

CUBANACÁN: A REVOLUTION OF FORMS

An opera of three acts. In Spanish.

Composer, Roberto Valera

Librettist, Charles Koppelman

Synopsis



PROLOGUE — HAVANA, 1952

Eleguá is the orisha (deity) of roads. He dances, then sings to his power and authority. He is the narrator.

ACT I, SCENE 1 — HAVANA COUNTRY CLUB, 1961

Fidel, Che, and their entourage play golf. Fidel commissions art schools to be built on the course. They need an architect. Selma Diaz knows someone.



ACT I, SCENE 2 — HAVANA PORT, 1952

Elegua sits on the dock. Architect Ricardo Porro returns from Paris. He carries a Wilfred Lam painting. He declares his love for Cuba and his desire to make beautiful and revolutionary work. Elegua warns him to be careful.

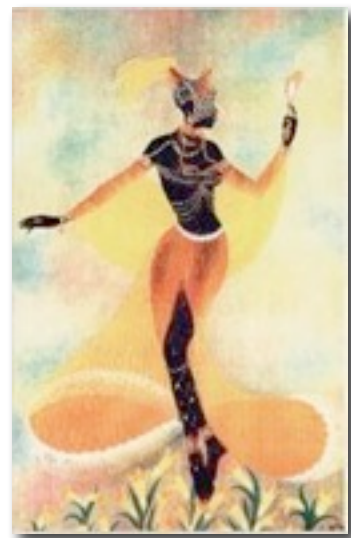


ACT I, SCENE 3 — OUTSIDE PORRO'S APARTMENT, HAVANA, 1958.

A rumba is underway in the street. Inside Porro's apartment he and a group meet in support of the guerillas in the Sierra Maestra. After they leave Selma Diaz informs Porro he is in jeopardy from the Batista regime and needs to leave the country.

ACT II, SCENE 1 — CARACAS VENEZUELA, 1959

Elegua informs us that Porro is in Venezuela. Porro is unfulfilled and longs for his homeland. Oshun enters, the orisha of love, art, and water. Porro adores Oshun. The dance. Oshun informs Porro that the Revolution succeeded in Cuba, that he should return home.



ACT II , SCENE 2 — HAVANA COUNTRY CLUB, 1961

A reprise of the end of Act I/Scene 1. Selma Diaz knows an architect for the art schools.

ACT II, SCENE 3 — HAVANA, INSIDE PORRO'S APARTMENT, 1958.

Porro is with Selma Diaz who tells Porro about the commission from Fidel for the art schools. Selma challenges Porro to take the assignment in spite of the impossible schedule. Porro realizes this is the project he's dreamed of. But he will need help from his two Italian architect friends.



ACT III, SCENE 1 — HAVANA COUNTRY CLUB, 1961 — 1965

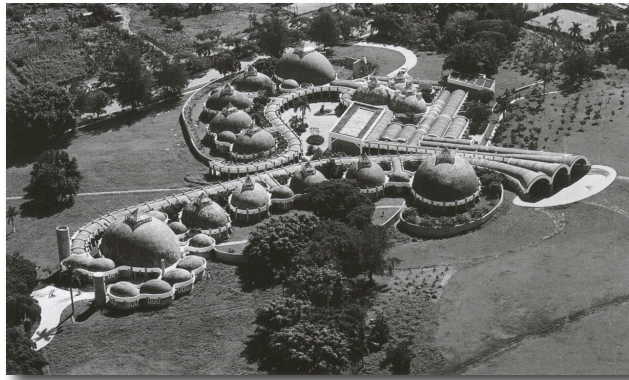
The clubhouse has been converted to a design studio with drafting tables, etc. Porro works alongside partners Vittorio Garatti and Roberto Gottardi. We see visual representations of their designs— projections of blueprints, photos, etc.

Porro tries to come up with a design for the School of Plastic Arts. Oshun appears and provides inspiration. We see projections of images as they appear inside Porro's mind, architectural drawings, blueprints and ultimately forms.



ACT III, SCENE 2 — HAVANA COUNTRY CLUB, 1965

With intensity and joy the community of artists, students, engineers, and workers builds the Schools. Fidel enters with his entourage, frustrated by challenges to the Revolution. Porro needs materials to finish the Schools and asks Oshun for help. Fidel declares the Schools open, even if they are unfinished.



Reality dawns on Porro and the community as work stops. Porro begs them to stay. Porro, heart-broken, tells Fidel the Schools are not done.

Eleggua and Porro watch as Fidel and Oshun dance furiously in a stalemate of love and hate. Eleggua reminds Porro that many things are forbidden. Porro reflects on his fate.

ACT III, SCENE 3 — PORT OF HAVANA, 1966

PORRO is leaving Cuba, exiled again. Oshun begs him to stay. Eleggua reminds everyone they know not their final destination a young artist paints, a young musician plays, and a young dancer dances.

— THE END —