

URBANGATEWAYS

CHA CHA CHA: LATIN AMERICAN DANCES

NELSON & PAOLA SOSA



TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Two chairs, without arms
- One table (eight foot table ideal)
- Access to electrical outlets

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Cha Cha Cha takes a trip through Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean, and explores the music and dance of each culture along the way. This show not only features the artistry and energy of Nelson and Paola, but students and teachers will also be integral parts of the journey! Highlights from this music and dance show include explorations and performance of Merengue, Cha Cha Cha, Bachata, and Cumbia. In this show the audience participation comes in two different directions. While a group of students learn how to play instruments for Latin rhythms, another group learns how to dance basic steps of Salsa, Cumbia, Merengue, Cha Cha Cha, and Bachata. The idea is that students play and dance while they learn about the countries in Latin America. Students can visualize where the countries are located, what their flag looks like, and what are the typical instruments used on each rhythm. The audience will also recognize the importance of other cultures in Latin rhythms, such as African and European. They will learn about the Spanish speaking countries and the role of Spain in these countries, as well as about the Brazilian Jungle (The Amazon), and the islands on the Caribbean.

MEET THE ARTIST

A native of Los Andes, Chile, Nelson Sosa has been singing and performing in America since the early 1970s. He has worked extensively with Chicago's bilingual and Spanish speaking communities to provide textbooks and study aids. He keeps strong ties with Latin America by regularly receiving educational aids, learning new folklore, songs, rhythms and guitar techniques. With a deep love and respect for his native land, Nelson performs with vigor and understanding to preserve and communicate in his native language and music. He has performed at cultural institutions across Chile, at the schools and cultural exchanges in Chicago, and has won honors at numerous competitions, such as the Festival de Vina del Mar in Chile.

Paola Sosa has been singing since she was 10 years old; professionally for the last 15 years with her father Nelson, presenting entertainment and educational shows. She had been involved in teaching Chilean dances with the group "Paisajes de Chile" with the sponsor of Chilean Consulate. Together, Nelson and Paola Sosa have performed in different states and festivals, sometimes with other musicians and dancers.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

The Latin American countries stretch from just south of the United States to Chile and Argentina at the tip of South America, plus the islands of the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Although Latin American nations share many common threads, all have greatly varied cultures and folklores. For example, the culture of Brazil has been influenced by settlers from Portugal and Spain, Africans who were brought across the Atlantic as slaves, Native American populations and German and Central Europeans who migrated after World War II. Other Latin American nations have similar types of cultural mixtures. It is this cultural mix that adds to the vibrant and expressive ways of life in Latin American countries.

Music and dance play a large role in much of Latin American life. Different types of songs and rhythms dominate the different countries, but nearly every country is known for its love of contemporary music and native folk songs. The rhythms of Latin America, the ways of expressing emotion and telling stories through music, and the pieces created for dance or worship are all deeply seated parts of Latin American life.

Folk music is the music that has been played for centuries by a relatively stable, settled group of people in one region. The folk music of Latin America has the flavor of Spain and Portugal, just like their language, and uses of many of the same instruments, including the six-string guitar, but Latin American music is also influenced by Native American styles and by the use of African rhythms brought across the Atlantic by slaves. The story of Latin American music mixes history, politics, culture and geography into a network that connects all the people in that region.

Nelson and Paola take students on an imaginary journey to seven Latin American countries, discussing and demonstrating their rhythmic styles and associated dances along the way. Their examples illustrate not only the differences in music and dance from country to country, but also the similarities among the Latin American countries that make their cultures unique.

RESOURCES

Latin American Music and Dance

<https://goo.gl/z2JLmm>

YouTube Video: Roots of Rhythm (three-part series exploring the history of Latin music)

<https://goo.gl/JP83Ri>

YouTube Video: The Basics of Latin Music

<https://goo.gl/nsFhnK>

Coloring Page:

<https://goo.gl/kMBPZU>



Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

Dance Literacy:

History and Culture

(IL 27B; Nat'1 5)

- Discuss and explore the role of dance in celebrations or events.
- Investigate aspects of dance in various cultures or historical periods.
- Describe similarities and differences in dance movements from various cultures and forms.

Critical and Creative Thinking (IL 25B; Nat'1 4, 6)

- Define the role of an audience and performer in dance.

Interpretation & Evaluation:

Interpretation & Communication (IL 26B, 27A; Nat'1 3)

- Discuss various dance movement experiences and express preferences.

VOCABULARY

AMAZONAS

The largest state in Brazil, named after the Amazon River.

BACHATA

Style of music that spread to Latin America in the early 20th century after beginning in the Dominican Republic. The associated dance gained popularity in the region in the latter part of the century.

CABAZA

Auxiliary percussion instrument that features ball bearings to make a scraping sound when rotated.

CARNIVAL

The celebration in Latin America held the day before Ash Wednesday, in which everyone feasts before they fast for lent. Many carnival style songs and rhythms are used in this celebration.

CHA CHA CHA

Music style that began in Cuba typically associated with a particular rhythmic pattern that is mimicked in the dance style.

CORRIDO

Type of song that tells a story, popular in Mexico today.

CUECA

The national dance of Chile, it is also a category of musical styles and their dances from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Peru.

CUMBIA

Columbian music genre that was created by combining Native Columbian, African, and Spanish music styles.

FLAUTAS

Spanish for “flute;” a woodwind instrument identified by a tube with a series of holes.

GUIRO

Percussion instrument from Latin America that is made from a hollow gourd with notches cut in the side and one end open, played by rubbing a stick across the ridges.

MACHU PICCHU

The lost city of the Incan people. A huge ruin in south central Peru, it was discovered in 1911 on a huge rock between two mountain peaks in the Andes.

PANDERO

Handheld drum of Puerto Rican origin that was adapted from the tambourine.

SHOW INTRODUCTION

On the day of the performance, please have someone from the school read the following introduction when welcoming the performers onstage. “Today we have a show from Urban Gateways. Cha Cha Cha: Latin American Dances is going to take us on a trip. This will be a journey with music and dance presented by father and daughter Nelson & Paola Sosa. Please give the performers your full attention, and welcome them to the stage.”

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Have students research a Latin American country, focusing on the music, dance, and costumes. Afterwards, have students give a brief presentation (or share with a partner), and then have a class discussion about the similarities and differences of these countries.
2. Hang a map of Latin America. Have a sign that reads “Where we are from/Where we have been” and encourage students to place push pins into map to represent where they are from or places they have visited.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Have students fold a piece of paper in 4 squares. Play 4 different Latin American styles of music (salsa, tango, steelpan, bachata) for one minute each. Have students color/draw in each box while the music is playing. Tell them to color/draw based on how the music makes them feel or the rhythm of the song. After all four songs are played, have students share with a partner about what they colored/drew.