

Cubans celebrate legacy of Juan Almeida Bosque, President Diaz-Canel attends gala in Revolution Commander's honor

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Revolution Commander Juan Almeida Bosque

(RHC)—Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel attended a tribute gala to Revolution Commander Juan Almeida Bosque. The gala took place Wednesday, on the eve of Almeida's 95th birthday anniversary, celebrated on February 17th.

The participating soloists and ensembles performed tunes by Almeida, who was also a prolific composer, writer and cultural promoter. Featured artists included Banda Nacional de Conciertos, kids with the emblematic children's theatre group La Colmenita, renowned singer Beatriz Márquez and Almeida's son, young talented musician Juan Guillermo Almeida –JG.

Juan Almeida Bosque was born on February 17th, 1927, in Havana.

He participated alongside Fidel and Raúl Castro in several decisive revolutionary actions against the pro-US Batista dictatorship and for Cuba's complete independence and sovereignty, including the assault on the Moncada Barracks in July of 1953.

Almeida was part of the expeditionary force coming from Mexico on the Granma yacht in 1956. Later, during the war on the Sierra Maestra mountains, he founded and commanded the Mario Muñoz Third Front of the rebel army, demonstrating great courage and patriotism.

After the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, Juan Almeida served in many different responsibilities within the Revolutionary Armed Forces, particularly repelling the mercenary invasion at Bay of Pigs and fighting against the US-financed counter-revolutionary bands on the Escambray mountains.

He was a founding member of the politburo of the Communist Party's Central Committee and vice president of the Cuban Council of State, and the founding president of the National Association of Veteran Combatants of the Revolution.

Wednesday's gala performance celebrated the vast legacy left by Juan Almeida Bosque, his revolutionary life and work, but also as a composer, writer and cultural promoter.

One of the best known tunes written by the Revolution Commander is 'La Lupe'. He wrote the tune in 1956 while in exile in Mexico, at the time he, Fidel and Raúl Castro and other revolutionaries were preparing the expeditionary force that returned to Cuba on the Granma yacht to continue the war for independence.

Almeida's contribution to Cuban music is undeniable. He is the author of more than 300 tunes, mostly boleros and ballads, but also son and guarachas. The Havana-based Editorial Abril Publishing House published the book 'Con la mano extendida', which compiles the lyrics and score of one hundred tunes written by him.

As a writer, he is the author of several memorable, enjoyable works of great historical and literary value, like 'La Única Ciudadana', 'El General en Jefe Máximo Gómez', 'La Sierra', his trilogy 'Presidio', 'Exilio' and 'Desembarco', based on his own experiences as a revolutionary combatant and 'Contra el agua y el viento', among others.

As if this were not enough, Juan Almeida Bosque was a great cultural promoter. On his initiative, the Siboney Studios of Cuba's record and musical editions company EGREM was founded in July of 1980 in Santiago de Cuba, to promote the work of young and established exponents of Cuban rhythms and genres in the eastern territory. He was instrumental in revitalizing the iconic Chepín-Chovén orchestra and the Sindo Garay musical instrument factory.

In 2021, on occasion of Almeida's 94th birthday anniversary, Siboney Studios released the tribute album "Desde el alma".

It compiles eight tracks, six of them written by Almeida himself, who was posthumously awarded the Siboney Prize to Musical Excellence.

The musical production includes also the tune "Mi querido viejo", written by none other than Almeida's son JG, and "Así te recordamos Comandante", written by Ricardo Leyva, leader of the emblematic band Sur Caribe.

The album 'Desde el alma' was produced by Ricardo Leyva and tres guitar player Fernando Dewar, the leader of Septeto Santiaguero.

JG released the album 'Llevo la música en el alma', dedicated to his father and to the 40th anniversary of Siboney Studios of EGREM.

The musical production includes new, more contemporary versions of 11 iconic hits, written by the revolutionary leader.

Titles include 'Quisiera enamorarme', 'Mejor concluir', 'Vuelve pronto', 'Dame un traguito', 'Por teléfono no', among others.

Graphic designer Diana Almeida González, daughter of Juan Almeida Bosque also collaborated with his brother, as she was in charge of the album cover.

In statements to the press, JG said 'Llevo la música en el alma' includes dance tunes and targets young Cubans. It includes collaborations by several other Cuban popular musicians, notably Mayito Rivera, Tania Pantoja, Cándido Fabré, Kelvis Ochoa, Pedrito Calvo, Septeto Santiaguero and Conga de Los Hoyos, among others.

EGREM has also released the music videos for two tracks from the album 'Dame un traguito' and 'Por teléfono no' .

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/cultura/286572-cubans-celebrate-legacy-of-juan-almeida-bosque-president-diaz-canel-attends-gala-in-revolution-commanders-honor>



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