Lecuona and four of the female soloists who appeared with him at a 1943 concert in Carnegie Hall.

This photo was taken at MGM studios in 1931. Lecuona is at far left. He is accompanied by the Lecuona Cuban Boys Band. Buster Keaton appears dancing in the middle.

Lecuona frequently traveled with friend and colleague, composer Gonzalo Roig. They appear with John Sperry (Lecuona’s attorney) and NY Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia

Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies Presents

The Music of Ernesto Lecuona

Pianist
Huberal Herrera

Elebash Recital Hall

The Graduate Center
City University of New York
Friday, May 24, 2002    7:00 P.M.
Ernesto Lecuona was the most important musician in Cuban musical life during the first half of the 20th century. Rich compositions, often imbued with Afro-Cuban rhythms, were his unmistakable signature. Born on August 6, 1905 in Guanabacoa, a suburb of Havana, Lecuona first established himself as an outstanding pianist, graduating from the National Conservatory with the Gold Medal in performance at the age of seventeen. He came to New York City to give concerts and here, in 1916, made his first public appearance outside Cuba. International success as a pianist occurred seven years later, also in New York, but by then composition had become his primary musical activity. Ernesto Lecuona was a prolific composer, writing in many different forms, including musical reviews, zarzuelas (Spanish opera), cantatas, operettas, and piano pieces. His lyrical songs are his most remembered works. Among Lecuona's many achievements were the founding of the Havana Symphony (with Gonzalo Roig), the Lecuona Cuban Boys Band, and La Orquesta de La Habana. Lecuona wrote numerous film scores in the '30s and '40s and, in 1942, was nominated ("Always in My Heart") for an Academy Award. Among other film scores were: "Under Cuban Skies," MGM (1931); "Free Soul," MGM (1931); "Susana Lenox," MGM (1931); "Pearl Harbor," MGM (unknown year); "The Cross and The Sword," MGM (unknown year); "One More Tomorrow," Warner Bros. (1946); and "Carnival in Costa Rica," 20th Century Fox (1947). Ernesto Lecuona died in the Canary Islands (Spain) on November 29, 1963.

Pianist Huberal Herrera was born in Mayari, near Holguín, Cuba and studied music at the Hubert de Blanck and Amadeo Roldán Conservatories. He holds a degree in law from the Universidad de La Habana. Herrera's professional career as a concert pianist began in 1954 with a recital of works by Cuban composers. He has since presented recitals at concert halls throughout his country and abroad featuring works by Carlos Fariñas, Héctor Angulo, Ernesto Lecuona, Neno González, Félix Guerrero, Hector Villa-Lobos, and Francisco Mignone. He has toured Europe, Asia, Africa, and the United States. As a composer, his oeuvre includes works for chorus, piano, voice and piano, and chamber ensemble. One of the foremost interpreters of the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona's piano music, Herrera has investigated, researched, and transcribed Lecuona's works, including the revision of Lecuona's complete collection of piano compositions. This repertoire encompasses more than eighty pieces that Herrera has presented as a three-recital series on various occasions. Recently Herrera has served as jury member at national and international piano competitions honoring Ernesto Lecuona.

This event is organized by the Bildner Center in affiliation with The Cuba Project (Queens College and The Graduate Center – City University of New York), with generous support from the Ford Foundation.