

# *Silvio Rodríguez officially opens Casa de las Américas Literary Prize*

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Cuban singer-songwriter and poet Silvio Rodríguez opened the prestigious Casa Prize, evoking the island's National Hero José Martí and the institution's founder, Haydée Santamaría, at the Havana based cultural institution's Che Guevara Hall.

'If a century after his birth José Martí was identified as the mastermind of the revolutionary events that sparked our liberation stage of 1953, it could also be said that this Casa de las Américas was founded by our National Hero, because of his commitment to the founding fathers who began continental emancipation wars against colonialism', said Rodríguez in his opening address. 'weren't it not enough, a young girl from the generation of the Centennial of the birth of Martí, a protagonist of that terrible but symbolically beautiful event (referring to the attack on the Moncada military headquarters, the action that sparked the Cuban Revolution) was, at the same time, who founded and promoted this institution, which has gathered writers as making a home-made essay of that ideal essay called Our America (by José Martí in the late 19th century)'.

He added that in February they will celebrate half a century in which various singer-songwriters of his generations gathered to sing in the same hall, thrilled because, by February 1968, Casa de las Américas was already an honorable entity led by a heroine and supported by brilliant writers and artists.

Referring to that young generation which found refuge in the place, which he once called the 'womb of the New Song Movement', and of which he is one of the leaders, he said that they were apprentices to everything, ranging from written history, the history that remained to be created, to the true history that this small challenging and besieged country has written and to what Rodríguez called 'the bright lights of the dreams' that Cuba has been able to project beyond its borders.

The 59th Casa de las Américas Literary Prize includes a series of activities that got underway last night and will continue until January 25th with the awards ceremony of the winning literary works in competition in the categories of short story, theater, artistic-literary essay, Brazilian literature, Caribbean literature in English or Creole and Women Studies.

The opening was attended by Cuba's Culture Minister, Abel Prieto, and Casa's Literary Research Center Director, writer Jorge Fornet and other Cuban and international intellectual.

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