



# TV UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

## UN IN ACTION

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Release Date: March 2017

Programme: 1539

Length: 6'00"

Languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish.

### AFRICAN RHYTHMS PERMEATE CUBA'S MUSIC

#### VIDEO

BEAUTY SHOTS OF CUBA  
MUSIC

PEOPLE IN STREET  
MAGALI ROLANDO ON-CAMERA

MAGALI TEACHING  
STUDENT PLAYING PIANO

MUSICIANS IN STREET

#### AUDIO

NATSOT – MUSIC

(IN TEXT)

*Reflecting on the legacy of slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the musical journey of the African Diaspora*

MAGALI ROLANDO: (In Spanish) F

*"It is impossible to find a Cuban who doesn't have a little bit of rhythm in their blood. // It means life to us. // It is our history." (19)*

#### NARRATION

Magali Rolando is a piano teacher who lives in Havana, the capital city of Cuba. She eagerly teaches the younger generation about the roots of Cuba's music. (13)

NAT SOT – PIANO PLAYING

Music lies at the heart and soul of every Cuban. It originated mostly from Africa by those who were brought and enslaved

centuries ago on this Caribbean Island. (13)

#### NARRATION

MAGALI PLAYING WITH BAND

Magali's ancestors originated in southern Africa which connects her to the African beat. Besides teaching, Magali plays in a musical band led by 45-year-old Ramon Garcia who creates his own music. (19)

RAMON GARCIA ON-CAMERA

RAMON GARCIA: (In Spanish) M  
*"I try to connect it with Africa. There is no way around that in my head, I compose a song without a little bit of (boom boom boom). That gets me going and gets the rhythm that comes from the inside and leads my moves."* (24)

DRUMS/DANCERS

#### NARRATION

Now songs and tunes are mixed with Spanish and pre-colonial indigenous origins as the enslaved embraced the tempo they found in Cuba when they first arrived. (11)

MATANZAS, MUSEUM

OLD PHOTOS

(Educational Video Clip from Archive.org  
02:50-02:53)

(Archived Drawings 02:53-02:58)

It is estimated that more than one million Africans were brought to the island through the port of Matanzas, some 100 kilometres from Havana, as part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, until slavery was abolished in Cuba in 1886. (20)

MERCEDES ALVAREZ ON-CAMERA  
DIRECTOR, MUSEUM OF THE  
ORICHAS OF THE YORUBIAN  
CULTURAL SOCIETY

MERCEDES ALVAREZ: (In Spanish) F  
*"They came here because the Spanish needed cheap labour and brought them here to work in the fields as slaves."* (11)

MAGALI ON-CAMERA  
PHOTOS OF WOMEN, MEN,  
IMAGES OF FAMILY

(Educational Video Clip from Archive.org  
03:05-03:10)

AFRICAN FAMILIES

(Educational Video Clip from Archive.org  
03:20-03:28)

(Educational Video Clip from Archive.org  
03:33-03:39)

(Archived Drawings 03:39-03:46)

DANCERS

PIANO

MAGALI ROLANDO: (In Spanish) F

*“They worked on sugar and coffee plantations. The worst was the separation of families. The father and the mother and the children were separated. Some of them were killed and others removed from their culture.”* (14)

NARRATION

In 2007, the United Nations designated March 25<sup>th</sup> as the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It also established the United Nations Remember Slavery Programme, which works with educators and civil society to teach future generations about the causes, consequences and lessons of this human tragedy, and the dangers of racism and prejudice. (8)

Today, people of African descent treasure the legacy of music and song brought to Cuba by their ancestors. And the younger generation is keeping that flame alive. (11)

NATSOT –STUDENTS DANCING

But that isn't the only contribution of people of African descent to the development and culture of Cuba. (7)

NARRATION

In recognition of the African heritage, Cuba participates in a global Slave Route Project initiated by UNESCO in 1994. (10)

DANCERS

OLGA RUFINS MACHIN: (In Spanish) F  
*“The castle at San Severino is part of the Slave Route project. The very same castle was constructed by slaves and that’s why we helped with its reconstruction and rebuilding.”*  
(19)

DRUMMAKER

SAN SEVERINO CASTLE

NARRATION

Situated at the docks of Matanzas, the enslaved would carve symbols on slabs of stone depicting their religious and cultural background. (10)

SAN SEVERINO/MATANZAS

OLGA RUFINS MACHIN ON-CAMERA

CULTURAL ADVISOR, UNESCO

OLGA RUFINS MACHIN: (In Spanish) F  
*“We are convinced that a lot of them were brought in with a high level of education and were disgraced by this human tragedy.”* (10)

CITY OF MATANZAS

WALL CARVINGS

OLGA RUFINS MACHIN ON-CAMERA

NARRATION

Now a cultural heritage site, San Severino castle documents the history of slavery through memorabilia dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.  
(11)

SAN SEVERINO CASTLE

UNESCO DOCUMENTS

NATSOT – CHAINS

NARRATION

By the time slavery was formally abolished, the enslaved had constructed forts and iconic buildings that still stand today attracting thousands of visitors to the island. (13)

ICONIC BUILDINGS

There are around 200 million people of African

(Archived Drawings 05:47-05:54)

IMAGES FROM BISPO STREET

DECADE LOGO (Centered)

UN FOOTAGE

UN LOGO

### MUSIC

Live Recording of Ramon Garcia 00:13–01:16 (1'02")

Live Recording of Ramon Garcia 02:47–03:45 (58")

Live Recording of Ramon Garcia 04:29–06:00 (1'30")

descent living in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent. Across the globe, Africans and the African diaspora continue to suffer inequality and disadvantage because of the legacy of slavery and colonialism. (23)

In addition to the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the United Nations has also set aside an International Decade for People of African Descent, which began in January 2015, to acknowledge their contribution to human history. The decade also recognizes injustices they endured while promoting and protecting their human rights. (21)

This report was produced by Mary Ferreira for the United Nations. (4.5)