



# *Mi Gente:* Fania Records & New York Salsa Music

**Est. Time: 45 minutes**

**Subjects: History, Social Studies, General Music**

**Age Range: High School**

**See the full lesson [here!](#)**

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



What is Fania Records, and how does it reflect the history of Spanish-speaking Caribbean communities in New York City?

- Explore the Fania Records label and its artists Celia Cruz, Héctor Lavoe, and Johnny Pacheco?
- Trace the historic presence of Caribbean people in New York City
- Examine the folk music and dance traditions of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico
- Locate where the Caribbean is on a map and where Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico are on a map

Mi Gente (mee hehn - teh)

- Do you know what “*mi gente*” translates to in English? If not, look it up.
- What do you think of when you hear the phrase “my people”?

# Fania All Stars

- Did you hear the phrase “*mi gente*” anywhere in the clip? If so, where?
- What instruments were being played?
- How would you describe the singing?
- What language are the lyrics sung in?
- What was the audience doing during the concert?
- How would you describe the demeanor of the musicians? Do they seem serious or more playful?
- How would you describe the demeanor of the audience?
- What else did you observe about the video?

# Fania Records and New York Salsa: Music, Dance, & Migration

Play [this clip](#), then consider or ask a partner:

- What musician is featured at the beginning of the clip? Where is he from?
- What is Salsa, and how did it develop?
- What is Fania Records?
- What other musicians were part of Fania Records? Where were they from originally?





# How Caribbean Culture Was Born in New York

Play [this clip](#), then consider or ask a partner:

- What was the major crop in the Caribbean?
- What is an archipelago?
- In the 1970s, what city in the United States became home to many people from the Caribbean?
- The musicians who created Salsa came from many different places. What did they have in common?
- What is the name of the Cuban singer who we saw in a rehearsal and a performance in this video?



# Explore Fania Records Artists

Choose **two** of the following musician to explore from the list below. Read the documents for the two artists you chose and answer the questions below.

- [Johnny Pacheco](#)
- [Celia Cruz](#)
- [Héctor Lavoe](#)
- [Fania Records](#)

## Questions:

- On which islands were your subjects born?
- What role does your subject play in the creation of Salsa?
- What is their relationship to New York? Were they born there or did they migrate?
- Did the artist you are researching record “Quimbara” or Mi Gente”? Or, if you are researching Fania Records, answer the following question: Who recorded “Quimbara”? Who recorded “Mi Gente”?



# SUMMARY

- Fania Records was founded or established by Johnny Pacheco, and is known for producing Salsa music
- Salsa music is a mixture of American Jazz and Afro-Cuban traditional rhythms and songs
- African rhythms reached the Caribbean through the transatlantic slave trade
- Cuban artist Celia Cruz, Puerto Rican artist Héctor Lavoe, and Dominican artist Johnny Pacheco were leading figures at Fania Records

# BE CURIOUS

Choose an artist featured in this lesson to learn more about by following the links below:

- **Celia Cruz: The Voice Of Experience:**
  - <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/17/759193674/celia-cruz-the-voice-of-experience>
- **Remembering Johnny Pacheco Of Fania Records:**
  - <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/24/970951550/remembering-johnny-pacheco-of-fania-records>
- **Before The Rumble In The Jungle, Music Rang Out At Zaire 74:**
  - <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/14/532636128/before-the-rumble-in-the-jungle-music-rang-out-at-zaire-74>



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