

# *Cuban President Raul Castro Congratulates Cultural Groups*

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Santiago de Cuba, May 23 (RHC) -- On Friday, Cuban President Raul Castro congratulated two Cuban folk dance groups on the the 55th anniversary of their creation. In a latter, the statesman stressed the commitment of the Oriente Folk Ballet and the Cutumba Folk Ballet to the protection and preservation of Cuba's African roots and culture.

The congratulatory text was read by Julian Gonzalez, Cuba's Culture Minister, during a gala at the Martí Theater in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, marking the anniversary of the Afro-Cuban dance companies.

"You have striven to rigorously preserve traditional Afro-Cuban and Caribbean dances for present and future generations," said Raul Castro in his letter to the members of the Folkloric Ballet in eastern Cuba.

"Art has been the medium to convey an authentic Cuban message at many stages throughout Cuba and the world," he said.

During the gala, both groups joined in a colorful performance showing their mastery of Afro-Haitian-Cuban music and dance.

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