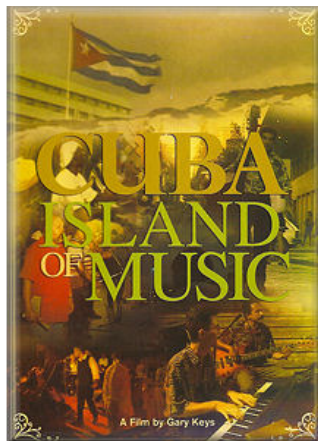


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## DVD REVIEW

### CUBA: ISLAND OF MUSIC

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I was looking forward to watching this DVD, as Cuba has given the rest of the world so much music, especially in the wide range of rhythms that the country can offer - and which have strongly influenced jazz. The film was made by Gary Keys, who says that he is not only a film-maker but teaches film-making. This is rather a surprise, as the DVD barely reaches the standard of a home movie about someone's foreign holiday. And the production is so scrappy as to be uninformative as well as unsatisfying.

Gary drives around Havana showing us fragments of Cuban life: street musicians, dancers wiggling their hips, ancient American cars, a church, a butcher's shop, a cigar factory. It is like a bitty travelogue. I was hoping it would show us good footage of Cuban musicians performing but the film only shows us short sequences - not one single whole tune.

Gary also visits New York and interviews such performers as Billy Taylor and Chico O'Farrill but he splits the interviews into short sections which tell us little. Worse still, O'Farrill's contribution is often incomprehensible, as his Cuban dialect means that his comments need sub-titles, which are not supplied.

I was looking forward to a film which would explain Cuba's musical contributions to world music - but this isn't it. Instead it is an object-lesson in how not to make a documentary. If Gary Keys is a teacher in the art of the movie, he has certainly taught me a lesson!

*Tony Augarde*

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