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José Bustamante: Peruvian in Moscow

Once an aspiring actor, diplomat José Rodríguez Bustamante immerses himself in the arts

By Emily Erken

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José Bustamante

José Roberto Rodríguez Bustamante is an actor, a poet, and the Counsellor at the Peruvian embassy in Russia. since his arrival in Moscow in 2015 with his wife, who was seven months pregnant at the time, Rodríguez Bustamante has immersed himself in Russian cultural life.

In March two years ago, I was working in Saudi Arabia, and I was called to ask if I wanted to go to Moscow to work. I said "Why not? Let's go!" I noticed the quantity of Russia's snow from the airplane. It was very impressive because I had come from Saudi Arabia. So I changed my life from plus 40 degrees to minus 14 degrees in the space of one week. The cold was the first shock, and the second was the heartbeat of the city.

At the end of 2015, Peru and Russia increased the level of their diplomatic relationship. The

presidents signed a declaration in Paris, a strategic partnership. It includes all of the fields of cooperation, and keeps us busy.

At the end of last year, I moved to Frunzenskaya. My house is 200 meters from the Moskva river, and every morning when the day starts, I see the river through my window. It is a residential area for a quiet life, for families. It's what I missed when I was living on Tverskaya Street, right in the center of the city. I also like the peaceful atmosphere when I am walking along the Moskva River.

Maybe the thing I love most living in Moscow is learning about Russian culture and people. The Stanislavsky Theater is one of my all time favorites. I love drama and opera above all. But ballet is also a pleasure to see here in Moscow. All my life, I made theater. I was an actor: first as a hobby in my time at university, then professionally when I lived in Peru. I had to give up on my acting career in order to enter the diplomatic corps.

I am personally convinced, 100 percent, that the best way to approach different cultural views of the world is through cultural liaisons. In Peru, we say that the best way to conquer the heart of a man is through the kitchen. But for me, it's through cultural life.

On the 17th of April, we presented Peruvian week in Moscow at Chicha restaurant because it's a Russian restaurant with Peruvian foods. We presented alpaca wool clothing, make-up, cosmetics, tourism, gastronomy, Pisco — which is a national drink — and wine from Peru. The chefs have had a local experience in Peru, they studied with the most important internationally known chef in Latin America, Virgilio Martinez. They know how to cook Peruvian cuisine to Russian taste. It's a symbol of fusion. Ceviche is one of the national dishes of Peru. And it has to be accompanied by Pisco Sour, it's mandatory, ceviche plus Pisco Sour.

We will close Peruvian week with a Peruvian piano concert on the 20th of April. We will invite Mr. Pablo Sabat, the Director of the Symphonic Youth Orchestra in Lima. He will do a piano concert in the Italian Courtyard in the Pushkin Museum. He will present some classic pieces from Latin American composers, and in the second part, he will play Russian composers. The day after, Mr. Pablo Sabat will offer a masterclass for the students of music at the Gnesin Institute.

I'm surprised what beauty you can find in the Metro system in Moscow. It's art. Ploshchad Revolyutsii is good, and I like Mayakovskaya. It's amazing how a metro station can be a literal piece of art.

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