

*"Nowhere have I seen the level of talent, attentiveness to students, and the knowledge of the music combined with the pedagogical skill like I have seen with Carrie and Jesús of ¡Cubanana!" (Assistant Professor, Foreign Language Education, Queens College/CUNY, NYC)*

### **Community Venues - Comments:**

- "¡Cubanana! is a perfect example of how schools and communities can come together for mutual understanding." (Former Executive Director, American Association of Teachers of Spanish & Portuguese)
- It was great. The songs and dance were lively and involved our audience. The slides provided a visual element that many programs don't have and fostered understanding and appreciation for the music's origin and the performer's homeland. (Beachwood Library, Toms River, NJ)
- The instructive aspects of the program are enhanced by Carrie's voice, diction and style. Jesus and Carrie are a musically talented duo and one is left wanting to hear more (especially from Jesus who has an outstanding solo voice). ... Thank you again for a wonderful evening. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. (Frontenac Museum, Union Springs, NY)
- Although I wasn't able to be here for your show, I heard many wonderful comments about the fun music and informative nature of the presentation. (Maggie Head, Nantucket Antheneum, MA)
- The Island Heights Branch (of Ocean County Libraries) collaborated with the Island Heights Grade School to present "Melodias de Cuba" on Friday, Sept 29 in time to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Teachers and students in grades 1-6 enjoyed the lively, rhythmic language, culture and music of Cuba through music and song in a live performance by Jesus Alvarez and Carrie Lavender of Cubanana. This was a wonderful program that taught the salsa, the chachacha and the conga through audience participation. If you are interested in hosting them at your location, check out [www.cubanana.com](http://www.cubanana.com). (Island Heights, NJ)
- Carrie & Jesus created a full experience for our elementary age summer program that included music, dance, songs and a good dose of Cuban culture. Their warmth, enthusiasm and wealth of information made it a week we can't wait to repeat! (Director, summer arts camp, Brooklyn, NY)

### **Elementary Schools - Teacher/Administrator Comments:**

- Exceptional program. Carrie is a natural teacher and their presentation was spot on for elementary students. I guarantee that each child left the auditorium knowing something new Carrie was awesome. Excellent musicians in their own right! (Susan Kaczynski, written evaluation, Music Teacher and Acting Principal in charge of assembly programs. Hubbard School, East Berlin, CT, May 14, 2009)
- This is a brilliant program. Fascinating. Many artists come in as great musicians, but you came in as musicians and teachers. This has a strong educational component. You have a gentle way. Carrie, you're a *natural* teacher who made connections and involved the audience. I can measure the children's enthusiasm for the presenters by their engagement and behavior. They were fixed on you. You presented the history and cultural origins from simple things that happened. Everyone came away knowing something new about Cuba. There's no mystery to the cultural origins you present. I lived all of it. That was brilliant. (Susan Kaczynski, in person after show, Music Teacher and Acting Principal in charge of assembly programs. Hubbard School, East Berlin, CT, May 14, 2009)
- This has been my favorite Young Audiences performance yet! Thank you! (Elementary Teacher, Mary Peake Center, Hampton City Schools, VA)

- We are predominantly Hispanic here in Paterson. Our students constantly tell me they feel like 2nd class citizens -- disenfranchised -- like they don't belong. To hear you, Carrie, say that your biggest dream since early childhood was to belong to Hispanic community and speak Spanish like a native speaker, made them feel very proud of their language and heritage. That was so important for them to learn how much you have been influenced by their culture, and how influential their culture is! I watched their faces light up when you talked about your passion for Latin culture, music and dance! It makes them realize their value. It was heart-warming! Thank you so much for sharing that! (Teacher, K-8 Assembly for Paterson schools, Hosted by Passaic County Community College, Paterson, New Jersey)
- A lot of other programs don't contain as much meat. This was like school only fun. I enjoyed learning as much as the kids did. There are many Puerto Ricans here that speak little English, and the Hispanic kids felt special. (May 6, 2009, Edgewood Elementary School, Maryland)
- "That was the best show we ever had because of how well Carrie and Jesús related to the children." (Teacher, Parker Elementary School, Trenton, New Jersey)
- I recommend contacting the group Cubanana. They can come to your school and do a program and provide you in advance with information, maps, lyrics, etc. They demonstrate song, dance, instruments, the history of Cuba and authentic stories. Their program is very interactive and dramatic. You can reach them at [www.cubanana.com](http://www.cubanana.com). I had them come to my school and they were terrific. . . . For Cuban heritage there is Cubanana. They gave a knock-out presentation in my school that was very informative as well as highly entertaining. They provide excellent materials beforehand to prepare the students, so the work is done for you. . . . I work in a private school in New Jersey and the kids are exposed to a lot of programs and field trips. They thought Cubanana was one of the best they had seen. (Janet Glass, FLES Spanish teacher and nationally-known FLES - Foreign Languages in the Elementary School - methodology professor)
- "We have a big Hispanic population. Their faces were transformed to hear their language, music, culture. Wonderful!!" (Teacher, Franklin Elementary School, Reisterstown, MD, Oct, 2007)
- We loved the multimedia presentation which tied in an in-depth geography, social studies lesson, covering the following points: lots of across the curriculum, and cultural roots of the music. It was right up their alley. *After the assemblies, the school was buzzing!* Everyone really enjoyed the presentation and thought Carrie has a beautiful voice. (Principal, West Avenue Elementary School, Bridgeton, NJ, Abbott District)
- This was our second year using Cubanana and we loved it again! It was even better than last year! Super! It was age appropriate, and a nice mix of education, entertainment, and interaction. (FLES Spanish Teacher, Sewell Elementary School, Sewell, NJ)
- I just wanted you to know how much the children and faculty (including myself) enjoyed your show. The music was great and the lessons taught about Cuban culture was very enlightening. Thank you for coming and we look forward to seeing you next year. (Principal, PS #8, Jersey City, NJ)
- Excellent performance! Kid-friendly and informative. (High Mountain Road Elementary School, Franklin Lakes, NJ)
- A very engaging and thorough performance. The audience "felt" the culture and experienced arts firsthand. (Belvidere School District, Belvidere, NJ)
- Carrie and Jesús did a nice job of giving our rural students insights into the rich culture and history of Cuba and Latin America. . . . The Cubanana assembly was highly informative, interactive, and entertaining. . . . Great cultural experience for the students—I loved the music! (Combined comments, New Bloomfield and Carroll Elementary Schools, New Bloomfield and Shermans Dale, PA)

- The children just loved your performances. Thank you. (Orchard Elementary School, Ridgewood, NJ)
- Thank you for such a wonderful program. The children learned many new things, and were humming the music in the library the rest of the morning!! (Montebello Elementary School, Suffern, NY)
- I have heard the nicest comments from both faculty as well as students. I played your CD in 2nd grade this morning and they really enjoyed it. Thanks for your wonderful presentation. (Skippack Elementary School, Colleagueville, PA)
- We loved having you and Jesus. The teachers and students really enjoyed your presentation. I will recommend Cubanana to the other media specialists next year. (Jackson Annex School, Hempstead, Long Island, NY)
- Cubanana sang and played a variety of instruments from Cuba. The children were involved and loved the performance. Afterwards, we made instruments from ordinary household items, danced the conga, and sang the Guantanamera. You can contact them at cubanana.com. (Brookdale Avenue Elementary School, Verona, NJ)
- Muchísimas gracias por el gran 'espectáculo'! Todo el mundo me pregunta si van a volver. ¡Ojalá! ¡Les vuelvo a agradecer por todo! (Parker Elementary, Trenton, NJ) *(Thank you very much for the spectacular show! Everyone asks me if you are going to come back. I hope so! Once again, thanks for everything!)*
- It was an absolute delight! (Kew Forest School, Forest Hills, NY)
- Wonderful presentation!! Excellent motivation, enthusiasm and captivation of audience attention! Educational and uplifting! Thank you! (New Jersey)
- The music was excellent! (Rising Tide Charter School in Plymouth, MA)

### Secondary Schools - Teacher/Administrator Comments:

- Teachers commented on how educational Carrie and Jesús were. Carrie made teaching moments of it all. Parents said it was all very interesting and done very well. (Lourdes Eckstein, Spanish Teacher, East Ridge Middle School, Ridgefield, CT, May 14, 2009)
- Our students are still talking enthusiastically about Cubanana months after the program. (Manhattan Village Academy (High School), New York, NY)
- Cubanana was quite a sensation here. Above all, students came away with an appreciation for the vitality and importance that music and dance carry in Latin cultures. (Foreign Language Chairperson, Brooklyn Independent School, NY)
- This presentation was the best I've seen in terms of a perfect balance/mix between the educational information and entertainment. As a teacher, I can certainly appreciate that. The performance was also perfectly timed and they arrived at our school early! Yeah! I also liked that they got the kids up to participate. (Naples High School, Naples, NY, May 2008)
- Terrific show and much enjoyed by all. Thank you. (Pierrepoint School, Rutherford, NJ)
- The two of you are an extraordinary combination! (Adult Assembly Spectator, White Mountain School, Bethlehem, NH)
- You guys were great! The kids loved it! Come any afternoon you want! They were singing away in the classroom! . . . Everyone loved it - teachers and kids! (Wilson Middle School, Natick, MA 3/13/2007)
- I loved the program and the students were eager to participate! . . . I enjoyed the presentation fully. I would like them to be invited once again to future events. . . . Very well done and effective. Thoroughly enjoyable too. . . . The performance was fantastic, educational, and well received by the students. Our group seemed very motivated by the music. The students who

volunteered were terrific! ((Combined comments, Warren Hills High School, Washington Twp, Warren Co., NJ)

- This is an excellent interdisciplinary program, incorporating Spanish, geography, music and dance. The length is perfect and the students are actively involved. . . . Just wanted to let you know how wonderfully the assembly was received. Comments were positive all around. What I was impressed by was how much they actually did recall and learn from it, even the new Spanish words. Most of the classes got all the answers right (to a quiz game follow up). So I just wanted to let you know that this was a very successful learning experience! Thanks again! (Briarcliff Middle School, Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES, NY. October 2007)
- THANK YOU! I heard you guys were GREAT and the kids had a blast. (Administrator, PS/IS 266, Bellerose, Queens, NY, June 2, 2009)
- It was incredible! You could have heard a pin drop! I have never seen the [middle school] students more attentive during an assembly. They didn't want to miss a thing you said. (regarding Carrie's informational multimedia presentation on Cuba, 1998, Administrator, Birch Wathen Lenox, New York, NY)

### Colleges/Universities - Teacher/Administrator Comments:

- "The show was fantastic. I was mesmerized!" (Administrator, Sussex County Community College, also a Percussionist, Newton, NJ)
- You are "a creator at heart" and have a true calling in your work. I enjoyed every minute of the performance. You are magnificent. . . . I really enjoyed the show. It was educational and fun. You were really great. Congratulations. . . . You should perform at Carnegie Hall. . . . Your program was GREAT! One of our largest turnouts! The audience was so receptive it was wonderful watching how engaged they all were. Hopefully we can do it again next year. (Combined comments, Sussex County Community College, Newton, NJ)
- Thank you again for your fine performance at Susquehanna University. I have heard many favorable comments about your program . . . informative, fun, and exciting. (Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA)

### Teacher Conferences:

- I saw Cubanana at the Northeast Teachers Conference in NYC last year . . . . THEY WERE GREAT!!!! (NECTFL, Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)
- Carrie and Jesus are superb! . . . They helped refuel my passion for the work I do! Their enthusiasm is infectious! . . . Great, terrific program. . . . Fun with much enthusiasm. Great audience participation! . . . The video clips (visual aids), instruments and songs were incorporated in a lovely way to demonstrate the culture, teaching and learning. . . . Excellent and entertaining workshop! . . . Excellent. Very inspiring. . . . This was really relaxing. Wonderful performance! . . . Interesting and talented introduction to Cuban music and dance-well-done. . . . Very interesting and engaging. I'm sure that my students would love this! . . . (Written Evaluations by Teacher Participants, NYCAFLT)
- On behalf of the Planning Committee of the NYSAFLT-NYCAFLT/UFT New York City Annual Professional Conference for foreign language educators, we would like to thank you for joining us on November 1, 2003. Your presentation was informative and offered concrete suggestions for professional enrichment. It was greatly appreciated by all who attended. You are a valued member of our profession and your presence contributed to the success of the event. Enclosed you will find some comments from teachers who attended your workshop. (NYC Association of Foreign Language Teachers Conference Co-Chairpersons)

- I have seen your show at the Northeast Conf. last year! Great! I would like to have you for an assembly at school or for a school event for the community. (NECTFL, Spanish Teacher from West Orange, NJ)
- I enjoyed your Nov. 1 presentation. I truly enjoy your CD and the afternoon of Cuban entertainment. I'd like to know how much an assembly program would be. (NYCAFLT, FLES teacher, Bellmore, Long Island, NY)
- I saw your performance at John Jay college in November. I was impressed with it. How do I go about having you performing at my school? (NYCAFLT, Spanish Teacher from NYC public school)
- I saw Cubanana perform at the recent conference for foreign language teachers at John Jay College and I was so entertained! I really enjoyed the performance and I am sure that my students would too. I am e-mailing to find out the rates for an afternoon assembly. (NYCAFLT, Spanish teacher of heritage students, MS/HS 368--InTech Academy, Bronx, NY)
- I teach at New Dorp HS IN SI I saw you at John Jay Coll a few years ago. You were great I was hoping to have to come to NDHS (NYCAFLT, Spanish teacher, Staten Island, NY)
- We saw you perform at SUNY Purchase. We'd love to plan an assembly at our school for next year. (SUNY Purchase, teacher from Briarcliff Schools, NY)
- Teachers from our foreign language department saw your group perform at SUNY Purchase and were interested in bringing your group to our Middle School in March 2007. (2 years later, another Briarcliff School, NY)
- I loved your presentation. I told my parents all about it last year. I was born in Cuba and came here when I was two. My parents would love to your presentation. Do you perform in the Baltimore area??? I will keep on spreading the great news about your presentation!!!!!! (NECTFL, 2004, Spanish teacher, Baltimore, MD)

**Special Education Populations - Comments:**

- "The artists left us with smiles on our faces and songs of salsa in our hearts!" (Administrator, Regional Day School, special education population, Jackson, NJ)
- The artists tailored their presentation beautifully and musically to our "special" population! The staff and students actively participated in the performance. . . . Excellent program. I enjoyed it as much as the students and learned the history of the music. I would recommend the program to anyone! Super! . . . Excellent! . . . Come back! (Combined comments, Jackson Regional Day School, Jackson, New Jersey)
- I am always amazed by Young Audience performances, but especially this one because of the consistent music to help students interact with the educational component. This was the first time my autistic student sat contented for an entire assembly. (Teacher's Aide, Special Education Autism Class, Edgerton Elementary School, New London, CT)

**Student Comments:**

- You guys rocked!!!! (Holmes Road Elementary School, Rochester, NY, May 2008)
- That was the best assembly and most fun we've ever had! (Jackson Regional Day School, Jackson, NJ; and McKinley School, Fairfield, CT)
- You guys were really cool! (Silver Bay Elementary School, Toms River, NJ)
- We had an amazing time watching and doing all the Cuban music and dances. (Lower Merion School District, PA)
- The videos in the background really helped us understand. (Gladwyne Elementary School, PA)
- Working with a real Cuban musician was totally awesome! (Birch Wathen Lenox, NYC)

- I loved your performance. . . . I really like how you taught kids how to dance and play music. I also like how you taught us to speak in Cuba. . . . I loved your dancing and I also loved your music. I did all the dances at home. I love to dance. . . . I loved the songs that you sang. I wish I could hear you again. . . . I loved your voices. . . . I really liked the instruments. They were really cool. I especially liked the drums. I wish I could be playing them right now. . . . I liked it when you taught us about your culture. I want you to come back again, Cubanana! . . . I hope you let other kids experience all the fun that you gave to us. (Combined comments, High Mountain Road School, Franklin Lakes, NJ)
- I want you to come and play music at our school again. (Perelman Jewish Day School, Philadelphia, PA)
- Hola q esten bien y megusta (sic) sus musicas y los bailes megustan (sic) los bailes de cuba porque soy de alla q dios los bendiga mucho y sigen (sic) con los bailes y las (sic) musica ok. (Worcester, MA) *(Hi, I hope you are well, and I like your music and dance. I like dances from Cuba because I am from there. May God bless you a lot, and keep up your dance and music.)*
- Hi my name is Irving Acevedo. I just saw your show. It was great. Next time I hope you pick me because I like playing instruments. (New London, CT)
- I loved your show at Ruckersville Elem. (Ruckersville, VA)