

Buena Vista Social Club

A Documentary

The Buena Vista Social Club is a documentary that tells the story of how Ry Cooder (a composer, guitarist, and musicologist) went down to Cuba with a tape of some *son* music he had been given. What he didn't realize was that many of the aged musicians who had created and helped popularize *son* music (one of them ninety years old) were still alive, living in obscurity and retirement. We see forgotten heroes, who never dreamed of becoming popular again this late in their lives.

As you watch this documentary, pay special attention to the musicians that are interviewed and the stories that they tell. Each musician is speaking about Cuba's past and the rich musical heritage that Cuba retains to this day. Make sure to read the questions before we begin so you know exactly what you will be listening for.

Ibrahim Ferrer

1. What happened to him at the age of 12 years old?

Omara Portuondo

2. What happens when she is walking down the street singing?
 - a. What does it show about the Cuban people?

For each of the musicians below, write at least one music/cultural/historical item that you find interesting about them:

<u>Compay Segundo:</u>
<u>Eliades Ochoa:</u>
<u>Rubén Gonzalez:</u>
<u>Amadito Valdés:</u>

<u>Manuel Mirabal Vazquez (El Guajiro):</u>
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Barbarito Torres

3. What instrument does he play?
 - a. Where does it come from?
 - b. What is a *metamorphosis*?

Ry Cooder

4. How did this documentary come into existence?

5. What strikes you about the last scene with the two Cuban musicians in New York City?