

Travelling Playhouse by Alberto Martinez



“I would rather own a little and see the world ; than own the world and see a little of it”

The stage is set, the curtain rises and the fun begins as Alberto Martinez seamlessly fuses imagery from Italy, Cuba and the United Kingdom to create his own colourful and contemporary opera in Travelling Playhouse.

Opera is a key part of the Western classical music tradition and one of London’s most treasured and distinctive buildings, The Royal Albert Hall, is the setting for Alberto’s painting. With his unique and playful style, Martinez builds a character by showing us snippets from his characters life.

An Italian, down on his luck, travels across Europe and arrives in the UK in his Fiat 500. A barber by trade, he works hard for many years, tinkering with automobile engines in his spare time.

His passion for bikes and cars ultimately leads to him racing and winning trophies alongside his idol, Valentino Rossi (Martinez paints Rossi's helmet centre stage).

And when he can no longer compete, he owns his own garage and motorsport shop. A rags-to-riches story set in one vivid painting.

Alberto's 'work', (the literal translation of Italian word "opera") makes numerous references to Italy.

We see the Italian flag proudly flying over Mount Etna which is placed centre stage ; instead of an exit sign we see the Martini logo ; an ice-cream cone filled with Italian gelato adventurously replaces a statue ; and the bold red of the Ferrari shines like a beacon from the auditorium.

We see Alberto's playful style radiating through the painting with the face of Big Ben, firmly routing the picture in London.

We see the British monarchy with the king and queen in pride of place, and yet he brashly paints them as puppets. The infamous British musical theatre scene and all things 'West End' are depicted with the poster for 'Cats'.

Alberto himself journeyed from Cuba to settle in the UK and this sense of travel runs through the painting.

The Space Mountain sign clearly emblazoned at the top of the image conjures images of high speed travel. In reality, the actual rollercoaster is set in Tomorrowland, another nod to Martinez playing with our suspension of disbelief.

The Cuban cigar, a staple of all Martinez paintings sits effortlessly in the scene and the animals bring the painting to life!



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