



# Music from Cuba: Mongo Santamar<sup>a</sup>, Chocolate Armenteros, and Other Stateside Cuban Musicians

*Charles D. Gerard*

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Studies of Latin American music often overlook its Cuban roots and the political policies that brought the musicians to the United States. This work rectifies that omission by examining the Afro-Cuban influence upon Latin American music and its various idioms. A brief history of Afro-Cuban musicians in the United States provides the background and context for the study. Influential pre-revolutionary Afro-Cuban immigrant musicians, such as Mongo Santamaría, Jesus Caunedo, Charanga and Pup Legarreta, Juan Carlos Formell, and Alfredo Chocolate Armenteros, discuss both their music and their attitudes toward the political policies that led them to flee Cuba. Speaking from firsthand experience, founding figures of Latin music in the United States present unique insights into the Afro-Cuban experience within the Latin musical community.

Adding to the musicians' stories, Gerard provides a history of relations between Cubans, African Americans, and Puerto Ricans in the Latin music community. He also discusses the impact of the mass emigration in the 1980s that brought many more Cubans to the States. This multicultural approach to Latin American music will appeal to music and Latin American history scholars and to jazz and Latin music enthusiasts. An appendix includes album listings for the musicians interviewed.

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