



2025 Annual Program Update

Expanding Access, Elevating Talent



Academia de Bachata is pleased to share with you some of our proudest moments from 2025. We couldn't do it without your support. *Mil gracias.*

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2025 At a Glance...

We serve **530 students** in the Dominican Republic, including 180 at our main campus in Callejón de la Loma, 50 in la Ciénaga and an additional 300 Montessori students at the DREAM Project in Callejón de la Loma.

We have **12 student bands**.

We have **29 dedicated teachers**, including 24 in-person teachers and 5 virtual teachers.

Our instructors taught an estimated **27,000 hours** in 2025.

At our main campus in Callejón de la Loma, Cabarete, students receive classes in music theory, choral practice, guitar, bass guitar, saxophone, voice, piano, dance, bongo, conga, güira and tambora.

Konpa Akademi in Cap-Haïtien!



Our Haitian konpa students rehearsing

In December 2025, we launched a new campus in Haiti's Cap-Haïtien! With classrooms provided by Institution de Madame Rose, the Konpa Akademi will focus on konpa and other Haitian traditions. The Konpa Akademi's director, Emmanuel Civil, studied at the CEMUCHCA School of Music and has been teaching with us for three years. Our Konpa programs have 10 teaching faculty and 120 daily students enrolled. The areas of study include drums & percussion, guitar, bass, piano, voice and music theory.

Follow Konpa Akademi on Instagram:
[@konpa.akademi](https://www.instagram.com/konpa.akademi)

Puerto Bachata: Celebrating Bachata and Merengue on a Grand Stage



Academia de Bachata students in concert in Puerto Plata in February 2025

Academia de Bachata partnered with the Ministry of Tourism to produce Puerto Bachata 2025, a free concert series that joined our student bands with big stars of bachata and merengue. Over five Sundays in February and March 2025, Puerto Bachata drew more than **14,500 attendees** to Puerto Plata's La Puntilla Amphitheater! La Puntilla came alive with music and dance featuring performances by Ala Jazá, El Prodigio, El Varón de la Bachata, Ramón Torres, Luis Miguel del Amargue and Marino Castellanos.

12 Students Headed to Berklee in Santo Domingo

Berklee has selected 12 Academia students for its 2026 season of [Berklee in Santo Domingo](#), an intensive weeklong music program to be held on January 5-10. The program is sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic, The National Conservatory of Music in Santo Domingo and the AES Dominicana Foundation. 2026 marks the 4th year that our students participate in the program, sharing music with the DR's most promising talent, and receiving priceless guidance from some of the world's best music professors. Three of our students were awarded Berklee Scholarships in 2022-2024 Berklee in Santo Domingo sessions.

Academia de Bachata Talent Shines on Dominicans Got Talent



Pide de Tu Bachata, a band led by Academia alumnus Raylin Cuevas, competed in this year's Dominicans Got Talent. Raylin began studying at the Academia at 10 years old. In 2023, Raylin received a full scholarship for Berklee College's 5-week program. Now, at age 21, Raylin plays bass and guitar, sings and leads a group made up of current and former Academia students and faculty. The group performs frequently and has appeared on national television many times. Reflecting on Academia de Bachata's impact, Raylin says, "The humanitarian aspect of the Academia is very important... I had the opportunity to spend many mornings and afternoons with my dear teachers. The teachers have been like parents to us. They believe in us."

From Academia de Bachata to University: Alumni Take the Next Step

We are proud to share that Miguel Rivas, a longtime student and young bass teacher of Academia de Bachata, has received a scholarship to study music at Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña (UNPHU). Miguel will be the seventh Academia de Bachata student to pursue higher studies in music at UNPHU in Santo Domingo and the Conservatory of Puerto Rico.



Emely Díaz began taking classes at Academia de Bachata in 2010, studying guitar, percussion, voice, and contemporary piano. Soon, she was attending classes daily from 2PM-6PM. “It was the place where I found my Dominican roots and saw myself as a girl on stage, something that... [I had been told] wasn’t appropriate for me,” she said. “The Academia had a fundamental influence on my path. It became my community, my family. Here, I can represent my story and share it with others. And the discipline, the persistence that [my teachers] taught me, I now bring with me. It’s all thanks to the Academia.”

Emely will graduate in April 2026 from UNPHU in Santo Domingo with a degree in music composition, arrangement, and production. In December 2025, she completed her thesis, titled “Analysis of the Musical Transformation of Bachata in Four Representative Works of the Genre (1964-2002-2010-2021).” As part of her program, she is now completing an internship at the Ayni Green School in Ecuador, where she teaches music theory, arrangement, and production to students ages 3-17. Emely’s students are preparing a performance of the Jungle Book, The Musical for the end of December. We are delighted to share that Emely will be returning to Academia de Bachata as an instructor in January 2026.

Adriel Polanco began taking classes at Academia de Bachata when he was 12 years old, first picking up the bongó, güira, and tambora. “At first, it was something new and exciting,” he shared, “and then music gave my life purpose.” Today, Adriel is a complete percussionist. Adriel studied, and eventually taught, at Academia de Bachata for six years. In 2021, he earned a scholarship to study Jazz and Caribbean Music at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico.



Since beginning his studies at the conservatory, he has toured and performed in Chicago, Chapel Hill and Washington, D.C., as well as recorded original music and an album with a band that plays bachata, merengue and reggae. “Music makes me happy. You have to work on what you love,” Adriel shared. “I don’t know what my life would be without an instrument in my hands.”

Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Ricky Giordano



Our guitar students are receiving virtual classes from renowned Jam band guitarist Ricky Giordano. Ricky, a California-based artist of Dominican heritage, is synthesizing bachata with funk and jazz techniques to provide our advanced guitarists with new skills.

Ricky first connected with the Academia as an organizer of Jam Cruise’s 2023 visit.

Since then, he has volunteered in person at our Cabarete campus for several teaching residencies totalling more than two months of full time teaching. Ricky called this “full circle... the maturation of what I’ve been doing my whole life... being able to give back to my people.”

Ricky has also been instrumental in organizing support from Taylor guitars and the Positive Legacy Foundation.

Ricky is now teaching several hours of Zoom class each week to our advanced guitarists and young teachers. He reflects:

“The students were always good, and they’re just getting better. I’m teaching them super advanced concepts and they’re really taking to it... I’ve never seen a music school that’s this hands-on. I wish I had that growing up!”

Check out Ricky’s music on Instagram or keep up with him on his website:

Instagram: www.instagram.com/rickyg

Website: www.rickyg.live

About Us: Established in 2013 in the Dominican town of Cabarete, Academia de Bachata is the world's only school with dedicated programs for Dominican bachata and merengue. We offer professional formation in Dominican, Latin and Caribbean music. Under the tutelage of faculty that includes Grammy-nominated Abelito Mendez, Academia students are achieving international recognition for virtuosity. Academia de Bachata's student bands perform concerts and workshops throughout the DR and US. Many of our graduates continue professional careers and higher studies in music.



Percussion class at Academia de Bachata in Callejón de la Loma, Cabarete

On behalf of our students, our faculty and listeners around the world, we thank you for being part of our community!

We invite you to join us in furthering our mission today with a donation. Our young musicians need your support.

Scan to donate today:



academiadebachata.org/donate

Any questions about our programs or how to get involved?

We'd love to connect!

Reach us at hola@academiadebachata.org

or message us on social media:

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