

Latin America Serenades Fidel

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 11 (acn) The Serenade of Fidelity, slated for August 12, will be the tribute of Latin America to Cuban leader Fidel Castro on the occasion of his 85th birthday, and will bring together over 20 foreign and Cuban voices at the capital's Karl Marx Theater, in an evening anticipating August 13.

So far, the presentation, convened by the Guayasamin Foundation, includes 22 soloists and music groups from Cuba and another seven countries of the continent, in addition to an European singer.

In the form of an expression as old and genuine as a serenade, the spirit of Ecuadorian painter Oswaldo Guayasamin will permeate the event, commented during a press conference Uruguayan artist Daniel Viglietti.

The singer-songwriter, one of the participants in the presentation, asserted that it will be a tribute to Fidel's thinking.

Alfredo Vera, director for International Relations of the Foundation named after the famous painter, announced that the event is an expression of endless love, and recalled the ingenious way in which Guayasamin managed to convince his very close friend Fidel to accept the celebration of his birthday in 1988.

Joining Viglietti on stage for the three-hour performance will be Omara Portuondo (Cuba), Pablo Nuevo (Ecuador), Cecilia Todd (Venezuela), Liliana Herrero and Raly Barrionuevo (Argentina) and Ricardo Flecha (Paraguay).

Also offering their art will be Braulio Lopez (Uruguay), Pancho Villa (Chile), the Cuban groups Buena Fe, Anonimo Consejo and Moncada, and vocalists Maria Victoria and Candido Fabre, among others.

Peruvian singer Marcela Perez, who will also perform, recalled that five years ago she felt the caudal of love that emerged from the event entitled “Todas las voces, todas”, with the presence of interpreters from the five continents, who expressed their appreciation for the Cuban leader’s example of loyalty and solidarity.

At that time, Marcela wrote a poem, the verses of which are included in today’s “Retrato de Fidel con Palomas,” one of the songs that participants to the serenade will enjoy.

The serenade, in which renowned Latin American intellectuals will also take part, will be broadcast live by Cuban television, as well as by the Radio Progreso and Radio Havana Cuba radio stations

Cuba Urges U.S. to Grant Gerardo Hernandez Access to Appeal Documents

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 11 (acn) Cuba's National Assembly of the People's Power urged once again American authorities to allow Gerardo Hernandez –one of the five Cuban antiterrorist fighters imprisoned in the U.S., to access the legal documents required for his extraordinary appeal.

A press release posted at www.antiterroristas.cu and www.cubadebate.cu recounts that on August 1 the Cuban parliament denounced the arbitrary treatment given to Gerardo Hernandez who has been denied access to documents related with his case.

Hernandez, sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years, was arrested in 1998, in Miami, along

with Rene Gonzalez, Ramon Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando Gonzalez for monitoring anti-Cuba terrorist organizations based in Florida.

The Cuban Parliament's statement issued this Thursday says Hernandez's current situation is the same as 10 days ago when the aforementioned claim was filed.

On August 1, the Cuban Parliament agreed to step up the fight for the release of the Cuban Five pointing the need to bring down the wall of silence that allows Washington to perpetuate the injustice on the Cuban Five.

"We have to demand American authorities to deliver the information they are hiding about their plot with so-called "journalists" from Miami who slandered the Cuban Five and provoked and threatened members of the jury, despite protests by the judge herself," the statement reads.

The Cuban parliament urged the U.S. government to take out satellite images they have been keeping away for 15 years likely because they will reveal the true location of the 24-Feb-1996 incident –when the Brothers to the Rescue aircrafts that violated the Cuban air space were shot down-, for which Hernandez was claimed responsible though there no evidences proving so.

La Coubre Sabotage Survivor's Son Visits Cuba

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 11 (acn) Jean François Guillotin, the son of one of the six French marines who survived the sabotage to La Coubre steamer (March 4, 1960) met this Thursday with relatives of Cubans who died in the catastrophe.

In a press conference at the headquarters of the Cuban Friendship Institute in Havana, Guillotin said on the day of the sabotage his father, Jean Marie, was in the ship's cabin writing a letter to his wife when he heard the first explosion.

Guillotín, who was only two back then, said the ship's commander immediately organized the evacuation and a little after firefighters, police corps and a multitude of Cubans reached the place for help.

Jean François Guillotin later knew that his father had lost one ear as a consequence of the strong explosion and noted that the event caused deep suffering to his family.

Unfortunately, many people died after the second blowing including dozens of rescuers, he added.

La Coubre was a French steamer that was the target of a terrorist act in the port of Havana while it carried weapons and ammunitions for the defense of the newly established revolutionary government that was being threatened by the American imperialism.

There were two explosions on the ship in which close to a hundred people were killed and 200 were wounded.

Speaking in the commemorative meeting, journalist Jean Guy Allard said Cuban authorities and officials of the French embassy in the island are leading joint investigations to clarify the event masterminded by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Allard said Guillotin could throw light on the event since he has copies of documents from that time that belong to Générale Transatlantic, the company operating the French steamer, but the documents can not be published until 150 years after the incident.

Relatives of Cubans who died in the catastrophe thanked Guillotin for his visit to Havana and encouraged him to do everything in his power to unveil the truth and relief the pain they have endured for nearly half a century.

Daniela Perez, great-granddaughter of Carlos Alfaro, a victim of the sabotage, told ACN that since when she was little she has participated in all the activities carried out to recall La Coubre sabotage because "she wouldn't like for other children like her and their families to go through the same suffering."

New Revelations of U.S. Campaign vs. the Cuban Five

Havana, Aug 10 (Prensa Latina) Documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provide overwhelming evidence that the United States paid for a campaign against the five Cuban antiterrorist fighters unjustly who have been held in prisons in that country for almost 13 years.

The campaign involved prominent reporters from the Miami Herald, El Nuevo Herald, and Diario Las Americas newspapers, and Miami-based radio and television stations that were on the U.S. government's payroll during the same period in which the five men were on trial.

The documents were obtained through a FOIA request made by the U.S. National Committee to Free the Five, the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund (PCJF) and the newspaper Liberation.

During the trial of Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Rene González and Fernando Gonzalez, the Miami media was saturated with highly provocative, prejudicial reports on the Cuban Five, as they are known worldwide.

According to a Free the Five Committee press release, further requests for the release of more documents are pending, with the objective of presenting the systematic and illegal policy of the U.S. government in violating the constitutional right of the Five to a legal trial.

Belgian Radio Station Interviews Activist who Visited Gerardo Hernandez in Prison

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 10 (acn) Radio 1, the Belgian national radio station in Dutch language, broadcast a live interview with Katrien Demuynck, who recently visited Gerardo Hernandez at the federal prison of Victorville, California, the United States.

While introducing the case, the interviewee denounced the unjust nature of the excessively long sentences given to the five Cubans in US territory, for having monitored the activities of terrorist groups of Miami and warned about their actions.

She pointed out that in spite of the media crusade of manipulation and silence with respect to this case, today there's an increasing campaign in the world in favor of their release, the www.cubaminrex.cu Web site reported.

When asked about her personal commitment to this cause, Demuynck said that what shook her most when she knew about it in 2001 was to know that these men risked their lives to struggle against terrorism and ended up by being arbitrarily incarcerated.

She explained that Fernando Gonzalez, Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labañino, Rene Gonzalez and Antonio Guerrero had infiltrated the criminal organizations that, with impunity, were threatening their country with their activities from Miami, with the only objective of saving the lives of their compatriots.

The Belgian activist recalled that, in Cuba, more than 3,000 people have died as a consequence of violent actions organized and financed from the northern country, and that practically each family has or knows a victim of these attacks among relatives or friends.

With regard to the sentences they were given, she insisted in the fact that they're excessive, since The Five were imposed prison sentences ranging from 15 years to two life imprisonments plus 15 years, for charges lacking arguments and that have not been proved.

With respect to the possibility of visiting Gerardo Hernandez, Demuynck clarified that it was not easy and that until the last moment she was not sure about whether she could make it or not, and denounced that the wife of the hero, Adriana Perez, has not received an entry visa to visit him in almost 13 years.

While referring to his state of mind, she said that the Cuban is strong and optimistic, something that seems to be incredible after more than 10 years of unjust imprisonment in such terrible conditions.

Katrien Demuynck ended the interview by asserting that US President Barack Obama has constitutional power to put an end to these arbitrary sentences and called to increase the pressure of the international public opinion so the five antiterrorist fighters are released.

Cuban City of Baracoa Celebrates 500th Anniversary

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 9 (Prensa Latina/acn) As the Cuban city of Baracoa celebrates its 500th anniversary, it has become one of the strongest pillars of the Cuban tourist industry, especially focused on nature and culture.

Baracoa will celebrate its anniversary on August 15 with festivities that highlight the city's development in the tourist industry in areas such as nature, history, culture, traditions and contact with city residents.

Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion de Baracoa is the full name of this city in Guantanamo province, 621 miles east of Havana. It was founded by Diego Velasquez in 1511 as the first Cuban capital and bishopric.

Guantanamo's provincial government's vice president Luis Sanchez, along with commercial representative Misael Tamayo and historian Alejandro Hartman are running a promotional campaign to boost tourism in the region.

The inauguration of a new hotel, the 1511, as well as tours, meetings, books launchings and festivities of all kinds, will take place from August 13 to 15.

Bolivians Thank Cuba for Aid in Education

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug 9 (acn) Bolivia's Deputy Minister of Justice, Nelson Cox, highlighted on Tuesday the progress made in the interests of indigenous populations, like the eradication of illiteracy in rural areas by way of the program "Yes, I Can," with the help of Cuba and Venezuela.

Cox spoke on Tuesday during a meeting on the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Prensa Latina news agency reported.

He recalled that, for the defense of the rights of these sectors, the government of La Paz worked as of 2006 on the formulation of the National Plan of Action of Human Rights to Live Well (Plan Nacional de Accion de Derechos Humanos para Vivir Bien), to which communities made contributions with their demands.

The Deputy Minister praised the literacy teaching method "Yes, I Can," developed by Cuban Leonela Relys, an educational program to teach adults how to read and write, which has so far helped about five millions people in some 30 nations stop being illiterates.

The program was born on March 28, 2001, when the Cuban government asked this pedagogue to create a literacy teaching manual of not more than five pages, which combined letters and

numbers.

Since its creation, it was conceived as a project of internationalist nature, prepared to be adapted to different social realities and languages.

The first country from Latin America to declare itself Free of Illiteracy was Cuba, in 1961, followed by Venezuela (2005), Bolivia (2008), Nicaragua and Ecuador (2009).

Cuba Gives a Boost to Railroad Track Repair

Havana, Aug 12 (Prensa Latina) The annual repair plan of Cuba's major railroad tracks has reached a 73-percent completion, said director of the Railroad Tracks, Works and Constructions business Ledysban Morales.

Main efforts have been carried out in the first half of this year, he told Prensa Latina.

He recalled that the national program of rehabilitation of the railroad infrastructure started last year and its first stage will run through 2013.

"We have repaired the worst stretches of the Central Line, 835 km long, in eastern, central and western Cuba, as well as other main roads along with members of the enthusiastic Youth Labor Army," he said.

Morales said that this repair work will contribute to substantially increase the speed of trains and accomplish their scheduled itineraries in transporting passengers and cargo.

Cuba Celebrates International Youth Day

Havana, Aug 12 (Prensa Latina) Young people in Cuba are celebrating International Youth Day on Friday with an extensive program of cultural and sports activities, turning the day into a real party. "We have the privilege of celebrating the date with happiness, unlike elsewhere in the world," Leira Sanchez, head of the Union of Young Communists(UJC) International Relations department, recently stated.

As one of the most important events in recent times, Sanchez mentioned the discussion by young people of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and Revolution, approved by the 6th Congress of Communist Party of Cuba in April.

She also referred to Cuba's participation in the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in South Africa in December 2010.

Today's celebrations are dedicated to the five Cuban antiterrorist fighters unjustly held in U.S. prisons since September 12, 1998, Sanchez said.

"We want to send this message of encouragement to Fernando Gonzalez, Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero, Rene Gonzalez and Ramon Labañino with the conviction that men like them are needed to defend the homeland," she said.

The Cuban Five, as they are universally known, are currently serving harsh sentences, after a trial full of irregularities, for trying to prevent terrorist actions against the island.

Youth Day celebrations are will begin on the eve of the 85th birthday of the leader of the

Revolution, Fidel Castro, leader and creator of the work of our youth, Sanchez stated.

August 12 was declared International Youth Day in 1999 by the UN General Assembly.

Cuba Produces Heart Medicine

Havana, Aug 12 (Prensa Latina) The Drug Research and Development Center (CIDEM) in Havana successfully introduced and generalized in Cuba the use of Atorvastatina, a hypolipidemic drug.

Iverlis Diaz, a researcher with that institution, told the National News Agency that the drug, in tablet form, reduces blood cholesterol levels, lipids and triglycerides, and therefore, the risk of heart disease, the No. 1 cause of death worldwide.

Since 2009, Atorvastatin has been produced by the Novatex Laboratories company, and is distributed in all hospitals and selected community drugstores.

The Cuban-made drug is a top seller worldwide, has never been imported, and is very expensive on the world market, Diaz said.

Since its development, the medicine has contributed over five million pesos in income in Cuba, and its export has brought income of 10 million convertible pesos (CUC), she noted.

CIDEM won the 2010 National Technology Innovation Award, conferred by the Cuban Academy of Sciences, for its development of Atorvastatina.

Sumbe, New Cuban Film on Angola Epic

Havana, Aug 11 (Prensa Latina) A new film about the Cuban presence in the war in Angola, this time focused on the battle carried out by teachers, construction workers and doctors in Sumbe, will premier Thursday in the capital's Charles Chaplin movie theater.

Directed by filmmaker Eduardo Moya, the film is the second part of a trilogy begun in 2008 with the film Kangamba, by Rogelio Paris, which closes with the battle in Cuito Cuanavale (1987-1988).

Moya said in a news conference that this film reflects the real history of 175 women and men who fought for 30 continuous hours against five elite forces of the UNITA armed opposition in March 1984.

"This is a tribute to those combatants who defended freedom and independence of a brother people and above all a historic testimony of glorious pages about the solidarity of our country, which remained for future generations," he said.

Shot entirely in Cuba, the movie tells in one and half hours how the UNITA forces tried to capture a group of foreign collaborators who were there, including Russians and Bulgarians, to cause an international impact.

The movie's music was written by Jose Maria Vitier and includes performances by Roberto Perdomo, Fernando Hechavarria, Rene de la Cruz and Jorge Martinez, the latter in the role of colonel lieutenant Juan A. Castillo Vazquez, who was the main adviser to the full-length feature.

Asian Artists Win Over Cuban Public at Circuba 2011

Havana, Aug 12 (Prensa Latina) The Brothers Giang from Vietnam received a standing ovation from the Cuban public at the Trompoloco Big Top, one of the venues for the International Festival Circuba 2011.

The Vietnamese duo, a favorite for the Gran Prix and Popularity awards, electrified the audience on Thursday with a performance full of balance, strength, coordination and beautiful movements.

A dozen girls ages 7-10 from the Chinese company Fuyong Acrobatics Troupe exhibited their skills and elegance in multiple acrobats, a centuries-old traditional art.

Brazilians Priscilla and Richard offered a real ballet up in the air and moved the audience with an acrobatic performance that tells the love story of two gypsies.

The Russian trio Roman Markin evoked Italian film maker Federico Fellini in a balancing act in which they played the characters of Augusto and Carablanca from the 1971 film I Clowns.