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Documentary Soy Andina Premieres on PBS

By Cindy Y. Rodriguez

Unless you grew up in Paterson, New Jersey, you weren't surrounded by ceviche or lomo saltado or even the comfort of knowing there were fellow Peruvian-Americans to reminisce with. Growing up in West New York, New Jersey was a completely different ballgame, in that I shared being Latino with fellow Cubans and Dominicans but that was it.

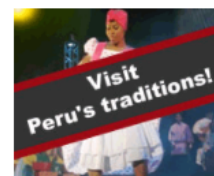
To put it lightly, I was always the token Peruvian. No one completely understood the love and admiration for Eva Ayllon or why a lot of our food was purple or even how with all its faults, we loved our country to the core. You had to be Peruvian to understand. However, times have changed and now everyone can bask in the traditions and rich culture of Peru with the national public television premiere of "Soy Andina" on PBS this month.

In conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month, PBS is premiering an eight-part series titled Voces curated by the Latino Public Broadcasting Corporation, and hosted by Edward James Olmos. Don't fret if you find yourself in Lima, because all eight films will be available online for your viewing pleasure on their broadcast premiere dates.

Patricia Boero, Executive Director of Latino Public Broadcasting, is the Curator and Executive Producer of the series said, "We at LPB are delighted that Voces will be airing its second season this fall. Besides being great entertainment, Voces is a reminder of the enormous influence that Latinos have had on every aspect of American life, from music to sports to education to public service... Our hope is to bring these stories to a wide audience, including Latinos, who will be proud to see their community's achievements on screen." Now Celia Cruz, Tito Puente and "Soy Andina" will be side by side, sharing their stories.

Originally starting with the notion of travelling to Peru with co-star Nelida Silva and documenting her trip back home to host the fiesta patronal in Llamelin, you can see where the film takes a turn. It then focuses on co-star Cynthia Paniagua's yearning to fulfill her need to learn the authentic traditional dances of Peru and learn about herself all the while. Both women revisit Peru to reconnect with culture and tradition through the dances and rituals of Incan culture.

Nelida found that customs were changing in Llamelin and returned with a somewhat off-putting notion of tradition. She is now working on building a hometown cultural center in Lima. Cynthia returned with a different sense of self and found a proactive way to express her political views through a fusion of modern and traditional dance. Now you can find her teaching and planning a dance company while getting her Masters in Performance Studies at New York University. Although Cynthia and Nelida divide their time between New York and Peru—both agree that they wouldn't have it any other way.


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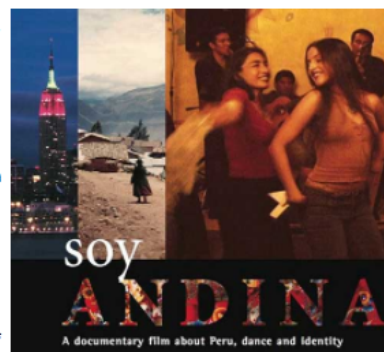
Luis Legua says :
July 27, 2011 13:36:42
Hi everyone, A formula for learning spanish in Peru, I totally agree with Larry, and patience is an im ...

In Looking back: Five years



During the screening of this film I was fortunate enough to be sitting next to my father and a Belgium tourist. Needless to say I left with two completely different opinions of the film. My father kept saying how Cynthia would've learned so much more had she known where to go to truly learn the traditional dances of Peru and the Belgium was enamored with the idea of Cynthia finding herself and having a chance to go back to her roots. I was torn between both reviews of the film because both were correct in their own right.

Being an immigrant in the United States can overwhelm someone with a feeling of belonging neither here nor there. When director Mitch Teplitsky brought "Soy Andina" to the big screen I was overwhelmed with a sense of nostalgia I hadn't felt in a long time. He was able to bring a little bit of Peru back to the States and this time, I didn't have to leave the country to be home again.



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Peru-N-English Blog says :
July 27, 2011 13:28:12
Garcia has set the bar high. I think he has done a marvelous job. If Humala can reach as high I will ...

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For more pictures of Soy Andina and the Premiere in New York, see Douglas J. Klostermann's [album here](#).



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3 Comments

Mitchell Teplitsky says :
7 October, 2009 [10:54]

Excellent article Cyndy! (of course I'm biased).

And I remember the first time we met -- in Cynthia's marinera dance class in New York. Maybe that's the subject of a future story!
- Mitch

Denise Ramirez says :
8 October, 2009 [07:19]

I can very much identify with being a part of two totally different cultures and how wonderful but sometimes ostracizing a feeling that can bring. It was nice to read about someone embracing and reveling in such differences :)

Denise Ramirez says :
8 October, 2009 [07:45]

I Love Peru!

Full Name

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