

The audience took their seats and awaited for the voice that would tell them the action was about to begin: a loud, husky voice, with lots of experience, but above all, a cheerful voice beloved by those who filled the stalls of the theater. For any theater enthusiast in Colombia, this now brings nostalgia and gratitude towards the owner of such voice: Fanny Mikey.

“She felt more Colombian than anyone,” says Daniel Alvarez Mikey, the adopted and beloved son of the director of the Iberoamerican Theater Festival. Since Fanny gave him his first Video 8 camera when he graduated from high school, he never stopped recording the life of the artist he always admired. Hence the film “Fanny Forever” –an account of her life as a mother and theater lady.

“Hurricane Fanny” Arrives to Colombia



{rokbox title=|Fanny Mikey, creator of the Iberoamerican Theater Festival of Bogotá. / Photo: Salvatore Salomone.}|images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/historiaytradicion/feriasyfiestas/FITB2010/fanny-mikey2.jpg{/rokbox}

Fanny Mikey, creator of the Iberoamerican Theater Festival of Bogotá. / Photo: Salvatore Salomone.

Fanny Mickey was born in Buenos Aires in 1930. There she became an actress, and learned to direct. The love she felt for Argentinean actor Pedro I. Martínez took her to Colombia in 1958. Pedro was a friend of Enrique Buenaventura, an actor and theater director born in [Cali](#). Buenaventura contacted him among several actors and directors in order to strengthen the emerging Colombian television business and to make teletheater.

Cartagena was Fanny Mikey’s favorite getaway.

“Fanny and Pedro I. maintained a very intense distance relationship, full of love letters and poems in which he told her about the beauty of Colombia. So my mom decided to come: she took a bus to Valparaíso and then traveled by boat to Buenaventura, Colombia. When she arrived there she thought she was in Africa due to the black communities of the region,” says Daniel.

After eight years of working with Enrique and Pedro in Cali's School of Theatre, Fanny separated from her husband and returned to Argentina for a year. "She wasn't able to readapt to life in Buenos Aires, so she accepted the invitations of her friends in Colombia and decided to return," states Daniel.

Fanny settled in Bogotá, but in the 80s she bought a small apartment in Cartagena, since that was her favorite getaway. According to her son, "She loved this city: there she relaxed, shared with friends, and created new projects with a clear mind."

Fanny, a Very Colombian Argentinean



{rokbox title=|Ajiaco, Fanny's favorite Colombian dish. / Photo: Flickr User Reindertot.}|images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/historiaytradicion/feriasyfiestas/FITB2010/ajiaco.jpg{/rokbox}

Ajiaco, Fanny's favorite Colombian dish. / Photo: Flickr User [Reindertot](#) .

The creator of the largest theater festival in the world captivated her foreign friends by talking about Colombian cuisine; she promised to take them to try ajiaco and arepa de huevo: this was the country's presentation card.

However, it was not the food what she enjoyed the most, it was her friends, the warmth and kindness of Colombian people. "Had it not been for my friends in Colombia, I would not have stayed here," said Fanny to the camera that recorded the documentary on her life.

Fanny started introducing Colombia from its gastronomy.

Fanny Mikey passed away on August 16, 2008. As she called for, her funeral was held in the best Colombian style: a party where the rhythm of cumbia was present in the voices of the singers of Aurora al Amanecer and Asoculcar. Both friends and family as well as fans from different parts of Bogotá gathered to say farewell, and Colombian singer and actor Cesar Mora sang for her.

Fanny Mikey's Legacy for Colombia



{rokbox title=|Fanny Mikey. / Photo: Salvatore Salomone.}|images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/historiaytradicion/feriasyfiestas/FITB2010/mikey-fanny.jpg{/rokbox}

Fanny Mikey. / Photo: Salvatore Salomone.

Pasto and Barranquilla have their carnivals, every town has its own celebration, but Bogotá did not. In 1986, Fanny Mikey decided to give it one. According to Guillermo Restrepo, mayor of the Festival's City of Theatre, she wanted to rescue the hope and culture of Bogotians, and she worked with her team throughout 1987 to create the Iberoamerican Theater Festival and to turn it into the capital's big celebration.

With all the contacts and staging ready, the festival was launched during the Holy Week of 1988. People attended massively, not only from the capital but also from other cities and countries. Tickets sold out and street shows were widely popular. This is how the most important theater tradition in the country and the world was born.

The Festival director devoted 50 years of her life to promote theater in Colombia.

The Iberoamerican Theater Festival and three theater venues were the main legacies of the artist, but more than that, they are a reflection of her personality and characteristic features –an unshakeable persistence, faith in the work of others, and the ability to promote Colombia and its culture.

Although she is gone, her 50 years of work and love for Colombia during which she built friendships, festivals, staging, and joy still persist. This was Fanny, the actress, the cultural manager, the mother and friend. This was “Hurricane Fanny” as her son referred to her in the presentation of the documentary on March 17, 2010.

Learn more about the Iberoamerican Theater Festival at: www.festivaldeteatro.com.co .