

Music

Timbalive headlines latest Little Havana Social Club concert



Miami band Timbalive will perform Friday, March 18, at the Koubek Center in Little Havana. (Timbalive / Courtesy)



By **Barbara Corbellini Duarte** · Contact Reporter

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Cuban percussionist Leo Garcia moved to Miami in 1999 searching for what he calls the "mecca of Latin music." Nearly a decade later, he started the band Timbalive.

Little did he know that he would find the most passionate audiences in places such as China, Switzerland and Russia.

"We were truly impressed and surprised with Russia, not only because they knew our music, but because they knew how to dance, too," Garcia recalls. "I think much of that merit belongs to the Cuban dance schools that are all over Europe, and they teach them to dance with our music."

Timba, which the band performs, is a Cuban rhythm that became popular in the 1990s. It mixes funk, hip-hop, reggae and Afro-Cuban folklore. It's often referred to as the Cuban salsa. When Garcia moved to Miami, he didn't find many places playing timba.

"There was Cuban music, but everything was old," he recalls. "And I thought Miami needed this contemporary Cuban music."

Timbalive will perform March 18 at the Koubek Center in Miami. The show is part of the new **MDC** Live Arts dance and concert series, Little Havana Social Club. The event will begin at 7:30 p.m. with a dance class that will be followed by the concert. The band will perform songs from their most recent album, "Gasolina de Avion," which Garcia composed with Cuban singer-songwriter Descemer Bueno. The album was released in January.

Timbalive will go on tour in Europe throughout June and July. Garcia says the popularity of Cuban music overseas doesn't surprise him anymore.

"What was missing was promotion, and we're still missing some," he says. "But it's proven that this is a highly contagious and danceable music for all ages and cultures."

Little Havana Social Club will begin 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 18, at the Koubek Center, 2705 SW Third St, in Miami. Admission is \$10. Call 305-539-3000 or go to KoubekCenter.org.

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