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DVD Review

Cuba: Island of Music

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Mike Spring - Editor
DVDsnapshot

Yes, it's true. Win Win is completely overrated. <http://ow.ly/6pPZw>
43 minutes ago · reply · retweet · favorite

@murraymaker And that's the point: he wasn't trying to win me over, but he did. = Liable character, even though he's a psycho.
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@murraymaker Wait, ignore my last reply. I thought you were referring to Win Win, not American Psycho.
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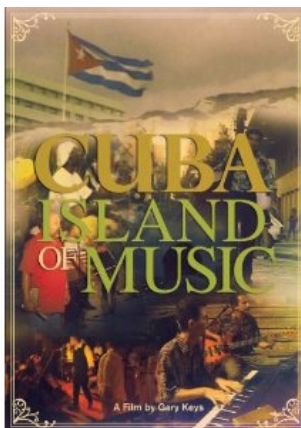
@DavidBjerre Agreed, 100%.
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@murraymaker Me, not so much.
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Official Synopsis:

The film is a behind-the-scenes look at Afro-Cuban music's role in the daily life of Cubans. Filmmaker Gary Keys (Memories of Duke and Dizzy's Dream Band) brings the audience into the heart and soul of Havana, through a vibrant mosaic of street musicians, big bands, dancers, religious rituals, and classic cars. Keys shows us Afro-Cuban music in New York City, with the music and commentary of jazz legends Billy Taylor, Candido Camero, and Chico O'Farrill.

Our Take:

The thing that intrigues me with documentaries is that it could be about virtually any topic as long as the subject matter is presented in an interesting and/or entertaining way. Prior to popping in **Cuba: Island of Music** into my DVD player, I was skeptical that a documentary about Afro-Cuban music would grab my attention but I gave it a shot anyway. What I found was that filmmaker Gary Keys seems passionate about this type of music and the history behind it, but to the casual pop-in observer, it's not all that enthralling. Keys recounts his love for the genre as well as his visits to Havana, but he lets the music do virtually all the talking. This is an issue to me for 2 reasons. Firstly, I tend to find this type of music irritating to listen to. Secondly, there are really only two interweaving interviews he cuts throughout the film and each one only adds to the stagnant pace of the movie. I found this piece to be cut together more like a music video than a bonafide documentary. Out of the 72 minute runtime, it's safe to say that 40 minutes of it is simply women dancing to this Afro-Cuban music; not what you would consider to be a compelling narrative, which is what this doc seriously lacks.

Special Features:

There are no special features to speak of in this release.

Conclusion:

The only aspect of this documentary that I found remotely interesting was the talk about how Cuban embargo with America has influenced Afro-Cuban music. Unless you're a die-hard fan of this type of music, I would avoid **Cuba: Island of Music** entirely.

Overall Picture:

Show: **D**
Extra Features: **F** (no special features on DVD)

- Dan Schiller
Staff Writer

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