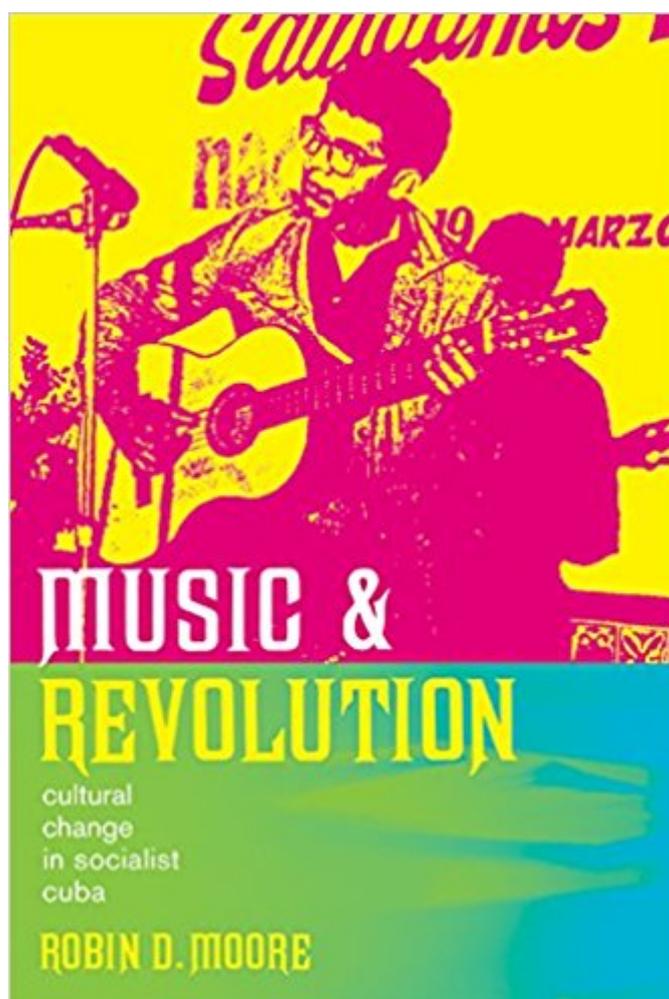


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# Music And Revolution: Cultural Change In Socialist Cuba (Music Of The African Diaspora)



## Synopsis

Music and Revolution provides a dynamic introduction to the most prominent artists and musical styles that have emerged in Cuba since 1959 and to the policies that have shaped artistic life. Robin D. Moore gives readers a chronological overview of the first decades after the Cuban Revolution, documenting the many ways performance has changed and emphasizing the close links between political and cultural activity. Offering a wealth of fascinating details about music and the milieu that engendered it, the author traces the development of dance styles, nueva trova, folkloric drumming, religious traditions, and other forms. He describes how the fall of the Soviet Union has affected Cuba in material, ideological, and musical terms and considers the effect of tense international relations on culture. Most importantly, Music and Revolution chronicles how the arts have become a point of negotiation between individuals, with their unique backgrounds and interests, and official organizations. It uses music to explore how Cubans have responded to the priorities of the revolution and have created spaces for their individual concerns.

Copub: Center for Black Music Research

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“All you ever wanted to know about Cuban music, but were afraid to ask, could be the motto of this book. . . . Interesting and enlightening. . . . A valuable source of information.” (European Review Of Latin American & Caribbean Stds

2008-04-01) "Valuable" (Bryan McCann The Americas 2009-01-01)

"The Cuban reality reveals itself in many forms, perhaps none as compelling as its music. Through the rhythm, by way of the melody, within the lyric, and in the arrangement and performance, the music speaks to the Cuban condition, past and present. Few have conveyed knowledge of this relationship with the originality and thoroughness that Robin Moore demonstrates in this book. *Music and Revolution* offers insight and understanding of the Cuban Revolution unobtainable by any other means. It will assume a place of prominence among those books considered obligatory reading." Louis A. Pérez Jr., author of *To Die in Cuba: Suicide and Society*

This is the definitive book on the relationship between the 1959 Revolution and Cuban music. It presents a picture that dozens of other books on the subject fail to paint, and touches every question you may have. It not a thrilling read, but if you have an interest in the subject I reckon you will enjoy it.

I totally agree with the 2011 reviewer, and could not see the problems identified by the earlier reviewer. It's rare that an academic text is so readable. I have read all three of Dr Moore's texts on Cuba now, and highly recommend them to anyone interested in Cuban music, for their comprehensive coverage and readable style. *Music and Revolution* gives many insights into Cuban culture generally, particularly Afro-Cuban traditions. Whenever it made comments of a political nature, I found them refreshingly balanced.

This is an enthralling and compelling read from a very accomplished musician, and truly dedicated and innovating ethnomusicologist. Dr. Moore is truly a great in his field.

The first problem with this book is that it skims over major developments in Cuban music and treats the topic practically in passing rather than in depth. A serious scholarly work would have focused more on how Cuban music shifted in terms of its harmonic vocabulary, the innovations in terms of different rhythms and how they came about, with interviews from the creators, such as Jose Luis Quintana of Van Van, Juan Claro of Ritmo Oriental, Chucho Valdes of Irakere, and more. There are references to how piano guajeos changed and some structural differences but it's generally superficial despite the scattered musical examples. It would have been much more instructive to compare conga tumbaos from Tata Guines or piano guajeos from Luis Martinez with the more

sinuous patterns innovated by Rodolfo Argudin and others. There also needed to be a focus on Cuba's approach to playing jazz, tracing the work of figures like Guillermo Barretto and Frank Emilio Flynn and Julio Gutierrez and Pepi Delgado and Bebo Valdés to Irakere, Emiliano Salvador, Grupo Nueva Generación, AfroCuba and others. This could practically be a book itself and needed to be covered in a large chapter. A book on post Revolution Cuban music that scarcely mentions Irakere and monumental figures like Emiliano Salvador does not have much depth. Then there is the issue of repression. Moore alludes to several instances and offers examples, then quickly tries to justify or gloss them over. At one point he even says that censorship is justified when a country is "under attack," as he puts it, which is how he thinks that Cuba was in the 1960s. Academic rigor and honesty dictate that this topic be an entire chapter if not a whole part, and he should have interviewed musicians like Juanito Marquez, Paquito D'Rivera, Sandoval, Meme Solis and others about this topic. They would have offered firsthand accounts that would shed a great deal of light on the topic. In addition, offering 2 laconic sentences about the UMAP camps in the 1960s and 8 pages on the actions of reactionary Miami exiles in the 1990s is not exactly balanced, nor does it give proper weight to the topics, since the UMAP camps had a much more direct effect on Cuban artists than sporadic stupidity by reactionaries. And the assertion that Willy Chirino's music can be purchased at state stores in Cuba strains credulity. That brings us to another huge flaw, the author's apologetics for a regime that even he acknowledges has trampled on human rights in a number of instances. He even cites the government's false assertion that the U.S. embargo is what is causing Cuban misery, conveniently ignoring a centralized economy operating with policies that are proven failures that in fact caused Cuban foreign debt of \$30 billion by 1986, 3 years before the Soviet Union withdrew aid. The scholarly approach to this would be to interview economists for their perspectives as to what plagues the Cuban economy and how much policies are to blame. Finally, there is some general ranting about capitalism being evil in general or some such blather. Academics are truly amusing when they rant about capitalism, given that rich alumni contribute to universities with money earned from this system. Then there's the tuition that hardworking parents pay. All of that pays for the generally good salaries that university professors enjoy. Capitalism also ensures that the stores the professors go to have abundant amounts of food. And that they can buy cars, which ordinary Cubans cannot do. Tsk tsk, how bourgeois. Could it be something as crassly material as the easy availability of steak that is keeping academic capitalism haters from moving to Coco Solo in Marianao, riding camellos and joining the local CDR? I for one gladly volunteer my services to drive them to the airport when they do make the decision to move. Though something tells me that we'll probably get in a greater proportion of rafters coming in from

Cuba than academics going there to live on 400 pesos a month.

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