



Aṣẹ-ilé 2026

MEETOURMAESTROS & ARTISTS

HÉCTOR OVIEDO

Héctor Oviedo Abreu is a Cuban dancer, choreographer, percussionist and teacher from Havana. His career includes work with Raíces Profundas, the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba and the celebrated rumba ensemble Yoruba Andabo, with whom he toured internationally.

Known for his command of rumba Columbia, Orisha dance and Abakuá traditions, Héctor brings together expressive movement, musical knowledge and cultural understanding. A returning collaborator with Damarys Farres and Cuban School of Arts, he has shared his artistry through Aṣẹ-ilé, Ashe Espresso, Puro Sabor Cubano and CUBAinBrighton.



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SERGIO ANTONIO LARRINAGA

Sergio Antonio Larrinaga is a Cuban dancer, choreographer and teacher with more than three decades of experience in Afro-Cuban and folkloric dance. His career includes work as a soloist and choreographer with the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba and artistic direction with the University of Havana Folkloric Ensemble and Yoruba Andabo.

He has also taught and choreographed at Havana's Teatro Variedades América, worked as an instructor with the Italian Federation of Professional Dance and served as an international competition judge.

A long-time colleague and cultural ally of Damarýs Farres, Sergio returns to Aşę-ilé with a deep commitment to sharing Cuba's living dance traditions.



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DAMARYSFARRES

Damarys Farres is the founder of Cuban School of Arts and Aşë-ilé Lab, bringing cultural research and dynamic dance training together. A graduate of Cuba's National Ballet School, her work draws on Afro-Cuban, folkloric and popular Cuban dance, from Yoruba and rumba traditions to Son Cubano and reggaeton.

Her independent cultural projects include CUBAinBrighton, El Son Cubano Festival, Puro Sabor Cubano and Master Workshops. Her choreography, teaching and collaborations include Ayanfe: A Yoruba Opera, the Acosta Foundation, the BBC, Grupo Ocha and the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba.

At the heart of Aşë-ilé 2026, Damarys connects movement, rhythm and cultural context, creating a space for deeper learning and the celebration of Cuba's living traditions.



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GERARDO DE ARMAS SARRIA

Born in Havana and immersed in rumba from childhood, Gerardo de Armas Sarria is a Cuban singer, percussionist and teacher. A former singer with Yoruba Andabo, he has performed in Cuba and internationally, and his voice features on recordings by Iroso Obbá and The London Lukumi Choir.

Now based in Italy, Gerardo has collaborated with Carlos Acosta and Eliel Lazo and led singing and percussion workshops across the UK and Europe. He founded Gerardo y su Rumba Aché and created Alma de Tambor, a female percussion and vocal project celebrating rumba, Yoruba and Palo traditions.

A regular collaborator on Cuban School of Arts projects over the years, Gerardo returns to Aşë-ilé after a long time away. It is an honour to welcome him back and share his knowledge once again.



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RANDY LESTER HECHAVARRIA

Born in Santiago de Cuba, Randy Lester Hechavarria is a percussionist whose playing brings together Haitian, West African and Spanish influences. His dynamic performances have enlivened festivals including Glastonbury and WOMAD, sharing the energy and richness of Cuban music with international audiences.

His style reflects the cultural meeting points of eastern Cuba, where percussion carries stories of heritage, migration and community. Through live performance, Randy shares the connection between Cuban rhythm and dance, bringing warmth, energy and a distinctive musical presence to the Aşë-ilé artist line-up.



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Ase-ilé 2026

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LÁZARO LOPEZ

Lázaro López is a Cuban dancer and teacher with a rich foundation in Afro-Cuban folklore. A 1989 graduate of Havana's Escuela Nacional de Arte, his training encompassed classical, contemporary, folkloric and popular dance.

He went on to perform as a principal dancer with Raíces Profundas, Pinos Nuevos and Compañía Folklórica Cubana J.J., touring Asia, Europe and Latin America. He also taught dance and percussion on summer courses at the Escuela Nacional de Arte.

Lázaro moved to London in 2000 to appear as a lead dancer in the West End production Lady Salsa. A regular collaborator with Cuban School of Arts, Lázaro shares his knowledge of Cuban music, movement and tradition through our projects, including Ashe Espresso.



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