



The great disco party in Cuba: the Cubadisco International Fair, will arrive from May 15 to 23 next in its edition 20-21, which includes the record productions of two years and is validated as the authentic gift that it is, from and for whom they love and defend our music.

By summarizing two calendars of phonographic and audiovisual work, the current chapter of Cubadisco configures an atypical scenario, as well as poses additional challenges for institutions and actors, with the priority and mandate of invigorating the music industry.

Especially since these two years are the ones with the best quantitative statistics in terms of creation, while they are so from a qualitative point of view. That first outlined impact gives a greater reach than an event that has responded from the height of that bastion of Cuban culture that is our music. So

although the big stages have not been open to the public, creativity and art do not understand sterile confinements.

The importance of Cubadisco, the characteristics of chapter 20-21 and its impact on the development dynamics of the Cuban music industry, discussed the Round Table this Thursday.

For this, the main organizers of the largest musical event on the island appeared on the radio-television program: Indira Fajardo Ramírez, president of the Cuban Institute of Music (ICM); Jorge Gómez Barranco, president of the Cubadisco International Fair; and Caridad Díez Ferrer, musicologist and member of the Academic Committee.

Music, sound and image: Inside Cubadisco, reinventing spaces and bridges



At the gates of a new edition, from May 15 to 23, Cubadisco 20-21 is also consolidated by entering the field of celebrating its 25th anniversary, which will be next year. This is what the president of the Cuban Institute of Music (ICM), Indira Fajardo Ramírez, said on Thursday when she spoke at the Round Table.

"There have already been 24 editions, since 1997, in which it has been endorsed as a platform to show, as a showcase, the best of Cuban music," she said. And among the attributes in the contest's resume of an intentional nature, she emphasized how it embodies "a space to articulate the Cuban music industry that has also been built throughout these years."

The event is of great importance for the ICM - an institution that embraces it from its very beginnings - and for the Ministry of Culture (Mincult), as it reinforces that articulation between record companies and all the actors who, in one way or another, During this period, they have contributed to the development and the effort to strengthen - more and more - this music industry.

In a context of a pandemic, where artistic presentations have stopped throughout the world, production and creation in the musical field have grown during 2020 and 2021. A momentum that has also been tempered by the disappearance of limitations on artists to make your presentations.

He highlighted the will of the Cuban State to dispense a budget for the protection of artists, a supportive political decision with which the creators have also been consistent.

The increase in artistic production has resulted in more than 300 works, including phonograms and audiovisuals. That impulse has shown, in unison, the island's talent in terms of the musical and cultural wealth that it has known how to defend.

Faced with the impossibility of making a Cubadisco in person, a program has been organized aimed at articulating traditional media with digital platforms.

In that sense, he added, it has been essential to have the support of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (ICRT), specifically the Clave channel. And therein lies "one of the fundamental challenges of this Cubadisco: how not to lower the quality of everything that we present to the public and, at the same time, offer a product that really is a showcase, in a general way, of everything that our discography produces. , companies and agencies ".

These strategic ICM-ICRT-Mincult cultural alliances have become an indispensable platform to promote and put on the radio the Cuban music that we defend. That's a premise, he insisted.

In this edition that greets the Ibero-American Year of Music, the event is dedicated to Spain as Guest Country of Honor. According to the organizers, a significant agenda of activities has been planned in this direction, an effort that has had the support of the embassy of that European nation in Havana and should result in the successful outcome of the cultural actions.

It is an inclusive event, in which many actors have a place, both from the state and non-state sectors; another of the contributions of this international music fair, under the slogan: Music, image and sound.

The articulation of actors is not limited only to record production, but has a wide range from the audiovisual field, which is growing to a greater extent and constitutes a strength for the event in particular and for Cuban music in general.

Cubadisco "should be endorsed as a true platform to show the hierarchy and talent of Cuban music," said the head of the ICM.

An ecumenical platform to rethink our music industry



On how the Cubadisco "has always been a platform on which the Cuban music industry has developed," reflected in his speech at the Round Table Jorge Gómez Barranco, president of that international fair

Among the actions and key elements that have influenced the results, after 24 editions, "almost always the clapping goes to the Prize", as it was the most anticipated and controversial of this musical festival. The good thing that it is controversial, he explained in this television space, is because it denotes the interest of people.

"Record companies, producers, artists, feel great enthusiasm when presenting" their proposals. Works have been received from all the great Cuban artists, including some who do not currently reside in the country. In fact, among these there are those who have works in competition that have already been awarded in international competitions of great value and prestige. And they present it here precisely because they trust the importance of the Cubadisco: that is one of the best impacts of the event. "The Prize continues to be the great center around which the entire Cubadisco scaffolding revolves because it is also the way in which the industry rewards itself."

They are not a venal jury or not, a group of people who make decisions or not; but dozens of music professionals: producers, conductors, arrangers, journalists, musicologists ..., who cast their vote without influencing each other. "People vote conscientiously, they bring the music, they hear it, they give their opinions..."..

Because of the high quality, he said, sometimes the problem is not just who is chosen from the contestants, but who is left out. This applies to all genres or categories where awards are awarded. Hence, the prize tends to be, precisely, the most visible part of this great music festival on the Island..

"Not only do we not renounce controversy, but we like that there is one, that people give their opinion. We have even established a space in the networks so that people can express their disagreements or their criteria ", which in the end help to improve the realization of the event.

The contest has also grown in diversity of genres and expressions of music, without discrimination.

"Cubadisco is the most ecumenical, the broadest, of all the events that take place in the country. You can award, listen, nominate, from the most exquisite concert music - Cubans who make tremendous versions of the classics of the seventeenth and seventeenth centuries, academics - to the most humble cajon rumba, passing through the new trova, through rock , urban music... ".

He pondered the support from the Mincult and the ICM to legitimize and defend this "open, democratic platform, where all genders have a place." Logically, these principles of inclusion and participation of the fair complicate the decisions of the juries and promote healthy rivalry among the contestants. "The most that can happen to us is that there is the enormous amount of phonograms that have been presented and audiovisuals". The latter have gained in number of works, despite the complex epidemiological situation that exists.

He said that, in some way, the event is resembling others of its kind on the international stage, in terms of the design of actions to promote markets and shows. "To the extent that this platform that we are offering is more effective, we are going to get closer to something than our responsibility - with the public, with the makers of music -: to ensure that it can enter the market spaces that belongs

to them in their own right, because of their quality ”.

Perhaps that endeavor will take time, he commented, but there is the expectation of turning the fair into an instrument that allows reaching a greater number of people; that makes it even more attractive to tourists; let the specialists come from everywhere. Sometimes when these experts arrive from other countries they cannot believe (themselves) the phenomenon of Cuban music, due to its ostensible quality.

Gómez Barranco announced that, in the context of Cubadisco, a symposium will be held, apart from the traditional event of the fair where exhibitors and record companies make the potential we have available to the public, which is a lot.

As a first, he shared that this year there will be a presentation of all of their products in all entities - in response to the absence of specialists and promoters who usually come to Cubadisco - in what has been conceived as a virtual fair. In this case, the virtual fair is marked by three moments in the programming in which the products available from each of these agencies, national and foreign, will appear.

And with this, Cubadisco transcends the narrowest frontiers of specialists to be available to the public.

As it was known, several galas expressly conceived and recorded for this event will be broadcast on Cuban Television.

In those 14 hours a day of television transmission, both the space of the fair and the symposium, as well as the programming strips with the different topics to be discussed by the specialists will be included.

For example, Mauricio Figuieral is going to present Cantar makes sense, with Liuba María Hevia; the teacher Cary (Caridad Díez) has been the creator and promoter of an idea that will find shelter on the programming grid, De las Roots; Carmen Rosa López will also be there with Esos locos bajitos, a space for children... among other audiovisual proposals.

It is an extensive program, there are seven strips of half an hour each during the day. Meanwhile, with the collaboration of

the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain, a number of programs have been brought in: "a marvel of programming." Among these spaces, he cited the one dedicated to Xavier Cugat, one of the great mambo cultivators. There is also a documentary about Paco de Lucía and another "frankly interesting and very endearing" for trova lovers: Aute-portrait, about the life of Luis Eduardo Aute.

Gómez Barranco specified that, from April 12 to 14, the Clave channel shared documentaries and concerts that have been presented for the Award. "What we agreed with the ICRT and the Clave channel is that these initiatives remain as common heritage and, possibly, we will have the option that the Cubadisco can demonstrate throughout the year, and people follow the pulse of that industry, to that she is much more proud of Cuban music".

He added that the challenges imposed by the pandemic have created work facilities that should not be discarded when normality returns: "Right now people cannot go to the fair or concerts, but we are taking them home. . Things are not only being done on television, but also on digital platforms, which have been very useful.

He exemplified that, through the latter, the Listener or Public Award is being created, similar to that of popularity, in addition to that of the specialized press that has followed the event

A fair that always aims at the roots



She commented that the creation of the Cubadisco coincided with the centennial of the first Cuban recording in the United States. "From the beginning, the event has had academic responsibility and in that they had a leading role **Ciro Benemelis**, its founding president, and other colleagues such as **Jesús Gómez**, **Pepe Reyes**, **María Teresa Linares**, **Argeliers León** ...".

In addition, she said that she has been pending to study the thought of **Fernando Ortiz** and other figures. "We have always had the attitude that Cubadisco has to go to the bottom, to the roots, to the foundation, which prepares the context for the creation of music."

From May 17 to 20 there will be a virtual symposium that will also be broadcast at eleven o'clock in the morning on the Clave channel. The event will be organized by the Cuban Music Research and Development Center.

"In this space we will discuss how the Cubadisco Prize reflects the creation of Cuban music, how it is represented in the broadcast media,

what are the strategies that are perceived in institutional relations and the efforts made by our artists, in addition to getting to know the various actors in the music industry ", pointed out Diez.

The symposium has always had a section to study production and marketing. "At the moment we are focused on verifying not only the use of networks and technologies for production and creation, but also for commercialization, in order to have greater visibility of the products and to be able to develop the catalogs."

She specified that, for several weeks, at three in the afternoon, the Ministry of Culture creates a channel, through its Streaming Cuba platforms.

"Since the press conference where the nominees in all categories were announced, we have had the presence of journalists, specialists, critics and researchers."

According to the directive, next week the initiative will be reinforced with members of the Award committee "because we want people to be able to convey their concerns, doubts, praise, analysis ... Thus, the Cubadisco will not only have within its academic attitude the members of the organizing committee, but to the people, to think, explain and enjoy how they tell their stories ".

He added that the symposium will address the challenges in times of pandemic. "For a year and a half we have had the We are with you, who have really been with everyone and have made almost 400 broadcasts, some of which have been released this week and several have shown enormous wealth because most of the genres and genres have been addressed. important events ".

This edition of Cubadisco commemorates the 125th anniversary of the birth of Ernesto Lecuona. "There is a collection of 13 albums with the work of voice and piano, and a production: Al fin Lecuona, by the maestro Nelson Camacho.

In addition, the 100 years of the Habanero Septet are celebrated, the 70 of the birth of Vicente Feliú and the 95 of Enrique Bonne. "All these works show that we are close to the heartbeat of the nation, to the fantasy of this country to constantly reinvent itself, and we are even seeing the projection of the future," he concluded.



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