





## THEATER

## Carlos Diaz, Founder of Cuba's Avant-Garde Teatro El Publico, Talks About Miami Project

Is anyone else feeling freaked out by East Coast earthquakes and hurricanes the size of Europe that reach all the way to Canada? Not to be alarmists or anything, but maybe it's time to stuff our belongings into our hybrids, pack a year's supply of organic trail mix, and navigate...

By Gabriela Garcia | September 7, 2011

Listen to the article now    
Audio by Carbonatix

 1.0x 



Is anyone else feeling freaked out by East Coast earthquakes and hurricanes the size of Europe that reach all the way to Canada? Not to be alarmists or anything, but maybe it's time to stuff our belongings into our hybrids, pack a year's supply of organic trail mix, and navigate our way through the universe until we get to another planet where we can start all over, before our world starts looking like the landscape in *If You're Going To Pull a Knife, Usalo*.

In the gloomy, absurdist play by Carlos Caballero and Elizabeth Doud, a petroleum worker and a Disney World character actress fall in love in a ruined, polluted ocean. *New Times* spoke with Carlos Diaz, founder of the Cuban avant-garde theater company Teatro El Público and director of the play, about Samuel Beckett, directing theater in Cuba, and cultural exchange between our two countries. (Interview translated from Spanish.)

### ***New Times*: What is *If You're Going to Pull a Knife, Usalo*?**

**Carlos Diaz:** We are using the text of different works of Beckett to create a play that in a visual manner talks about the care that we need to put into the sea and everything that has to do with the environment. It talks about the relationship between a worker and a mermaid. The story begins when they meet and continues until the mermaid leaves... it's about two human beings who wait for change and realize that there is no day in which they are happy.

### **What's the role of Samuel Beckett's work in the play?**

We use the text of *Waiting for Godot*, *Happy Days*, and *Endgame*, as a function--without betraying the text of Beckett--to create a second story with the purpose of the project.

**Where did the idea for the project come from?**

The idea for the project came from the duo of actors Carlos Caballero and Elizabeth Doud. They worked on this idea for 20 minutes, and then I came in to realize the play of one hour and 10 minutes.

**How did you know the actors? You currently live in Cuba, correct?**

Yes, Carlos worked with me in Teatro El Publico, for which I'm the director [in Cuba]. I met Elizabeth at a theater festival I attended here last year, when we brought the play *Las Amargas Lágrimas de Petra von Kant*. I met Elizabeth and met up with Carlos, who had been a producer of Teatro El Publico in Cuba. It's been a bit like working with family.

**And what is Teatro El Publico?**

Teatro El Publico was founded 20 years ago. We've put on works from the classics to combinations of different languages that allow us to communicate with the public of today. We have a broad repertory. We've spent 20 years I think working with the best of universal theater.

**Do you sense any difference in directing plays here in Miami and in Cuba?** Look, I think that theater is a communication that is the same in any place where one goes; theater is the magic of the black box and communicating with the public. And to me, it's been very comfortable working here in Miami.

**You probably heard about all of the controversy surrounding Cuban musician Pablo Milanés's concert here. What's your opinion on cultural exchange between our two countries?**

I think, in the best sense, that we need to fight for that cultural exchange. I think that there shouldn't be silence on either shore, because people should be able to get to know arts and culture from both here and there,

and be able to exchange.

*Performances of If you're going to pull a knife, USA! take place*

*September 8 through 10 at 8 p.m. and*

*September 11 at 5 p.m. at Miami-Dade County Auditorium (2901 W. Flagler*

*St., Miami). Tickets cost \$20 general admission or \$15 for students and*

*seniors. Call (305) 358-5885 or visit fundarte.us.*

*Follow Cultist on Facebook and Twitter @CultistMiami.*

## GET MORE COVERAGE LIKE THIS

Sign up for the Arts & Culture newsletter to get the latest stories delivered to your inbox

Email •



I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA  
Privacy Terms

**SIGN UP**



**GABRIELA GARCIA**

A message from Culture Editor Celia Almeida: If you value independent journalism, please consider making a contribution to support our continued coverage of Miami's vibrant culture and arts scenes.

**SUPPORT TODAY**