

# Robert Davis

[www.robertdavis.biz](http://www.robertdavis.biz)

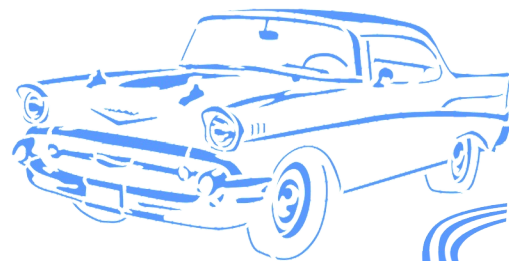
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*Yuca con Mojo* is the name of a typical Cuban meal that is made from *yuca* (a root vegetable also known as cassava) served with a garlic citrus sauce or *mojo* in Spanish. And *mojo* is the power and magic of the blues! Robert Davis is a Toronto-based acoustic blues guitarist and harmonica player who provides the vocals and harmonica on his new CD. *Yuca Con Mojo: Cuban Blues* was inspired by his deep connections to both the blues and to Cuba. Recorded in Cuba.



## ROBERT DAVIS



## BLUES

<https://robdeeb blues.bandcamp.com/>

### Cuban Blues - a saucy mix of blues with Cuban Roots!

*"This CD has been on my mind since 2016, when I met and started jamming with a Cuban blues band called Bluespirit in Santa Clara. Since then, I've played with the band whenever I've been in the country. This CD is my attempt to interpret blues songs that could be a bridge to a Cuban audience."*

Toronto release November 28, 2018:  
Robert Davis (Vocals, Harmonica),  
Fraser Melvin, (E Gtr, Lap Steel),  
Jay Danley (Cuban tres guitar)  
Scott Hunter (Bass), Max Senitt  
(Percussion)

There are lots of rumbas in the blues and of course the Bo Diddley beat is a clave rhythm. In 2018, Davis recruited **Fraser Melvin**, the amazing young Canadian bluesman with an old soul and two creative Cuban musicians, **Yasel Giral** and **Pedro Pérez** to help him realize his idea. They recorded 9 songs live off the floor in three days in a recording studio in **Santa Clara, Cuba** in early May 2018. Track 10 is from a solo show by Davis that he performed in Cuba in 2017.

# Selected Reviews for Yuca Con Mojo -Cuban Blues

## John's Blues Picks – Maple Blues. Jan. 2019

*John Valenteyn is co-founder of the Toronto Blues Society, radio host on CIUT.FM and the Toronto Blues Society's resident album reviewer. John's Blues Picks (JBP) are collected monthly in the Toronto Blues Society's monthly print newsletter, Maple Blues. January, 2019*

Robert Davis moved here from Kingston in 1981, playing harmonica and learning guitar while teaching in community college and working with the homeless. He was also learning Spanish and would regularly visit Cuba to play with band called Bluespirit. He formed a band here called Up the Line, which was a finalist in the 2007 Talent Search. Fraser Melvin is a very talented guitarist and arranger about town, currently playing with Bad Luck Woman & Her Misfortunes and you heard some of his amazing charts at the Women's Blues revue last fall. As Davis points out, Cuban blues is not that much of a stretch: after all, the Bo Diddley beat is a Cuban clave rhythm. Cuban musicians Yasel Giralt and Pedro Pérez Quintero round out the quartet and they play a variety of instruments in these sessions recorded in Cuba last May. Conga drums drive the opening "Got My Mojo Workin'" as it gets the Cuban street party treatment. Davis delivers a fine "Sittin' On Top of The World" with some local lyric changes and Yasel Giralt picking the Cuban laud. Quintero plays the bassline on a potbellied earthenware jug and a marimbula. The distance from New Orleans to Cuba is much shorter and Ernie K-Doe's "Mother in Law" sees Fraser Melvin taking the vocal with Davis on harmonica over some distinctively Cuban percussion.

Comments from Norma the studio cleaner are included and although she's speaking Spanish it's quite clear she's taking the mother in law's side. Yank Rachell's "Up North Blues" features Giralt on the Cuban tres and Melvin on acoustic. Davis throws in spoken asides, the way John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson did on Rachel's 1941 original, although Davis' are in Spanish. "Bo Diddley" takes the beat home except that the chorus is 'Listen to the Clave'.

RJ's "Me and the Devil" closes, a fine solo performance by Davis recorded at a festival in Cuba the year before. Something a little different then and maybe Davis and Melvin should make more working trips to Cuba. The web site is [www.robertdavis.biz](http://www.robertdavis.biz).

## Bman's Blues Report Dec. 2018

I just had the opportunity to review the most recent release, Yuca con Mojo - Cuban Blues from Robert Davis and it's quite soulful. Opening with Muddy Waters' I've Got My Mojo Working, Robert Davis on lead vocal and harp takes a traditional Chicago style blues and with island rhythm and bongo gives it a much more tropical feel. Supported by Fraser Melvin on guitars, Yasel Giralt on bass, and Pedro Perez Quintero on percussion this is a cool opener. On Walter Vinson and Lonnie Chatmon's, Sitting On Top Of The World, lush acoustic picking gives the track a real iridescence under Davis' solid vocals. Real traditional Cuban flavor soaks in on traditional folk blues, House of the Rising Sun. This is a really nice arrangement and with beautiful finger picked accompaniment and simple percussion rhythm, this is very nice. Ernie K. Doe's R&B classic, Mother In Law gets a reggae rhythm and a breakout rockin turnaround. Davis' vocal and harp work on the track is very solid and the rhythm seems so natural that it's as strong as the original. My favorite track on the release is Davis' harmonica mastery of Gershwin's Summertime with classic cuban backing piano by Rosario Escobar and guitar by Melvin. Excellent! Wrapping the release is a terrific take on Robert Johnson's Me And The Devil in traditional delta fashion. The recording is clear and the the guitar seems to jump from the track. Very nice closer. [www.bmansbluesreport.com](http://www.bmansbluesreport.com)