Sac State presents Che Guevara play

The mythic persona of Marxist guerrilla fighter Ernesto “Che” Guevara continues to mesmerize generations of people around the globe nearly five decades after his death in a Bolivian jungle.

Those fascinated with the charismatic revolutionary, who was captured by CIA-assisted Bolivian forces and summarily executed Oct. 9, 1967, will be able to see a live performance of Che Guevara and the Dispossessed, Nov. 14-24 at Sacramento State’s Playwrights’ Theatre.

Written and directed by Professor Roberto Pomo, Che is produced by theatre and dance, film, music and communication studies students, faculty and staff. Performances are at 8 p.m. Nov. 14-16 and 22-23; 6:30 p.m. Nov. 20-21; and 2 p.m. Nov. 17 and 24. Tickets for the 6:30 p.m. shows are $8 general admission and $5 for children. All other performances are $12 general, $10 for students and seniors, and $8 for children. Tickets are available at www.csus.edu/hornettickets.

The original hypermedia production traces Guevara’s fateful journey from Fidel Castro’s chief lieutenant to Marxist martyr. Played out chronologically, the production features three large screens to display period photographs and newsreels. Pomo sees it “as an impressionistic dramatic work that mixes sensory perceptions of an iconic and historical Latin American political figure through live performance techniques, photographic images and live video imagery.”

The play’s main characters are Young Che, played by Russell Dow, Mature Che, played by Amir Sharafeh, and Inquisitor/Felix Ramos, played by Thomas Dean.

Dow sees Guevara as “incredibly complicated” and best viewed as “an idealist with nowhere to go.” Sharafeh, a 2004 Sac State graduate who majored in theatre and minored in film, anchors the play with his multilayered performance.

Professor Pomo, who shares Guevara’s Argentine heritage, also envisions his play as a personal journal of sorts. He was going to begin researching and writing Che six years ago during a forthcoming summer sabbatical when he was persuaded instead to resurrect Sac State’s Honors Program. Last summer, Pomo finally returned to his project only to discover it to be far more complex than he initially imagined.
Pomo’s meticulous research prompted him to delve even deeper into the Marxist revolutionary’s shadowy past and demise. To document the endgame, Pomo flew to Miami to meet with Col. Felix Rodriguez, a Cuban exile and CIA operative who assisted Bolivian forces in Che’s capture. The highly decorated Rodriguez, who was present during Che’s execution, and an Army comrade will attend the play’s opening night and be available for questions from the audience.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156. — Alan Miller

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