

# School Matinee Series • Study Guide

2017/2018

## Malpaso Dance Company

Fri • January 12 • 10 am





# Welcome to the Hop

A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

## Theater Etiquette

When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas.

Be aware and use quiet voices. Remember that live theater differs greatly from watching television or movies or attending a sporting event. Live performers can hear and see you and are easily distracted by any talking or moving around in the audience. Even the smallest sounds can be heard throughout the theater, so it's best to be quiet so that everyone can enjoy the performance. Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation!

Important to remember: Backpacks, food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the theater. Please turn off all cell phones and note that recording the performance or taking any photos is strictly prohibited. Hats off! It is respectful to remove hats during your time in the theater.

## Information For Teachers

**Prepare**—review this study guide for context that will help your students engage with the performance. Check in with the Hop if you have any questions or concerns about content. Read the letter that accompanies this guide—Hop staff often requests details about your visit including how many buses you'll be bringing and what accommodations you need.

**Arrive**—arrive 30 minutes prior to start time to allow time for Hop staff to check you in and escort students to their seats. Hop staff will ask you for a head count of students. Please review our bus policy before arrival: [hop.dartmouth.edu/online/plan\\_a\\_successful\\_visit](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/online/plan_a_successful_visit)

**Lunch**—sometimes we are able to offer a space for schools to eat bag lunches following the show. Check the letter that accompanies this guide to confirm. If staying for lunch, please confirm with Hop staff one week prior to show. The day of the show, please bring lunches in boxes or tubs labeled with school's name. Hop staff will take lunches to the lunch space and escort school group there following the show. Schools are responsible for calling their own bus back to the Hop when they are ready to leave.

**Ticketing Policy**—no tickets are issued for school matinee performances. Seating placement for each school group is determined by Hop staff. Please let them know if you have a seating request or accommodation; we do our best to keep each school group seated together. Payment is required 30 days before the performance regardless of whether all students are able to attend on the day of the show—please feel free to bring extra chaperones or school staff to fill any empty seats.

**Photography**—though photography by the audience is prohibited, the Hopkins Center may take photographs during the performance for use on our website or other promotional materials. If you or your students do not wish to be photographed, please let Hop staff know.

**The Show Must Go On!**—we do not cancel events due to school closings for inclement weather. Performances will only be cancelled if the artist is unable to reach the theater. Schools will be notified by phone if this occurs. We do not issue refunds for performances missed due to school closure. Please contact Hop staff if you find your school unable to attend for this reason.

This study guide was created by the Hop's Outreach and Arts Education team. To download copies of this and other guides, visit [hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach)

Special thanks to Portland Public Schools and White Bird, Portland, OR for use of their Malpaso Curriculum Guide.

## Enjoy The Show!

**Hopkins Center Outreach Department:**  
**Stephanie Pacheco**, Outreach Manager  
**Sarah Case**, Outreach Coordinator  
**Mary Gaetz**, Outreach Coordinator

The Hopkins Center Outreach & Arts Education department embodies the Hop's mission to "ignite and sustain a passion for the arts." It provides Dartmouth, the community and beyond rare personal contact with artists and a broad context for the performing arts. Unveiling the creative process of extraordinarily diverse artists, Outreach programs touch more than 14,000 lives each year.

## Did You Know?

- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.
- In The Moore Theater, the area over the stage, called the "fly loft," is 63 feet tall.



# About the Show

In this show, Malpaso performs two dances: *Why You Follow*, a **charismatic** exploration of **Afro-Cuban ritual** dance by **choreographer** Ron K. Brown; and *Ocaso (Twilight)*, a stirring **duet** choreographed by Malpaso **artistic director** and dancer Osnel Delgado.



Malpaso Dance Company



Image from *Why You Follow*

## About *Why You Follow*

This dance is 23 minutes long and utilizes all of the dancers in the company. They dance in various configurations: solos, duos, trios, etc. The choreography explores the relationships we have with our **elders** and why we choose paths similar to those of our parents and teachers. The dance demonstrates that in order to lead, we must first learn to follow. The choreography includes dancers ushering or shepherding each other, guiding the group to make good choices and exploring repetition and pattern.

*Why You Follow* has four consecutive sections, each accompanied by a different piece of music:

Open Heart (*Locklat Africa* by Zap Mama)

Commitment (*Enroute to the Motherland* by Gordheaven and Juliano)

The Path (*Yoruba Road* by The Allenko Brotherhood)

Faithfully Forward (*Kusase Mnandi* by Gordheaven and Juliano, The Heavy Quartet)



Image from *Ocaso*

## *Ocaso (Twilight)*

This dance is a duet that explores the relationship between two people. At moments, they move close to one another: looping arms together, embracing, falling together, lifting each other up. At other moments the two dancers move separately, rolling on the floor or leaping into the air. Music for this piece is a mix of songs by Autechre, Kronos Quartet and Max Richter. The piece is 13 minutes long.

## About the Company

Established in 2012, Malpaso Dance Company has already become one of the most sought-after Cuban dance companies with a growing international profile. Emphasizing a **collaborative** creative process, Malpaso works with top international choreographers while also nurturing new voices in Cuban choreography. The company tours with 11 dancers and is led by its original three founders: Osnel Delgado, Fernando Sáez and Daileidys Carrazana. An Associate Company of Joyce Theater Productions in New York City, Malpaso and the Joyce have commissioned original works from a number of **prominent** North



Choreographer Ron K. Brown wrote a poem which inspired his choreography for *Why You Follow*:

**Yoruba** Road  
Why You Follow  
That path is yours

The reason  
For your life

LOVE FREEDOM PEACE

Rolling down Yoruba Road  
Like water down a hill  
People moving forward

Making a way for  
The rest

Why you follow  
Because you must...  
To be able to lead

Learning on Yoruba Road  
En route to the Mother Father  
And the child  
The children are waiting  
On Yoruba Road



American choreographers including Ron K. Brown (*Why You Follow*), Trey McIntyre (*Under Fire*), and, most recently, Canadian choreographer Aszure Barton. Barton's work *Indomitable Waltz* made its world premiere in Havana, Cuba in fall of 2016. The company has also recently premiered *Dreaming of Lions*, a new full-length **commission** choreographed by Osnel Delgado, featuring an original **score composed** by Grammy award-winning Cuban-American composer Arturo O'Farrill.

## Choreographers



**RON K. BROWN** founded Evidence, A Dance Company in 1985. A United States citizen, he has worked with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Mary Anthony Dance Theater, Jennifer Muller/The Works as well as other choreographers and artists. He choreographed Regina Taylor's award-winning play, *Crowns* and won a Fred & Adele Astaire Award for Outstanding Choreography for the Tony-winning *The Gershwin's Porgy & Bess*, adapted by Suzan Lori Parks. Brown was named Def Dance Jam Workshop Mentor of the Year in 2000 and has received the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts Choreographers Fellowship, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, United States Artists Fellowship and The Ailey Apex Award for teaching.



**OSNEL DELGADO** is a Cuban citizen who danced with Danza Contemporanea de Cuba from 2003 to 2011 before founding Malpaso. He has worked with choreographers Mats Ek, Rafael Bonachela, Kenneth Kvarnström, Ja Linkens, Itzik Galili, Samir Akika, Pedro Ruiz, Isidro Rolando and George Cespedes, among others. Delgado has created works for DCC, Rakatan and Ebony Dance of Cuba. Delgado is a 2003 graduate of the National Dance School of Havana, where he is also a professor of dance studies.

## Contextual background

### Cuba

Cuba, officially the Republic of Cuba, is made up of the island of Cuba as well as Isla de la Juventud and several minor **archipelagos**. Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, with an area of 42,426 square miles and is located where the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean meet. Havana is the largest city and the capital.

Culturally, Cuba is considered part of Latin America and its main language is Spanish. It is a multiethnic country, meaning its people, culture and customs have diverse origins, including the **aboriginal Taíno** and **Ciboney** peoples, the long period of Spanish **colonial** rule, African slaves and a close relationship with the **Soviet Union** during the **Cold War**.

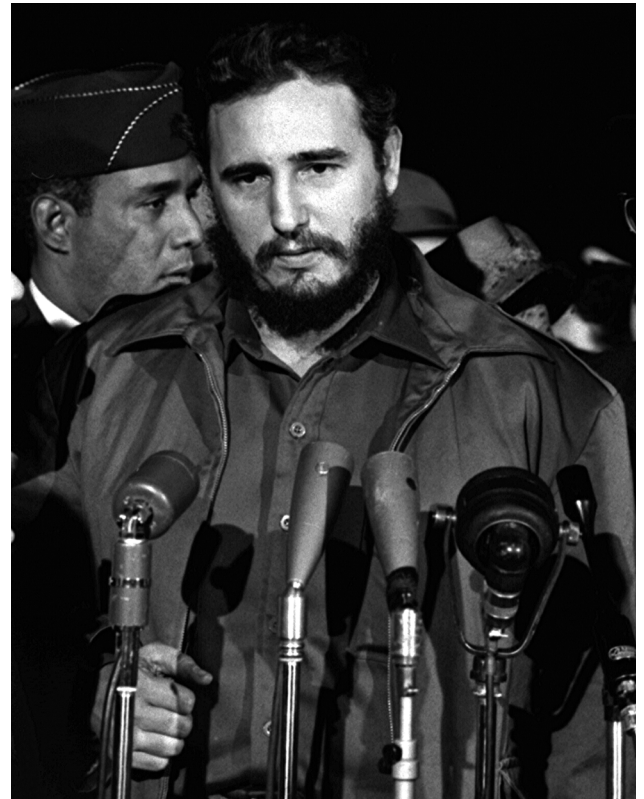


## History and Politics

Cuba's political history is complicated. It was a colony under Spanish rule until the **Spanish-American War** rendered it a United States **protectorate** in 1902. While technically independent, under the protectorate Cuba received leadership and guidance from the US as it sought to build more **democratic** government. The US benefitted from working with Cuba during this time—among other economic opportunities, the military outpost at Guantánamo Bay was given a permanent **lease** to the US during this time. Despite working towards building a **progressive** democracy, mounting political **radicalization** and social strife brought about the **dictatorship** of Fulgencio Batista as part of a **coup** in 1952. Further unrest and instability led to Batista's ousting in January 1959 by a group of fighting rebels led by Fidel Castro. A new government was eventually established under the leadership of Castro and the **Communist Party**. The revolution that put Castro in power was violent, and Castro and his **regime** regularly imprisoned and **executed dissidents**. Many Cubans fled by boat to the United States, 103 miles away, to escape this fate.

Since one of the principle **tenets** of **Communism** is sharing all resources with the public, Cuba took over American-owned oil refineries in the country. This prompted the US to enact an **embargo**, leaving Cuba without an important trading partner. To make up for this loss, Cuba began partnering with the Soviet Union, trading sugar for fuel. The US was deep into the Cold War with the **USSR**, and as the economic and political partnership between Cuba and the Soviet Union grew, so did military tension. In 1962, the Soviet Union began installing surface-to-air missiles in Cuba, which set off the Cuban Missile Crisis. President Kennedy declared that any attack on the US from Cuba would be an act of war from the Soviet Union and would be responded to with the full force of the US military. At the time, "full force" meant nuclear weapons. Luckily, war was averted when the Soviet Union removed the weapons.

A year earlier, the US had tried unsuccessfully to secretly invade and overthrow Castro in the Bay of Pigs Invasion; in fact, the United States tried several times to remove Fidel Castro from power but was never successful. In 2008, he retired from leading the country and handed over rule of Cuba to his brother, Raul; Fidel died in 2016. Due to the embargo and tensions between countries, access to the United States and other parts of the world has been very limited for most Cubans. In the last year of the Obama presidency, some of the embargo restrictions were eased in an attempt to open up trade, travel and cultural exchange between the US and Cuba.



Fidel Castro addresses the press on a visit to Washington D.C. in 1959



Photo showing ship transferring missiles to Cuba in 1962



President Obama met with Raul Castro in 2016



Cuba is a vibrant country, known for colorful **facades** and beautifully maintained old cars



A view from Morro Castle, a fortress turned museum, that overlooks the entrance to Havana Bay in Havana, Cuba

## Modern Dance

Traditionally, European and American theatrical dance was rooted in Western classical ballet. However, in the early twentieth century, it became fashionable in dance circles to rebel against the **strictures** of this tradition. The popularity of television and easier international travel provided greater exposure to dance styles from all over the world. Choreographers began to focus on personal experience and using the body as an instrument to express emotions such as passion, fear, joy or grief.

### Cuban Modern Dance

Even after Communism took hold in the country, the performing arts were highly regarded—it was important to Fidel Castro that education in music, dance and visual art be available to all, not just the rich. The government helped start dance companies and universities, and they instantly became an integral part of Cuba's identity. Cuban contemporary dance, also known as *la técnica cubana*, was created by Ramiro Guerra in 1959 after a **mandate** from Castro's government. It is a combination of North American modern technique, ballet, African and **Creole**-influenced ballroom dance. The island's isolation meant this style of dance was unique to Cuba. Though not seen in most of the world, it was taught in school and universities all over the island, and Danza Contemporánea de Cuba became a point of pride for the government and citizens of the country.

### Elements of Dance

**BODY** refers to the awareness of specific body parts and how they can be moved in isolation or combination.

**ACTION** refers to locomotor and non-locomotor movement. Locomotor action includes movement that travels through space, such as walking, running, jumping and leaping. Non-locomotor movement is when you move body parts while the main part of the body stays planted in one space, such as swaying, shaking, stretching and twisting.

**SPACE** refers to the space the dancer's body moves through, the shapes the body makes, the direction of the movements, and the shapes, levels and movement patterns of a group of dancers.

**TIME** is applied to both a musical and dance element, which includes beat, tempo, accent and duration.

**ENERGY** refers to the force applied to dance to accentuate the weight, attack, strength and flow of a dancer's movements.



# Influential Dance Styles

## Ballet

Ballet is a regimented dance style that values long lines, strength and balance. Despite modern dance turning away from this style, it is still studied as a foundation for many dancers: most Malpas company members trained at the National Ballet of Cuba, and they also do a ballet class every day as part of their training regimen.

Cuba's best known ballerina is Alicia Alonso. Alonso trained in the United States at the School of American Ballet and danced with the American Ballet Theater. After Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba in 1959, Alonso returned home and formed a new ballet company, Ballet Nacional de Cuba (National Ballet of Cuba). In addition to serving as its director, she continued to dance until age 75.

"In Cuba, a country with a healthy vein of machismo, the art of ballet carries more weight than an outside observer might expect. Cuban ballet dancers are arguably the country's most esteemed export, they often earn more money than doctors, and they perform locally to the type of cheering crowd that in the United States would be reserved for pop stars." *PBS, Independent Lens*



Alicia Alonso

## North American Modern Dance

While in the United States in the late 1940s, Cuban choreographer Ramiro Guerra studied with American dancemakers Martha Graham and José Limón. Martha Graham's dance technique focuses on the contraction, or strong pulling back and curving of the **torso**, and the release of this movement by returning to a straight torso. The repeated use of the contraction and release gives a rhythmic energy to the movements in this technique. In contrast, Limón technique is divided among various physical extremes: fall and recovery, sense of weight and sense of suspension; moments of shared movement and others of isolation. These ideas can be illustrated in the way a dancer uses the floor as a place from which to rise, return to and then rise from again. In both techniques, the movement demonstrates a physical expression of the human spirit.



Martha Graham



José Limón



## African Traditional Dance

Afro-Cuban ritual dances reflect the main groups of Africans that were transported to Cuba: the Kongo-Angola of west-central Africa, *Arará* (from what are now Benin and Togo), *Yoruba* (largely from Nigeria), and *Carabalí* (from the Calabar River regions of Cameroon and Nigeria). In African dance, the full body is often **articulated**, including **undulating** spines and high legs lifts. There is often a percussive element included, with stomping feet, clapping hands or slapping parts of the body with hands. The best-known dances are attached to the Yoruba-based Afro-Cuban religion of *Santería*. *Santería* combines African and Roman Catholic belief systems and religious practices. The percussive rhythms, songs and dances of *Santería* are meant to please the *orishas* (deities or gods) and to persuade them to join in; their acceptance is signaled by their manifestation within the dancers' bodies, often described as possession, when a dancer abruptly breaks from the basic repetitious dance step, pitches forward or shakes, and then begins the distinct movements that characterize the *orisha*. For instance, *Yemaya* is the *orisha* of the ocean; when a female dancer experiences possession, she may lift her skirts and move them in a way that suggests the swells of an ocean wave.

## Creole Colonial Ballroom

Many social dance styles have their origins in Latin America and in Cuba specifically. Some developed as a response to new forms of music. A popular dance in Cuba is *habanera* or *contradanza* which was derived from English court dances of the 18th century thought to have been brought to Cuba by sailors from Spain. It is characterized by slow and delicate movements. Rumba, cha-cha-cha and mambo all developed in Cuba in the late 19th and early 20th century. One of the best-known dances from Cuba is salsa. Characterized by vibrant, energetic hip swinging and danced to music with an intense beat, salsa coalesced in the 1960s as a blending of Cuban mambo and Latin jazz infused with choreographic and stylistic imprints from Puerto Ricans living in New York City. Salsa has broken the barriers of ethnicity and class to become both a variety of music and dance performed throughout the world.

### Fun Fact

Mambo means "conversation with the gods" in the Kongo language, which is spoken by Congolese in Africa.



Dancer from Jeh Kulu Ensemble, Burlington, VT, performs West African dance at the Hopkins Center



A couple dances salsa

## Pre-performance discussion questions

- Do you think dance, music and other performing arts are able to communicate across language barriers? Why or why not?
- Is stillness part of dance? Why or why not?
- What role does music play in dance?
- What are some ideas and expressions that are valued in US culture that may not be valued in Cuban culture? What are some things you have seen in non-Western culture that you find strange or unattractive in expression? How do you think the Internet is helping or hurting connection between cultures and countries?

## Post-performance discussion questions

- What kind of music did you hear in the performance? How did the dancing compare to dance in music or YouTube videos you have seen?
- Did the movement seem wholly unique or did you see elements of other dance forms?
- What visual patterns did you see in the dances? What did you hear?

## Learning Activities

### Space Exploration (grades 5–8)

In a large open area, have students explore the tempo of their movement by silently walking at a normal speed in various directions throughout the space—the path is determined by the individual. After they establish walking a normal speed, announce that, on a scale of 1-10, this speed is a five. Continue the activity by calling out numbers between 1-10 and watching students vary their tempo. Next, divide students into two groups, one watchers and one movers. In a large, open area, have students walk through the space in straight lines, as if the floor were covered in graph paper. They must turn at a 90 degree angle, just like the lines on the paper. After exploring this way of moving for a few minutes, tell students that in addition to walking, stopping and lying down are also allowed (but no other kinds of movements). Once they have started exploring those additions, add tempo in, asking students to explore changing tempo. After a few minutes, ask the watchers to comment on what they see. Switch groups and repeat. After both groups have moved, discuss what both groups noticed as they moved around the space. Repeat, this time with movers changing their speed.

### Movement Vocabulary (grades 5–12)

Divide students into groups of three or four. Have the groups choose a topic they wish to represent in movement. Ideas could include: walking someplace where you don't feel safe, eating a delicious meal, falling down on a patch of ice, getting caught at something you aren't supposed to be doing, keeping a secret. Have each individual within the group create a shape, gesture or position with his or her body that reflects the theme in some way. Have each individual teach his or her motion to the others in the group. Each group then finds a way to connect each other's motions, moving from one position to the next. Present each series of movements to the class. What is the larger story perceived by those watching each movement piece? Are there connecting themes and imagery between the groups? Have each group share its reasons behind each choice.



## A Poem and Song (grades 8–12)

Play a recording of *Guantanamera*. A good one is [HERE](#). Lead a discussion about the meaning of the song. Ask the students if anyone has heard this song before. Ask what languages they hear being sung (Spanish and English) and ask what they think the meaning and the purpose of the song might be. Ask them for a list of words they heard and their connotations. What do they represent? How are these words indicative of or linked to revolutionary activity? Use a projector to display the lyrics (available online [HERE](#)) and go over the lyrics with students. Have the students read the lyrics along with you. As Pete Seeger explains in the recording, though he made the song famous, the words come from a poem by Jose Marti. Divide students into small groups and ask them to read about Jose Marti [HERE](#) and Pete Seeger [HERE](#). Next, have students create a Venn diagram comparing the two men to compare and contrast them. Have students present their Venn diagram to the class. Finally, students may write an essay responding to the following questions: how does *Guantanamera* bring together multiple cultural and stylistic elements. How can men from such different backgrounds create such a powerful and popular song? In your opinion, what are some of the most effective elements of the song (melody, combination of lyrics)? Can you think of any present day songs written by two people from different backgrounds? Have students get into small groups and share their essays with one another.

### Did You Know?

Mr. Seeger writes that in 1961, a young Cuban was working at a children's summer camp in the Catskill Mountains when he read some simple verses by Jose Marti. He found that the verses could be fitted to an old popular song of Havana. He combined Marti's patriotic verses with a chorus addressed to a country girl. Later that summer, while Mr. Seeger was singing for the children, they taught him the song they had learned from their Cuban counselor. Now the song is an international favorite.

## Vocabulary

**Aboriginal:** inhabiting or existing in a place from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists; indigenous

**Afro-Cuban:** refers to Cubans who have West African ancestry and/or to the historical and cultural elements that originate from this community

**Archipelagos:** groups of islands

**Articulated:** two or more parts connected by a flexible joint

**Artistic Director:** a person who provides creative leadership to an organization, often in the performing arts

**Charismatic:** having a compelling charm that inspires devotion in others

**Choreographer:** one who creates a sequence of steps and moves for a performance of dance

**Ciboney:** a now extinct American Indian people that inhabited the Greater Antilles

**Cold War:** a state of political hostility that existed between Soviet countries and the United States from 1945-1990

**Collaborative:** produced by two or more parties working together

**Colonial:** relating to a colony or colonies, for example, Great Britain taking full political control of countries such as India in the 19th century

**Commemorate:** celebrate someone or something by doing or building something

**Commission:** a work of art that a person or organization asked an artist to make for a specific purpose

**Communism:** political theory that advocates for society in which all property is publicly owned and each person works and is paid according to their abilities and needs

**Communist Party:** refers to group of people with shared beliefs and political goals based on Communism

**Composed:** written or created, as a work of art

**Coup:** a sudden, violent and illegal seizure of power from a government

**Creoles:** people of mixed European and black heritage, often from the Caribbean

**Democratic:** favoring social equality; referring to democracy which is a system of government by the whole population or all eligible members, typically by elected representatives

**Dictatorship:** a country governed by a person (dictator) who has typically obtained political power by force and rules with absolute power

**Disparate:** unrelated

**Dissidents:** people who oppose official power, especially dictatorships

**Duet:** a dance performed by two people

**Elders:** senior figures in a tribe or other group

**Embargo:** official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country

**Executed:** carry out a sentence of death

**Facades:** faces of buildings, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space

**Lease:** contract by which one party transfers property to another for a specified period of time

**Mandate:** official order or commission to do something

**Progressive:** a group favoring social reform or new, liberal ideas

**Prominent:** important

**Protectorate:** a state controlled by another state

**Radicalization:** the action or process of causing someone to adopt positions well outside the mainstream on political or social issues

**Regime:** a government, especially one that employs strict obedience to the authority of the government at the expense of personal freedom

**Ritual:** a series of actions or type of behavior regularly followed by someone

**Score:** music written to accompany a film or other performance

**Soviet Union:** a large group of Communist countries, including Russia, that unified in 1922 and dissolved in 1991

**Spanish-American War:** a ten-week war fought in 1898 between American and Spain for the independence of Cuba which was then a Spanish colony

**Strictures:** a stern remark or instruction

**Taino:** a member of the Arawak people formerly inhabiting the Greater Antilles and Bahamas

**Tenets:** principle or belief

**Torso:** upper body

**Undulating:** moving in a wave like motion

**U.S.S.R.:** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the Soviet Union

**Yoruba:** member of a people from southwestern Nigeria and Benin



# Additional Resources and References

**Read more about Malpaso Dance Company:** [malpasodance.com](http://malpasodance.com)

[en.granma.cu/cultura/2017-04-26/ramiro-guerra-a-lifetime-devoted-to-cuban-dance](http://en.granma.cu/cultura/2017-04-26/ramiro-guerra-a-lifetime-devoted-to-cuban-dance)

[nytimes.com/2016/05/07/arts/dance/what-comes-next-for-cuban-modern-dance.html](http://nytimes.com/2016/05/07/arts/dance/what-comes-next-for-cuban-modern-dance.html)

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[britannica.com/biography/Alicia-Alonso](http://britannica.com/biography/Alicia-Alonso)

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[solomons-says.com/post/87209144115/malpaso-dance-company](http://solomons-says.com/post/87209144115/malpaso-dance-company)

[miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article118282148.html](http://miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article118282148.html)

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