



Play 'Rum and Coke' comes to South Florida

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Associated Link

MIAMI (WSVN) -- A Miami-born playwright is ready to share her Cuban experience in a one-woman show that's coming to South Florida.

The play "Rum and Coke" tells the tale of a young Cuban American's trip to Havana. Critics are calling the show "ferociously comic" and "moving" and now South Floridians can see it.

"I got so upset. I turned around, and I said, 'Look!'" Miami native Carmen Pelaez is telling the story of expatriation and exile in her solo play "Rum and Coke." The Cuban actress recounts the fictional journey of a woman who decides to go to the island for the first time.

"I'd take the personality of my mother with the story that a manicurist told me, or my grandmother's story with the personality of an uncle, and I'd kind of form each character," explained Pelaez, "until I could get the most truthful and most immediate story out of them and say things that might make us a little uncomfortable but very honestly."

Her sister and co-producer added that the play speaks to universal truths. "There's no filter on her. She's a very honest person, and she sees things and she says things that people think or they feel," said Ana Sofia Pelaez, "and she just articulates it so well and so beautifully, and it resonates with people right away."

The play also explores how laughter and pain live in the same breath. "My goal for every performance is to get someone going, 'Hahaha' [and] 'Ohhhh,'" said Carmen Pelaez. "That's what I hope for with these characters."

She has performed "Rum and Coke" for years across the U.S. to rave reviews, and for the play's upcoming 20th anniversary, she chose to bring the story full circle at the Freedom Tower at Miami Dade College. "Whenever I drive by it, I'm always aware that this was the first place that welcomed my grandparents, and that's such a gift," said Carmen Pelaez.

She says South Florida audiences embrace the storyline. "It's really home to the play. My audiences here have always been diverse and generous and fun, and they get it," she said. "I'm trying to tell their story through these characters and through these women."

Carmen Pelaez will perform her play Friday and Saturday night at 8 p.m. Tickets are still available online for just over \$25.