
New 'Fidel' Musical Celebrates Cuban Revolution in London

16/11/2017



"With just a few hundred soldiers and limited means, they took on Batista's army of thousands with its tanks, aircraft and backing from the United States."

The Cuban Revolution will be brought to London audiences in musical form this week when "Fidel," a new stage show celebrating the life of the revolutionary in song, premieres at the Actor's Church.

The musical depicts Fidel Castro's life in the years leading up to and during the Cuban revolution of 1953-59. It was written by University of Southampton Professor Denise Baden, who was inspired by what she called the "David and Goliath story" of the Cuban Revolution during a research trip to the socialist country.

"I can't believe it's not on stage already as a massive musical," Baden said.

Baden hopes to depict – entirely through song – how Cuba overcame "impossible" odds against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista to fight for independence and sovereignty.

"With just a few hundred soldiers and limited means, they took on Batista's army of thousands – with its tanks, aircraft and backing from the United States... and won," reads the play's official billing.

"Their secret was bravery, dedication, and the support of the Cuban people, who desperately longed for justice and an independent Cuba."

The musical score was composed entirely by students from schools across the United Kingdom through a nationwide songwriting competition, in an attempt to mirror "Cuban values" of "education and inclusion," according to the show's website.

One actor, from Latin America, pointed to the stark difference in how the Cuban leader is commonly viewed in the

South and the vilifying propaganda so prominent in the U.S. and Europe.

"Back home he's not seen in the same way they see him here," he said. "He is quite vilified in the U.S. He's like this evil dictator who, whatever. Back home the whole left side of politics still kind of view him as a hero."

Actress Gabriela Garcia, who plays revolutionary Celia Sanchez, said she is deeply inspired by the role of women in the Cuban revolution, and hopes to depict that to London audiences through her character.

"For me, women like her in the Revolution or most of the time get forgotten. So everything, all the stories you hear, is about Fidel or Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, but actually, when you really start digging in deep and read about all these revolutionary women, there were so many. Especially in the Cuban Revolution,"

Fidel Castro is admired by leftist and anti-imperialist movements around the world for his role in building a sovereign Cuba, staving off the United States, and assisting worldwide revolutionary movements. He died last year at the age of 90.
