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Alasdair Fotheringham • Thursday 03 October 2013 18:34 BST • [Comments](#)



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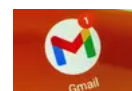
The International Brigades are back in Barcelona, but this time they are not defending the doomed Second Republic in Spain’s Civil War as they were when they were last present, almost 80 years ago. Instead, they take to the stage in a musical called Goodbye Barcelona.

The show’s 21 songs are an account of the experiences of an 18-year-old London-born volunteer, Sam, in the Brigades as – like so many tens of thousands of anti-fascist idealists from across the world – he heads to Spain to fight with the Republic against General Franco’s uprising. While Sam falls in love with a Spanish woman, his mother, Rebecca, then also volunteers as a nurse as she searches for her son in Spain.

First performed at London’s Arcola Theatre in late 2011, this is the first time Goodbye Barcelona has been put on in Spain and, in this case, in a Catalan version, with a company of nine actors and three musicians in Barcelona’s Teatre del Raval. “When we first performed this in London, my dream was to bring it here,” Goodbye Barcelona’s co-author Karl Lewkovicz told the Catalan newspaper La Vanguardia earlier this week, while the director of the production, Fran Arráez, described the musical as “fighting against the loss of memory and some very important things that have fallen by the wayside a bit”.

Indeed, although Sam’s love affair is one of the central ingredients of the musical, Arráez describes it as essentially “political”. “It deals with very serious subjects,” he says.

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