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**Cubans bid farewell to Alicia Alonso**

19/10/2019



Thousands of Cubans converged at Havana's Great Theater on Saturday to bring flowers and bid farewell to the legendary ballet star Alicia Alonso who died in Havana on Thursday at 98.

Multiple floral wreaths, led by those sent by Cuban Communist Party leader Raul Castro and President Miguel Diaz-Canel, escorted the coffin which was placed in front of the Theater's grand staircase. The auditorium, which currently bears her name, was the venue where she first performed 69 years ago, with her first company.

People from all walks of life, authorities, ballet students, artists, intellectuals and admirers lined up to file past the artist's mortal remains.

Since the announcement of the ballet star's passing, numerous events have been held island-wide to celebrate her life and legacy. A planned performance of the National Ballet of Cuba, scheduled to inaugurate the newly refurbished Sauto Theater in Matanzas, went ahead Friday evening as planned, in tribute to the Prima Ballerina Assoluta's concept of the show must go on.

A live national television broadcast started at 9 am carrying images of the funeral of the founder of the Cuban National Ballet, of the Cuban School of Ballet and one of the most extraordinary figures of world dance art of the last century.

The burial ceremony was scheduled for 5 pm.

A declaration issued by the National Union of Writers and Artists – UNEAC, stated that Alicia Alonso "was and will be one of the most intimate symbols of national culture."