WHY SOME PEOPLE THINK

CELIA CRUZ
IS TOM’S MOTHER.

KIDS DON’T GET ENOUGH ART
THOSE DAYS. Not at school. Not at home.
Not even from TV. They don’t experience enough
jazz or opera or dance. Or even such art forms as
salsa music. Which is why some kids think that
an international Cuban star is the mother of an
international movie star — simply because their
last names sound the same. But the similarities stop
there. Because only one of them can carry a tune.

A RISKY VOCALIST.

Celia Cruz didn’t start off as the Queen of
Salsa. Her humble beginnings began in Cuba. As one
of four brothers and sisters, Celia sang
to tourists who gave her shoes instead of money.
She bounced around from school productions to
talent shows to Cuba’s Conservatory of Music.
Finally, in 1950, she got her big break with La
Sonora Matancera, the Latin equivalent of the
Duke Ellington Orchestra. It was there where
she honed her unique vocal style and proved
that women could sell as many records as men.

The undisputed Queen of Salsa. Funny, she doesn’t look like a hot sauce.

Celia Cruz was an original. An iconoclast.
A maverick. She said “abue” to Cuba, became
a citizen of the United States and joined
forces with percussionist Tito Puente. But
their combined star power wasn’t
enough to excite the masses. It was
apparent. The public wasn’t ready.

SALSA: EXTRA SPICY.

Then came 1973. At her now
legendary Carnegie Hall appearance,
Celia Cruz burst onto the concert stage wearing
flamboyant costumes, jewelry and wigs — with
a voice that brought down the house.

No one on the face of the planet had
seen anything like Celia Cruz. She
appeared with The Fania All Stars and
worked with such artists as David Byrne and
Willie Colón. By the time she appeared in the
1993 film, The Mambo Kings, Celia Cruz was at
the height of her power. At her death in 2003, the world
mourned a singular talent. But in her wake she left
a musical legacy. She brought salsa music (and its
culture) to generations. Every hot and spicy bit of it.

HOW DO YOU SAY “ART” IN SPANISH?

Art in any language has the ability
to open minds. Art can have an amazing
influence on kids. In fact, the more art a
kid gets, the more knowledgeable he or she
can become in subjects like
science. From salsa to science?

Try Cambio! The overall result is
that your kids will grow up to
be well-rounded adults. And that
is music to any parent’s ears.

Ten Simple Ways to get more art in kids’ lives,
visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org

ART. ASK FOR MORE.
AmericansForTheArts.org

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