

Dance Consortium presents

Acosta Danza

100% Cuban

*"Some of the finest
Cuban dancers I have
ever had the pleasure
of working with"*
Carlos Acosta

★★★★★
Evening Standard

★★★★★
The Observer

★★★★★
The Guardian

★★★★★
The Times

INSIGHT NOTES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Acosta Danza 100% Cuban UK tour

Dance Consortium is delighted to present 100% Cuban by Acosta Danza at six UK theatres in Spring 2022.

Cuban-born dance superstar Carlos Acosta set up Acosta Danza in 2015 to showcase Cuban performers and the vibrancy of the culture. The company's dancers perform with flair and personality, underpinned by a rigorous training in ballet, contemporary dance and Afro-Cuban dance styles.

Artistic Director Carlos Acosta selects a range of dance works by international and home-grown choreographers for the company's diverse repertoire. *100% Cuban* features a mixed bill of dances by five choreographers. Watch the [tour promo](#) for a flavour of the company style and performances described by critics as **"Generous of spirit, explosive, full of charm."**

These background notes are designed for teachers and students to learn more about Acosta Danza and the dances in 100% Cuban.

- Clickable links take you to video clips from the show, links to Acosta Danza's website and podcast interviews
- Discussion prompts encourage conversations about the show and its themes
- Group bookers have a unique opportunity to visit an open rehearsal

These insight notes are produced by Dance Consortium.

Access to free open rehearsals for group bookers

Education or community group bookers (minimum 10 attendees) are invited to come behind the scenes and watch Acosta Danza in rehearsal. Contact Dance Consortium's Learning and Participation team to find out more: Fiona.Ross@DanceConsortium.com

UK TOUR 2022 presented by DANCE CONSORTIUM

Sadler's Wells London
Wed 9 - Sat 12 Feb 2022 [link](#)

Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham
Tue 15 - Wed 16 Feb 2022 [link](#)

The Lowry Salford Quays
Tue 22 - Wed 23 Feb 2022 [link](#)

Hull New Theatre
Fri 25 - Sat 26 Feb 2022 [link](#)

Marlowe Theatre Canterbury
Tue 1 - Wed 2 Mar 2022 [link](#)

Theatre Royal Plymouth
Fri 4 - Sat 5 Mar 2022 [link](#)



Tell us what you think of the show



Acosta Danza is a must-see company

As a young boy, Carlos Acosta spent his time after school break-dancing in the streets of Havana. Until one day his father decided to put Carlos in a ballet class. He never looked back and has enjoyed a glittering international dance career, including 17 years as a principal dancer at the Royal Ballet. Acosta continues to be an enormous influence in dance – he still performs, is Artistic Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet and established Acosta Danza to showcase Cuban performers.

The culture and history of Carlos' homeland have been important influences throughout his career. In 2015 Acosta set up Acosta Danza to showcase the vibrancy of Cuban culture. When starting his own company, Acosta hoped to support and showcase young creative dance talent emerging from Cuba. Hundreds of Cuban dancers auditioned – coming from both classical ballet and contemporary dance backgrounds.

The company's ethos is to produce dancers that can combine both classical and contemporary genres effortlessly, imbibed with Cuba's rich musical and dance influences. to create repertoire that is exciting and stimulating and that pushes conventional boundaries. The style is watchable, dynamic and connects with audiences irrespective of any prior dance knowledge.

Acosta Danza's method of dance training is based on the Graham technique merged with stylised elements of Afro-Cuban rumba, a popular and traditional dance in Cuba.

The Cuban Modern Dance Technique is unique and characterises the modern and contemporary Cuban dancer. Acosta Danza have further adapted this technique to the characteristics of the dancers in the company who come from both classical and contemporary backgrounds.

Acosta selects a range of dance works by international and home-grown choreographers. Two concepts - Cuban culture and exciting the audience - guide Acosta when he commissions new pieces from Cuban choreographers and international artists. *"If they aren't Cuban, I ask them to give their own vision of the country"*, Acosta says.

Find out more about Acosta Danza

- Artistic Director Carlos Acosta shares his vision for the company and Cuban influences [Watch](#)
- Amidst footage of the company taking daily class, Carlos and company dancers describe the fusion of styles both contemporary and classical ballet which came together to form Acosta Danza [Watch](#)
- Dancers talk about what makes Acosta Danza unique [Watch](#)
- Listen to Carlos Acosta discuss key moments including break dancing in Havana's streets which influenced his journey into dance on Radio 4's [This Cultural Life](#) podcast





100% Cuban features five dance works by different choreographers

Liberto by choreographer Raul Reinoso (15 mins)

Hybrid by choreographer Norge Cedeno (24 mins)

Interval (20 mins)

Paysage, Soudain, la nuit by choreographer Pontus Lidberg (17 mins)

Impronta by choreographer Maria Rovira (7 mins)

De Punta a Cabo by choreographer Alexis Fernandez (Maca) (18 mins)

Running time: 1hr 40 minutes with one interval

Full production credits are available at [Acosta Danza](#).

Liberto

Liberto (translates as ‘freed man’) by Acosta Danza dancer and choreographer Raul Reinoso makes it’s UK debut. The work explores slavery and freedom. It is inspired by two pieces of Cuban literature - the right of every individual to choose their own path in life.

The story depicts a runaway slave and invites the audience to consider different aspects of the past. Afro-Cuban roots are at the heart of the dance which combines folk, modern and contemporary movement vocabulary.

For World Ballet Day 2021 Acosta Danza offer a sneak peek of new works *Liberto* and *Hybrid* from the Havana Studio. Watch the dancers rehearse with choreographers Raul Reinoso and Norge Cedeno. [Watch on Facebook](#)



Hybrid

In **Hybrid** Norge Cedeño Raffo creates a dance universe where the real and the unreal blur as the twelve dancers strive to reach imaginary futures.

The Cuban choreographer was inspired by the myth of Sisyphus who was condemned to roll an immense boulder up a hill, only for it to roll down every time it neared the top – and to repeat this action for eternity, never giving up.

Hybrid harnesses the power of dance to deal with the challenges of life on an island that unveils its mysteries as it journeys from darkness to light.



Paysage, Soudain la nuit

The opening dance of the second half **Paysage, Soudain, la nuit** approaches Cuban culture through rumba (traditional Cuban music with African roots).

The work is by Swedish choreographer Pontus Lidberg who is a rising star in International dance. You can watch an extract of the dance [here](#).

The setting is an evocative landscape installation of a wheat field by Cuban artist Elizabet Cervino. Twelve dancers move with lightness and joy; conjuring the exuberance, playfulness and possibility of youth to the melodic rumba-inspired rhythms. The title of the work loosely translates as ‘the countryside suddenly the night’ and audience sees the dancers converge in the fields under the stars for an evening of dance and romance.

Vera Liber of British Theatre Guide describes the movement as “Arms waving, bodies burgeoning, it is a celebration of youth. Solos, duets, lovers’ meetings, and group dances, infectious, all welcome.”



Impronta

Catalan choreographer Maria Rovira created the short solo **Impronta** (translates as 'footprint') especially for company dancer Zeleidy Crespo. The movement style draws on the dancer's training and is rooted in the folkloric dance styles of Cuba.

The dancer's strong athletic body dazzles with fast, accurate choreography. Limbs fully extended, skirt swishing, the dance is a dynamic display of expression and virtuosity.

The Times describes the performer "*undulating and twisting in a Martha Graham-esque long blue dress, [she] embodies a captivating vision of a modern woman paying homage to a revered heritage*".



De Punta a Cabo

The Havana coastline is the backdrop for **De Punta a Cabo** (translates as 'from end to end') featuring a stage filled with dancers bringing Cuba's contrasts to life – a fusion of development and poverty, tradition and modernity. This dance was one of the pieces with which Acosta Danza made its debut in 2016.

In this work Cuban choreographer Alexis Fernandez (Maca), who now lives in Spain, shares his impressions of contemporary Cuba and its contrasts, with scenes depicting all aspects of society.

The dance is set against the backdrop of Havana's malecón, a broad and long esplanade and seawall which stretches along eight kilometres of coastline and was built to protect the city from the sea. It's the most famous seaside avenue in Cuba, a place where people hang out, perform religious rituals or bring their dreams, music, fights and sorrows, as if it was an outdoor lounge of sorts.





10 discussion points

Acosta Danza's 100% Cuban is well suited to learners studying performing arts, dance, circus and drama courses including GCSE, A/AS Level, BTEC, as well as those in Higher Education. For formal learning, teachers and group leaders may wish to take inspiration from our 10 points for discussion:

1. The duet *Liberto* by Raul Reinoso depicts the story of a slave. Describe what you think happens to him? Which different characters/people does he meet and what impact do they have on him?
2. In *Paysage, Soudain, la nuit* how does the set (an evocative landscape installation of swaying wheat by Cuban artist Elizabet Cerviño) contribute to the atmosphere of the dance? Describe how the dancers interact with the set?
3. In the solo *Impronta* what space, levels and pathways does the dancer use? Did you notice specific changes in dynamics at any point?
4. How does the set and lighting in *De Punta a Cabo* evoke a coastal setting?
5. Were there any distinctive signature or motif movements which caught your eye? How did these contribute to the mood or storytelling of the work?
6. Acosta Danza performs dances which feature some folk and Afro-Cuban movement. Did you recognise this? Describe how the choreographers fuse different dance styles together?
7. How do the choreographers create moments of drama in the show?
8. How did watching the dances make you feel?
9. Which of the five dances did you enjoy the most? Why?
10. Artistic Director Carlos Acosta set up Acosta Danza to "create a company which didn't look like any other company out there". What do you think Carlos Acosta means when he says this? Is the show, in particular the dancers way of moving, different from other dance companies you have seen?

Further information

- **Yuli** – a 2018 feature film depicting the journey of Carlos Acosta from a child (nicknamed Yuli by his father) in a run-down Havana neighbourhood to the international dance stages of the world and the first black principal dancer of the Royal Ballet. View trailer [Watch](#)
- Filmed in the studio and streets of Havana, Carlos Acosta discusses his impetus to create a company to represent the best of Cuban dancers from classical and contemporary dance backgrounds [Watch](#)
- Read Carlos Acosta's biography <https://www.acostadanza.com/en/company/carlos>
- Dance Consortium 100% Cuban tour Spring 2022 <https://danceconsortium.com/touring/acosta-danza-100-cuban/>





Dance Consortium is a group of 18 large theatres located across the UK. With a shared passion for engaging people with contemporary dance from different parts of the world, the theatres work together to find dance companies and productions that will excite, challenge, inspire and entertain their audiences. Since its formation in 2000, Dance Consortium has presented 46 tours by 26 different companies whose performances and education activities have been experienced by hundreds of thousands of people across all parts of the UK.

Dance Consortium’s engagement programmes run alongside tours so audiences can grow their knowledge and love of dance. Access to world-class international performers is at the heart of what we do. Open rehearsals and talks are a fascinating way to learn about the ideas and hard work to bring productions to the stage. Dance Consortium events are led by performers and artists from our touring companies. Fun and inclusive open workshops bring theatre foyers to life, on-stage masterclasses see the next generation of dancers learning from world-class performers.

Get in touch for more information Fiona.ross@danceconsortium.com

www.danceconsortium.com

Acknowledgements

These introductory notes have been produced by Dance Consortium.

They are designed as educational resource materials and should not be sold or exploited for commercial purposes.

Dance Consortium members

- Grand Opera House Belfast
- Birmingham Hippodrome
- Alhambra Theatre Bradford
- Brighton Dome
- Buxton Opera House
- Marlowe Theatre Canterbury
- Wales Millennium Centre Cardiff
- Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, Dublin
- Festival Theatre Edinburgh
- Hull, New Theatre
- Eden Court Theatre Inverness
- Sadler’s Wells London
- The Peacock, London
- Milton Keynes Theatre
- Theatre Royal Newcastle
- Theatre Royal Norwich
- Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham
- Theatre Royal Plymouth
- The Lowry Salford