ELIADIES OCHOA
Cool Cuban

Guitarist Eliades Ochoa is one of the Buena Vista Social Club’s most charismatic members, and is often described as “the Cuban Johnny Cash.” It is his 7-string sound that is at the heart of such hits as the classic Chan Chan, amongst the most well-known songs in Cuban music.

Born in 1946 in Songo La Maya, Santiago de Cuba Province, Ochoa began playing the guitar at the age of 6 and within a few years he was busking in the streets of pre-revolutionary Cuba. His professional career did not begin to take off until the 1960s, with bands such as the Oriental Quintet and the Típico Septeto. In 1978 Ochoa was invited to join the legendary Cuarteto Patria as director and singer. However, the expressive guitarist-singer didn’t find fame until 1997, when he became a founder of the Buena Vista Social Club. His involvement with the Grammy-award winning album, and the subsequent Wim Wenders film of the same name, has propelled him to worldwide fame.

Ochoa’s trademark cowboy hat is a symbol of the singer’s roots as a guaitero – a Cuban from the countryside, and his music, which harks back to the very heart of the revival of Cuba’s son and guajira traditions. Son cubano combines the structure and elements of Spanish canción and the Spanish guitar with African rhythms and percussion instruments of Bantu and Arará origin, while guajira is the Cuban version of country music. Ochoa plays the tres, a 3-course, 6-string chordophone, popular with the son genre.

Eliades Ochoa has toured over 40 countries and recorded albums of great significance to the Cuban music industry, such as “Son de Oriente,” “Chanchanense,” with Company Segundo, “La venganza de Perico” together with Divango, famous saxophonist from Camagüey, and “El Guasine de Don Tomás” with legendary American folk singer Bob Dylan.

Tap your feet to Ochoa’s unique sounds at the D’Avila Mount in Nicosia on June 26th, 8pm.