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La Zorra y El Cuervo: An Oasis for Jazz in Cuba

Manager of nightclub in Havana talks about the local jazz scene

By [Lee Mergner](#)

Recently, JazzTimes partnered with the [Insight Cuba](#) organization to present the [Havana Jazz Experience](#), a series of legal trips to Cuba, with an emphasis on cultural exchange and person-to-person interaction. In addition, there will be a special trip to the [Havana International Jazz Festival](#) in December. For jazz and music fans participating in those travel programs, spending time hearing great music in the nightclubs on the street named La Rampa in Havana is a sure bet. And, at La Zorra y El Cuervo, listeners can take in some of the finest jazz musicians the country has to offer.



1
Scene at La Zorra y El Cuervo jazz nightclub in Havana, Cuba



2

Performance at La Zorra y El Cuervo jazz nightclub in Havana, Cuba



3

Performance at La Zorra y El Cuervo jazz nightclub in Havana, Cuba



4

Performers at La Zorra y El Cuervo jazz nightclub in Havana, Cuba

1 2 3 4

Arturo Delgado, the manager of the club, says that the club originated in 1959 before the Cuban revolution and it became a jazz club in 1997. A popular destination for tourists as well as a hangout for local musicians, the club features live jazz nearly every night. Most of the performers at the club come from Cuba, with a few international artists appearing occasionally. Among the artists who perform there regularly are Roberto Fonseca, Javier Zalba, Lázaro Valdés, Oscar Valdés, Jesús Fuentes, Yasek Manzano, Ruiz López-Nussa, Harold López-Nussa, Cesar López, Pablo Menéndez, Dayramir González, Bellita, Michel Herrera and Alexis Bosch, all of them with their own groups.

The club only holds about 100 people, so the intimate setting only enhances the experience. Here is a video of a recent performance from the club:

Delgado says that the club really comes alive during the Havana International Jazz Festival. “In La Zorra y El Cuervo, you can feel that something good is happening,” he says proudly. “At midnight when the artists finish their performances in the theaters, most of them come here. During the festival we have here two different groups of musicians every night. I think that what makes the festival unique—not only the meeting of friends from different countries, but also the opportunity they have to play together.”

Recent easing of restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens has made cultural exchange a central facet of relations between Americans and Cubans. Delgado believes both groups reap the benefits of this interaction. “I think cross-cultural exchange is important not only for American jazz musicians and jazz fans, but also for Cuban jazz musicians and fans here,” he says, “because this is one of the ways to enrich how to perform jazz.” However, Delgado sees this dynamic as nothing new. “Nowadays people talk about *Cuban jazz*,” he explains. “Something we cannot forget is that cultural exchange between American and Cuban musicians has been taking place since two centuries ago.”

For more information about JazzTimes’ trips to Cuba, visit the Insight Cuba [website](#).

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