

CUBA

Rhythm and Views

A CULTURAL EXPLORATION LIKE NO OTHER!



Havana Revealed—For Your Eyes Only

Experience the Heart and Soul of Cuban Creative Life with Oracle Piano Society and internationally acclaimed pianist Aldo López-Gavilán

March 20-25, 2024



Cuba Rhythm and Views' business model from Day One has always been in support of the Cuban people. For us, it is about the art. We view ourselves as cultural ambassadors creating bonafide dialogue and understanding between our peoples. Thankfully there are hundreds of our CR&V alumni scattered throughout the country who feel the same way. From classical music to jazz, dance and the visual arts, CR&V reveals the challenging reality of the arts in Cuba that is remarkably different from anywhere else in the world.

We have witnessed the glimpse of hope that came with the political rapprochement in 2014, only to have it rolled back five years later. As the diplomatic

relationship between the United States and the Republic of Cuba continues to degrade after more than six decades of embargo, our cultural and educational exchanges are among the few legal opportunities remaining for Americans to visit Cuba.

CR&V is pleased to present this special opportunity to experience the arts, culture, people and nightlife of Havana over five nights and six days. Delegates will dine in Havana's world-renowned privately-owned *paladares* and stay in the finest hotel, the Grand Aston La Habana. The reviews from our past delegates say it all.

LEGAL
TRAVEL TO
CUBA

March 19, 2024 travel to Miami on your own

March 20-25, 2024

Double Occupancy per person \$4,350

Single Occupancy surcharge \$ 600



Visit www.CubaRhythmandViews.com
for info, reservations, video and FAQs

PRICE INCLUDES

- One night at Miami International Airport Hotel
- 5 nights in Havana's most prestigious 5-star hotel, Grand Aston La Habana
- 5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners
- Roundtrip airfare between Miami and Havana
- All land transportation via luxury coach
- A different private performance most days with Cuba's most celebrated performers from all genres
- All activities and events include admissions and ground transportation
- Baggage transfers and handling at airport and hotel arrival and departure
- Cuban visa fees, departure tax, and medical insurance while in Cuba

NOT INCLUDED

- U.S. domestic airfare and passport
- 3 dinners and 2 lunches so you may explore local dining options
- Independent and private transfer for activities not on the itinerary
- Any baggage charges or fees
- Trip cancellation insurance (strongly recommended)
- Personal items such as telephone services, cigars, laundry
- We will collect \$150 from each traveler when in Cuba to cover all tips for every program activity

ELIGIBILITY

To secure your space, please make your refundable deposit here. cubarhythmandviews.com/reserve/
Priority will be based on the order in which we receive deposits. Upon receiving your deposit, we will send you an application.

COVID POLICY

All international and Cuban travel regulations at the time of travel will be enforced.



Meet Your Cultural Envoys and Co-Hosts

Aldo López-Gavilán and Stephen Cook

Oracle Piano Society's exciting Cuba exploration will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience of artistic and cultural life in Cuba. This innovative collaboration will take a VIP delegation to Cuba, March 20-25, 2024, for a six-day, five-night in-depth immersion into the creative arts in the hemisphere's most intriguing and isolated nation.



Your Co-Host, Concert Pianist Stephen Cook, is Founder and Artistic Director of Oracle Piano Society. He has appeared at the Bermuda Piano Festival, Puerto Rico Piano Festival, Arizona Piano Institute, Beverly Hills Music in the Mansion Series, the Toradze Concerto Institute, Steinway Hall in NYC, in Italy, and in Japan. Cook expands the traditional piano recital format with distinctive elements of artistic fusion and recently released an interactive book titled *Picturing Rachmaninoff* featuring his performance of Rachmaninoff's 9 Etudes-Tableaux, Op. 39 illustrated with poetry and paintings.

Cook studied at DePaul University, Northwestern University, and Arizona State University where he earned his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree. He has built Oracle Piano Society into a community treasure offering a world-class concert series, chamber music festival, on-line conservatory, art gallery and a community chorale.

Aldo López-Gavilán was born in Cuba to a family of internationally acclaimed classical musicians, his father a conductor and composer, his mother a concert pianist. López-Gavilán made his professional debut at age twelve with the Matanzas Symphony Orchestra. Parallel to his classical abilities, López-Gavilán developed remarkable skills in improvisation. He was invited to perform in the world-famous Havana Jazz Festival with the legendary Chucho Valdés, who called him "simply a genius, a star."

Today "Aldito" is considered part of Cuba's jazz royalty. In addition to performing at international jazz festivals, he is also sought after by symphony orchestras around the world. In recent years Aldo has appeared as a soloist with Northwest Sinfonietta (Seattle), The Florida Orchestra, Columbus Jazz Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, Boulder Philharmonic, Colorado Springs Symphony, Shreveport Symphony, Chicago Sinfonietta and more. He was a featured performer, along with Joshua Bell, in *Seasons of Cuba*, a PBS Special from Lincoln Center in December 2016.

Aldo has previously released four albums, all successes with audiences and critics alike. His recently released fifth album—*Playgrounds*—brings together a wide range of varied and eclectic musical universes. He has already performed his recently composed piano concerto, *Emporium*, with several well known orchestras in the US (recently recorded with the Tahoe Orchestra and maestro Ken-David Masur), as well as in Cuba and Colombia, he has been commissioned to compose music for tv, films and other orchestras such as the one he recently did for Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Arturo Sandoval that had its world premiere at the Carnegie Hall.

For more about Aldo and his career, visit aldomusica.com



Neil Birnbaum

WHY CHOOSE CUBA RHYTHM AND VIEWS?

This trip is different from all the others. Our delegations uniquely blend full legal compliance with all US Government requirements with distinctive and insightful experiences in exclusive and intimate performance spaces not generally accessible to Americans. This trip includes the finest hotel and private restaurants (*paladares*), in addition to offering up close and personal experiences with Cuba's most revered musicians, dancers, visual artists, and social activists. Our group size is limited to ensure that your experience is unique and memorable.

This is the only legal trip to Cuba designed for passionate lovers of music, dance and the visual arts and Cuba has some of the best in the world. CR&V has taken hundreds of people to Cuba since 2013 and their testimonials speak for themselves.

Your host, veteran musician and symphony orchestra executive Neil Birnbaum, has more than thirty-five years of experience producing the world's finest music and artists. Since 2011, Neil has been exploring Cuba's creative arts, curating major cultural exchanges, and building cultural bridges that help support the Cuban people.

CR&V is dedicated to offering the highest attainable artistic excellence and a truly distinctive experience. Delegates will be exposed to Cuba's world-renowned jazz and nightlife along with performances of classical dance and music. We will meet with individual artists of all genres as well as representatives of private performing arts organizations to strengthen civil society in Cuba. From grand theaters to intimate salons, travelers will have access to some of Cuba's most revered musicians and artists. The authentic Cuba will always reveal itself to the insightful and inquiring mind. The result is a cultural exploration that has become the benchmark for legal travel to this remarkable and isolated nation.

neil@CubaRhythmandViews.org



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

IMMERSE yourself in intimate and private performances and experiences curated exclusively for your delegation.

STROLL the 500 year-old streets and historic plazas of Old Havana and be inspired by the resilience of the Cuban people.

DISCOVER the authentic history of US/Cuban relations and foreign policy from political experts and former diplomats.

DINE in Havana's internationally-celebrated *paladares* and taste the success of Cuba's only private sector experiment.

EMBRACE the infectious vibrancy of nightlife of Havana's clubs and cafes.

LISTEN to the Afro-Cuban beat of the Cuban culture everywhere you go.

UNDERSTAND why CR&V's arts and culture exchange programs are so critical to the future of US/Cuban political dialogue.

MINGLE with the performers, academics and artists at special post-concert receptions and private dinners.

ENJOY a walk along the historic Malecón seawall just steps away from your hotel.

The Grand Aston La Habana

Our headquarters will be Havana's newest and most stylish hotel, the Grand Aston La Habana. After a busy day in Havana, this is the place to relax, have a cold drink, check your email with available Wi-Fi, look at the sea and be inspired by Havana coming to life after dark.



Classical Music and Dance

In Cuba the classical arts are revered by every walk of life. During this trip patrons will experience performances by such renowned groups as Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Orquesta de Cámara de La Habana, Ballet Español de Cuba, Ballet Liza Alfonso, Danza Contemporánea de Cuba and much more. Events will include opportunities to attend private rehearsals as well as performances and mingle with the performers in intimate settings.

Traditional Cuban Music

Traditional music and its evolution over the centuries is at the heart of the Cuban soul and mystique. The history of Cuban music is the story of its people—from slavery, political upheaval, revolt and a joyful celebration of Cuban cultural life.



Ballet Español de Cuba



Danza Contemporánea de Cuba



Ballet Liza Alfonso



Orquesta de Cámara de La Habana



Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional



Orquesta de Cámara de La Habana

Arts Education

Cuba is committed to arts education from primary school to the university level. The flourishing music, dance and arts scene provides a solid foundation in the training students receive at the prestigious arts schools throughout the country. To see firsthand how artists and musicians are cultivated, we will visit both Conservatorio Amedeo Roldán and Ballet Liza Alfonso where you will experience Cuba's arts education system with private performances by students. In addition, you will have the opportunity to communicate with the students and their teachers in a round table discussion that will enlighten you on Cuba's robust arts education.

Cuban Jazz and Nightlife

In Havana, jazz thrives. Our patrons are not only immersed into Havana's jazz nightlife, but will be treated to private, one-on-one concerts from the best and brightest of Cuba's jazz elite, including pianist Aldo López-Gavilán. This unique exposure to one of the world's most active jazz scenes is a CR&V exclusive. You will better understand the day-to-day sacrifices as well as the financial and artistic challenges, including the difficulty of buying and maintaining instruments in Cuba.

Architecture and Historic Preservation

Some of the most exquisite historic buildings in the Caribbean are in Cuba. Havana celebrated its 500th anniversary in 2019. Despite 60 years of embargo, Cuba has managed to preserve and restore some of its most important heritage structures, neighborhoods and monuments. Using tourist dollars and financial incentives, much of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is gradually being rehabilitated to its former beauty. Our patrons will gain an insight into what it takes to gradually restore one of the New World's great cities, one building at a time.



Ballet Liza Alfonso



Out for a night on the town



Aldo López-Gavilán



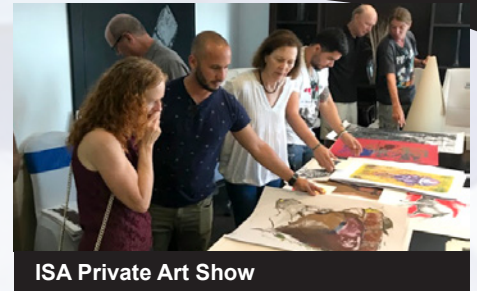
Grupo WOW



Grupo Harold López-Nussa

Visual Arts

As part of our cultural exchange, our patrons will visit notable Cuban artists' studios, galleries and homes. They will discuss their work and their artistic visions and the state of Cuba's control of artistic expression. These personal encounters will help you understand cultural life in Cuba before the Revolution as well as today. Artwork will be for sale at all studios and galleries. In addition, a CR&V exclusive private show of original art for sale by Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) professors and students is always on our itinerary.



ISA Private Art Show

Cuban Cuisine and *Paladares*

The growing movement of private restaurants, or *paladares*, in family homes is flourishing in Havana. This movement is at the vanguard of economic change and private ownership in Cuba. The best dining in Cuba is in *paladares* along the backstreets and alleyways of Old and New Havana. The restaurants are being reviewed internationally and Havanaphiles are slowly finding their way to these wonderful free enterprise culinary destinations. All of our meals other than breakfast, will be in *paladares*. And, for the meals not included in the package, you will be given the names and locations of Havana's best private restaurants, all within a ten-minute cab ride from the Grand Aston La Habana.



Additional Activities In Support of the Cuban People

Meet with career Cuban diplomat Camilo García López-Trigo for a talk about US/Cuban relations. Dr. García is a professor at University of Havana International Relations School and an expert in US political studies. You will also visit a day care center run by The Sisters of the Love of God, see a classroom in session, learn about the remarkable work the sisters do for families in need and be inspired by the humanitarian work of their order.



Camilo García López-Trigo

Don't take our word for it!

Here's what people said about our recent trip:

I cannot tell you enough how incredible the trip was. I am using the word "transformational" with sincerity. The experiences continue to flood my brain...you put together an amazing trip for us. —Susan O, Boulder, CO

From day one, we were given intimate glimpses into the hearts and souls of the dancers, singers, musicians and teachers who shared their lives with us. We have been on many "tours" to other countries but have never experienced anything as moving and beautiful as this.
—Thomas and Sally K, Tempe, AZ

Your efforts and attention to detail really made the trip a success. Planning, networking, flexibility and knowledge are your trademarks.
—Jim L, Seattle, WA

We have not stopped talking about it to everyone we have been in contact with these 2 days. This will be a beautiful memory for us for a long, long time...You two have put together such a special experience – we are proud to have been a part of it.
—Jody V, Carolina, Puerto Rico