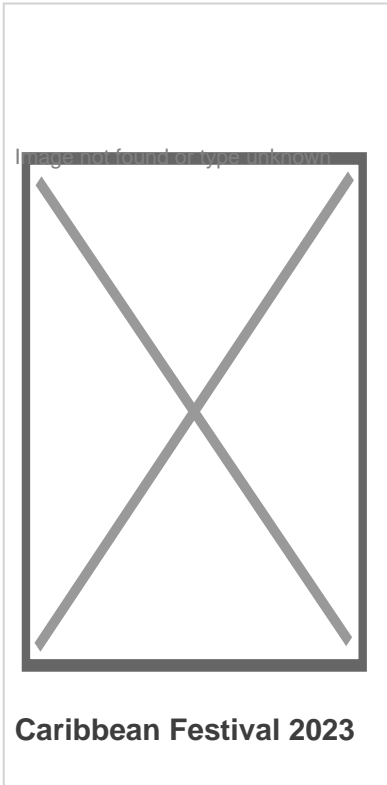


# *Caribbean Festival begins, celebrates life and death*

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Santiago de Cuba, July 4 (RHC)--Heredia Theatre in eastern Santiago de Cuba hosted the opening gala of the 42nd edition of the Caribbean Festival --also known as the Fire festival, which this time is dedicated to Mexico.

On hand were the Mexican ambassador to Cuba Miguel Diaz Reinoso and the president of the organizing committee and of Casa del Caribe, Cuban intellectual Orlando Vergés.

The lineup includes more than 1000 Cuban and over 400 foreign artists.

Oscar Escobedo, artistic director of the Mexican delegation pointed to more than 100 Mexican artists, notably mariachis, dancers, lyrical singers, carnival artists and choirs.

Monday's opening gala paid tribute to Cuban intellectual, the late Yoel James Figarola, who founded the Caribbean Festival in the 1980s.

Running through July 9<sup>th</sup>, the event has the support of the Cuban Ministry of Culture and government and cultural authorities in Santiago de Cuba.

This year's edition of the Caribbean Festival is particularly dedicated to Mexican celebrations of life and death --The Day of the Dead--which was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003.

Highlights on the program include the International Conference on 'DEATH IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND LITERATURE.'

The Day of the Dead is widely observed in Mexico, where it largely developed, and is also observed in other places, especially by people of Mexican heritage.

The multi-day holiday involves family and friends gathering to pay respects and to remember friends and family members who have died. These celebrations can take a humorous tone, as celebrants remember funny events and anecdotes about the departed.

Also on the festival's program is an artistic gala on July 6<sup>th</sup>, featuring traditional Mexican culture, including death rituals.

The annual Caribbean Festival celebrates common and unique features of Caribbean cultures, idiosyncrasies and traditions towards promoting and preserving them.



**Radio Habana Cuba**