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Black Women in Music

Scarlet Castilla



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Prof. Remi Alapo
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Cuban Culture and Dance

- "salsa" is an umbrella term for fusion of West-African-derived, clave-centric genres with American influences like jazz and Nuyorican boogaloo.
- Salsa specifically emerged from New York City in the 1970s, within Latin-American communities. Singers addressed issues of poverty, inequality and violence that a lot of under-resourced communities were experiencing at that time
- Afro-Cuban rumba is based on African rhythms and dance moves mixed with Spanish gypsy flamenco dance
- "In the 17th and 18th centuries, slaves vastly outnumbered white settlers on islands like Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola, and consequently were better equipped to preserve their religious beliefs and musical practices than slaves in the United States." (Fernandez)



Afro-Cuban Music



-Afro-Cuban composer and saxophonist Yosvany Terry brought the music, dance and religious traditions of the West African culture-which have traveled with the slaves from the the region of West Africa to Cuba, Haiti and Brazil hundreds of years ago and was preserved there-to Harlem

- Afro-Cuban culture and American jazz music is known for its percussive elements: drumming, hand clapping and body percussion.

Celia Cruz

- Celia Cruz (1925–2003) was a Cuban American singer popularly known as the "Queen of Salsa."
- Born in Santos Suárez, a working-class neighborhood outside of Havana, Cruz defied her father's desire that she abandon singing for a more respectable career.
- She will later go on to be one of the most influential Latin singer around the world.
- Cruz incorporated folkloric elements into her music in order to establish historical roots
- "Celia felt proud of her African heritage. She displayed pride in her songs, such as "*Oshun con Chango*" where she referenced African religious saints of *Santería* in the Yoruba language.." (Sierra)



"Her songs not only showed her pride in being black but it also displayed positive messages towards black women. One example of this is her iconic song "*La Negra Tiene Tumbao*" (The Black Woman Walks With Grace), where she sings about a black woman that walks with her chin up with style and grace without any worry." (Sierra)

Celia Living In Exile

- After the Cuban Revolution caused the nationalization of the music industry, Celia Cruz and became one of the symbols and spokespersons of the Cuban community.
- She was soon exiled from Cuba by the dictator Fidel Castro after he found out she become a U.S Citizen but that never stopped her from singing about her beloved country.
- Although she was devastated about not being able to return home, her exile lead to her road to fame
- She became the lead sing of a group called La Sonora who was extremely popular across Latin America
 - Pedro Knight (Husband)





Celia And La Sonora

- When Celia Joined La Sonora she became the first woman of color to become the lead singer of that band
- During that time there was very little representation of female Afro-Latinx in salsa



Celia Cruz: Accomplishments



- ★ Twenty-three gold albums,
- ★ Three Grammy Awards,
- ★ Four Latin Grammy Awards
- ★ The President's National Medal of Arts.

Celia Cruz And Fashion

- Celia's fashion was unseen like no other
- People would criticize her for her wigs and outrages outfits but she represented her Cuban and African Ancestry through her clothes
- Her clothes allowed her to move along to the rhythm of the music while also making impact
- Her clothes are now displayed on the Smithsonian



Credits.

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