



CR&V Insiders' Newsletter: Spring, 2018

Our Cuban Family Continues to Grow; Alicia is her Name.

Our fabulous guide and amiga **Raydali O'Farrill** and her husband have an addition to their family. Bebé **Alicia** was born in late December and she's muy hermosa. Just look at that smile.

Ry is an integral part of our program in Cuba. Like all Havanatur guides, she is fluent in English to the point you would think she was American. But, like most Cubans, she has never left the country. Her command of English is expert—right down to her use of idioms.

Ry's humor, personality, diligence and professionalism has always been one of the best features of our program. She travels with us wherever we go and makes certain things happen. From individual dietary needs to restaurant reservations, Ry is our troubleshooter.

Congratulations to the O'Farrills on their new arrival. We can't wait to meet Alicia.



Cuba Rhythm & Views Poised to Have its Best Season Yet as Cuba Bounces Back

On January 20, CR&V, along with Lakeshore Music, presented our good friend Aldo López-Gavilán and his trio to a sold out house at the Tempe Center for the Arts. It was an amazing show on so many levels. With several dozen of our CR&V alumni in attendance, we began our fifth year of cultural diplomacy in Cuba with a renewed sense of optimism and commitment to exposing Americans to creative life in Cuba.

As we know, it has been a rough year for Cuba. First, the new US administration curtailed travel, tightened the embargo and created fear in the minds of American travelers.

Then, in September Cuba was devastated by Hurricane Irma, one of the worst hurricanes to hit Cuba in modern history. There was wide-spread flooding around the country and the north coast agriculture and tourism sectors were completely flattened. Havana had five feet of water in the streets along the Malecón.

But we also know Cuba and Cubans are resilient. They have endured 57 years of economic embargo from the United States and still want to be our friends. They always have hope. It is the message that comes through in their inspirational art, dance and music. This is why we continue to go back.

To celebrate our fifth year in Cuba, we currently have three delegations to choose from in 2018-19 and more in the works.

May 23-30 is a reprise trip with the great trumpeter Byron Stripling. Cuba cannot get enough of Byron and word of mouth from patrons who previously traveled with us (and Byron) have nearly sold out the upcoming trip. The finale of an incredible week will be a tribute to the great George Gershwin entitled *By George: The Music of Gershwin, Cuban Style*. This performance will be held in the beautiful theater of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana. Accompanying Byron will be Aldo López-Gavilán and his quartet.

October 31-November 5 is a very special 5-day, Havana-only trip with internationally celebrated flautist, Elena Durán, who was invited by the Cuban government to perform during Cuba Festival de Música Contemporánea XXXI. Elena is one of the most charismatic flute players on the international concert stage today. She recently was honored to premiere *Concierto Son* (for Flute and Orchestra) composed by preeminent Mexican composer Arturo Márquez with the Mexican National Symphony Orchestra in the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

Elena will perform the Cuban premiere of this amazing work during the Festival XXXI accompanied by Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba conducted by Guido López-Gavilán. This hugely energetic work concludes with a soaring conga, that will most certainly demand an encore. Elena will also work with Cuba's best and brightest students at Instituto Superior de Arte, the national conservatory.

Our Success Has Been Achieved Through Our Patrons' Testimonials...

Please Spread the Word!

We still have a few spots remaining for our May trip with Byron Stripling!

Cuba Rhythm and News:

[OnCubaMagazine.com: Legal, safe and hospitable travel for Americans](#)

[An interview with William M. LeoGrande, Professor of Government at American University on the rationale of Donald Trump's hardline with Cuba](#)

[The Guardian: Cuban Government expands wifi coverage to mixed results](#)

[Reuters: Trump task force on expanding internet service to Cuba meets for the first time](#)

[Reuters: Cuba grants visa to senior US diplomat to lead Havana embassy](#)

[CNBC: Cuba Faces its next financial challenge](#)

Just for fun...enjoy the finale of Byron's May 2016 Tribute to Louis Armstrong. Imagine what Gershwin will sound like!

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CR&V Spring 2018, cont..

January 4-11, 2019 is our collaboration with harmonica virtuoso Robert Bonfiglio and the prestigious Grand Canyon Music Festival. Robert, co-founder of the Grand Canyon Music Festival, will perform with the Havana Chamber Orchestra and again with some of Havana's most renowned jazz musicians at Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana.

Described by the music critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, as "the Paganini of the harmonica," Robert is known for his many recordings and live performances featuring the instrument.

Bonfiglio has performed harmonica concertos as the soloist with over 200 major orchestras including Minnesota Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Buenos Aires Philharmonic of Teatro Colón, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Leipzig MDR-Radio Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, as well as Pittsburgh Symphony, National Symphony, Boston Pops, New York Pops and dozens of others.

Cuba Rhythm and Views is a legal "People-to-People" cultural exploration of Cuba. You may fill out an application for any of our delegations at www.cubarhythmandviews.org. Everything can be done on our website. Simply download the application to your computer's desktop, fill it out and send it electronically to us. We take care of everything from there. You may even pay for your trip on our secure credit card terminal. We look forward to hearing from you. Saludos!

Who's That Guy in the Back of the Bus?



Miguel Cañellas Sueiras

CR&V's Government Liaison
and Host

Everyone who has traveled with us over the years always wonders who the erudite Cuban gentleman is who sits in the back of the tour bus with his interpreter and accompanies our group wherever it goes.

His name is **Miguel Cañellas Sueiras** and he is the director of the beautiful Teatro Tomás Terry in Cienfuegos. He is also one of Cuba's most famous poets and writers. Additionally, he is Cuba's leading expert on the restoration of historic theaters and opera houses. His decades of work on the restoration of Teatro Tomás Terry, Cienfuegos' most recognizable cultural landmark, is known throughout the world. Nowadays the Terry Theater is a cultural institution with a solid schedule of performances from artists from all points of the globe.

Miguel, through the Ministry of Culture, ensures that all our cultural events are sanctioned by the government and takes care of performance visas for our visiting artists. He lives in Cienfuegos and is our host when we visit his beautiful city.