





Compay Segundo & Rubén González.

The players and singers of the 'son de Cuba' have nurtured this very refined and deeply funky music in an atmosphere sealed off from the fall out of a hyper-organised and noisy world. In the time of about a hundred and fifty years, they have developed a beautiful ensemble concept that works like greased lightning. This album is blessed with some of the finest musicians in Cuba today - their dedication to the music and rapport with each other is unique in my experience. Working on this project was a joy and a great privilege.

This music is alive in Cuba, not some remnant in a museum that we stumbled into. I felt that I had trained all my life for this and yet making this record was not what I expected in the 1990s. Music is a treasure hunt. You dig and dig and sometimes you find something. In Cuba the music flows like a river. It takes care of you and rebuilds you from the inside out. My deepest thanks to everybody who participated in this record.

Ry Cooder

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

The Musicians

Luis Barzaga
Joachim Cooder
Ry Cooder
Julio Alberto Fernández
Ibrahim Ferrer
Carlos González
Juan de Marcos González
Rubén González
Salvador Repilado Labrada
Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea
Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
Benito Suárez Magana
Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
Eliades Ochoa
Omara Portuondo
Julienne Oviedo Sánchez
Compay Segundo
Barbarito Torres
Alberto 'Virgilio' Valdés
Lázaro Villa

The Composers

Isolina Carillo
Eusebio Delfin
Ibrahim Ferrer
Sindo Garay
Israel López
Luis Marquetti
Faustino Oramas
Rafael Ortiz
Guillermo Portabales
Francisco Repilado
Electo Rosell
Eliseo Silveira
Maria Teresa Vera



Compay Segundo's House.

Composed by
Francisco Repilado

son

Eliades Ochoa
vocal, guitar

Compay Segundo
backing vocals, congas

Ibrahim Ferrer
backing vocals

Ry Cooder
guitars

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Carlos González
bongos

Alberto 'Virgilio' Valdés
maracas

Joachim Cooder
udu drum

The slow country style *son* 'Chan Chan' is a recent composition by the 89 year old giant of Cuban music, Francisco Repilado a.k.a. Compay Segundo. Compay's career began with the first great flowering of the *son* in Santiago in the 1920s. By his early teens he was working in the tobacco fields but would head for the local bars at night to play and sing with the top musicians of the time soon joining Níco Saquito's Cuban Stars. He acquired his nick-name when he formed the legendary Duo Los Compadres in 1942; Compay is Cuban slang for Compadre (friend) and Segundo referred to his trademark, bass harmony 'second' voice. He remained as guitarist and singer with Los Compadres for fourteen years and during this period he also played clarinet with the group's main rival, Conjunto Matamoros.

The lyrics draw on Compay's own background of the east Cuban *guajiro* (peasant) and the couple in the song are themselves part of Cuban folklore, first appearing in a popular turn of the century song.

Lead vocals are by fellow Santiaguera Eliades Ochoa, widely acknowledged as the finest guitarist of his generation, but Compay's own vocals and congas can be heard in the backing track.

*De Alto Cedro voy para Marcané
Luego a Cueto voy para Mayarí.*¹

*El cariño que te tengo
Yo no lo puedo negar
Se me sale la babita
Yo no lo puedo evitar.*

*Cuando Juanica y Chan Chan
En el mar cernían arena
Como sacudía el 'jibe'
A Chan Chan le daba pena.*

*Limpia el camino de paja
Que yo me quiero sentar
En aquel tronco que veo
Y así no puedo llegar.*

*De Alto Cedro voy para Marcané
Luego a Cueto voy para Mayarí.*

*I'm going from Alto Cedro to Marcané
Then from Cueto, I'm going to Mayarí.*¹

*The love I have for you
I cannot deny
My mouth is watering
I just can't help myself.*

*When Juanika and Chan Chan
Sifted sand together on the beach
How her bottom shook and
Chan Chan was aroused!*

*Clean the dry sugar cane leaves
from the path
So I can get to that trunk
I want to sit down.*

*I'm going from Alto Cedro to Marcané
Then from Cueto, I'm going to Mayarí.*

¹ Alto Cedro, Marcané, Cueto and Mayarí, - ciudades de la región Oriental.

¹ Alto Cedro, Marcané, Cueto and Mayarí are all towns around Santiago in the East.

Composed by
Ibrahim Ferrer

Ibrahim Ferrer
vocal

Compay Segundo
guitar

Ry Cooder
guitar, mbira

Barbarito Torres
laoud

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Alberto Valdés
maracas

Joachim Cooder
dumbek

Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea,
Juan de Marcos González,

Alberto Valdés,
Luis Barzaga
backing vocals

The singer Ibrahim Ferrer was born at a social club dance in Santiago in 1927. He was the only one of his family to become a professional musician although he says "they all like to dance". He wrote 'De Camino a la Vereda' in the early 1950s around the time he was touring the east of the island aboard a carnival float, as the specialist improvising singer with Pacho Alonso's group. After years of singing with Benny Moré, the Chepín-Chovén Orchestra and Los Bocucos amongst others, his pure soft voice had grown less fashionable in recent times. Called in to the studio from his daily walk through the streets of Havana on the day of recording, this was his first session for a number of years.

Ibrahim lives in old Havana in a run down apartment building. He is a shy and unassuming man with a strong faith. His tiny living room is dominated by an alter to Saint Lazarus (Babalé-Ayé in the Santería religion) and this song has religious overtones not to stray from the path.



Ibrahim Ferrer.

De Camino a La Vereda

*¡Oígame compay! No deje el camino por
coger la vereda.*

*Usted por enamorado
Tan viejo y con poco brillo
Usted por enamorado
Tan viejo y con poco brillo
El pollo que tiene al lado
Le ha hecho perder el trillo*

*¡Oígame compay! No deje el camino por
coger la vereda.*

*Ay, pero yo como soy tan sencillo
Pongo en claro esta trovada
Yo como soy tan sencillo
Pongo en claro esta trovada
Compay, yo no dejo el trillo
Para meterme en cañada.*

*¡Oígame compay! No deje el camino por
coger la vereda.*

*Ay, pero estabamo' comentando
Por qué ha abandonado a Andrea
Estabamo' comentando
Por qué ha abandonado a Andrea
Compadre uste' 'ta cambiando
De camino por vereda.*

*¡Oígame compay! No deje el camino por
coger la vereda.*

Listen Friend,
don't stray from the path.

Just because you're in love
You, so old and jaded
Just because you're in love
You, so old and faded
You have become all flustered
Because of that lady by your side.

Listen friend,
don't stray from the path.

Oh, but I want to explain simply
The meaning of this song
Oh, but I want to explain simply
The meaning of this song.
Friend, I'm not straying from the path
Only to roam the dry riverbed.

Listen Friend,
don't stray from the path.

Oh, but we were just saying
That you had left Andrea
Oh, but we were just saying
That you had left Andrea.
Brother, you are wandering
From the path.

Listen Friend,
don't stray from the path.

*Pero mire compadrito, uste' ha 'dejao' a la
pobre Geraldina para meterse con Dorotea.
No hables de tu marido mujer. Mujer de
malos sentimientos,
Todo se te ha vuelto un cuento
Porque no ha llegado la hora fatal.*¹

*¡Oígame compay! No deje el camino por
coger la vereda.*

*Ay ay ay ay, canta y no llore' Eliade'
Porque cantando se alegran, cielito mío
los corazones.*²

*No hables de tu marido mujer. Mujer de
malos sentimientos,
Todo se te ha vuelto un cuento.
Porque no ha llegado la hora fatal.*

*Ay, húyanle, húyanle, húyanle al mayoral.*³

*Pero ese señor está en el paso
Y no me deja pasar.*⁴

*A la man... a la man... a la mancunchévere,
camina como chévere ha matao su
madre, mamá.*⁵

¹ This verse is a quote from a popular 19th century song from Oriente in Cuba.

² Quote from the old Mexican song 'Cielito Lindo'.

³ An allusion to the overseers on the plantations who would rob workers of part of their daily sugar cane takings.

But look my friend, you've left poor Geraldina
for a bit of fun with Dorotea.
Don't talk about your husband you
gabbling woman,
Everything is like a fairy-tale to you
Because your time of reckoning is yet to come.¹

Oh, listen friend,
don't stray from the path.

Ay, ay, ay, ay. Sing, don't cry Eliade'
Because the heart is cheered through song
my dear.²

Don't talk about your husband you
gabbling woman,
Everything is like a fairy-tale to you.
Because your time of reckoning is yet to come.

Run, run, run from the overseer.³

But that gentleman is in my way
And he won't let me pass.⁴

To the proud, to the proud, to the really proud man,
He's walking proud, he has killed his
mother, mama.⁵

⁴ A saying from the 1895 war with the Spanish.
People would say 'be careful, there's the crocodile
(enemy), you won't be able to get past'.

⁵ A Cuban saying meaning that your fine appearance is
all a facade.

Composed by
Sergio Siaba

Eliades Ochoa
lead vocal, guitar

Ibrahim Ferrer
lead vocal

Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea
lead vocal

Ry Cooder
guitar

Barbarito Torres
laoud

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Orlando 'Cachaito' López
bass

Luis Barzaga
chorus vocals

Alberto Valdés
maracas, chorus vocals

Carlos González
bongos, cowbell

Joachim Cooder
dumbek, conga

Julienne Oviedo Sánchez
timbales

Juan de Marcos González
conductor

El Cuarto de Tula has long been a favourite with Eliades Ochoa's group Cuarteto Patria. This extended *descarga* (Cuban jam style) features the great *soneros* Ibrahim Ferrer and Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea joining Eliades in improvising lyrics laced with sexual innuendo in the Santiago tradition.

The extraordinary solo on the laoud (a small, twelve string instrument similar to a lute) is by Barbarito Torres, the finest player in Havana. The timbales are played by the 13 year old phenomenon, Julienne Oviedo Sánchez, already a veteran of some of Cuba's most celebrated modern big bands.

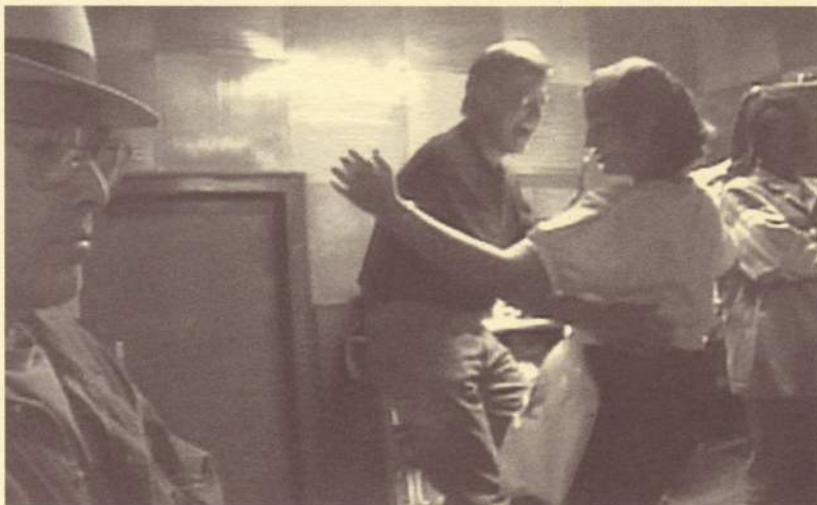


Alberto 'Virgilio' Valdés, Ibrahim Ferrer, Lázaro Villa, Eliades Ochoa & Ry Cooder.

El Cuarto de Tula

*En el barrio La Cachimba¹ se ha formado
la corredera.
Allá fueron los bomberos con sus campanas,
sus sirenas.
Allá fueron los bomberos con sus campanas,
sus sirenas.
Ay mama, ¡qué pasó... Ay mama, qué pasó?*

There's a real commotion going on
in Cachimba.¹
The firemen have arrived with bells ringing and
sirens blaring.
The firemen have arrived with bells ringing and
sirens blaring.
Oh mama, what happened? Oh mama, what happened?



Egrem Studios.

*El cuarto de Tula, le cogió candela
Se quedó dormida y no apagó la vela.*

*¡Que llamen a Ibrahim Ferrer, que busquen
los bomberos!
Que yo creo que Tula lo que quiere es que
le apaguen el fuego.*

*Ay, por ahí viene Eliades, en tremenda corredera
Viene a observar el cuarto de Tula que ha
cogido candela.*

*Carlo' y Marco' están mirando este fuego
Si ahora no se apaga, se apaga luego.*

*Puntillita ve y busca a Marco', pa' que busque
al Sierra Maestra.²
Que vengan para acá rapido que La Tula,
mira cogió candela.*

*Ey Marcos, coge pronto el cubito y no te
quedé allá fuera.*

*Llévalo de agua y ven a apagar el cuarto
de Tula que ha cogido candela.
Tula está encendida llama; a los bomberos
Tu eres candela; afina los cueros!*

*(dicho)
Candela, muchacho
Se volvió loco, Barbarito, ¡Ay qué interesante!*

¹ La Cachimba - Barrio Santiaguero.

² Se refiere al grupo de son Sierra Maestra, cuyo director Marcos González dirige esta canción.

*It's Tula's bedroom, it's gone up in flames
She fell asleep and didn't blow out the candle.*

*Call Ibrahim Ferrer, call the
fire-brigade!
I think Tula wants them to put
out her fire.*

*Oh, here comes Eliades amid the commotion
He's come to see Tula's bedroom
in flames.*

*Carlo' and Marco' are watching the fire,
If it isn't put out now, it will go out later.*

*Puntillita go and get Marco' so he can
call Sierra Maestra.²
Tell them to come quickly, look Tula's
on fire.*

*Hey, Marco'! Quick get a bucket, don't hang
around out there.*

*Fill it with water, come and put out the fire
in Tula's bedroom.
Tula is on fire, call the fire-brigade
You're hot! Tune the drum-skins!*

*(spoken)
Fire, my friend
Mr Crazy Barbarito! How interesting!*

¹ Cachimba - a suburb of Santiago de Cuba.

² Sierra Maestra - the singer refers to the son group, Sierra Maestra, whose leader, Marcos González is conducting this piece.

Composed by
Rubén González

danzón

Rubén González
piano

Ry Cooder
guitars

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Ibrahim Ferrer
conga

Joachim Cooder
udu drum

Alberto Valdés
maracas

Lázaro Villa
güiro

The 77 year old pianist Rubén González is regarded by his fellow musicians as one of Cuba's national treasures. He passed up the chance of a career as a doctor to be a musician and joined the *conjunto* (dance ensemble) of the legendary blind *tres* player Arsenio Rodríguez in the early 1940s. It was a time when the African-influenced *mambo* was taking hold and jazz harmonies were being introduced into Cuban music. Rubén is the last survivor of a trio of pianists, together with 'Lilí' Martínez and Peruchín, who were at the heart of those developments and created the modern Cuban piano sound. "Everything you hear now in Cuban music" he says, "comes out of that brilliant period." This track is typical of the urban piano style he developed in those years with an introduction in *danzón* rhythm followed by a *mambo* section with solos from piano, trumpet and bass.

In the mid 1950s he began a thirty year association with Enrique Jorrín, the creator of the *cha-cha-cha* but in recent years Rubén had virtually given up playing due to arthritis and no longer has a piano at home. He was the first at the studio every morning waiting for the doors to be unlocked and once inside he would rush to the piano and play. His excitement was visible as his beautiful touch returned. In the two days that followed the recording of this album Rubén recorded his own debut album for World Circuit.



Ibrahim Ferrer & Rubén González.

Composed by

Isolina Carillo

bolero**Ibrahim Ferrer***vocal***Ry Cooder***guitar***Rubén González***piano***Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal***trumpet***Orlando 'Cachaito' López***bass***Lázaro Villa***congas***Joachim Cooder***udu drum***Alberto Valdés***maracas*

This classic *bolero* is the pianist and arranger Isolina Carillo's best known composition. Born in 1907 she wrote the song in the 1930s and it has since become an essential part of every *bolero* singer's repertoire.

The great Cuban singer and bandleader, Antonio Machín scored a huge success with the song in Spain in the 1940s. Machín died in Seville in 1995 and Compay Segundo played the song at his funeral before sprinkling rum on his resting place as a tribute. This recording features an intimate performance from Ibrahim Ferrer who learnt the piece when he was playing with the great Benny Moré, at the Club Alivar in the 1950s.

*Dos gardenias para ti
Con ellas quiero decir:
Te quiero, te adoro, mi vida
Ponle toda tu atención
Porque son tu corazón y el mío.*

*Dos gardenias para ti
Que tendrán todo el calor de un beso
De esos besos que te di
Y que jamás encontrarás
En el calor de otro querer.*

*A tu lado vivirán y se hablarán
Como cuando estás conmigo
Y hasta creerás que te dirán:
Te quiero.
Pero si un atardecer
Las gardenias de mi amor se mueren
Es porque han adivinado
Que tu amor me ha traicionado
Porque existe otro querer.*

*Two Gardenias for you
With these I mean to say:
I love, I adore you, my life
Look after them because
They are your heart and mine.*

*Two Gardenias for you
With all the warmth of a kiss
Like those I gave to you
Kisses that you will never know
In the embrace of another.*

*They will live beside you
And talk to you as I do
And you will even believe, that you hear
them say: 'I love you'.
But if one late evening
The Gardenias should die
It's because they know
That you have betrayed me
And that you love another.*

Composed by
Eusebio Delfín

bolero

Compay Segundo
vocal, guitar

Ry Cooder
guitar

Rubén González
piano

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Alberto Valdés
maracas

Joachim Cooder
dumbek

Ibrahim Ferrer
clave

This song with its beautiful lyrics and charming melody was written in the 1920s by Eusebio Delfín. Born in the last century, he died in Havana in 1965 and was a good friend of Compay Segundo, who shares his baritone voice. Delfín made his first recordings in 1922, one of the first Cubans to do so, and was also a guitar accompanist to singers such as Rita Montaner and Luis María Morales.

Moving away from the then typical strumming and introducing freer harmonic and rhythmic changes, Delfín caused a sensation in his time. "I had a happy idea which completely changed the style that was employed to accompany the *bolero*," he later recalled. The delightful guitar duet with Ry Cooder here features Compay Segundo on the *armónico*, a small guitar with seven metal strings with the third double-strung, which he invented in the 1920s to combine the characteristics of the *tres* and guitar.

*En el tronco de un árbol una niña
Grabó su nombre henchida de placer
Y el árbol conmovido allá en su seno
A la niña una flor dejó caer.*

*Yo soy el árbol conmovido y triste
Tu eres la niña que mi tronco hirió
Yo guardo siempre tu querido nombre
¿y tú, qué has hecho de mi pobre flor?*

On the trunk of a tree, a young girl
Filled with joy, carved out her name
The tree, touched to the core
Let a flower drop down to the girl.

I am the tree, sad and moved
You are the girl who wounded my bark
I will always treasure your beloved name
And you, what have you done with my poor flower?



Rubén González, Compay Segundo & Ry Cooder.

Composed by
María Teresa Vera

bolero

Omara Portuondo
vocal

Compay Segundo
vocal, guitar

Ry Cooder
guitar

Barbarito Torres
laoud

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Alberto Valdés
maracas

Joachim Cooder
dumbek

The only woman on the album, Omara Portuondo has sung with many of Havana's groups including the all-women bands Orquesta Anacaona and Aida Diestro, but she is best known as a solo *bolero* and *feeling* singer. A rare calm descended on the studio as she dictated tempo and arrangement and in just two hours 'Veinte Años' was recorded. The song was written by María Teresa Vera, one of the great figures of music who died in 1964 and here Omara perfectly captures her spirit.



Omara Portuondo.

*¿Qué te importe que te amé
Si tú no me quieres ya?
El amor que ya ha pasado
No se debe recordar.*

*Fuí la ilusión de tu vida
Un día lejano ya
Hoy represento al pasado
No me puedo conformar
Hoy represento al pasado
No me puedo conformar.*

*Si las cosas que uno quiere
Se pudieran alcanzar
Tu me quisieras lo mismo
Que veinte años atrás.*

*Con qué tristeza miramos
un amor que se nos va - es un pedazo del
alma que se arranca sin piedad.*

What does my love mean to you
If you no longer love me?
We should not dwell
On love that is past.

I was your life's desire
One day long ago
Now I'm history
I can't face the change
Now I'm history
I can't face the change.

If only we could make
Our dreams come true
If only you would love me
As you did twenty years ago.

How mournfully we watch our
love ebb away - heartlessly a part of the
soul is torn away.

Overleaf: Joachim Cooder, Ry Cooder, Manuel
'Puntillita' Licea, Orlando 'Cachaíto' López, Compay
Segundo, Eliades Ochoa, Marcos González, Remberto
Becquer, Ibrahim Ferrer, Alberto 'Virgilio' Valdés & Roberto.







Lázaro Villa, Eliades Ochoa & Ry Cooder.

Composed by
Guillermo Portabales

guajira

Eliades Ochoa
vocal, guitar

Ry Cooder
oud, bolon, mbira, floor
slide, percussion

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Alberto Valdés
maracas

Juan de Marcos González
güiro, backing vocals

Joachim Cooder
udu drum

Ibrahim Ferrer
backing vocals

This composition by Guillermo Portabales is a typical *guajira* (country lament) from the east of Cuba, a style which is very popular in West Africa. Sometimes known as the Cuban 'blues' it is, in fact, derived from the Spanish tradition. Eliades Ochoa is the song's perfect interpreter. A close associate of the *guajira* maestro Nico Saquito, who was Portabales' mentor, Eliades is deeply immersed in tradition and wears his cowboy hat to identify himself as a country man. Born in Santiago into a whole family of guitarists and singers, he first picked up the instrument at the age of six. As a youth he was a familiar sight playing guitar in the brothels and bars around Santiago and by the early 1970s he was a regular at Santiago's celebrated music club the 'Casa de la Trova'. In 1978 he took over the renowned Cuarteto Patria, a group which has existed in some shape or form since 1940. Like Compay Segundo he plays a self-made hybrid of guitar and *tres*, doubling the D and G strings of a standard six string guitar.

El Carretero

*Por el camino del sitio mío
Un carretero alegre pasó
Con sus canciones que es muy sentida
Y muy guajira alegre cantó:*

*Me voy al transbordador
A descargar la carreta
Me voy al transbordador
A descargar la carreta
Para cumplir con la meta
De mi penosa labor.*

A caballo vamo' pa'l monte.

*Yo trabajo sin reposo
Para poderme casar
Yo trabajo sin reposo
Para poderme casar
Y si lo llevo a lograr
Seré un guajiro dichoso.*

A caballo vamo' pa'l monte.

*Yo soy guajiro y carretero
Y en el campo vivo bien
Porque el campo es el edén
Más lindo del mundo entero
Chapea el monte, cultiva el llano
Recoge el fruto de tu sudor,*

Along the track by my house
A cart-driver passed
With his sentimental songs
The Guajiro sang:

I'm going to the crossing
To unburden my load
I'm going to the crossing
To unburden my load
There I'll reach the end
Of my crushing labour.

Ride on up the mountain.

I work without rest
So I can marry
I work without rest
So I can marry
And if I can achieve that
I'll be a happy man.

Ride on up the mountain.

I am a Guajiro and a cart driver
I live well off the land
Because the countryside is paradise
The most beautiful place on earth
Work the mountain, cultivate the plain
Reap the fruits of your labour.



Joachim Goeder.

Composed by
Faustino Oramas

son/tumbao

Ibrahim Ferrer
vocal

Eliades Ochoa
vocal, guitar

Ry Cooder
*acoustic &
electric slide guitar*

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Oriando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Carlos González
bongos, cowbell

Joachim Cooder
dumbek

Alberto Valdés
maracas, chorus vocal

Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea

Luis Barzaga
chorus vocals

Juan de Marcos González
chorus vocals, conductor

This composition by the 85 year old Faustino Oramas is the perfect vehicle for Ibrahim Ferrer's extended vocal improvisation. It features a heavy two chord *tumbao* (rhythmic riff), developed at the turn of the century in Oriente de Cuba by Victoria de las Tunas of the Familia Valera Miranda. Oramas who now lives in Spain, was a popular *tres* player and singer in eastern Cuba and this song is a typical example of the 'guayabero' or 'passion fruit' style of singing which talks of everyday life, with lyrics full of sexual double meanings.

*Ay candela, candela, candela me quemo aé.
Ay candela, candela, candela me quemo aé.*

*Puso un baile un jutía, para una gran diversión.
De timbalero un ratón, que alegraba el
campo un día.
Un gato también venía, elegante y placentero,
'Buenas noches, compañero'
siempre dijo así el timbal
'Para alguien aquí poder tocar,
para descansar un poco'.
Salió el ratón medio loco,
'también voy a descansar'.
Y el gato en su buen bailar, bailaba un
danzón liviano.
El ratón se subió al guano, y dice
bien placentero:
¡Y ahora si quieren bailar, búsquense
otro timbalero!*

Ay candela, candela, candela me quemó aé.

*Oye, Faustino Orama' y sus compañeros,
necesito que me apaguen el fuego.
Margarita llama pronto a los bomberos para
que vengán a apagar el fuego.
Oye, si estás perdida llama a los siete ceros,
y así vendrán más pronto los bomberos.
Ay candela, candela, candela me quemo aé,
mama ¡Aaaay!*

Oh fire, fire, fire, I'm burning!
Oh fire, fire, fire, I'm burning!

A rodent put on a dance for some great amusement.
He chose a mouse as his drummer, to play for the
whole day.
An elegant and amiable cat came along too,
'Good evening my friend'
he said to the drummer
'I can play too,
and you can take a rest'.
The mouse left the room half-crazy,
'now I'll have to go and rest!'
And the cat played a lighthearted danzón in his
delightful way.
The mouse got up on the palm-tree roof and
announced politely:
'And now if you want to dance, find yourself
another drummer!'

Oh fire, fire, fire, I'm burning!

Listen, Faustino Orama' and friends,
I need someone to put out the flames.
Margarita call the fire-men quickly, to put out
the flames.
Listen, if you are lost, dial seven zeros,
that way the fire-brigade might turn up.
Oh fire, fire, fire, I burnt myself,
mama, ay!

Tilán tilán
 Didilán didilán
 Margarita que me quemo
 Yo quiero seguir gozando
 La candela me está llevando
 Me gusta seguir guarachando
 Esta tarde venimo' acabando
 Como quiera venimo' tocando
 La mujer cuando se agacha
 Se le abre el entendimiento
 La mujer cuando se agacha
 Se le abre el entendimiento
 Y el hombre cuando lo mira
 Se le para el pensamiento
 De tí me gusta una cosa
 Sin que me cueste trabajo
 De tí me gusta una cosa
 Sin que me cueste trabajo
 De la barriga pa'rriba, de la cintura pa'bajo
 Mira se quema, se quema, mama
 Mira se quema, se quema, oye
 Mira mama que me quemo
 Mira llama pronto a los bomberos, para que
 vengan a apagar el fuego
 Mira que el fuego me está quemando
 Y yo quiero seguir guarachando
 Mira se quema Báiamo, ¹ mira que Songo
 está que arde
 Mira se quema La Maya, ¹ mira ese pito
 que suena.

Tilán tilán
 Didilán didilán
 Margarita I'm burning
 I like it, I can't stop
 The fire is taking me with it
 I don't want to stop
 This afternoon it'll be time to end
 We'll carry on playing as we choose
 When a woman bends over
 She opens her mind
 When a woman bends over
 She opens her mind
 When a man looks at her
 His brain just stops
 I like one thing about you
 It's not hard to see
 I like one thing about you
 It's not hard to see
 From the belly down, from the waist up
 Look he's burning, burning, mama
 Look he's burning, burning, mama
 Look mama, I'm burning
 Look call the fire-brigade, tell them to
 put out the fire
 Look, I'm burning up
 But I don't want to stop
 Look Báiamo ¹ is burning, look Songo is
 a blaze
 Look La Maya ¹ is burning, listen to the
 whistle blowing.



Ibrahim Ferrer, Eliades Ochoa, Salvador Repilado, Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea & Compay Segundo.

Malaguën ¹ está que corta mama
 Santiago de Cuba está que te mete en llamas
 Se quema, se quema, se quema, oye, mira
 me quemo, me quemo.
 Mira que me quemo, oye, yo quiero
 seguir guarachando.
 Mira mama que yo vengo quemando.
 Faustino Orama' tú está acabando
 Mira se quema, se quema
 Pero mira mi mami se quema
 Oye se quema, se quema.

Malaguën ¹ is in trouble mama
 Santiago de Cuba can set you alight
 He's burning, burning, burning, listen,
 look, I'm burning, I'm burning.
 Look I'm burning
 I can't stop myself.
 Look mama I'm burning up.
 Faustino Orama' you are coming to a close
 Look he's burning, he's burning
 But look, mama, he's burning
 Listen, he's burning, he's burning.

¹ Báýamo, La Maya and Malaguën - pueblos del Oriente de Cuba.

¹ Báýamo, La Maya and Malaguën - Towns in the East of Cuba.



Benito Suárez, Ibrahim Ferrer, Salvador Ropilado, Julio Alberto Fernández & Compay Segundo.

Composed by
Rafael Ortiz

influencia americana/gospel/blues

Compay Segundo
vocals, guitar

Julio Alberto Fernández
vocals, maracas

Ry Cooder
slide guitar

Benito Suárez Magana
guitar

Salvador Repilado Labrada
bass

Ibrahim Ferrer
bongos

Joachim Cooder
dumbek

The 88 year old composer and guitarist Rafael Ortiz, known as Mañungo (although nobody can remember why) was for many years a member of the celebrated Septeto Nacional de Ignacio Piñeiro. Written in the 1930s this song was, like the two that follow, influenced by black American styles, including gospel and jazz, which were popular in Havana at the time. Augmented by Ry and Joachim Cooder, this performance features Compay Segundo y sus Muchachos, the group Compay has led with varying line-ups for the past 40 years. This formation has been together since 1992.

*Mueren ya las ilusiones del ayer
Que sácié con lujurioso amor
Y muere también con sus promesas crueles
La inspiración que un día le brindé.*

*Con candor el alma entera yo le dí
Pensando nuestro idilio consagrar
Sin pensar que ella lo que buscaba en mí
Era el amor de loca juventud.*

Lost are the dreams of my deluded youth
Dreams I fulfilled with overwhelming passion
The hope of love she inspired is dying
It was only her cruel promises.

Innocently I gave away my soul
Believing love's idyll was blessed
When all she was seeking
Was the insane love of youth.

Composed by
Eliseo Silveira

influencia americana/jazz

Compay Segundo
vocal, guitar.

Ry Cooder
guitars

Eliades Ochoa
guitar

Barbarito Torres
laoud

Rubén González
piano

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal
trumpet

Orlando 'Cachaito' López
bass

Joachim Cooder
drums, dumbek

The prolific composer and *tres* player Eliseo Silveira played a major part in developing the *son* form in the 1930s. A member of various Havana sextets including El Bolero he was a keen student of popular American music by way of cinema and radio and he would incorporate the harmonic and rhythmic ideas he liked into his compositions.

Over the years Compay has made this song his own. It has a ragtime / early jazz feel which is beautifully captured by 'Guajiro' Mirabal's trumpet and Joachim Cooder's drums. Compay was particularly delighted by Ry Cooder's 'cowboy' guitar solo which he thought would have won Silveira's enthusiastic approval.

*'Orgullecida estoy de ser divina
Y de tener tan linda perfección
Tal vez será que soy alabastrina
Serán los filtros reinos del amor'.*

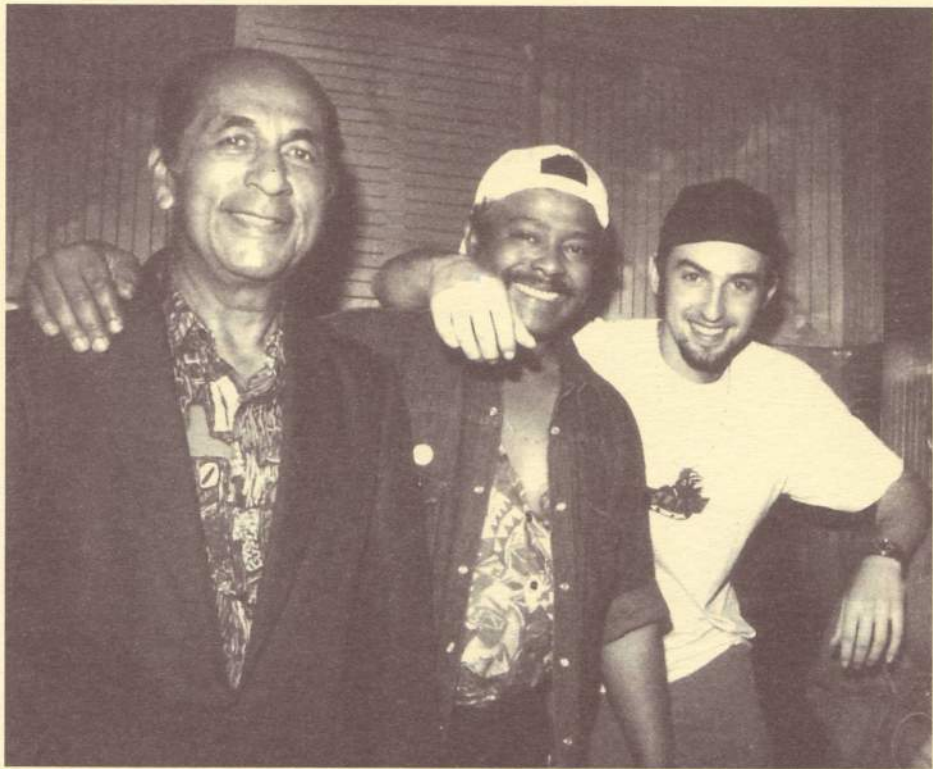
*Luego vendrán los celos del cariño
De aquel volcán de llama tentadora
Y tú podrás lograr que yo te quiera
Porque tú has sido mi única ilusión.*

*'I am proud to be divine
Proud of such beautiful perfection
Perhaps I'm made of marble
And my love is the purest love of all'.*

*But soon from that volcano of tempting fire
Love's jealousies will ignite
And you will conquer my heart
Because you were always my life's desire.*



Compay Segundo.



Orlando 'Cachaíto' López, Carlos González, Joachim Cooder.

Composed by
Electo Rosell 'Chepín'

ballad

Ibrahim Ferrer
vocals

Rubén González
piano

Ry Cooder
guitar

Oriando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Lázaro Villa
conga

Joachim Cooder
udu drum

Alberto Valdés
maracas

This romantic ballad, inspired by Hollywood musicals, was written by Electo Rosell, better known as 'Chepín' who, alongside Bernardo Chovén led the popular Chapín-Chovén dance orchestra for a quarter of a century from 1932. Ibrahim Ferrer, once a member of that orchestra is featured in the urban nightclub style with interesting piano accompaniment from Rubén González.

*Hay un suave murmullo
En el silencio de una noche azul
Son dos enamorados
Que, encantados, gozan del amor.*

*Y ríe la vida y qué dice así: Ahh, ahh...
Y ríe la luna y qué dice así: Ummm, ummm...*

*There is a soft whisper
In the silence of one blue night
Of two lovers
Bewitched by their love.*

*And life laughs and says: Ahh, ahh...
And the moon laughs and says: Umm, mm...*

Composed by
Israel López

danzón

Rubén González
piano.

Ry Cooder
guitars

Orlando 'Cachaíto' López
bass

Alberto Valdés
maracas

Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea
congas

Lázaro Villa
güiro

Joachim Cooder
udu drum

Ibrahim Ferrer
clave

The 'Buena Vista' was an old members-only social club situated in the hills in east Havana. This instrumental was written by Israel López and was suggested for these sessions by his nephew, Orlando 'Cachaíto' López who plays bass throughout this album.

Cachaíto comes from a whole family of musicians which includes forty bass players. His father Orestes and uncle Israel 'Cachao', both prolific composers learnt to play bass from their father Pedro. In the late 1930s the brothers experimented with an African influenced syncopation of the *danzón* to lay the foundations of the *mambo* rhythm which soon came to the forefront of popular Cuban music. In the 1950s Israel played a seminal role in the creation of the *descarga* which fused jazz style improvisation with Afro-Cuban rhythms. This recording which opens in *danzón* rhythm and moves into a *mambo* section features an extended improvisation from Rubén González on piano.



Orlando 'Cachaíto' López.



Ry Cooder & Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea.

Composed by

Sindo Garay

*criolla***Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea***vocal***Compay Segundo***guitar, vocal***Ibrahim Ferrer***vocal***Rubén González***piano***Orlando 'Cachaíto' López***bass*

La Bayamesa, was written by the great bohemian troubadour Sindo Garay in 1869. Composed in the *criolla* rhythm, a precursor of *son*, it is a patriotic hymn to the Republic. The lyrics tell the story of a woman from Báýamo, the first town to be liberated in the revolutionary war of 1868, who burns her house rather than let it fall into the hands of the Spanish.

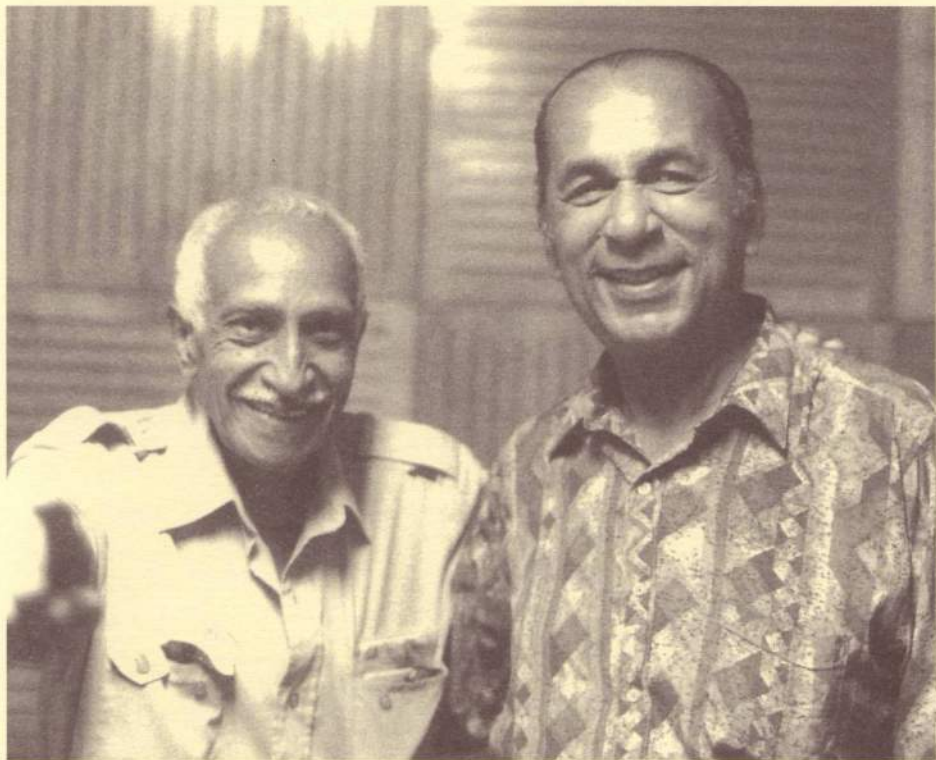
This version features a new ending, arranged by Compay Segundo who has clear memories of a time when as a boy of seven, Garay would visit his family home. The lead vocals here are by the 70 year old Manuel 'Puntillita' Licea , one of the great *soneros* who made his name in the 40s and 50s singing with the big Havana orchestras.

*En su alma La Bayamesa
Tristes recuerdos de tradiciones
Cuando contempla sus verdes llanos
Lágrimas vierte por sus pasiones, ay
Ella es sencilla le brinda al hombre
Virtudes todas y el corazón.*

*Pero se siente de la patria el grito
Pero se siente de la patria el grito
Todo lo deja todo lo quema
Ese es su lema, su religión.*

In her soul, the Bayamo woman carries
Sad memories of the past
Memories of green pastures
Make her passionate tears overflow
She is so true, she brings only goodness
And love to mankind.

But she can hear her homeland crying out
But she can hear her homeland crying out
She has left everything, she has burnt everything
It is her life, her religion.



Rubén González & Orlando 'Cachaíto' López.

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

A World Circuit Production

Produced by Ry Cooder

Executive Producer

Nick Gold

Recorded and Mixed by

Jerry Boys

A & R Consultant

Juan de Marcos González

Mastered by

Bernie Grundman

Recorded at

Egrem Studios, Havana, Cuba, March 1996

Additional recording

Larry Hirsch at Ocean Way Studios, Los Angeles

Mixed at

**Livingston Studios, London
& The Bakery, Los Angeles**

Photography by

Susan Titelman

Designed by

The Team

Song Transcriptions by

Juan de Marcos González & María Rodríguez

Translations by

Jenny Adlington & Francesca Clarke

Sleeve Notes by

Nick Gold & Nigel Williamson

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Candice Hanson, Nicky O'Donnell &
Susan Titelman**



Egeem Studios, photograph by Joachim Coedre.

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- 1 **Chan Chan**
 - 2 **De Camino a La Vereda**
 - 3 **El Cuarto de Tula**
 - 4 **Pueblo Nuevo**
 - 5 **Dos Gardenias**
 - 6 **¿Y Tú Qué Has Hecho?**
 - 7 **Veinte Años**

- 8 **El Carretero**
- 9 **Candela**
- 10 **Amor de Loca Juventud**
- 11 **Orgullecida**
- 12 **Murmullo**
- 13 **Buena Vista Social Club**
- 14 **La Bayamesa**

Produced by **Ry Cooder**