

Marcos Casanova and the Hispanic Theater Guild
at the Cuban/Latino Theater Archive
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Theater Arts (class of 2010)

As a first generation Cuban-American, it is important for me to connect to a culture that I could not experience first hand and to make it my own. Theater has also become important over time; it is truly my passion. For a long time I have sought outlets to combine the two. I have always been drawn to Spanish literature, largely in part due to great teachers and mentors I had in high school. Spanish-language theater was accessible to me through my high school's interaction with the Hispanic Theater Guild and Marcos Casanova in particular. I have participated in three of their productions over the course of my high school years. I learned a tremendous amount about the craft and the art of theater. In fact, Marcos Casanova taught the only drama course I took in high school.

The connection between my culture and its theater became even more relevant when I came to the University. I immediately became involved in Federación de Estudiantes Cubanos (or the Federation of Cuban Students). Through that spirited organization, I was introduced to Dr. Lillian Manzor and her work with the Cuban/Latino Theater Archive. It immediately sparked my interest. After discussing the archive, I realized that the work of Hispanic Theater Guild and Marcos Casanova was vastly underrepresented. Their work as individuals and as a prominent theater company in Miami is an important stage in the history of Cuban and Cuban American theater; the archive and the artistic and scholarly communities are truly at a disadvantage without documentation of their work.

I propose to engage in archival research to expand upon the materials concerning the work of Marcos Casanova, the Hispanic Theater Guild, and el Teatro 8. I will engage in both physical collection and digitization of materials that are already part of the archive and will seek out new materials for documentation. I will focus my research on the company and develop the appropriate web-pages for their work in the Cuban/Latino Theater Archive. My personal relations with both Marcos Casanova and the Hispanic Theater Guild put me at an advantage to gather such things and to add permanence to their temporary art.

I truly believe that the work I would engage in at the Cuban/Latino Theater Archive in the Cuban Heritage Collection would enhance both my knowledge of my craft and offer me a deeper understanding about my culture and their relation to each other. The work would also benefit those generations after me who will be able to access the archive and learn from past productions produced, directed, or performed by members of their cultural community. The cultural and personal implications of the work is the force behind my ambition and dedication to this project. As a first generation Cuban-American and as an aspiring actor, I truly have nothing to lose but everything to gain from the work.