

INDYCA, RAI CINEMA, FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL & VALDIVIA FILM  
PRESENT

# CUBAN DANCER

A FILM BY ROBERTO SALINAS





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CANADA, ITALY, CHILE | 2020 | DOCUMENTARY | 94 MINUTES | 4K

Indyca with RAI Cinema in co-production with Valdivia Film and Filmoption International Inc  
in collaboration with Microdocumentaries

With the support of Ibermedia, Piemonte Doc Film Fund, Torino Film Lab/Creative Europe

**[filmoptioninternational.com](http://filmoptioninternational.com)**

**A passionate  
coming of age  
ballet tale,  
danced between  
Cuba and the  
U.S.A., in a time  
of change.**



# SYNOPSIS



Alexis is a 15 year old talented and proud student of the National Ballet School of Cuba. He spends his life practicing chassé and entrechats with his girlfriend and dance partner Yelenia. However, when his parents move to Florida to be reunited with his sister, his happy teenage world is turned upside down. He's forced to leave behind Cuba, his colleagues at school, his relatives, and his beloved girlfriend.

Facing rejection and homesickness for his native Cuba, Alexis feels lost and alone. When he gets accepted in the prestigious Harid Ballet school he has to start all over. He doesn't speak the language, has no friends and his Cuban style of ballet does not match the American school method. Meanwhile, his parents are making sacrifices for his career working extra hours at their humble jobs. Alexis knows that he has to find his way quickly in the bourgeois and elitist world of American ballet while trying to remain faithful to his roots.

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

If dance is the secret language of the soul, Cuban dance reveals the feeling of a people in constant dialectic with its own identity. Being Cuban means to live an irremediable conflict: the visceral love for the island and the need for many to abandon it. The despedida, the farewell, is a daily affair in Cuba. Cuban art is nourished by the poetics of farewell. For Alexis, the experience of farewell came at the age of fifteen. Farewell to the first love and to that Cuban method of ballet proudly taken as a moral guide. A short distance away, in Florida, where Alexis' artistic and sentimental education continued, people grow up and dance differently. The chaotic urban life of Havana is replaced by the placid order of the "gated Communities", the indoctrination of the National Ballet School of Cuba by the liberal model of the HARID Conservatory in Boca Raton.

Nevertheless, these seemingly antithetical worlds complement and need each other. On their capacity for dialogue depends the path of integration of many young Latinos, like Alexis, who expect respect for their identity as well as economic opportunities. For their parents, perhaps it is too late to escape the ghetto of Miami's Latino community and an integration that often tastes of exploitation. Alexis and her companions are beyond these stereotypes. For them, it's just background noise. In the hall where the rehearsal is taking place there is only dance.

# FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Alice nella città (within Rome IFF) 2020,  
Habana International Festival of New Latin American Cinema 2020,  
Miami Film Festival 2021 (Knight Made in MIA Award),  
Glocal Film festival 2021 (Best Documentary),  
San Francisco Film Festival 2021 (Audience Award),  
Visions du Réel 2021,  
DocsBarcelona 2021,  
One World Film Festival 2021,  
DOK Munken 2021,  
Docaviv 2021



# DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Roberto Salinas is a Director, Producer, Screenwriter, Director of Photography. His previously directed documentary THE TROUBLEMAKER, BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE UNITED NATIONS was co-produced by Italian GA&A productions and New York based Sirk Productions and developed with the support of the MEDIA program of the European Union. It premiered at the 36th Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, La Habana, Cuba and was official selection of the 16th Havana Film Festival New York; the 11th Biografilm Festival, Italy; the 16th International Human Rights film Festival, Buenos Aires Argentina and the 32nd Chicago Latino Film Festival, among others. Salinas has worked as a documentary director and D.O.P. on numerous productions including feature documentaries, commercials and TV series in Italy and internationally. His work is focused mainly on social and cultural issues. Roberto lives between Managua, Nicaragua and Rome, Italy.

**2020**

CUBAN

DANCER

**2014** THE TROUBLEMAKER, BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE UNITED NATIONS



# CREDITS

**DIRECTED BY**

Roberto Salinas

**STORY BY**

Roberto Salinas & Laura Domingo Aguero

**PRODUCED BY**

Paul Cadieux – Filmoption International (Canada)

Simone Catania – Indyca (Italy)

Fernando Lataste – Valdivia Films (Chile)

**CHOREOGRAPHY**

Laura Domingo Aguero

**CINEMATOGRAPHY**

Roberto Salinas

**SOUND**

Arthur Byer

**EDITING**

Abraham Lifshitz

**MUSIC**

Caroline Chaspoul & Eduardo Henriquez (Beta Pictoris)

**WITH**

Alexis Francisco Valdes Martinez, Alexis (Titico) Valdes Quer,  
Mayelin Valdes Martinez, Laura Olivares Martinez, Yelenia Riveron  
Gomez, Catherine Doherty & Hidetora Tabe





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## DISTRIBUTION

Filmoption International

514.931.6190

## PRESS

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Rai Cinema



MICRO DOCUMENTAIRES

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