
Oswaldo Doimeadiós: Pressing Essences

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He is one of most natural people I've ever known lately, despite carrying on his shoulders, from my perspective as well as others the weight of the condition of performing "star".

Oswaldo Doimeadiós, after almost two and a half hours answering the tireless CubaSí readers he still had interesting ideas in his tank of answers:

If I ask you, in just a few words, to tell me the meaning it holds humor, theater and cinema for you?

"For me the humor is a magic possibility to exchange with the spectator and feeling the joy in oneself. Humor creates bonds, harmony. It has been a vessel in my life to reach others, to tear down boundaries and ways of thinking.

"That factor of humor has been always present in theater, because it's part of my luggage, therefore lays within the identity of some of the characters I embody in the theater, the cinema and the television. I wouldn't want to discard it, because sometimes people want to erase an image to avoid the contamination of something else.

"The chemically pure or established genres and its frontiers have faded away. People are made of many fibers, of multicolor strands. When embodying a character, you settle some sort of loom, where you choose strands or shades, because it's a reflection of how we are in life. It's about compensating one thing with the other and put in each character and every moment. It's like a painter creating a canvass; he knows how to take advantage of contrasts, lights and shades."

Following that analogy of shades, how do you put together your life as an actor and those other facets of writer and director?

"Writing is not maybe my strong point; humor scripts which is basically what I have written, because I have not

written other things with serious aims of getting published, they have been for the stage, solo shows, monologues, works in which I have participated next to other actors... I've done it with the need of that who writes something because the idea came to him and has not found someone else to do it.

"It's born as a need, but I lack the rigor of those who have that habit, which I'd like to have a little more. The same has happened to me as a director. Not having a director nearby to pass on my ideas forced me to be one. About directing what interests me most is art direction, something I consider necessary and useful in any media and worldwide.

I see direction as the actor who embodies the character he will direct, but then I come out of it and return to perform which is what I love. Doing those things I see them almost as a game, because performing is a bit of that. Sometimes there's not need to approach things in such "hyper" serious way.

How important is in that theatrical game your alliance of almost 15 years with Carlos Díaz and El Publico?

Really important. Carlos sees theater exactly as a huge party. A party opposed to the solemn, something that has been fundamental for me in these 15 years. Next to him I have had the chance to personalize the most transcendental characters in my career, but assuming them with the serenity with which Carlos assumes each work, with his way of reinventing every day, every process, of fascinating the public...

"Carlos has a keen eye to know what is going on at a social level, of knowing how to return it in images to the spectator. He has been that, the respect, the inquiry, but also the rupture and transgression, people so often talk about, theater and performance must be seen as a great party, and that is very important for us Cubans."

In this versatile Cuba, what views do you have of the censorship and the self-censorship from your perspective as an actor?

"I believe everyone; at some point have suffered the censorship. There are several types of censorship, although I don't justify any. I believe that somebody must look from the outside what is not artistically effective to perform, although that's arguable and obey tastes and ways of thinking. What I hate about censorship is when people with no training whatsoever exercise it.

"I tried not to self-censor, although the experience and years of life show you ways of developing a speech. All messages can be sent from art. As a field, art exists to ask questions, uncomfortable questions and, of course, to receive uncomfortable answers. Art is also thought to dialogue with the social environment.

I try not to discard the social satire as son or legitimate component of humor, and because we are supported by a political attitude towards life, as for participating in the social debate and the cultural processes that, as human being and country we face. That is what I try to defend with my work, attitude, and I put it on the dialogue with those other segments of society they criticize sometimes. We all don't have to think alike."

Versatility, facets... tell us of your experience as professor of the National School of Art and in the training of your daughter Andrea.

"Versatility is something within us as a nation. We Cubans have to reinvent ourselves in so many other things. I admit I am not good in those matters. I have had to channel versatility through art, the theater, and other means. We are versatile by nature, and I always tell my students that our mothers are opera actresses, because we always see them cooking, washing, working, singing... they laugh at first, they shed a tear; they change overnight, as we Cubans say.

"Sometimes we need to stop to watch how we are and then to internalize many things that we have to put together from the scene through ourselves. The family is one of the best models that exist, and I always recommend that to my students: to watch a lot, to read and live a lot, because that awareness of the environment is something that we should take to the stage.

"I like teaching considerably. When I was very young I taught at the Higher Institute of Arts (ISA by is Spanish acronym). I started along with Armando Suárez del Villar, with lyrical song students. Then, I have indistinctively delivered courses, workshops, things very well directed.

Several years ago, I joined the National Theater School and currently teach lessons with Fernando Echevarría, Carlos Díaz and, generally, we work with the students from the last course”.

“Working with very young people opens up the prospect of what comes next, how they see life and what they want. That forces you to reinvent yourself, to read more every day. In performance, the actor constantly makes decisions.”

“I also see it as a responsibility. Martí used to say that when every man arrives on Earth, he has a right to be educated and then, in return, the duty to contribute to the education of others. That’s our way of repaying and conveying that knowledge to those coming behind.....

“In my case and in my house, my eldest daughter decided to be an actress. If she hadn’t had talent, I wouldn’t have let her to study. She was one of my pupils in those years, therefore, I see my pupils like my children and that is a way to harmonize with them, to understand them, to guide them and to offer them tools to be prepared to face up any medium”.

“Earlier, the lines between each medium were much more marked. Today, that panorama has changed a lot. I think young actors and actresses must be ready for what will come. Currently, we need young directors who are ready to transform that panorama. That is one of the problems that we have. I believe that in recent years there have been young people with a lot of talent, who love both audiovisual and theater, and that is our guarantee of continuity. We need to put all our energy according to that continuity.”

Pupils, children, family. What weight do you grant to the latter?

“A crucial weight. My family is as essential as my vocation for my life; they are conditioned to one other. Without those two things and without Cuba, I would not make sense, nor would my life be.”

Is Cuba that niche of professional achievement?

“Yes, I have tried to articulate my career and my vocation in this country. I think I have worked some 150 years, I feel it like that. But I have been able to afford it, which surely I would have found it impossible to achieve it elsewhere. I have done it with a lot of limitations, as we all know, because the quality of life of many material things is low. I have conditioned everything to my vocation and feel well for that.”

Holguín?

“The land where I was born, I grew up and my parents and my teachers educated me. A place, which I feel a lot of affection for. There, I have relatives, friends; I took my first steps performing on the radio. I made my first works in the theater together with Idalberto Betancourt.”

“There are many people linked to my formation who are still there, and whom I admire and revere.”

A word that defines you?

“Work.”

Cubasi Translation Staff
