

CALGARY, February 1, 2023.

FOR The Pitch It! Program Selection Committee:

I am Hebert Poll Gutierrez, a Cuban Canadian author, storyteller, poet, and playwright artist with 16 years of experience. I believe in the power of stories and theater to shape realities. Art is my strategy to defend my triple cultural identity:

My identity as an artist,

My identity as a Cuban

My identity as an Afro-descendant.

I have published nine books in several genres (poetry, theater, and short fiction). My latest book is: "Whispers from the Black Gods (Poetry)" (The Elite Lizzard Publishing Company, Canada, 2022).

Some of my writings appear in magazines and more than 20 anthologies from Cuba, Venezuela, Canada, Spain, the United States, Mexico, Germany, and other countries. Companies from Latin America, Europe, and Canada have represented my theater scripts.

I want to produce, with your company, my interdisciplinary play (theater and cinema) for young people and adults... " The great race."

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Title: THE GREAT RACE

AUTHOR> HEBERT POLL GUTIÉRREZ

TYPE OF PROJECT: Interdisciplinary one-act play for youth and adults (THEATER AND FILM).

DURATION: 50 MINUTES.

GENRE: COMEDY

AUDIENCE: GENERAL

TARGET AUDIENCE: Natural Canadians, Latin American Communities, first nations, and other cultures not originating in Canada.

LANGUAGE: The language will be mainly English, although the videos will be in English with Spanish subtitles. The Spanish-speaking audience is one of our target audiences.

FEATURES:

Awá: A very self-confident duck. He loves discussing and competing to the extreme. He is the son of Yemayá, and his colors are blue and white.

Akiko: The most popular rooster in the forest. He is powerful, determined, and hates being a loser. His father is Changó, the Thunder and Music God. His favorite colors are red and white.

Akeké : He is a brave little chick. He likes to observe before talking. Son of Ellegwá, owner and protector of all paths.

Long Tongue. Com: A long, skinny snake who hates to work. She is a specialist in twisting everything around.

Awemá: Wise lizard. She is white, almost transparent because she forgot how to change color. Obatalá, the owner of peace and queen of all Afro-Cuban gods, is her mother.

Sports announcer: He is a very talkative and energetic blue wolf. Loves to narrate sports. He is the best reporter in the forest.

CD RW: One of the most popular characters in the world. His mission is to have many friends, whether they play PlayStation or not. IE is his stage name to conquer his followers on social networks.

Receptionist

Voice Over 1

Voice Over 2

Voice Over 3

MALE ROLES: AWÁ, AKEKE. AKIKO, SPORT ANNOUNCER.

FEMALE ROLES: LONG TONGUE.COM, AWEMÁ, IE, RECEPCIONIST.

NOTE: This will be a dual-cast production. The actors don't have to be black. I'm thinking of diverse races. Identity has no color. **I also wish to include artists from the lgtb community in my play.**

What is the project?

The Great Race is an interdisciplinary project for youth and adults that promotes and defends the authentic Afro-Cuban culture.

SYNOPSIS

Due to a terrible argument,
there's a fire in the forest.

The characters in this story
never agree with each other.

Awa the duck and Akiko the rooster doesn't get along. Their silly feathered fight has lasted too long, affecting the animals, almost animals, and those who think of themselves as animals of the forest of Ibo Findo. They only have one solution left...

The protagonists of this story are animals with afro-descendant names. Expecting what must happen, it's necessary to ask for help from the Afro-Cuban gods. Between fights and a bit of love, time passes until the day of the Great Race.

The play is based on traditional Afro-Cuban legend, but it is not a 100 percent reproduction of this legend. The author decided to adapt this legend to contemporary contexts to be understood by children, young people, and adults who sometimes behave like children. The play is not a historical tale of the past but a modern cultural strategy to share and preserve the Afro-Cuban identity. The piece is full of contemporary nods and humor, starring divine beings (orishas) who live happily contaminated by the imperfections of human beings.

Project Goals:

To show and share aspects of Afro-Cuban culture that only a few know about.

It will help to eliminate stereotypes about Cubans and their traditions.

To share the wisdom of Afro-Cuban culture.

Target Audiences:

Young people and adults

Latino community in Calgary and elsewhere

English-speaking community

Canadian, African, and first nations communities and other local socio-cultural groups.

Why is this project important to others involved?

The advent of covid forced many artists to look for new ways to communicate, to engage the audience. That's why this project combines live theater with film. We are in a time when several arts are needed to impact audiences positively.

This project is an opportunity to express visions, sensations, emotions, and feelings that invite us to tell each other things, without masks, face to face, with love, because only love...engenders wonder.

I want to show through the play that opening our minds to different ways of thinking in new cultures is sometimes good. Learning to live in a community as the people we are is the basis of a healthy society. It is the basis of a healthy society. It is time to build cultural bridges, not walls.

The great race means defending my triple cultural identity as an artist, Cuban, and afro-descendant. The risk of failure and misunderstanding is a normal part of every artist's life. Presenting the project to people from different cultural contexts is a success. It is the first step in a long process that will end when Canadians, Cubans, Mexicans, and Chileans recognize the following:

No one educates anyone. Everyone needs to educate himself. Men educate each other through the mediation of the world. (Paulo Freire).

I don't want to talk about my creative process for this play. Each word and line shape my creative process. Instead of talking about my long creative process, I prefer, through my work, to motivate the public and other artists to discover their creative process. I'm just an artist in a non-stop creative process who always remembers Albert Einstein's words: Creativity is intelligence having fun".

THE GREAT RACE

SCENE I

Location of the story: A Forest

Curtain down. An atmosphere of the forest.

VOICEOVER: Somewhere in the forest, between the breeze and the sun...

The curtain rises, and...

SCENE II

Longtongue.com appears on stage, riding a bicycle and hawking Longtongue.com.

LONGTONGUE.COM: Extra, extra! Akiko the rooster and Awá the duck cannot stand each other! Akiko the rooster and Awá the duck cannot stand each other!

Longtongue.com orders several audience members to say: Akiko the rooster and Awá the duck cannot stand each other! Suddenly she stops shouting.

LONGTONGUE.COM (Addressing the public): See how easy it is to be a gossip.

We hear the beating of drums.

LONGTONGUE.COM (SCARED): Those unbearable people... they're coming this way. I'm leaving.

SCENE III

Akiko, Awa and Akeké appear. They are wearing sports clothes.

AWÁ: Well, my dearest Akiko... I cover this forest in just 2 seconds. I'm the fastest.

AKEKE (Interrupt conversation): I am faster.

AKIKO Y AWA (Yell at the same time): Shut up, you brat... Shut up!

AKIKO (Proudly looks at Awa): You make me laugh... don't you remember, my dear Awa, that my father is the Red God, the owner of the thunder? Do you run in 2 seconds? I can do it in one.

AKEKE: I am faster.

AWA (Yelling at Akeké): Shut up, you brat... Shut up!

Then he turns to Akiko.

AWA: A, E, I, O, U... I laugh harder than you, I laugh harder than you. That's why I look so young. Whoever laughs six times a day lasts 120 years.

AKEKE: Then I shall be immortal and forever the fastest.

AKIKO: Silence at once!

AKEKE: You love to shout for no reason. I might be small, but I've read many things on the internet.

AKIKO: Whatever you say... back to the topic, my mother is the blue queen, the tempest, the sea... the water that blows out the candles. Let's decide on this by running!

AWA: I accept. Let's do this now. My mother's birthday is at 7 pm, and poor me if I'm late.

AKEKE: I want to compete too!

AKIKO: What are you saying? Can't you see that you're just a yellow-feathered gnome?

AKEKE: A yellow-feathered gnome?

AKIKO Y AWA (Yell simultaneously): You're a midget!

AKEKE: I'll beat you!

AKIKO Y AWA (Laughing and teasing Akeke): Hahaha... AKEKE (A little bit angry): Shut up!

AWA: We'll let you run, but if you make it last, you'll learn to spell the word "beating."

AKIKO Y AWA (Yell at the same time): B E A T I N G.... BEATING.

AKEKE: I accept.

Awa gets in position on his marks, ready and out.

AWÁ: On your marks, ready and... AKIKO: What are you doing?

AWÁ: Take a guess. I'm getting ready to run! To beat you.

AKIKO: That's no fun. Who'd say I'm the fastest?

AWÁ: I'll do it. Honesty is my second last name. If I lose, then I'll lose. But if I win...

AKIKO: There isn't a better birthday present for your mother than to tell her that you proved, at last, to be the fastest in the forest, Ibo Findo.