

V = Voice-over **CA = Carlos Acosta**

- V:** Carlos Acosta is one of the greatest living ballet dancers. He was the first black principal dancer at Covent Garden in London. He is famous around the world and in his home country of Cuba he is a national hero. Carlos now travels the world but always sees Cuba as his home. All his family are still there. In Cuba he isn't a foreigner. He says that in Cuba a child learns to dance first and then to speak. He talks about the heat and the sea, about dance and music and happiness.
- CA:** Cuba is always going to be my home. In my heart, that's the only country, you know, and because that's where all my relatives are, my memories, you know, and this is the only place I'm never going to be a foreigner. You learn how to dance first, then you learn how to speak, you know, in Cuba. It's something that's been passed on through generation to generation. And it's also, you know, the heat, and the tropic, and the sea and ... it's almost that's what, er, it's asking for, dance and music and happiness.
- V:** Carlos was born in Havana, the youngest of eleven children in a poor family. He often missed school. He was a champion break-dancer in the streets but didn't want to be a professional dancer. When he was nine, his father sent him to ballet school. Carlos hated it. He told his father he wanted to do something else.
- CA:** So, I, I did tell him many times that I didn't want to be ... and that I wanted to do something else – football, you know – but he didn't want to hear it. So, I went and I ... but thank God he didn't want to hear it because thanks to that I'm here now.
- V:** At ballet school, Carlos wasn't always a good student and didn't want to be a dancer. But, when he was thirteen, Carlos saw the Cuban National Ballet and he loved it so much that he changed his mind about ballet. He decided to work hard and three years later, at sixteen, he travelled to Europe for the first time. That year he won four major dance competitions and became famous all over the world. Now he is an international star and he dances in many countries, but he still goes home to Cuba several times a year to visit his family.