the Ritmacuba program in the first week of July). It organises cultural events on its outdoor stage and indoors. The Alliance Française de Santiago de Cuba participates in an annual competition of French song with prizes going to Cubans, including a trip to France. The Alliance Française in Cuba also organizes French film festivals and aids in the creation of plays and multi-media events in Spanish.

## **THE NITTY-GRITTY - COST**

### **Pricing schedule**

For U.S. participants, there are online currency converters you can use to get an idea of costs in U.S. dollars. The Cuban convertible peso (CUC) is currently equivalent to the U.S. dollar. A 10% tax is charged by the Cuban government on top of exchange fees to exchange U.S. dollars into CUCs so I advise exchanging U.S. money for Canadian dollars (or euros) to take with you for exchange into CUCs. Credit cards issued in the U.S. or from U.S. banks are not accepted in Cuba neither are travellers cheques. For more details on money matters please read the practical information document.

### **Cost breakdown** **Canadian dollars (at January 20 rate)**

A. 650 euros - classes, concerts/day trip	853.00
B. 182 CUC 14 nights lodging w/breakfast based on double occupancy*	+182.50
C. 892 CDN flight (taxes in)	+892.00 =

**Total basic cost** **\$1927.50 CDN.** - flight, lodging and program

\*for private/single accomodation the cost will be 322 CUC (\$322.50)

### **Not included:**

dinners

taxi to airport on return

25 CUC (\$25.10 CDN) to pay departure tax at Santiago airport on return

**For those taking private classes :** 50 CUC (\$50.20 CDN) to pay on site as supplement

**Payment dates:**

- A. Ritmacuba: a Paypal request for payment to Ritmacuba will be sent to when you register. A deposit of 150 euros within the few days following is required to hold your spot. The balance of 500 euros must be paid by June 1/2012. Paypal charges a fee for each transaction fee so you may want to pay all at once and avoid paying two fees. You also have the option of bringing Euros and paying on site.
- B. Accomodation: to be paid (on site) in CUCs directly to the owner of the house where you will be staying.
- C. Flight: to be paid within a few days of registration to assure a seat, I will provide details.

**Canjet flight**

Depart	Toronto (YYZ)	Arrive	Santiago (SCU)
Date	July 9, 2012	Date	July 9, 2012
Time	n/a	Time	n/a
Depart	Santiago (SCU)	Arrive	Toronto (YYZ)
Date	July 23, 2012	Date	July 23, 2012
Time	n/a	Time	n/a

You may make your own travel arrangements, arrive in Santiago earlier or stay longer. If you wish, we can arrange for accommodation for your complete stay in Santiago. To take the classes you must be there from the 9<sup>th</sup> at the latest to the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. The first class is at 9 a.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The latest European arrivals will be getting to Santiago on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup>. Be advised that in July, direct flights from Toronto to Santiago are offered only on Mondays and only by Canjet.

For any questions, please contact  
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<http://ritmacuba.thelivemusicreport.com/>