

# CUBA.

Cuba was an amazing opportunity for me. Before the trip I had a small idea of what it would be like, or what I thought it would be like, and I knew I was going to have a lot of fun, but I got so much more out of the trip than I originally thought I would. Musically, it was absolutely beneficial to go to Cuba, since Cuba is such a musically living place, and I learned a lot from the musicians I got to hear and meet. Although we were on a band trip, and music is one of the main focuses, a lot of other factors in the trip taught me many lessons about life and true enjoyment of how much and how little it offers you. Cuba does not contain the richest people in the world by far, and yet if you go there, you will see these laughing, happy, and amazingly talented people there. The Cubans had very little compared to Canadians, and I learned to be full of gratitude for all I have. The spirit of the country also amazed me, it was like anywhere you have music, wherever you are, people are ready to get up and dance and sing with each other! You can see they truly enjoy the company of others, and I remember wondering why cannot Canada be like that as well? Canada has so much, yet I can't see any of this joy everywhere I go. Truthfully, I blame technology. I love technology, but really, it is a barrier between socializing and going out to enjoy nature. Although Cuba is beautiful, it is also quite broken, very visible within the cities. This woman as we exited our bus approached us, and started speaking Spanish to us,

and I was wondering what she was saying, when finally we understood through some movement of the arms, she was asking for shampoo. I have to say my heart just broke as she asked with her little daughter standing in front of her, I thought ~~but~~ about all the stuff I possess and how little they must have, where shampoo is not even available. I ~~learned~~ have never visited a 3rd-world country before this, and although I heard many stories, witnessing the poverty and sadness of it through your own eyes is so much more powerful than any TV commercial can produce. The kindness of the people there was astounding, and we as a band had the blessing of socializing with them and becoming friends even with the shortest of meetings. Cuba showed me its beauty, its lessons, its brokenness, its kindness, and its exciting culture. I learned A LOT through this trip, and this trip will always be memorable. I not only had fun, got some sunshine, made new friends, but experienced a type of lesson that only experience can produce.