

Laudation by Plácido Domingo

Held on the Occasion of the CINEMA FOR PEACE Honorary Dinner for President Gorbachev on 8 November 2009 in Berlin

So I am the only Spanish in the room... I am very happy to be with all of you to honor President Gorbachev. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is truly an honor and a pleasure for me to share this evening with someone who I admire and respect so much and who has been so important to Berlin, to Germany, to Europe, and to the history of our world.

Thanks to your vision of the future, your honorable wish for liberty and your committed actions, on November 9th, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down and brothers from the East and the West were united. A free and united Germany gave way to form a free and united Europe without borders and to a world where the Cold War became a mere phrase of the past. What a great fate for tomorrow!. And how lucky you were to have a very cautious Minister of the Exterior in those years - Hans-Dietrich Genscher - who also allowed Mr. Gorbachev to develop his vision to overcome a world separated in two confronting sides. Thanks to your spirit and your serenity to confront tremendous challenges, Mr. Gorbachev, your courage to take the first necessary step, your contagious wish for a better world and the clarity of Glasnost and Perestroika filled with bright light where once it was dark.

I like to tell you a musical story. There is a Tchaikovsky opera, which is called "Pique Dame" and the chorus, after a cold winter, in Saint Petersburg, they sing: "Finally, the sun is coming out". And when we were singing, when I was singing in a Russian company, in the first phrase they sang "Finally Perestroika". Finally there is real light coming to Russia, to Europe, to Berlin, to Germany, to the whole world.

With your Raisa Gorbachyova Foundation you have raised funds for children suffering from leukemia, and you have received many, many awards like this one here today from CINEMA FOR PEACE, and I know what it will mean for everybody in Berlin tomorrow and all around the world, to have you with us. I must say I was very honored to receive your prestigious World Achievement Award a couple of years ago in Hamburg, although, unfortunately I was not there because of a tremendous cold. But what a pleasure it is to be able to sit in the same room with you tonight, at the same table with you and in your company. And I know many of the people here may have a lot more interesting things to say. I can only express my great respect and once again thank you for whom you are and who you continue to be.

Thank you very much.