

# ***OPEN CHANNELS***

## ***Mini-Event***

**Dedictory**

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To the locked and freed by the pandemic.

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## **Theme/Team**

# **POPULAR THEATER AND RITUAL**

## Opening Words

Fatima Patterson

Open channels have provided the visibility that theater needs in the Caribbean and its diaspora. We have found common areas; theme “Training for the Popular Theater Artist” for my visceral gives us the clarity of the common and diverse elements.

The rumba complex, which contains the Yambu, Guaguanco, La Columbia and La Jiribilla puts the body in physical disposition in the initial energetic posture with a scenic presence that moves accordingly to other areas of body movement. Our body in attention and alert with half planted on the earth in the attitude of receiving the wise nourishment and the other half rising to the universe of the gods of air, our foundation would be in that spatial and esoteric circumstance at the same time.

We should show the figures in motion but that is for another space.



## Varieties of "training" Caribbean popular theater and performance

Lowell Fiet

I want to propose some new vocabulary that can, perhaps, better steer our conversation about the varieties of "training" required for popular Caribbean theater/performance in reference to what I see as its two principal paths: professional theater (the audience as spectators) and cultural theater (the audience as creative collaborators – and not only as participants).

In terms of training, these two paths correspond to different training models: on the one hand what we can call the "conservatory" (or European model) and on the other hand, "collective mentoring" (the community model). I prefer to think of them as a continuum, without valorizations.



## Comments

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*Lowell Fiet, I think this is helpful. When we had an earlier video conversation this distinction between community and conservatory came up as well. Perhaps a dialectical relationship between the two is the goal?*

(Mathew Schwarzman)



## **About Macubá training**

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Consuelo Duany Patterson

In our Cuban and Santiago experience, and given the investigations carried out from the searches of cultural essences to find a discourse of our own, it was important to explore the elements of traditional popular culture, including that of the cults of popular religiosity, we have also used the Yoruba, Vodú, Bantú rhythms, and all the popular rhythms of our region, such as the son and the rumba complex

All these tools that we use for our training make us accentuate Cuban and Caribbean expressions, making it easier for our directors to communicate in the improvisation process of our shows, since in the classes the characteristics of each of the orishas are particularized if we are Working with this system so that the actors know in depth and can be linked with the psychology of the character to this we add the rhythm and the steps of the dance and when we have consciously learned it this passes into the body memory of the actor.

### Comments

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*Wow, this is a marvelous meal here. Consuelo Duany Patterson has given us an entree seasoned with great concepts, any one of which deserves a dissertation. For example, the way you describe the "inhabitation" of the actor of spirit and tradition as manifested by improvisation --- to my experience sounds almost more like jazz musicians learning the classics and then experimenting with them in real time. Is there any validity to that idea?*

(Mathew Schwarzman)

## Post

### **Actress from Macubá**

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Daylen Osorio

If we think of training, such as the moment or the space, where the actor prepares for a certain play. We would of course be simplifying it only to physical and mental preparation, with a specific purpose. From my short experience at Estudio Teatral Macuba I have learned that our training goes beyond. The base; traditional popular culture and everything that develops in it: syncretic cults, magical religious systems, etc.

First, we launch ourselves (to a certain extent unconsciously) into a deep, individual (and collective) search for our essence, our roots, for what has been learned and apprehended by our body-mind and from there, explore it consciously and then assume it. It is then when we see or feel that moment or space of time, as the beginning of a practical-utilitarian, physical-psychic, and spiritual ritual, where the actor's body-mind is conditioned as a container to establish a relationship with the entity (character) to assume.

I think that his greatest achievement is that he starts from the truth of the actor, that we appropriate everything that traditional popular culture provides us and through its expressive forms we can create our own, identity, and true discourse.

## Comments

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*Thank you for sharing. I love the aspect that you described in the search for the "essence" as essential to the training. It is not only physical and mental proceso, but also it is one that requires the individual to see, notice and take note of themselves and their surroundings. I'm wondering what steps are taken if an actor seems resistant to this process because it is difficult work to look, see and internalize.*

(Carolina Caballero)

*It happens very often, even in this process not yet finished for me, at one point, I felt that I was resisting what I was discovering. It was very difficult, suddenly, to accept something that for so long (unconsciously) I had rejected, that society still does not fully assimilate, does not assume.*

*It was like the battle against the windmills. But, as there is a great difference between what is imposed, by the mere fact of fitting in or being accepted in a social environment or circle, and what is learned in a conscious way, the battle was fortunately not lasting. Now, something is fundamental in this process, and I always emphasize this point, and that is having a good guide, in which one as an individual, as an actor, fully trusted. I think this, among many others, is one of the most important aspects.*

(Daylen Osorio to Carolina Caballero)

*In a sense this training seeks the "liberation" of the individual, which as we know is a never-ending process. Do they resort to certain specific techniques when faced with a case of resistance?*

(Carolina Caballero to Daylen Osorio)

## Post

### The Body is a "Peripheral Center"

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Javier Cardona

"The body with its multiple nooks and crannies is a peripheral center that houses and in turn (re) produces a scenic gesture where a consciousness with a certain unconsciousness of inconsistencies swarms. In that body with a historicized broken memory - colonized, racialized, sexualized, classified and hierarchical there are many undulating, flexible voices, and at contradictory times, that like water serpents navigate between already invented and imposed myths and rites. It is in that memorialized body, with a fragmented voice inside and outside, where a performative aesthetic politics, for good or evil, constantly breeds and cultivates myths and rites of in/humanity.

Instead of "training", in the theater I prefer to "facilitate" experiences so that a body with a voice can *embody* its own critical curiosity so that within its drama it sacrifices myths and invent rites that disrupt and obscure the Enlightenment of a *glocalizing*, hierarchical and hegemonic aesthetic politics.

I believe that popular theater praxis does not necessarily comes from a point of origin, but rather from various points through which to travel. I am attracted to thinking and rehearsing a (pedagogy and) theatricality (a popular one) that is not didactic, linear and nostalgic, but is affective and unfinished; a theatricality that is not definitive, not standardized.

I don't want to be categorical, but training without reason or heart makes possible a theater of effects, and I prefer a theater of affections. A theater that as a living exercise enables me to delve into my humanity and the humanity of *others*. "

**Post**

**The Caribbean: Convulse and Paradisiacal Scenario for the  
Theater**

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Claudio Rivera



The following is a look at Caribbean culture from my experience as an artist and as a theater pedagogue. Everything should begin with knowing, recognizing, and remembering that I had a Spanish great-great-grandfather who had sex with my great-great-grandmother, a black woman descended from enslaved people. From this fact, my Caribbean identity sometimes appears calm, sometimes convulsed, strong and torrid like a Caribbean sea full of contradictions, of tensions between social sectors confronted by economic interests that translate into conflicts, where some end up imposing their vision dominant, their tastes, their aesthetics, their preference for living with their backs to the sea, while the other sectors and their cultural expressions subsist from resistance, marginality, even from contemporary versions of what has been recognized as a Maroon culture, from popular roots, full of cosmogony, of spiritual practices that feed the soul in harmony with natural and supernatural forces.

### *Recovery and dialogue*

We aspire to seek inclusive dialogue between all our ancestors and their cosmogony: that the Greco-Latin heritage, that the Dominican-Hispanic-North American-Chinese-Aryan-Turkish-Lebanese can include at some point, the Afro-descendant. We aspire that in the scenario of Caribbean culture, there can be options with equal rights, the fascination for Zeus and Aphrodite, the praises in the arbor for Granbuá, the feast of atabales at the door of the church for San Miguel, the visit to the Mosque, or the rituals to Yucahú or the songs in homage to Olofi. And that these spiritual practices can be studied and revisited from the creativity of our students in the Arts schools, in which the concerts are predominantly classical repertoire, where the exhibitions of the visual arts students are dominated by the influence of the manga (Japanese comics), where costume designs, even with recycled materials, are still designed for bodies with European sizes.

It is necessary to vindicate from the theatrical study, this popular and Caribbean culture of resistance in connection with the language of theater, which is always of a polytheistic and transgressive nature. That this exercise of incorporating a Caribbean vision of culture goes hand in hand with the effective learning of the theatrical trade and the technical peculiarities of its language, so that our students and graduates earn the respect and affection of their audience and that Above all, they are able to create their own audience for themselves and the entire Dominican theater. It is not just about living with your back to the sea, but it is not acceptable to continue trying to train theater players with your back to the theatrical knowledge of experts, teachers who enjoy prestige in the national territory. We are inspired and guided by the Martian premise: let's talk about the world but the trunk has to be our republic.

### *Inquiry in contexts*

In our acting pedagogical processes, as a formative strategy, we insist on the inquiry into personal contexts (Life history, personal references and preferences that connect sensitivity with the symbolism of the text), theatrical context

and cultural context, to be transformed into actions for creation and accumulation of scenic material. We bet on a vision of the artist that seeks the obligatory invention coupled with research, to give creation a solid base in the handling of the trade from the multiple cultural sources that make up us. They are permanent challenges to address in the classroom, how to stimulate sensitivity, intelligence, talent and creative work capacity in the direction of transmitting the theatrical trade in coherence with our context and Caribbean reality. It is quite a challenge how to encourage students to conceive powerful analogies for the composition of their characters and their staging, in live dialogue with our reality, social problems and historical memory.

### *Exploring the rituals for the mask*

The construction of the stage presence implies decolonizing ourselves from the daily automatisms that are hidden within deceptive social masks, in order from freedom, to choose new stage automatisms in an attempt to be inhabited by liberating, authentic masks, animated by archetypal essences.

Our classes have an experimental character and technical mastery on the artisanal aspects of acting and the construction of stage presence. In that sense, our classes are subject to constant renewal and inquiry.

From the classroom, we promote the need to nourish ourselves with the foundational and Latin Americanist thought and vision of Santiago García, who invites us to create our own works, from our convulsed reality, to think about theater from the scene and create theories that think about us from our needs and challenges.

Maestro Santiago invites us to rescue the notion of the group theater interpreter, who is responsible for his cultural discourse as opposed to the notion of the interpreter who limits himself to reproducing texts created by others. Let's dialogue with the knowledge of Latin American theater traditions, the need to think with our own head about our scene, its needs and challenges. Santiago invites us to amalgamate the threads of the so-called universal theatricality with the theatricality that emanates from our

popular culture. Making collective creation more than a closed method, an attitude to dialogue with the knowledge and life experiences of the actor-students and from there launch into the essential creative adventure.

### *Theater and thought*

The theater school requires an urgent pedagogical and creative dialogue between its teachers, its students and above all with the live theater sector of our country. A significant attempt is constituted by the theatrical thinking magazine "LA OTRA PIEDRA", which is conceived and produced within the Uasd theater school. In this space, the dialogue between the foundational (local) theatrical thought and the global theatrical thought, or universal call, is stimulated, connecting the theatrical thought of Bosch, Hostos, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, with the conceptions of Brecht, Stanislavsky, Eugenio Barba.

In our acting classroom, students must read and propose texts of Dominican and Latin American authorship. They must select and assemble stories by our founding teacher: don Juan Bosch. Students investigate to collectively create and assemble their own theatrical text.

### *Take sides*

We carry out the pedagogical experience within an anarchic and chaotic school, which within itself reproduces the contradictions of this society that has lived with its back to the sea and that insists on its vocation that denies the roots that make up the Caribbean culture. Students and teachers must decide and take sides, among the mass culture, which reproduces patterns of behavior and thought that do not question the dominant sectors, or be reproducers and creators of a culture of critical resistance that vindicates the sectors and culture popular.

It is necessary to provoke a permanent dialogue, it is necessary to generate spaces to generate conversations about what we learn, what we teach, from the office of theater in connection with our Caribbean reality, as polyphonic and diverse as it is buried and sinister, often threatened from a vision dominant that responds to the unequal economic order that determines us as a society.

The invitation from the classroom remains open to inspire and recognize ourselves in the fragments of this troubled sea, in these sheets of archipelagos, forged with pieces of memory. We must stop this self-denying desire for ancestors and essences.

Pending this pedagogical task continues to be training for a stage presence, incorporating strategies that make possible the re-meaning of rituals and codes of popular culture in resistance, from joy and creative rigor.

It is necessary not only to take sides in favor of popular culture in resistance, but also with the conscious and creative exercise of culture, a privileged role of the artist and the intellectual. Produce culture, systematize it, document it and generate live dialogue with all sectors of society, especially with those marginalized sectors, those who have never seen a play, which surprisingly, in our country, also includes professionals and wealthy people.

The theater has the power to become a synthesis of all cultures, a vehicle of resistance and at the same time bet on a concrete utopia: on a piece of half an island, where we all have the same rights. Caribbean culture, from the perspective of the resistance of popular culture, is generated and manifested clandestinely within a belligerent territory, in an area of risk above all political. From the theater it remains to resist, think, inquire, enjoy, create...

(October 24, 2020)

## **A Possible Training Proposal for the Popular Theater Artist**

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Claudio Rivera

For a training of bodies and voices of popular theater artists, based on inquiries into popular cultural traditions from a transgressive and liberating perspective, which decolonizes the body and the voice and enables their creative and liberating use.

### ***I.- LINK TO CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF A POPULAR CHARACTER.***

Either from Afro-descendant sources, from original American groups, or from other cultural sources that embody, from a transgressive and liberating vision, the needs, problems and aspirations of the popular and marginal sectors. (Whether they are reminiscent of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, etc.)

### ***II.- INQUIRY IN THE POPULAR CULTURAL TRADITION AND ITS RELATION WITH ITS SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT.***

It is about identifying, describing and explaining the relationships of the popular cultural tradition, its characteristics and components with its social and historical context in a way that contributes to understanding and dimensioning the documentation of its historical memory.

### ***III.- REPRODUCTION IN A MIMETIC WAY OF THE POPULAR CULTURAL TRADITION***

Reproduction in a mimetic way, of the corporality and vocality observed in the popular cultural tradition. Advised and / or accompanied by an "original" bearer of the popular cultural tradition. In this way, the replacement and the perpetuation of the popular culture tradition in the artist-apprentice's own body would be guaranteed, since this will become a direct bearer of the popular tradition. It is about the physical incorporation, in the body of the student-

apprentice, of the corporal and vocal codifications of the popular cultural tradition in a precise and fluid way.

#### ***IV.- POSSIBLE STRUCTURE FOR LEARNING:***

a) Interview with "original" carriers

b) Investigation of popular cultural tradition in its relationship with its social and historical context

c) Identification and description in the popular cultural tradition of elements of the stage presence (use and management of energy, principle of tension-relaxation, expressive use of arms and legs, involvement of the spine, use and maintenance of body balance, use of the gaze, generation of bodily alertness, use of space, manipulation of objects, and their justifications based on the possible fables that support them, the possible characters that intervene in them, possible relationships with myths, possible links with the ritual and its specific characteristics. The possible relationship of all these variables with the cultural and social environment).

d) Identification and description of any specific nomenclature or terminology that indicates some aspects concerning the stage presence.

e) Identification of any notion of "representation"

f) Identification and description of the possible presence of other artistic manifestations that are linked to the manifestation of popular cultural tradition (songs, dance, music, clothing, masks, etc.)

g) To seek the description of the possible link between the popular cultural tradition with the universe of the spiritual (connection with ceremonies of tributes, gratitude, petition to deities and / or representations of natural elements)

## ***V.- RESEMANTISIZE - RESIGNIFICATION OF THE POPULAR CULTURAL TRADITION.***

Once the corporal and vocal codes of the cultural and popular tradition have been mastered in a precise and fluid way, remantizing or resignifying these corporal and vocal behaviors seeking inspiration in themes, problems, aspirations or contexts that are of interest, that is, linking the corporal codings and vocals to new personal, cultural and theatrical contexts chosen by the artists based on their expressive needs. Seek the possible link between the body and vocal coding of the popular culture tradition (technical level) through dramatic play, with the expressions of problems, themes, conflicts and aspirations that affect popular edges and their communities.

## ***VI.- ABOUT THE TIME RESOURCE.***

Depending on the complexity of the body and vocal coding of the cultural and popular tradition, this learning could take different times. We propose a time of one academic semester for the mimetic learning of body and vocal coding and a second semester for the resemantization of popular tradition.

## ***VII.- PERFORMANCE LEVEL INDICATORS:***

### ***1.- BASIC:***

The (the) student - apprentice technically executes the forms and corporal and vocal codifications of a concrete popular cultural tradition. It is observed that she has a satisfactory command of precision and fluency. He summarizes conceptually and in a practical way, the characteristics of the corporal and vocal codification of the popular cultural tradition, relating it to its cultural and social context.

**2.- INTERMEDIATE:**

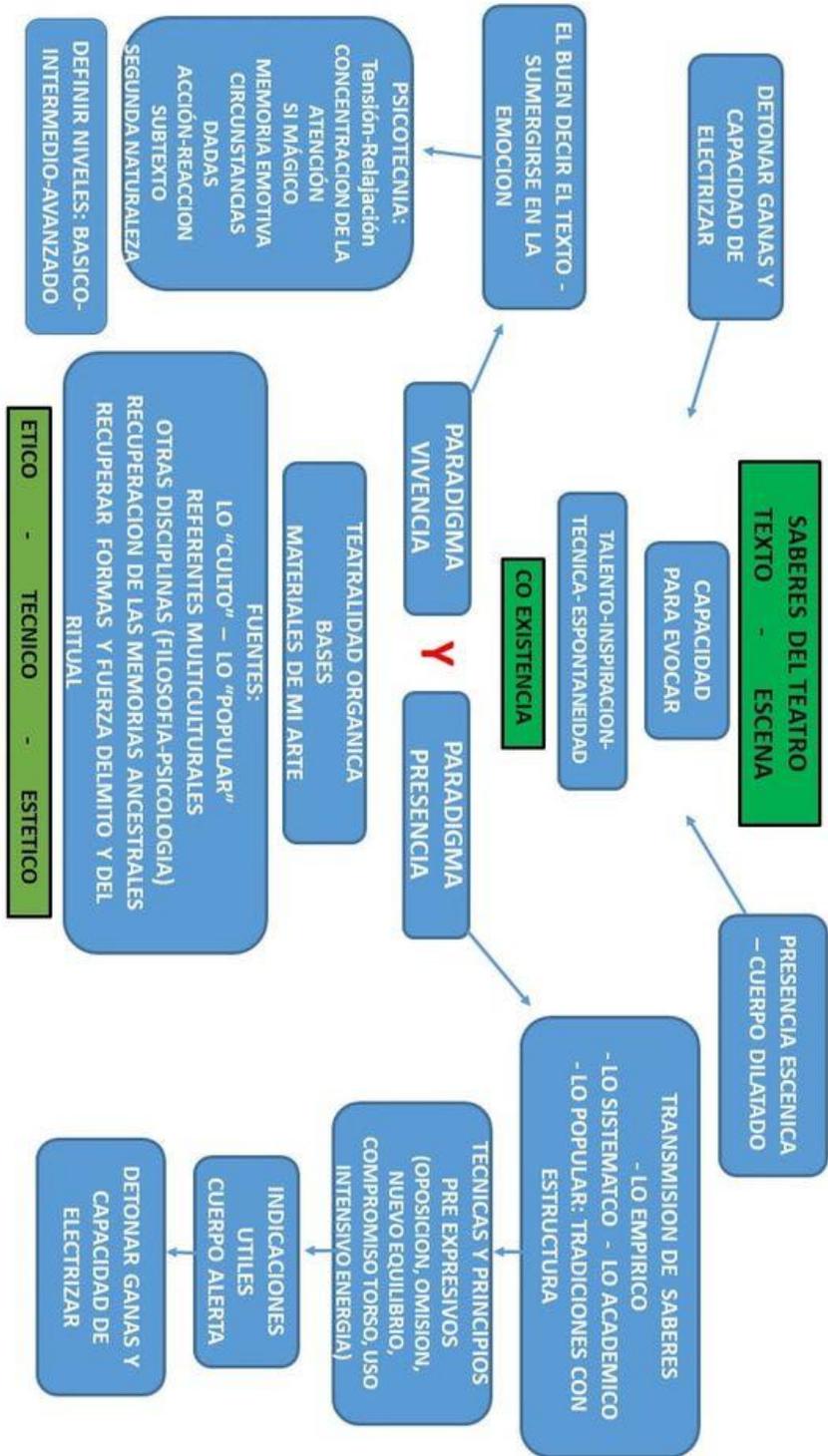
The student-apprentice technically executes the forms and body and vocal encodings of a concrete popular cultural tradition. Satisfactory mastery is observed at the level of precision and fluency while re-signifying these body and vocal forms in a creative way. He describes in a detailed way, conceptually and in a practical way, the characteristics of the corporal and vocal codification of the popular cultural tradition, relating it to its cultural and social context.

**3.-ADVANCED:**

The student-apprentice technically executes the forms and body and vocal encodings of a concrete popular cultural tradition. He has a satisfactory and outstanding mastery at the level of precision and fluency, while he manages to re-signify these body and vocal forms in a creative, eloquent and insightful way. He explains and examines in an exhaustive way, conceptually and in a practical way, the characteristics of the corporal and vocal codification of the popular cultural tradition, relating it to its cultural and social context.

### Conceptual Map: Theater knowledge- scene

Claudio Rivera



## Comments

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*Javier Cardona, in our previous conversation, used the term "critical curiosity" to describe the quality that he tries to cultivate in his students. Where could you see that concept present in Claudio Rivera's presentation?*

(Mathew Schwarzman)

*Mathew Schwarzman, it could be in part, as Claudio Rivera says in the Post in his writing entitled A POSSIBLE TRAINING PROPOSAL FOR THE POPULAR THEATER ARTIST that one must: "seek the possible link between the corporal and vocal codification of the popular cultural tradition (technical level) through dramatic play, with the expressions of problems, themes, conflicts and aspirations that affect popular artists and their communities ". Also the importance of him for creation is essential, Claudio puts as a foundation the decolonization of the body and the voice; something like this could be called "decolonized creation", for which it is necessary in part the formation of said "critical curiosity" capable of submerging and creating beyond the norms, structures, history, and colonial canonical realities.*

(Nile Mahatma Caituiro Monge)

*Claudio Rivera, thank you for your master class, which proves how committed your theatrical practice is to your roots and your hybridity. My respects and admiration for Teatro Guloya and for you.*

(Margarita Borges Hernández)

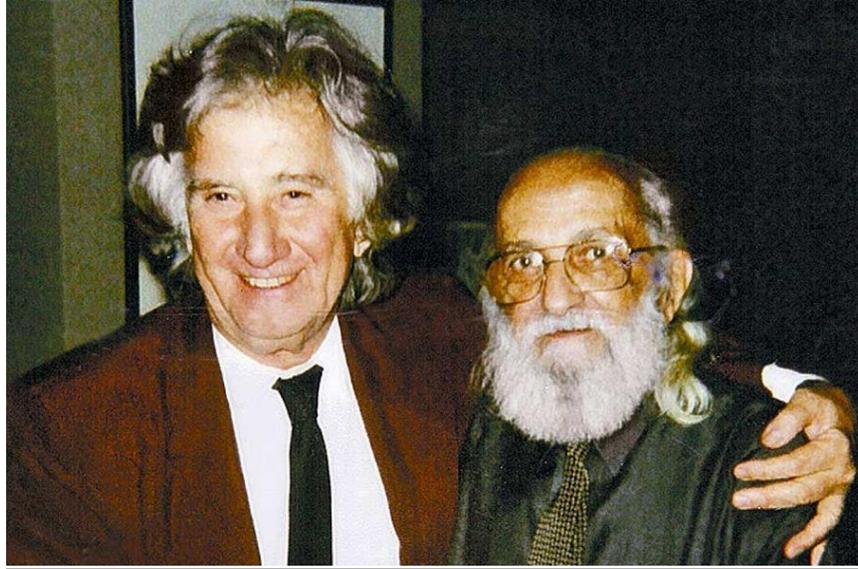
## Post

### Pregunta

Lowell Fiet

"How do we distinguish between training for the professional popular theater such as Macubá and what I would call "cultural" theater?; that theater that includes expressions such as the Theater of the Oppressed of Augusto Boal, the Play Back theater taught by Susan Metz in the Theater of the Elements in Cumunyagua (Cienfuegos, Cuba), visual and plastic theater such as the famous Bread and Puppet Theater and their followers, and processions, spectacles, and street theater (or at least out-of-theater) actions. I feel we also need that kind of exploration/evaluation in theme #2."





## Comments

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*I propose that professional and cultural work be one. In itself, which one distinguishes one from the other? Will 'professional' work be any that generates capital or is presented in a privileged place - or in some way - such as the stage or the living room? Perhaps here I am already projecting but I understand that Boal's vision, like Schumann's, is to decentralize theatrical production. Even training for that (x) professional teatrer (x) should invite play, improvisation and spontaneity.*

(Elena Vanasse Torres)

## **Theme/Team**

# **TRAINING OF THE POPULAR THEATER ARTIST**

## Post

### Opening Words

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Consuelo Duany

My name is Consuelo Duany, I am an actress and founder of the Macubá Theater Group. I am very happy and grateful to find this experience with you for the second time, which is nothing more than a meeting between artists and theater enthusiasts to share knowledge and ways of doing things.

Our topic. Training for popular theater artists.

The bearers of popular culture have with them what is inherited, learned, developed, and transmitted from generation to generation, which is part of their nature regardless of the manifestation of which they are the bearer.

We have been trying for a long time to organize, systematize and raise awareness of expressions of traditional popular culture. These are the essences of our ways of expressing ourselves; where we will find answers to the search that diligent researchers have made for a long time on the cultures of their regions and their connection with their knowledge and skills. For looking only towards the West we have a great debt with the Caribbean, underestimating the cultural richness that our origins possess; only when others point it out do we take it into account. For those of us who do theater, it is not possible to develop our work without taking into account the intrinsic theatricality in its entire ritual system. Theatricality full of symbolism that allows us to approach an intercultural dialogue, as a transgressive and liberating expression.

So this will be a space where we will try to reach all the ways in which we approach our creative processes and how the use of elements of popular culture for the training of our body-mind helps us to achieve a realization of our shows.

So our question would be how can we train the bodies and voices of popular artists while cultivating their essential humanity at the same time?

## Post

### **Hurricane Theater Alert!**

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Claudio Rivera

On our island there are still areas that are stupid, in ancestral precariousness and that have a clear vocation for the anarchic and chaotic. In our context there is a major preference for alternative routes to legality to satisfy both individual and collective needs. Despite this, the certainty of recognizing the vital and urgent need to organize our thinking and act at least in the field of the theatrical remains, which should be feasible if, as they say, art presents a certain autonomy with respect to reality.

Said caustic miracle could be possible only if we invoke all the saints and sorcerers to suddenly bring us a powerful hurricane theater that floods us with ideas, whose epicenter can be an energetic national scene that apologizes for Marti's position: "Let's talk about world, but the trunk must be our republic".

We feel like praying to the virgin of the cave so that it rains a recognition of the theatrical that the wind does not carry away and shows us anchored in the following paradigms: the search for a national scenic hero, the creation articulated to our historical memory, the defense of a national actor, heir and creator of culture as an expression of material and spiritual aspirations of what we call the people and its symbolic expressions, such as the inexhaustible ways in which the transgressive force of carnival and its capacity are expressed to detonate the imaginary, the oral traditions, the legends that embody the collective memory and the demands that color the influences and inspirations of the people who today decide to make and appreciate theater.

To this paradigmatic approach belong emblematic and solid theatrical traditions such as the National School of Dramatic Art, the late Gratey, the stupendous makers of Gayumba, the university theater movement and other more recent experiences. Another paradigm for theatrical creation could be inspired by the animation of an independent theater room with stable programming, as a way of provoking the creation of an audience that also aspires and participates in the construction of those scenic heroes and heroines, that count in a way of crossed bursts, our stories to

the world and those of the world to us. In this sense, we should recognize the heroic sustained effort of Teatro Las Máscaras, La Cuarta Espacio Teatral, Teatro Luna, Teatro Guloya, La Sala Laura Bertrán, XMT, El Teatro Alternativo, La Teatrera, Casita de Sueños, Sala Iván García, Nova Teatro, Autumn Theater, House of Art, Utopia Theater, Huella Latina and 37 by Las Tablas in Santiago. All spaces inspired by the foundational daring of Nuevo Teatro and Casa de Teatro.

We want a hurricane theater that appeals to the most archetypal of the human being: their dreams, as a thought that triggers emotions and the desire to give meaning to life from dignity and freedom. Inside this scenic storm, the construction of a dramaturgy, of a theatricality, could be gestated, which stimulates aesthetic pleasure and forms of thought.

Let's take advantage of this theatrical windstorm to execute a symbolic cremation of all the atrocious allegories of the dictatorship, as was consummated in "Perfectum quorum" by Waddys Jaquez and protect and shelter the grotesque validity of a ghost, of a dead person who speaks to us, as it is "Bolo Francisco" (Casa de Las Américas Prize 1985, by Reynaldo Disla).

Let's do all this and more without asking permission and let the gale clear the way to our vocation for this profession of nonsense, risk and fascination, the way to our right to resize the popular and re-invent the theater from a permanent trial error, in after a mastery of theatrical language that always finds inspiration in our daily lives to enchant and transform.

Let us advocate for an atmospheric theatrical phenomenon that drags our deficiencies, that desire to confuse organicity with spontaneity without elaboration, that brings us a balance between verisimilitude and codification and gives us back a fierce vocation for the artisan mastery of our craft.

Let us provoke a hurricane theater that shakes the peaceful tropical climate of the national scene, that takes away the misunderstood transgressor to the detriment of the conceptual and collective well-being and that instead its maximum winds make us link the transgressor with the thought three of our emblematic figures: Hostos, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Professor Juan Bosch and their ideas

about theater, considering that these great teachers have come to our country, our America and the world, a foundational work in terms of establishing educational paradigms, citizens and about art and culture, still valid and pending on the agenda of our nation project.

Let's go out into the streets to rejoice in the winds of a hurricane theater that soaks us in the way Hostos conceives the artistic truth raised in his treatise on morality, which in turn is amalgamated with the vision that the Russian teacher Stanislavsky has about the relationship between Art, Faith and sense of truth and the difficulties to tell the truth according to Brecht. And let us discover that each one presents the theater from an axiological point of view, that is, its moral obligation towards society and humanity. In all cases, the search, expression and manifestation of the truth must be the object of art.

Let us soak up Pedro Henríquez Ureña's demands on the theater as a search for new expressive forms and his connection with Brecht's Distancing approach as a response, according to his point of view, to the exhaustion of Realism in the theater. We will see how we are dragged by the desire to renew it, that the theater is conceived as something alive that fluctuates constantly and does not remain static.

That a hurricane theater arrives that makes us tremble at the demands that Juan Bosch makes of the Dominican theater about its relationship with its historical and cultural reality and its links with the approaches that Eugenio Barba makes about the relationship between theater and society. Both teachers contemplate the theater from its historical evolution, with the interest that it is understood that each reality deserves a type of theater and a type of language adjusted to its social and cultural reality. Both resort to the search for their own identity as a way to make a dramatic proposal that arouses the general interest. Both point out the need to develop a theatrical culture, which, in the words of Barba, would be about forming its own theatrical tradition and in Bosch's words it would be about founding a national theatrical tradition.

Let us try that this gale of ideas stuns us, that it raises us in a tidal wave of inquiring, critical and open attitudes and that it returns waves of renewed analogous thoughts, that touch the sensitivity of today's viewer and that leave us on alert, waiting for the next theatrical hurricane that shakes

our conscience and our imagination from the joy and adventure of overcoming our obstacles, of creating possible and diverse worlds from play and simulation. After the storm calm will come and with it poetry ... and with poetry, the promise of another unfinished, convulsed and fruitful journey ...

**Post**

**Question**

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Consuelo Duany Patterson

How can we train the bodies and voices of popular theater artists while cultivating their essential humanity at the same time?

## Comments

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*Sandy, I like your formulation here, particularly since I know its "backed up" by a clear definition of what it means to be human (i.e. Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Without those 30 statements as "boundaries" (as broad as they are), "what it means to be human" might let folks off the hook, I think.*

(Mathew Schwarzman)

*I think of the teachings of Boal / Freire, Theater of the Oppressed / Teatro do (s) Oprimido (s). The idea is to process the inequalities that affect us and / or our community and raise awareness through popular theater. Then the 'training' as such, rather, the safe-space to articulate, experience, manifests our full humanity. This 'essential humanity' or as Sandy Sohcot writes, 'what it means to be human' is the recognition of our basic rights as sentient and present beings, our tendency to come together, to express ourselves in community.*

(Elena Vanasse Torres)

## **THEME/TEAM**

# **YOUTH TO THE RESCUE OF POPULAR THEATER**

**Post**

**Questions**

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Margarita Borges Hernández y Kelly S White

How do each of us see youth coming to the rescue of popular theater?

How does the contemporary scene where you come from, or it's youth, have a dialogue with technology and the new means of communication, as well as with the popular-traditional?

## Post

### Some questions

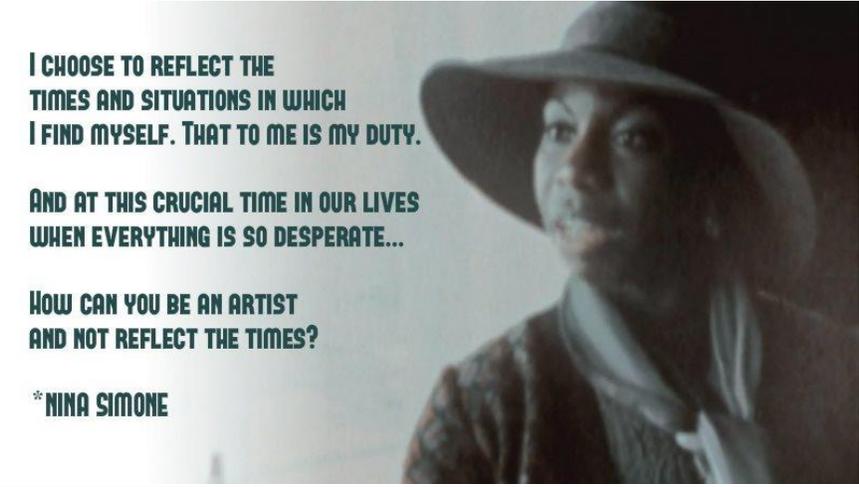
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Kelly White

Looking at the African Proverb- "It takes a village to raise a child", how has your village prepared and/or supported you to use your voice as an artist?

"An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times."- Nina Simone.

As youth, what is your role in creating art for the community? What fuels you in creating art that speaks to the community?



**I CHOOSE TO REFLECT THE  
TIMES AND SITUATIONS IN WHICH  
I FIND MYSELF. THAT TO ME IS MY DUTY.**

**AND AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME IN OUR LIVES  
WHEN EVERYTHING IS SO DESPERATE...**

**HOW CAN YOU BE AN ARTIST  
AND NOT REFLECT THE TIMES?**

**\* NINA SIMONE**

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## Post

### Some examples

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Alexis Martí

Calibán Teatro, a representative group of the city of Santiago, is one of the groups that, from its members, exemplifies the link between teaching and traditional culture. Most of its members have graduated from art academies and, in turn, not a few teach in those same institutions. This fact creates a revitalization of our culture through looks, gestures and voices that are constantly renewed. We always have on our theatres or streets a "Mulata", a "Negrito" and a "Gallego" because that is what we are; we always offer humor, bitter or sweet, because we have it; we adopt the accents, especially those of each region of the island, because either to make fun of us or to locate a character that is also a culture of traditions. I always remember the collaboration between the theatrical groups Calibán Teatro and Estudio Teatral Macubá with the staging of "La Plazuela" by the Italian Carlo Goldoni. These two collectives recreated history in a room or lot in Santiago, where the Italian characters became santeros, mulatas, negritos, town criers, etc. Dominoes were played, rum drank and a tasty Santiaguera conga was thrown in. From one of those theater groups I also carry out my work as a teacher, because young people have to know and master the classics: Greek, Roman, Egyptian, African, NO, Kabuki, Psychological, Latin American, Caribbean, because the more they know, the more they enrich their own.

## Comments

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*Alexis, I hope that tomorrow we will have the opportunity to talk about those guys you mention (the mulatto, the black and the Galician) who were inherited from the bufo. They carry in themselves a lot of importance in terms of the representation of a Cuban identity in the tables during the colony, but they are also problematic for several reasons. How do young theater men see these guys and how have they adapted them to today? In what way can you use and update these types so dear to and recognized by the Cuban people without falling into stereotypes?*

*(Carolina Caballero)*

## Post

**Publicación**

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**Alexis Martí**

Popular culture belongs to us, because we grow being fed by it and it is part of our sage. Even when we are not conscious of this intrinsic characteristic, it manifests itself in a very transparent way in teaching processes. In schools students assume the building of different characters, not only because they are distanced from themselves in regards to age, but also nationality and <sup>43</sup>uraduría<sup>43</sup>n<sup>43</sup> and it is wonderful to see how in spite of assuming verses from the Spanish golden age or the poetics of Shakespeare, there is always a gesture, a look or even a guttural sound that draws us a tropical "Segismundo" or a "Julieta" from Los Hoyos, just to make clear that from our own popular culture we can revisit in a vivid way the most dissimilar theatrical challenges.

## Comments

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*Alexis, can you think of an example to share? Is there a particular young artist or company that you think is reinventing our forms of theater in an exciting way? Give us a link to your work.*

(Mathew Schwarzman)

*Young artists are masters of their time. Human conflicts are always the same, no matter the moment, so young people assume them and give them answers based on the solutions they find according to the social, political, economic and cultural framework that surrounds them. Romeo and Juliet, two teenagers forced to be separated, commit suicide because this communication is the solution that Shakespeare proposed for some tormented and dramatic young people at that time. Today, the same conflict can be faced from an overdose to avoid torment, to applying for a scholarship in another city and being able to be together. That would be another story, but why can't we reinvent ourselves?*

(Alexis Martí)

*Alexis Martí, I think you could tell us about your teaching work and as an actor in Calibán Teatro, a project that emerged from our memorable Santiago Theater Council, curated by its own reinventions, and that investigates the memory and sensitivity of our town of various forms, even with dramaturgies. But the formative role that almost all the members of your group have distinguishes them, which says a lot about the notion of responsibility they have with the curatorship of their own reinventions and the curatorship of identity values that make the actor a true bearer of idiosyncrasy. For me they are committed, which I have included in my curatorship of several editions of the Youth Theater Day Repique by Mafifa.*

(Margarita Borges Hernández)

# **THEME/TEAM**

## **POPULAR THEATER IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC**

**Post**

**Question #1**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

“As the world continues to be impacted by the COVID Pandemic, and with the number of deaths once again growing, what can artists do to heal and empower our communities?”

Let's begin!

## Comments

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*The Pandemic!!!! In the last year's main event of Open Channels, at the discussion roundtable of Theater and Ritual, they talked about healing rituals. An extensive description of those would be great in some sort of compendium document for artists, especially for those working in arts education which are in contact with students.*

(Nilo Mahatma Caituiro Monge)

*Nilo MCM Such a great thought, and I couldn't agree more!!! In a RTP (round table participant) meeting we held on 1/15, RTP member Nick Slie asked the question: "what do we mean by 'healing'", and I've been thinking about it ever since. If we were able to compile some sort of document of artists descriptions of their healing rituals that could be used as resource- especially, as you said, for those working in arts education and in contact with students- it would serve so many functions! Not only as a resource (though I think it would invaluable as that), but also as a sort of living archive that could document individual artistic practice, work to recognize patterns of cultural rituals and healing traditions, trace real-time responses to such an unknown moment in history, etc. etc. This is a great thought and I hope that we can do something like this!*

*Thanks for sharing!*

(Kaillee Coleman)

*The conversation also looked at rituals*

- 1) What rituals continue to be effective during the pandemic?*
- 2) what new rituals have we adopted to assist us to cope and heal?*
- 3) How can we share these to other artists and friends?*

(Rosie Gordon- Wallace)

**Post**

**Question #2**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

How do we, as artists, become engaged in the response to the trauma caused by COVID?

## Comments

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*I've found that especially during the period of lockdown in Barbados, a number of our theatre artists (myself included) used poetry as an avenue to express/archive the trauma that we experienced, both as individual artists and as the larger community. The public responses to the poetry suggested that people felt that their own feelings, fears etc were validated and it provided a forum for the public to engage in dialogue about those experiences, even if that dialogue was primarily through Facebook comments.*

(Michelle Hinkson-Cox)

*Thank you for your comment! I agree that poetry is an excellent avenue for healing and those that produce theater rooted in "Spoken Word" have lots to contribute to the process. (see Junebug Productions "Gomela"!)*

(Linda Parris-Bailey)

*While working on "Speed Killed My Cousin", a work about an African American Woman Veteran and her struggles with PTS (Post Traumatic Stress) and "Moral Injury", I realized the importance of partnering with the mental health community and providing tools for engagement with our ensemble company. As artist, and not mental health workers, we have a responsibility "to do no harm" when working with the trauma that may be experienced by our audience and participants. We are responsible for educating ourselves and studying practices that already exist in our field. There are tools that we can bring to the table during this discussion that may better prepare us for the work ahead. See full article: <https://alternateroots.org/moral-injury-killed-my-cousin/>*

(Linda Parris-Bailey)

**Post**

**Question #3**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

What will it take to heal the sense of loss that we've experienced during COVID?

## Comments

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*I am a Brecht-boy, truth be told, and I hear his question on this topic in my head all the time: "In the dark times, will there also be singing?" I believe the role of the artist as witness becomes particularly important during times of great social unrest and pain. The question becomes "What are you going to witness?"*

(Mathew Schwarzman)

**Post**

**Question #4**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

How will we as artists respond to the current and future mental health issues that arise in creative ways?

## Comments

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How do you see the mental health needs changing or growing as a result of the pandemic?

(Mathew Schwarzman)

**Post**

**Question #5**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

How do we include ourselves in the process of education around the issues and information around vaccines? Should we be influencers? How do we build trust?

## Comments

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*I think we build trust by first learning about the science. Then stepping up to take the vaccine. Then becoming a witness to the process.*

(Rosie Gordon- Wallace)

*I know I am breaking my own rule here, but I suggest bringing Helen Ceballos into this conversation. Using theater for public health education in rural communities is what she's about!*

(Mathew Schwarzman)

**Post**

**Question #6**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

Who in our circles are doing the healing work and how are they doing it?

**Post**

**Question #7**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

How will we continue to adapt to changes in the way that we gather?

## Comments

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With social distancing protocols, capacity in most indoor theatre spaces is reduced to one third of the house, which is also a significant reduction in revenue at the box office. The associated costs (venue, technical requirements, production staff, actors etc.) haven't changed to reflect that reduction, so indoor theatre has become nearly impossible in Barbados, especially from a financial perspective.

Theatre artists are now experimenting more with alternative staging possibilities such as outdoor and virtual productions. I suspect that even with the eventual relaxing of pandemic-related protocols, these forms of theatre will continue to develop in Barbados and perhaps the Caribbean as a whole because they are simply more cost effective.

(Michelle Hinkson-Cox)

**Post**

**Question #8**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

How will we address the inequities in vaccine distribution? Is it a topic for our artistic work?

**Post**

**Question #9**

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Linda Parris-Bailey  
Rosie Gordon-Wallace

How can we use our culture and traditions to participate in the necessary healing process?

## Comments

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*In New Orleans, as may be the case with the culture of the Islands, music and dance has always been an emphatic source of healing. During this pandemic, more than ever we have utilized music, dance and our sacred outdoor places to release our tensions and stresses of this unique predicament of quarantine.*

*The good thing about understanding one's longstanding traditions is that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. We can do what has brought joy and happiness during our saddest times.*

*For the majority of deaths in the African American community in New Orleans, there is no funeral without second line music which includes a procession. During that procession, of slow dirge music, to the cemetery with family and friends, you have the opportunity to contemplate and see the life of the deceased and the music allows for a beautiful video to play in one's mind of all that is remembered about the person. Once the music moves to more syncopated fast rhythms, our sadness is magically released and we began to revel in the joy that the deceased brought to our lives and also our fears of the next journey of the deceased just disappears and the energy of the music lifts us into a joyful bliss.*

*Although many things are done online today, we keep our traditions going with the children especially, to give them hope and joy by teaching them music and traditional dances. Some classes are taught outdoors and the children socially distance while still having a day to learn about traditions and relieve their anxiety of being indoors giving them something to look forward to from week to week healing the stresses caused to them week to week.*

*(Claressia Zulu)*

# **VIDEOS @ OPEN CHANNELS**

## MUNDO DEL MUERTOS

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The last video in our exhibition is one from one of our hosts, Estudio Teatral Macubá. This video shows fragments of "World of the Dead." World of the Dead is a performance directed by Fatima Patterson Patterson, director of Estudio Teatral Macubá. It addresses women's issues in diverse environments. It is a homage to the Cuban singer Celeste Mendoza. A woman (a singer and dancer), returns every year to the place where she always performs a ceremony for the dead, but on this occasion, overwhelmed by the vicissitudes of life and full of regrets, she decides to enter Ayé N'fumbi (world of the dead); there, she encounters all the people in her story, and she is sure that reliving the past will change the future of someone she abandoned: her daughter. But there, like always, waiting, 61nt and oshu, the representation of death, who have always been a source of manipulation and destruction, make sure that this woman fulfills her destiny. <https://youtu.be/Q0Z1rBSvuoY>



## FREE MAMA GLO/FAMILY REJECTION

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The Graduates Rising (New Orleans) is an organization dedicated to awareness around the mass incarceration of black men and women in Louisiana. Here is “Free Mama Glo” and “Family Rejection.” Thank you to Kathy Randels for sharing this organization and video with us! <https://youtu.be/wVh5wVJTHTU>



## MEDEIA

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It's amazing to be able to investigate classic works and apply them to the present. The group Contadores de Mentira (Brazil) takes the story of Medea and "creates a parallel between the Greek rite of Medea and the afro 63ntrenami traditions of Candomblé. Enjoy this montage of "Curra," a work by Contadores de Mentira. <https://youtu.be/fYcG00aEh0g>



## HABLAR DE LA PROLE

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We present "Talking About the Lineage" by Helen Ceballos Vinas, an artistic video "anchored in my experience and perception of the migratory passages in the world and especially in the Caribbean." Thank you, Helen, for the video! <https://youtu.be/Rv1AmJ1DSLs>



## LA TARASCA HA REGRESADO

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While we stay at home, it's good to remember what we have done and what we can do in the future. María Victoria Guerra Ballester shared a lovely video: "The video shows a part of the street spectacular "La Tarasca has returned," a ritual procession and festival created by the street-theater group Gigantería in 2010 but has repeated multiple times (2010, 2011, and 2015) in the streets of Old Havana. I participated in the performance and accomplished the work needed for my diploma (2014) in Theater Arts from the Universidad de las Artes, ISA with an investigation about this performance and type of theater. In my chat, I will talk about the ritual, performative, street, and political characteristics of this work."  
<https://youtu.be/ms8rQeFCGhw>



## KUMBUKU

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“There is no place where love cannot find you.” Enjoy this video of the Kumbuku Drum and Dance Collective, in a performance from Jazz Fest in New Orleans, 2017. Many thanks to Ausetua Amor Amenkum for sharing this clip with us. <https://youtu.be/NLxYXKbziS0>



## VEJIGANTES

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We highlight Olga Costa Alfaro, a mask-maker dedicated to informing others of the artisanal work of mask making and also of the Vejigante, a character that makes up part of Carnaval in Puerto Rico. <https://youtu.be/Fe2XfLFwx34>



## UN LIEN (A LINK)

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Yacine Fall brings us a video of a work presented in Washington, DC. "This video contains a ritual involving 12 performing artists. Inspired by Senegalese traditions of spiritual gatherings, the performers use clay to bind themselves to each other as a collective body. They then proceed to manipulate a large strip of handmade burlap rope, tying knots through collective effort in order to investigate their bodies as a material and as a living embodiment/vessel of history."  
<https://youtu.be/pvRQo5cfRx4>



## TEATRO POPULAR

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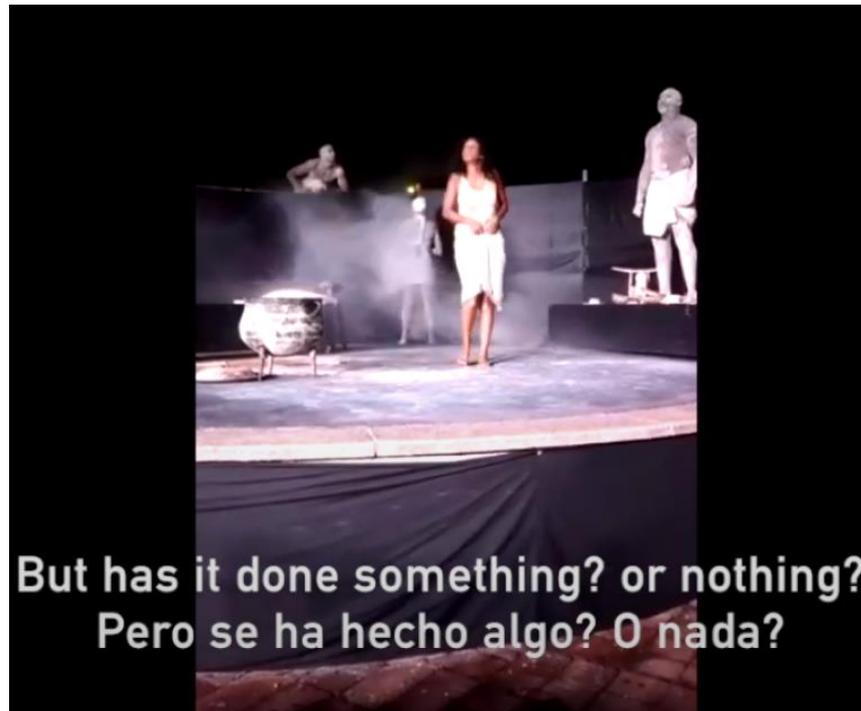
Jorge Enrique Caballero, an actor with Estudio Teatral BUENDIA (Cuba) speaks with us about popular theatre and his experience with it. <https://youtu.be/29LzmbUkIgI>



**'PUR' BLAKA**

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Theatre reflects what goes on within. Introducing a work from Suriname, by Tolin Alexander and Miguel Keerveld. In this scene, the woman Anna has a dialogue with her God. (The language of the piece is Dutch.) Thank you, Miguel, for sharing with us! <https://youtu.be/wy7HjATsJG4>



## TEATRO DESDE ECO POETICAS CARIBENAS

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AGUA, SOL, Y SERENO (Puerto Rico) gives us the next featured video, with a compilation of its original productions and work. "We hope that these three audiovisual minutes scratch the surface of a little bit of the collective, creative work of ASYS, rooted in Caribbean eco-poetics from Puerto Rico, and also serve as a bridge toward the coming dialogues about popular theatre; pedagogical methods and methods of creation, art and community, and more themes that pertain to our fields and communities." <https://youtu.be/9fB5N8dVkJs>



## GOMELA

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This video is a highlight reel of Junebug Production's theater piece, Gomela. (New Orleans, Louisiana) The shared highlight focuses on the central theme of the full Theater piece- Ancestors. Gomela was created as a reminder that space and time are not linear concepts. Every poem/sound/movement is an intentional and deliberate part of the divine whole. Each one brings us closer to the other; a weaving of ancestors past, present, and future. Directed by Stephanie McKee Anderson, developed by poet, Sunni Patterson, dancers Kesha McKey, Kai Knight, Jeremy Guyton, along with drummer, Jawara Simon. The poem in the reel is entitled, "Ancestor", and is written and performed by Sunni Patterson. <https://youtu.be/9oblmCvVfVI>



## MÁS CARAS CON MÁSCARAS

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Showcasing more the creation of masks as an essential part of Caribbean Popular Theatre, Deborah Hunt describes her “work with theatrical masks as a mode of acting/entertainment for the entire public.” This video shows only a part of her work. She is a mask-maker, puppeteer, teacher, and organizer of events, meetings, and ceremonies/processions. Thank you Deborah, for the video and for your work! <https://youtu.be/Gir7lQjipnA>



## EL VEJIGANTE DE LOIZA LEGADO ANCESTRAL

From the area of Loiza in Puerto Rico, Teddy Vazquez and Wilda Cruz sent us a video about the creation of the Vejigante. "The video shows how to create a Vejigante mask with coconut from Loiza in Puerto Rico; it explains how the Vejigante is meant to move and act. The Vejigante is one of the two important characters in the traditional festivals honoring the Apostle and Saint James. (The presence of the character has been passed down many generations and still accompanies the saint in its 3 processions. It walks, runs to the rhythm of the music, scares some and brings a smile from others. The attendees of the processions and festivities wait along the path of the procession. The sounds of the rockers and the presence of this character announces that Santiago (Saint James) is near. My wife and I are artisans and teachers; we also participate in the appearance of the character in hopes that we do not lose this tradition. To speak about the performance of the Vejigante in its totality requires much more time than three minutes. We hope to, in the future when COVID-19 passes, offer a complete workshop about the Vejigante de Loiza." <https://youtu.be/HBVdf6Penl4>



## TAXONOMIA OF A SPICY ESPECIMEN

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We present (a fragment) of Taxonomía of a Spicy Espécimen by Javier Cardona. "This is a performance and installation piece. It occurs around and on top of a table/desk. Silence is abundant. There is a map of species. A black, queer body, hyper-present, runs, swims, dodges, walks the fine line. My body, myself and other objects and subjects interact with the audience. I strip myself of stories from the past and adorn myself with words that are gifted to me from the audience. The table/desk is brown, the map of species is brown, my body is brown." Thank you, Javier, for sharing a bit with us. <https://youtu.be/8txA25gEAlk>



## MASCARAS

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A special part of popular theatre in the Caribbean is the creation of masks, whether they be cardboard or wooden. Más Taller, in Vieques, Puerto Rico, teaches the construction of masks to use in performance. Creating a mask is a rich process, especially when considering that the local variety of wood is “key to the design of crafted masks.” Thanks to Lowell Fiet y María Cristina for this glimpse into Más Taller. <https://youtu.be/kP7RPOAY314>



## SPACES IN BETWEEN

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ArtSpot Productions, our first representation of videos from the United States, specifically from New Orleans, Louisiana. Kathy Randels work, "Spaces in Between," shows the experience of a spirit that moves through the rooms of an house abandoned after Hurricane Katrina. <https://youtu.be/Eg-SCyAR2Sc>



## EL SORTILEGIO DE YEMAYA

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“Yemaya’s sorcery” is a fragment of a complex montage, whose larger story started in Santiago de Cuba, 2009. The most recent version- the one this video is part of, premiered in 2015 in Italy, with an Italian-Cuban company and using two languages: Spanish and Italian. It is the result of a long familiarization with the Cuban magic-religious tradition of the Santería, and at the same time, the cultural synchronization with the magic-religious tradition of the South of Italy, especially from the city of Naples... The text of “Yemaya’s sorcery” is written by Alina Narciso (the artistic director and dramaturg of the work). It is a “reinterpretation” of this important figure of Cuban Santería: we have never before sought to put on the stage a faithful representation of this, not to mention a mixed-race individual as the “character” of this divinity, from the perspective of an Italian. The entire work was born from the concept of a stage as a place of dialogue and where the cultural, ethnic, and gendered differences can find themselves, and, also, enter conflict to come to a common vision. In fact, the work was born from a collective effort: Italian and Cuban actors, musicians, and technical staff have participated in numerous workshops, lectures, essays meant to cause profound thought processes and dialogue between Italian and Cuban culture, and more specifically, between the two cities: Naples and Santiago de Cuba.”  
<https://youtu.be/n6N0IMLtPzc>



## AFROLATINOAMERICANOS

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Super excited that we have in our workshop representation of works from all over the world... this company is based in Buenos Aires, Argentina! ~TEATRO EN SEPIA~ They are celebrating 10 years as a company. Congratulations! [https://youtu.be/T-nbX9E\\_2\\_Q](https://youtu.be/T-nbX9E_2_Q)



## **CABALLAS POR ESTUDIO TEATRO MACUBA**

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A lovely video from our host, Grupo de Estudio Teatral Macubá: Santiago, Cuba. <https://youtu.be/CS8MAZGun5E>



## CUENTA, YOVA, CUENTA

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Open Channels strives to highlight important and diverse conversations, especially about themes that have been historically silenced. Our second video is “A clip that shows fragments of the theatrical monologue “Tell, Yova, Tell” by Ingrid Luciano, released in 2018 in the Dominican Republic. The piece addresses the trafficking of Dominican women abroad for the purposes of sexual exploitation.” Many thanks to advisor Ingrid Luciano.

For the clip. <https://youtu.be/Wl2kYq9nYno>



“LA VIDA ES SUEÑO “

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Let us begin our exhibition of works! In the words of artist and advisor Claudio Rivera: “Segismundo’s monologue from *Life is a Dream* by Teatro Guloya of the Dominican Republic. A montage of Calderonian images translated from the baroque universe to our Caribbean carnival.” Thank you, Teatro Guloya, for sharing your video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IYxfm\\_ud1A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IYxfm_ud1A)

