

Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica Newsletter



Esquina del Presidente



By: Alexander Mires

¡Bienvenidos!

Welcome to our first edition of the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica Newsletter of this school year.
Our theme for this newsletter is Cuba!

Nestled in the Caribbean Sea, Cuba is an island nation boasting a rich history and culture influenced by many diverse backgrounds. From delectable dishes like Ropa Vieja to music-infused streets in the Old Town, Cuba is definitely a sight to behold, and we hope that you can learn even more about this tropical paradise in this edition.

¡Nos vemos!

Club de Español



By: Ethan Gonzalez

¡ Hola!

Last week, our members of the Spanish Club held a table at club rush to connect with new members to celebrate Spanish culture through the forms of sports, food, and customs. Throughout the year, our Club hosts different events and activities such as soccer games, card games, Lotería, and so much more. Our Club Officers are hard at work planning some exciting things for this school year to build upon the history and importance of the Language for all students to partake in. Activities like papel picado during October, Fútbol, and maybe even a piñata. Our Club is dedicated to spreading cultural awareness and reflecting on differences in ways of life. We will be holding meetings throughout the year to further enrich our student body in the knowledge of the Spanish language and its origins; our goal is to bring life to the past and relight the footsteps of our ancestors to embrace the roots of the Spanish Language and to use that language to further build connections and relations with others. We thank everyone who showed up to our booth at Club Rush and our participants from previous years.

Food

By: Angel Garibay



Ropa Vieja

Ropa Vieja, one of Cuba's most beloved dishes, is a flavorful stew made with tender, shredded beef simmered in a rich tomato sauce with peppers, onions, and spices. Its name, meaning "old clothes," comes from the meat's shredded texture, but the taste is anything but ordinary—warm, hearty, and full of tradition. A single bite brings the vibrant spirit of Cuban culture straight to your plate.



Pastelito

Pastelito is a sweet and flaky treat that's loved for its buttery layers and delicious fillings. These pastries are usually made with puff pastry dough and filled with guava, cream cheese, or both — creating the perfect balance of fruity sweetness and creamy richness. When baked, the outside becomes golden and crisp, while the inside stays soft and flavorful. Often enjoyed with a cup of Cuban coffee, pastelitos are a staple in Cuban bakeries and a comforting reminder of the island's warm, vibrant culture.

Vacation Spot



La Playa de Varadero, Cuba

By: Xavier Mascaro

One of the best beaches to visit if you go to Cuba is Varadero Beach, located on the northern shore of Cuba, roughly 100 miles from Key West, Florida. Varadero is considered one of the top 10 most beautiful beaches in the world! This beach is highlighted by its white sand beaches, crystal-clear, calm waters, and sunny weather. Some activities to do are swimming, sunbathing, and fishing, and there are also many places to visit. On the tip of the peninsula, you can visit the Reserva Ecológica Varahicacos, a great hiking spot with hikes in the forest to a pre-Columbian burial cave. There are also many resorts that provide activities such as snorkeling, paddleboarding, kayaking, and fishing.



La Habana, Cuba

Another one of the best places to visit in Cuba is its capital, main port, and commercial center, Havana. Havana was founded by the Spanish in the 16th century. It was a strategic port for the Spanish conquest of the Americas, as well as a place for their ships to stop before returning to Spain. The three sections of the city are divided into Old Havana, the Vedado district, and the new suburban areas. Old Havana is a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its distinct culture and Spanish fortifications. Additionally, there was a revolution in 1959 in Havana, which consisted of revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro rebelling against U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Finally, the vibrant culture of Havana is highlighted by its brightly colored streets (El Malecón), rides in vintage cars, and visiting the Morro Castle (Spanish fortification).

Fun Facts!

By: Andre Lopez

- Cuba is famous for its classic old cars, especially colorful 1950s American models that are still driven today!



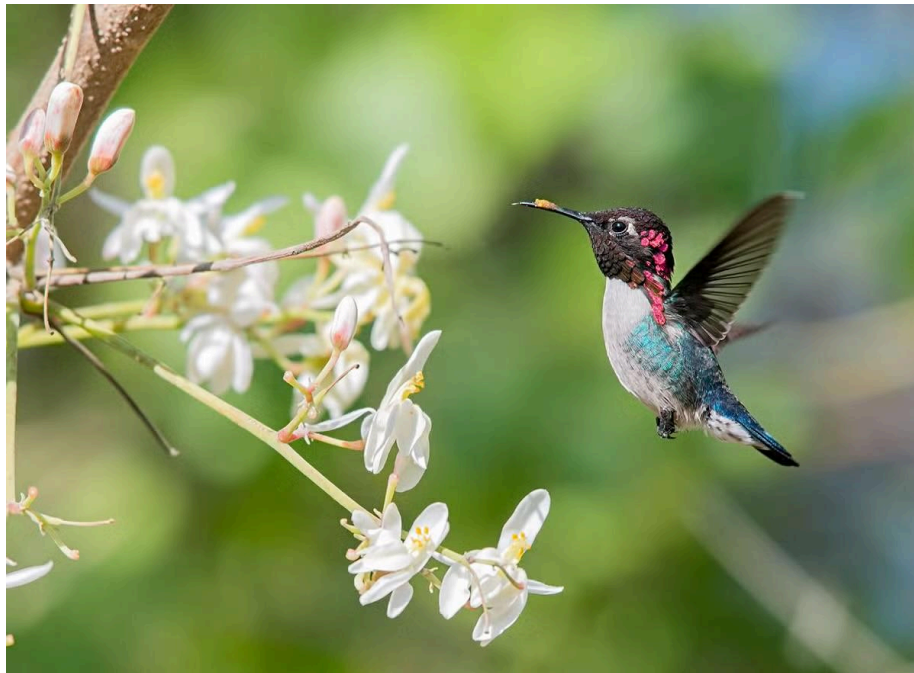
- The “coconut monkey” is a popular Cuban souvenir, made from coconuts carved into funny monkey shapes.



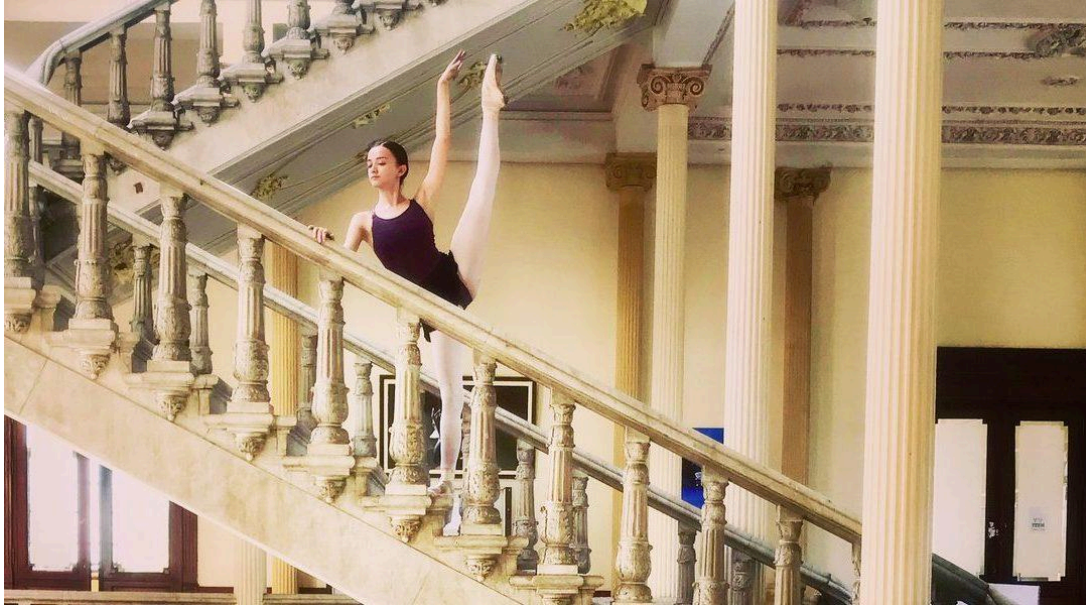
- Salsa music has many origins that come from Cuba, blending African and Spanish rhythms into one of the world's most popular dance styles!



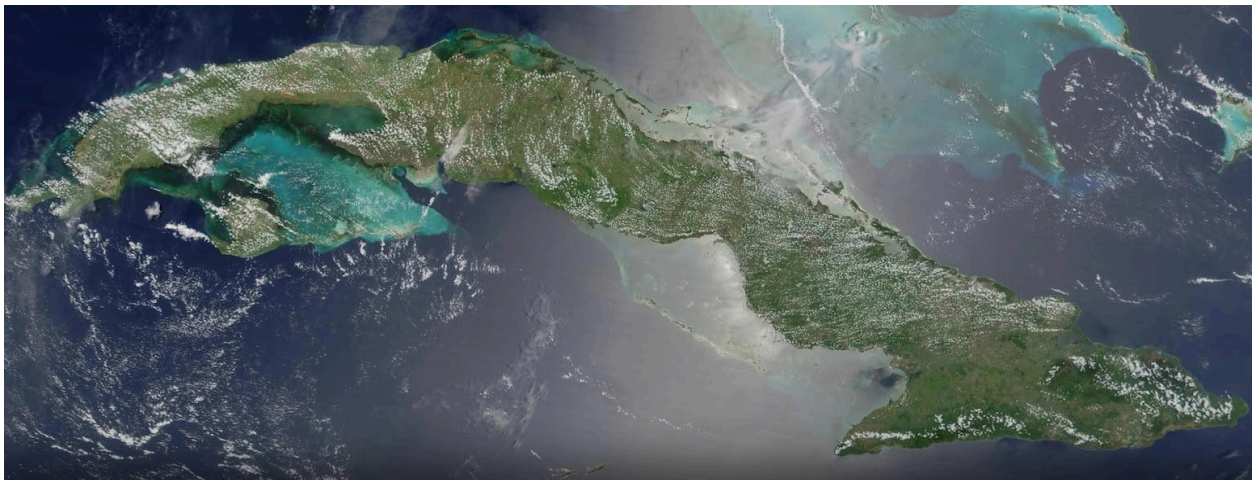
- The Bee hummingbird, which is the world's smallest bird, lives in Cuba, and it weighs less than a penny!



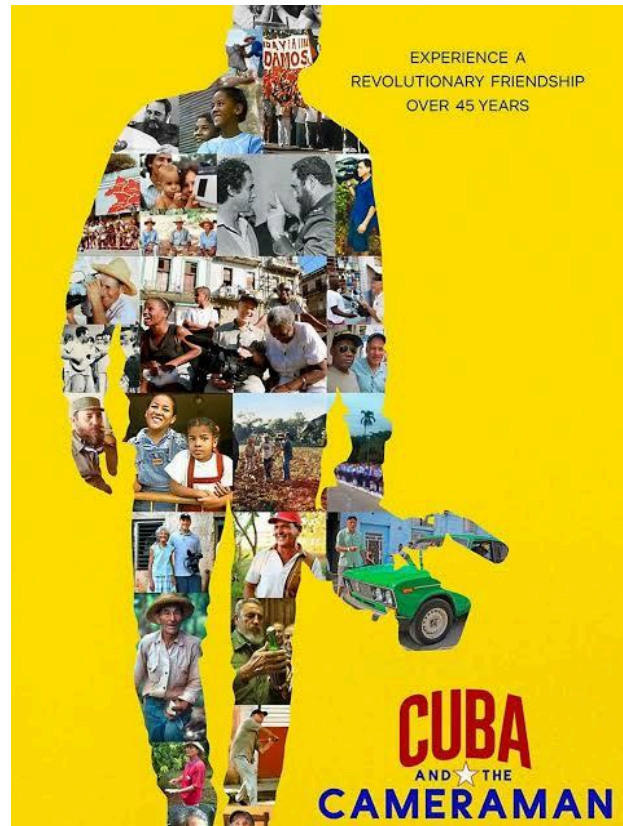
- Cuba is home to one of the world's largest ballet schools, the National Ballet School of Cuba.



- Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, a long and narrow strip that stretches 750 miles from east to west!



Movie Recommendation



By: Angel Padilla

A movie recommendation I suggest is *Cuba and the Cameraman*. This 2017 Netflix film, directed by Jon Alpert, follows the story of Cuba over forty years, showing how life on the island changed from the 1970s to the death of Fidel Castro. What makes this documentary special is that it is told through real people's lives, as Alpert returns again and again to film Cuban families, workers, and friends he met along the way. The film gives us a unique view of Cuban history, culture, and everyday struggles under communism. It highlights the warmth and resilience of the Cuban people while also showing the economic hardships they faced. Through laughter, tears, and personal stories, *Cuba and the Cameraman* reminds us how powerful film can be in capturing both political history and human connection.

Music



By: Mariano Ocampo Lee

Cuban music is a vibrant fusion of African, Spanish, and Caribbean influences, reflecting the island's rich cultural history. It is known for its infectious rhythms, intricate percussion, and deep emotional expression. Genres like son cubano, salsa, rumba, and mambo have not only shaped Cuba's identity but also influenced music worldwide. Traditional instruments such as conga, bongos, and tres guitar are central to its sound, often accompanying passionate vocals and lively dance. Cuban music is more than entertainment—it's a powerful symbol of resilience, joy, and community.

Culture/Tradition



By: Andres Castaneda

The Carnaval de Santiago de Cuba is one of the most famous and largest celebrations in Cuba, taking place near the end of July and lasting from the 18th to the 27th. This festival originates from former festivals named “Mamarrachos,” which celebrated saint days. However, religion typically played no role in these celebrations. Just like the Carnaval de Santiago de Cuba, the Mamarrachos included fiery celebrations, food and drink, music, dance, and parades. Additionally, the festival is also used to celebrate historical events, such as the Cuban Revolution.

One of the most important parts of the Carnaval de Santiago de Cuba is the comparsas. Comparsas are street parades that include a musical group and a group of costumed dancers. There are two categories of comparsas called paseos and congas. Congas consist of lower-class citizens, featuring mostly percussion, and a larger group of dancers. Paseos are characterized by a more modern European style and are more lavish in style. All in all, the Carnaval de Santiago de Cuba is a vibrant celebration that unites Cubans in celebrating their history and community.

Main Sport



By: Lucas Alfaro-Chuan

In Cuba, baseball is one of the most beloved and nationally celebrated sports, which has been deeply tied to the island's culture since the late 19th century. Games are played on open field stadiums, with two teams, nine players on each, who compete to score runs by hitting a ball against a pitcher and running around four bases arranged in a diamond shape, exactly like American baseball. The sport rewards teamwork, strategy, and individual skill, especially in pitching and batting. Unlike most global sports, the best team rarely wins in baseball, adding a feeling of thrill, anticipation, and hunger, as any club could win on any given day. Over the years, baseball has become more than just a pastime, it is a symbol of national pride, with Cuban players gaining international recognition in both local leagues and Major League Baseball abroad, with some even traveling overseas to play in Japan or Korea, two more hotspots of baseball. In Cuba and several other Latin American nations, baseball is more than entertainment; it is a stage where the people express their unity, passion, and love for their homeland.

Games



By: Jairo Oregel

Slowly gaining popularity, soccer is becoming one of the most famous games in Cuba. Just as the 1950s, when Chevys and old cars were found all over Cuba, evoke a similar remembrance of kids playing on the street. The famous game of soccer was widely spread through the streets of Cuba, and not only did the culture and activities spread, but also the colors of the island, such as the happiness of the kids. This was what really brought life to the island. The game was simply picked up in Cuba, as you don't need much to play the game. The game started with kids playing in the streets, picking up old plastic bags, yarn, or any materials, and forming a ball-shaped sphere. This led to the introduction of street soccer playstyle, which sparked creativity in soccer players and developed many stars. This sparked interest among the kids of Cuba, and as time passed, the streets were known as a playground for kids. This painted a picture for kids with poor backgrounds to help them find their way out of poverty in a fun and creative way. Some other games which were played in the streets of Cuba were baseball, dominoes, and board games.

Famous singer



By: Ian Arenas

Cuba has given the world many notable artists; however, none as significant and talented as Celia Cruz. Born in Havana, Cuba, Cruz would rise to fame in her thirties through singing “guarachas” in the band Sonora Matancera. Cruz had auditioned for said band after the lead singer departed. The Guaraches were a style of up-tempo songs containing often comedic or satirical lyrics; however, as her career evolved, so did her range. Besides Guarachas, Cruz mastered rumba, afro, son, and bolero. Cruz’s musical prowess is not to be undermined by her political activism. Whereas artists today fear holding any contrarian opinions, Cruz stood by her values in the face of fierce opposition. During a tour in Mexico, the Cuban government was

overthrown by Fidel Castro's communist revolutionaries. Cruz, having refused to support communism as a staunch supporter of democracy, was in turn refused entrance back into Cuba. Cruz had made the critical remarks about Castro and his Cronies with full knowledge of the potential consequences, and yet even in exile, she never displayed a sliver of support. This alienation from her homeland was disheartening; however, Cruz persevered with her career. Resigning from her position in the collective, she would continue to create many award-winning records and break new boundaries. Her passing in 2003 after a battle with cancer cemented her as a fighter to the end. Her music helped bring global attention to Cuba while never once backing down for what she believed in.



Dance/Performing Arts



By: Stefan Baaden

Hoy les voy a hablar sobre Danzon! Danzón is a traditional Cuban dance and musical genre that has played a significant role in Latin American cultural heritage. Known for its elegance, formality, and rhythmic sophistication, danzón is both a social dance and a form of performance art that reflects the syncretic blending of African, European, and Caribbean influences.

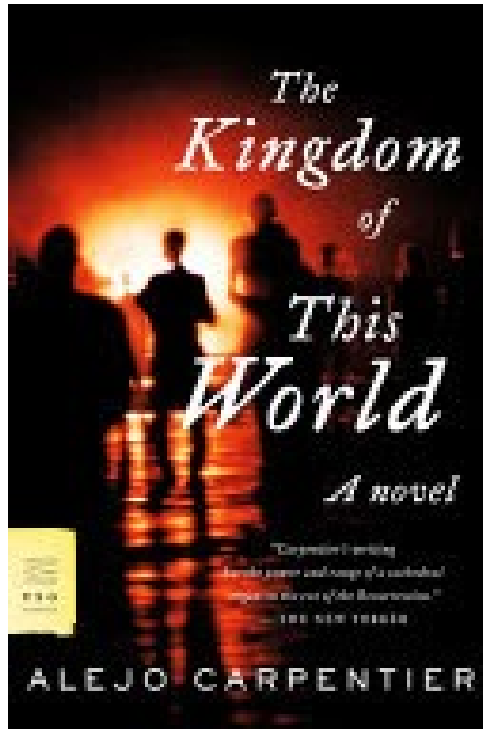
Origins and Evolution:

Danzón originated in Cuba in the late 19th century, evolving from earlier dance forms such as the contradanza and habanera, which were introduced by European colonists. A fun fact is danzón was first formalized by composer Miguel Faílde in 1879 with the piece *Las Alturas de Simpson*. The way that dance works is that it is primarily performed by couples, often characterized by smooth, gliding movements and pauses that match the music's distinct rhythm.

Cultural Significance:

Danzón is more than just a dance; it is a social ritual and a form of artistic expression. It has influenced other Latin music styles such as mambo and cha-cha-chá. Today, danzón is celebrated through festivals, competitions, and performances that honor its history and preserve its legacy. It is also a central part of Cuban culture/history.

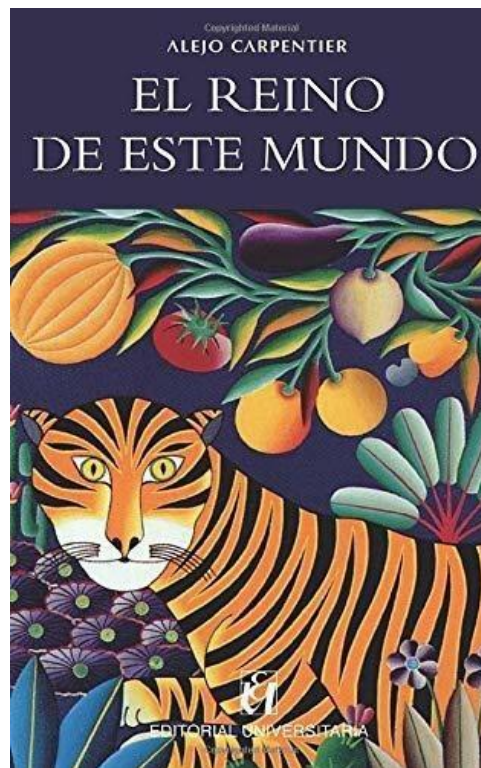
Book Recommendation



By: Andrew Garcia

The Kingdom of This World (“*El reino de este mundo*”) is a novel by Cuban author Alejo Carpentier, published in 1949 in his native Spanish and first translated into English in 1957. A work of historical fiction, it tells the story of Haiti before, during, and after the Haitian Revolution led by Toussaint Louverture, as seen by its central character, Ti Noel, who serves as the novel's connecting thread. Carpentier's work has been influenced by his multi-cultural experience and his passion for the arts, as well as by authors such as Miguel de Cervantes. The novel stems from the author's desire to retrace the roots and history of the New World, and is embedded with what Carpentier calls "lo real maravilloso" or "the marvelous real"—a concept he introduced to the world of literature (not to be confused with magical realism). Throughout the novel, varying perceptions of reality that arise due to cultural differences between its characters are emphasized and contrasted. Carpentier explores hybridization, nature, voodoo, ethnicity, history and destiny, confusion, violence, and sexuality in a style that blends history with fiction and uses repetition to emphasize the cyclical nature of events. The novel was largely

well-received with much attention paid to Carpentier's inclusion of magic realism, and *The Kingdom of This World* has been described as an important work in the development of this genre in Caribbean and Latin American literature. However, some technical aspects of his style have been ignored by the academic community, and the novel's narrative organization has been criticized.



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