

Production is Underway on Historical Drama "Alina of Cuba," Starring Ana Villafañe, James Franco, Mia Maestro

Goya award-winner Miguel Bardem directs screenplay by Oscar-nominated Jose Rivera and Pulitzer Prize winner Nilo Cruz based on the story of Castro's Daughter

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA, August 15, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Production is now underway and cameras are rolling on the historical drama "[Alina of Cuba](#)," starring Award Winning Broadway Crossover Ana Villafañe," in the title role along with Oscar-nominated Actor James Franco, and Imagen Award Winner Mia Maestro. Goya award-winner Miguel Bardem directs the screenplay by Oscar-nominated writer Jose Rivera and Pulitzer Prize winner Nilo Cruz.



Ana Villafañe stars as Alina Fernandez (aka Castro's Daughter) in "Alina of Cuba"

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Since its inception, we envision the project as being inclusive through uniting actors and creatives from both intergenerational and recent Latin roots from the U.S, Latin America, and the world.”

John Martinez O’Felan, the project’s lead creative producer,

The film follows the true-life story of Cuban exile turned social advocate, Alina Fernandez, aka “Castro’s Daughter,” whose birth was the result of a passionate love affair between Fidel Castro and Natalia “Naty” Revuelta, a Cuban-born socialite, who sacrificed her and her physician husband’s personal belongings and finances to help fund the start of the communist revolution. Fernandez learned that she was Fidel Castro’s daughter at the age of 10 when after years of secret visits to her home, her mother finally revealed that “El Comandante” was her biological father. Alina grew to become one of Castro’s most outspoken critics, arrested on more than one occasion for trying to leave and was classified as a dissident forbidden to travel outside of Cuba. Ultimately, she defected to Spain in 1993,

an event that drew headlines from every major news network around the world, before she

made Miami her permanent home.

The producers are Austin-based Mankind Entertainment's John Martinez O'Felan and Joe Lamy, along with Academy Award-nominee Celine Rattray ("The Kids Are Alright") and BAFTA-nominated Trudie Styler ("Still Alice," "Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels" and "Moon.") for Maven Screen Media. Additional producers include husband and wife team Allen Gilmer and Rikki Rushing, founders of Austin-based Redbud Studios. Emmy-winner Javier Gonzalez is executive producing with Bogota-based production services company Jaguar Bite and Colombian executive producers Juan Pablo Solano and Simon Beltran. Executive producers include Luis Mandoki and Thaddeus D. Matula.

Starring as Alina Fernandez, the film's title character, is Ana Villafañe, best known for her breakout role in the Broadway musical "On Your Feet," in which she portrayed Cuban pop icon, Gloria Estefan. She later starred as Nina Rosario in the Kennedy Center's 2018 production of "In the Heights," and then made her off-Broadway debut in MCC's critically acclaimed "Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties" that same year. On television, Villafañe most recently portrayed Dr. Valentin Castro in NBC's "New Amsterdam" and Diana Barea in "Sunnyside" for the network, as well as KT in the Paramount+ series "Younger." Villafañe was born in Atlanta, raised in Miami, and is of Cuban and Salvadoran descent.



James Franco stars as Fidel Castro in "Alina of Cuba"



Mia Maestro stars in "Alina of Cuba"

With a celebrated career spanning a wide range of diverse characters, Oscar-nominated actor and Independent Spirit Award and Golden Globe winner, James Franco ("127 Hours," "Milk," "The Disaster Artist") – who is of Latin-Portuguese heritage through his paternal line – will star in "Alina of Cuba" as one of the most controversial world figures of all time, Fidel Castro, and with the support of Castro's own daughter, who is serving the production on the set as a creative and biographical consultant to the film.

Mia Maestro stars as Natalia "Naty" Revuelta, the Cuban-born socialite, who sacrificed her and her physician husband's personal belongings and finances to help fund the start of the communist revolution. Maestro recently wrapped the Apple+ anthology series Extrapolations, starring opposite Edward Norton, as well as the lead in Domenico De Feudis' anticipated Italian feature "Il Legame" (aka The Binding) for Netflix, produced by Academy Award winner Paolo Sorrentino. Maestro recently starred in the acclaimed Sundance Film Festival premiere "The Cow That Sang Into The Future." Maestro is known for her roles in Carlos Saura's Oscar-nominated feature "Tango," Walter Salles' "The Motorcycle Diaries," Julie Taymor's "Frida," as well as her recent role in FX's hit series "Mayans M.C."

Rounding out the supporting cast are Alanna de la Rosa, Maria Cecilia Botero ("Encanto," Encanto 2"), Harding Junior, and Cuban-born actors Sian Chiong and Rafael Ernesto Hernandez.

"Alina of Cuba" is being shot entirely on location in and around Cartagena and Bogota, with Colombia's colonial Spanish architecture and design playing for Castro-era Havana, Cuba. The creative team working alongside and with Bardem includes production designer, Carlos Osorio ("24," and "Homeland"), director of photography Juan Carlos Gil ("Que viva la música, Narcos: Season 3"), editor Diego Fernando Bustamante ("Isolated"), and costume designer Daniela Rivano ("Treadstone," "Quest for Happiness"). To bring the character of Fidel Castro to life, working with James Franco, will be his long-time makeup collaborator Nana Fischer (Golden Globe winner, "The Disaster Artist") and dialect coach Jessica Drake ("The Batman," "Bohemian Rhapsody").

As part of the film's media package, O'Felan has also launched the fully financed feature documentary "Revolution's Daughter," filmed on-location alongside "Alina of Cuba" with Emmy and Peabody Award-winning director Thaddeus D. Matula at the helm. Matula is best known for award-winning TV documentary titles, "The Pony Excess" and "Brian and the Boz." The companion documentary will incorporate behind-the-scenes of "Alina of Cuba," while venturing into a historical and modern look at Cuban history and Alina Fernandez as a character. The documentary will open with Ms. Fernandez arriving on set after the project's 15-year-long development process with Matula charting the revolution from its inception as the true title strives to unearth, dissect, and further define the story of Cuba and its people as it sets a new course for itself in this post-Castro world. The documentary will be sold as part of the total feature film package.

UTA is handling North American sales for "Alina of Cuba." The film has received approval to

obtain the CINA incentive (Audiovisual Investment Certificate), granted by the Colombian government and administered by Proimágenes Colombia: a tax discount equivalent to 35% of the expenditure on audiovisual services in the country.

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