

Carlos Díaz: "Theater has to be Taken Care of, Although is Non-Profitable"

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On celebrating on March 27<sup>th</sup> the world theater day we offer our readers this interview with the Cuban Carlos Díaz, director of El Publico Theater and National Prize for Theater.

Cuba has had great examples in this artistic expression. Which of the many ways of making people feel have you learned more as a creator?

"Each time has its unique artistic expression, its sweet side and its bitter ones. I officially appear in this world in the 90's, when little theater was done. It was already the endless economic crisis and it reigned the concept how long will it last, but I believe I did the best of my career back then, like *La niñita querida* (The Dear Little Girl), a staging of Virgilio Piñera with which I won the admiration of many people.

"I thank that success and the later one to Roberto Blanco and his company *Irrumpe*. I had the chance to be his assistant after I graduated of Theater and Drama at ISA. I did everything there: costume design, scenography; to make rehearsal plans and production... I Learned what should be done and what not. I am very grateful because they gave me the training to dive into theater."

You have been one of the loved ones and, at the same time criticized for the audacity of your plays. Do you believe the Cuban theater of this time needs that audacity?

"I believe that audacity is there and it's necessary to practice it. If we don't go through there it's like we had problems to breathe. When, regarding art, you push your boundaries, how much one can say and if the receiver is happy watching your proposal.

"There are people who come to theater and, before asking who is the author or actors, they ask if there is nude in the play. It's the same as going to Coppelias Ice-cream parlor and ask for almond and they reply: No."

Which do you think is the way to walk by this art and its main characters in what follows?

"It's your time to struggle young people, the youths, for technology. It's important that every day there are more social networks, more computers; bridges to reach the moon and go camping people spend holidays in Mars... But theater is too hard to eliminate, despite its old age and craft.

"You must be next to Chekhov when he says that it's necessary to work every day."

That old theater could be in crisis some may think. What is going on that people don't fill theater rooms anymore?

"Theater must be taken care of. It's a luxury to work in it, it belongs to chosen ones. It feels like one is in Mount Vesuvius, although you don't earn a penny. You feel very happy.

"Not all rooms have problems with the public. Each company should take care of what they do to keep their audience and filling their room, not just during the Festival season.

"Today people rather stay facing a cell phone screen or a computer. But that is impossible with theater: you cannot take home the entire staff so that they make the representation of a play.

"We were recently in New York, at the event "Bajo el radar" (Under the radar), with Antigonón, an epic troupe, and a friend, Armando Correa, current editor for People magazine in Spanish, he gave to four of our young actors tickets to Broadway to watch *The French Girl*, starred by Uma Thurman. Having such talented actress on stage, right in front of you, it's a luxury you only find in theater; otherwise, you must seek a movie where she stars in *El Paquete* (The package).

"On the other hand, having a theater like ours is a privilege, because in the developed world it's more complicated the existence of so many groups, it takes many resources. Our economy is not fit to sustain this utopia for too long, but let's enjoy it while it lasts."

I was talking about technology. Do you consider it, next to the new media (Internet), enemy of the theater?

"No, nothing as new and young that struggles for the image can be an enemy. Enemy is the intention of allotting money to achieve something unhealthy, but the social networks help a lot. There is already a generation that could not live without Facebook, Twitter, Instagram... and we must also get to them.

"I am a director who loves visuality. I believe more in the power of an image than in a text. A sentence can lie, an image cannot. That's why I use audiovisual elements, for example, in Antigonón... The mixture of artistic specialties becomes new languages in the practice of what you do."

Which are your expectations with El Publico Theater, especially when you are no longer directing it?

"I still have some projects left. I still have to do the Orlando, of Virginia Woolf, but El Publico will always exist. I will appear eventually and unleash hell if I don't like what is going on! "

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