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"Don't Mess with the Saints": Popular Music and Afro-Cuban Religion

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Cuban Research Institute

Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs



“Don’t Mess with the Saints”: Popular Music and Afro-Cuban Religion Lecture by Alan West-Durán

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 | 7:00 PM | FIU Modesto A. Maidique Campus | Green Library (GL) 220

Using the title of Ignacio Piñeiro’s “No juegues con los santos” (Don’t Mess with the Saints), this talk will examine the influence of Ocha, Palo, and Abakuá in Cuba’s music and their intimate relationship with Cuban daily life. Whether it is love, health, friendships, food, ethical dilemmas, hanging out in the streets, or expressing faith, these religions are deeply embedded in everyday activities. Using examples like “Yerberero moderno” (Nestor Mili), “Mambo Abacua” (Arsenio Rodríguez), “Niño santo” (Omar Sosa), “Soy todo” (Los Van Van), “Canto para Elewá y Changó” (Orishas), “Ponle fe” (Eleyó), “Misa cubana” (José María Vitier), and “Loké Ayé” (Síntesis), these everyday expressions are deeply linked to Cuban notions of justice and joy, along with the Yoruba concept of coolness. And equally, both the music and the religions embody a wisdom, a cultural memory, and a spirit of resistance.

Dr. Alan West-Durán is Associate Professor of Latin American Studies in the Department of Cultures, Societies, and Global Studies at Northeastern University in Boston. He is a poet, translator, critic, and essayist. His interests and research are in Caribbean literature, Afro-Cuban culture (art, music, religions, and literature) and Latin American film. He is the author of *Cuba: A Cultural History* (2017) and editor-in-chief of *Cuba: People, Culture, History* (2011).

This event is free and open to the public.

To confirm your attendance and for more information, please call (305) 348-1991 or write cri@fiu.edu.