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Cuba: International Festival Honors Juan Formell

03/08/2019



A program focused on paying tribute to Cuban musician Juan Formell will mark on Friday the beginning of the 1st International Timba Festival "Forever Formell," to be held in Havana until August 4.

The organizers of the event chose this date coinciding with the birthday of Juan Formell, founder and director of the legendary Los Van Van orchestra, popularly known as 'The Train of Cuban Music.'

After a greeting to the participants by Samuel Formell, current director of Los Van Van, the photographic exhibition 'Por siempre Formell' (Forever Formell), by artist Ivan Soca, will open the festival at 10:00 local time at El Sauce Cultural Center.

Another of the activities taking place today is the panel of the same name, in which the children of the renowned musician and founders of Los Van Van will talk about the artistic work of the bassist, composer and arranger, and the different stages of the orchestra that won a Latin Grammy award in 2000 with its album 'Llego Van Van' (Van Van Has Arrived).

Next, musicologist Nerys Gonzalez will give a keynote speech on the work of Formell, who died in 2014, his impact on the music of the island and other countries and his influence on the way other orchestras play music.

According to the program, the documentary 'Legado' (Legacy), by filmmakers Nathanael

Mergui and Patricia Ayala, will also be screened at El Sauce Cultural Center at 14:00, local time.

The first day of the event concludes at La Tropical's Salon Rosado Benny More with a concert by Los Van Van orchestra and guest musicians starting 9:00 p.m., local time, until midnight.

The 1st International Timba Festival... 'Forever Formell' is sponsored by the Cuban Ministry of Culture and the Cuban Institute of Music, along with other entities of the Culture System in this country.

Orchestras such as Issac Delgado, Pupy y los que Son Son, NG La Banda, Alexander Abreu y Havana D' Primera, Adalberto Alvarez y Su Son, El Noro and Primera Clase, El Niño y la Verdad, as well as La Colmenita Children's Theater Company will participate in the festival.

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