



## DVD: Musica Cubana - Tokyo (2004)

**Review Rating:** Standard

**Label/Studio:** Icon Entertainment / VSC / MVD Visual

**Catalog #:** ICO-1592

**Region:** 0 (NTSC)

**Released:** April 3, 2007

**Genre:** Concert / Afro-Cuban Fusion-Jazz

**Synopsis:** Live concert featuring Pio Leiva and the Sons (and Daughters) of Cuba.

**Directed by:** Mikio Kawasaki, German Kral

**Screenplay by:** n/a

**Music by:** Pio Leiva and the Sons of Cuba

**Produced by:** John G. Phelan, Claus Clausen

**Cast:** Pio Leiva and the Sons of Cuba - Barbaro Marin, Mario 'Mayito' Rivera, Pedro 'El Nene' Lugo Martinez, Telmary Diaz, Isdalgia Lesmes, Luis Frank Arias, Tirso Duarte, Roberto Carcasses, Samuel Formell, Feliciano Arango, Julio Padron, Juan 'Coto' Antomarchi Padilla, and the Chiki Chaka Girls.

**Film Length:** 85 mins

**Colour**

**Languages:** Spanish Stereo 2.0

**Subtitles:** \_

**Process/Ratio:** 1.77:1

**Anamorphic DVD:** No

### Special Features :

Music Video: "Chiki Chaka" (3:14)

### Comments :

After the massive success of Wim Wenders' superb Oscar-nominated 1999 documentary **Buena Vista Social Club** [BVSC], various core members went on tour, and a few of the septuagenarian and octogenarian musicians released separate solo albums – in some cases, their recording debuts. At the peak of its international fascination, anything tied to Cuban music was branded 'in the vein of the BVSC' by record producers and promoters to ensure some kind of tie-in, and boost media sales.

The big difference between the original doc and subsequent BVSC concerts was the loss of the group's intimate, nearly all-acoustic sound which stayed true to the original loose arrangements and raw performances popular in Cuba during the fifties (at least that's the sound Wenders and musician Ry Cooder tried to evoke in most of the performance scenes in the original doc, including the live concert material Wenders cut between the relaxed Cuban studio sessions).

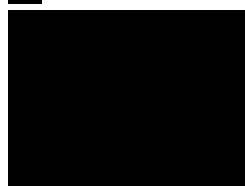
**Musica Cubana** is part of a 2004 follow-up concert that had one of the surviving BVSC members – the late Pio Leiva - tour with a group of new Cuban lions (billed as the Sons of Cuba, though they chauvinistically left out the *Daughters* in the billing. Ahem), crossing into Europe and Asia venues.



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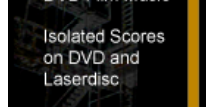


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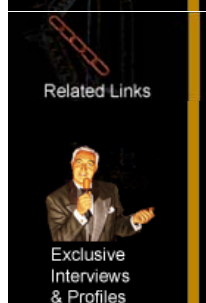


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Wenders' role here is more as a presenter for this 2-volume DVD series (each part sold separately) that document the tour stops in Amsterdam and Tokyo.

**Live in Tokyo** is the one to watch first, as it contains a more formal title montage, introducing the musicians as they enter Tokyo, mingle in a restaurant, and are introduced by an emcee to an appreciative audience.

Like BVSC, the first song performed is "Seis Semanas," and the arrangement is perhaps indicative of the concert's style: new and old songs are contemporized with electric bass and keyboards, and the vocal styles combine old, contemporary, and new infusions of rap.

Those wanting a performance that's unwaveringly true to the original BVSC CD will not be pleased with this release, but then this isn't being presented as a BVSC concert. The major disappointment is that Leiva's involvement is more or less as headliner and co-singer, although even in the original Wenders doc, Leiva was merely one of many veteran musicians who shined when grouped with contemporaries; as a soloist, his range is limited, his age is even more apparent, and his contributions get smothered when the entire group performs a song (though his duet for "Pio Mentiroso" is major highlight).

That said, the DVD is a solid production of sharp, colourful visuals and crisply recorded sound. This isn't a cheap knock-off production, and the young musicians haven't been gathered in some lame **Idol**-style tribute tour. Unfortunately, the DVD gives no background info on the young lions (there's a bonus pop music video, but that hardly places anyone in context).

**Musica Cubana**, as a concert, was designed to showcase a marriage of past and future, with old songs presented in warm acoustic and analogue renditions, and in up-styled versions that swerve into rap lyrics – a ploy that actually works, and maybe demonstrates the versatility of a good melodic tune with driving vocal parts. The lead vocalists are backed by good brass and percussion sections, and the arrangements do follow the energetic style of the original BVSC performances, and remain loose so everyone can infuse a bit of personal business.

**Musica Cubana's** biggest hurdle is to move beyond the immense shadow cast by the original BVSC performances, and after a few viewings, you'll find it's pretty successful, and stands on its own.

Performed songs: "Seis Semanas," "La Luna," "Volveria a Renacer," "Digan Lo Que Digan," "Pio Mentiroso," "Cubanas Por El Mondo," "Somos Cubanos," "Yo Vine Pa'Ve," "Cuandro You No Me Quieras," "Habana Cuba," "Negrito Bailador," and "Chan Chan."

This title is part of a two-part series: **Live in Tokyo**, and [Live in Amsterdam](#).

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