

# The New York Times

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## PLAYLIST

By NATE CHINEN

### Cachao

The great Cuban bassist Israel López, known as Cachao, made a number of casually arresting recordings in Havana in the late 1950s and early '60s, a rich documentation of a tradition of late-night jam sessions, or descargas. Many of these recordings come in at around three minutes; most of them pack an irresistibly vital punch. So the nearly 40 tracks gathered on “Descargas: The Havana Sessions” (Yemaya) are essential to any understanding of Latin music and its long interaction with jazz. Featuring quick-flash contributions by a cadre of serious musicians — including the pianist Orestes López, Cachao’s brother — the performances sound era-specific but utterly timeless.