

When a “New Deal” became a Raw Deal: Depression-era, Latin Federal Theatre

KENYA C. DWORKIN Y MÉNDEZ
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

Introduction: the rise of the Federal Theatre’s Spanish-language project in Tampa

My intention with this essay is to provide preliminary evidence of the fourteen-month (1936-37), Spanish-language, Federal Theatre Project (FTP) in Tampa, Florida, a virtually unknown chapter in American theatrical history.¹ The Spanish-language FTP in Tampa affords us a unique opportunity to examine what can happen when “progressive,” U.S. government policies, immigrant transnationalism and biculturalism, and the theatrical arts intersected in the name of work relief, the “great melting pot” and “good neighborliness” (as in the F.D.R.’s Good Neighbor Policy). More importantly, this episode begs the question of whether or not it was or ever could be possible for the United States to have a “national” theatre with room enough for the country’s diversity—particularly linguistic and cultural diversity. As Robert Mardis states in his 1972 dissertation about Florida’s Federal Theatre, “not only was the concept of a national theatre untried in America, but its scope exceeded that of established foreign national theatres. More important, it represented the first (and only) time a state theatre had been dedicated to a nation-wide relief function” (Mardis 464). In contrast, local relief efforts in Tampa—international, national or personal—were the norm in both the earlier, established, pre-Depression, as well as the post-FTP theatre at the city’s Cuban and Spanish mutual aid societies.

Critical to this project, too, is an examination of the presidential policies that led to the creation in 1935 of the Works Progress Administration (renamed the Works Project Administration after 1939), its federal work relief programs (such as the FTP, part of Federal

One),² as well as of the xenophobic, political controversy that resulted in a fundamental change in the description and spirit of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act's programs. After four years of political wrangling against FDR's New Deal policies and the FTP in particular, a deliberate rewording of the 1937 Emergency Relief Act (ERA) made a crucial number of Tampa's resident "aliens"—under- or unemployed Cuban and Spanish professional actors who, in this case, were first-generation immigrants (mostly from Cuba) to Florida who had not become U.S. citizens—ineligible for relief work.³

Roots of Theatre in Spanish-speaking Tampa

Tampa was a city whose major industry (cigars) had been brought in and developed by Cuban and Spanish immigrant factory owners and workers from Cuba, via the island and Key West, by the mid-1880s. Even prior to the FTP, this community already had a long-standing tradition of socially and politically relevant Spanish-language theatre (dramas, comedies and farces), both professional as well as a locally written, produced, performed variety supported primarily by members of the city's working-class, "Latin" population since 1887.⁴ In fact, Cuban-born Spaniards performed the first Spanish-language play, *La huérfana de Bruselas*, on Key West, at the recently established Cuban San Carlos Institute, in 1885 (del Río 5-6). Similarly, the very same players presented the first Spanish-language play, *Amor de Madre*, in cigar making Ybor City (Tampa) in 1887, only a year after the town's founding.⁵ This took place at the Liceo Cubano, a former tobacco leaf stripping structure that workers requested from the factory owner for the purpose of converting it into a theatre and site for other cultural events. Dubbed the "Círculo Cubano" by none other than Cuban freedom fighter José Martí, the Liceo was the precursor to today's Círculo Cubano, which is still located at North Avenida República de Cuba (14th Street) and Palm Avenue in Ybor City (11).⁶ The fact is that for decades, nearly 100 years, theatre—popular or formal, locally written or not—served not only as entertainment for Tampa's Spanish-speaking, working-class, and literate population and employers, and a way to raise money to support myriad causes, but also as a bonafide source of learning that complemented the education that the cigar workers had derived from twice daily readings (periodicals and classic literature) by their cigar factory *lectores* till 1931, after which their function was dubiously replaced by commercial radio programming.⁷

Spanish-speaking Tampa: Cuban to the Core

It is important to take into account that by 1930, 40 percent of Tampa's Latin population was Cuban. It represented the lion's share of the theatre-going public, playwrights and players. Moreover, as interviews I conducted with Tampa Latin residents between 1995-2005 reveal, it seems that Cuban-style farce (*bufo*) was the most popular theatrical form among the Tampa Latin population. As one key interviewee asserted in 1995, "[Whether] it was bufos or something else, I always recall the theaters being full. If they weren't full, I've got to remember they were... two-thirds full. OK? Bufos was jam-packed... In any case, the bufos [were] very popular in Tampa, particularly because of the close proximity to Cuba... ("Interview with E.J. Salcines"). This is not to imply that Tampa Latins did not go out for Spanish dramas. Both the Centro Español and Centro Asturiano in Ybor City, and later on the Centro Español de West Tampa, periodically featured traditional Spanish dramas and *zarzuelas* (Spanish operettas), but even they offered Cuban theatre and revues. However, this "lighter" fare was not devoid of didactic overtones or undertones, even if the social scene it presented was couched in Cuban *choteo*.⁸

Regardless, as far as the Spanish-language FTP in Tampa is concerned, most of the Spanish-language repertoire that it presented between 1936-1937 was selected primarily by actor and director Manuel Aparicio, who had his own company, and received his more traditional, Peninsular-style training in Cuba. Thus, most of the plays presented by the Latin FTP were actually *zarzuelas*, but some of them were transformed into Cuban-style farces, and a couple of the productions were commissioned by the FTP and locally written or co-written by Tampa Cubans, among them, Tampa Latin theatre giant Salvador Toledo.

It may have taken a politically motivated, national controversy aimed at FDR, immigrants, and liberals alike to dissolve the FTP's good intentions in Tampa. Yet the nation-wide FTP was also mired in controversy from its very inception regarding its possible boondoggling and communistic leanings.⁹ The Tampa project was even more short-lived, falling victim to witch hunts and immigration policies that never took into account the transnational and fluid nature of the relationship between south Florida and Cuba, or that of the residents of both sides of the Florida Straits. This early demise, however, did not end the Tampa Latin community's theatrical tradition—only the FTP chapter. Cuban and Spanish theatre in Latin Tampa began in 1887 and extended well into the 1960s and beyond (there are yearly revival performances of *zarzuelas* and revues, and even an occasional visit by a Miami Cuban troupe).

The Federal Theatre Project: a theatre "of the people, by the people, for the people"¹⁰

Both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt were extremely interested in and committed to bringing music and theatre to remote American communities, and to facilitating the participation of some prominent and other less recognized, economically and social disadvantaged ethnic groups. To this purpose, FDR handpicked Harry Hopkins to be one of the architects of the New Deal and head the FERA. An assistant of Hopkins, Jacob Baker, who knew of Hallie Flanagan's cutting edge work with the Experimental Theatre in Poughkeepsie, New York, and her commitment to strictly non-commercial theatre, offered her the position of national director of the FTP. Theatre historian Richard Brustein explains that Hopkins was compelled to quickly interview and accept Flanagan:

Hopkins knew instinctively that the project had to be run by a non-commercial theatre person and Hallie had caught his eye through the experimental work she had been doing at Vassar. He was soon to learn that she was not only an extraordinary theatre visionary, but an individual of unusual character, integrity and drive--qualities that, in combination, made her one of the greatest leaders in the history of American theatre. (Miller xii)

Upon the occasion of the official announcement of her directorship of the Federal Theatre Project, in July 1935 (which debuted a number of plays in October, just a few months later), Hopkins made clear his vision for this new enterprise. When he "asked whether a theatre subsidized by the government [could] be kept free from censorship, [he replied] yes, [that] it [was] going to be kept free from censorship. 'What we want is a free, adult, uncensored theatre'" (*Arena* 28). As we shall see, though, censorship did become a nagging reality for the FTP (and for the whole New Deal), as did anti-immigrant, anti-progressive political backlash. Nevertheless, the success of the FTP as a national experiment in "cultural democracy" is undeniable. According to Federal One historians Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard:

[Under] Hallie Flanagan, the Theatre Project employed 12,700 theatre workers at its peak. State units were established in 31 states and New York City, with most states in turn creating more than one company or unit within their own jurisdictions. Federal Theatre units presented more than 1,000 performances each month before nearly one million people — 78% of these audience members were admitted free of charge, many seeing live theatre for the first time. The Federal Theatre Project produced over 1,200 plays in its four-year history, introducing 100 new playwrights. (Adams and Goldbard n.p.)

In its four-year existence, the Federal Theatre played to nearly forty million people in more than two hundred theatres, portable stages, school auditoriums, and public.

Certainly one can imagine a 1930s, FTP, "national" theatre bearing the imprint of the WPA's objective of giving unemployed Americans dignified and necessary work to do, and not just "the dole." But FTP historian Miller asserts that in addition to this organizational goal, the project's director, Hallie Flanagan, had other, personal goals: "She wanted to create theatre that was closer to the real lives of ordinary Americans, theatre that dealt with real-world issues and presented realistic portrayals of everyday Americans" (Miller 9).¹¹ Hallie Flanagan wanted the Federal Theatre to be a truly national, decentralized theatre that reflected the social and political problems of the day. She knew that it could and should not be or compete with commercial theatre, nor be inaccessible—financially, cultural, or intellectually—to the majority of Americans (xii). Adams and Goldbard emphasize that the FTP placed,

[special] emphasis...on preserving and promoting minority cultural forms . . . Foreign] language companies performed works in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Yiddish; though eager audiences existed for these productions, mounting them for profit had become impossible. In short, the New Deal cultural projects took responsibility for our cultural commonwealth.... Within the large, centrally directed frameworks of Federal One projects, considerable allowance was made for regional differences. (Adams and Goldbard n.p.)

This attitude would seem to have served Tampa Latin theatre style and audience quite well. Yet, in its own way, the FTP's "culturally democratizing" agenda was assimilatory, too. In a theatrical context, this meant that the government, bowing to pressure from conservatives, eventually created "official" mechanisms, e.g., the National Play Bureau, by which to "theoretically" screen the scripts, images, and behaviors, such as "acceptable" minority ones (e.g., the Yiddish or and Negro theatre) that would be funded and touted as truly "American" or "quaintly Old World" (as in the handful of French and German plays that were performed under the auspices of the FTP). This was not easy or practical to do, particularly when it involved foreign-language plays that functionaries at the FTP Play Bureau could not read or vet, nor was it without complication, as the history of the Mercury Theatre's production of *The Cradle Will Rock*, in New York City, and of other actors, playwrights, or theatres, can attest.¹²

Spanish-language Federal Theatre: “Unemployed actors are as hungry as anybody else”¹³

In the early thirties, Tampa’s major industry, cigar making, was hard hit by the Depression. Many cigar workers became unemployed and ended up on relief roles, just like so many other laborers. In 1935, there were thousands of unemployed cigar workers in one its primary Latin quarters, Ybor City, with many already having left the city for other points (a number of them Cubans who headed north to cities like New York). By this time, according to Florida historian Gary Mormino, the number of Latin workers employed by cigar factories had declined by nearly 40 percent (*The Immigrant* 290-91). The incipient mechanization of cigar production, and the rising popularity of cigarettes (which were also mechanically made) also compounded the impact of the Depression on cigar workers. Some of these workers who also had been involved in theatre, particularly as actors, artists, carpenters or stagehands at their ethnic clubs or workers’ theatres, were hard hit as well, since their mutual aid societies could no longer afford to underwrite their theatrical sections in even a limited fashion, even though the actors’ participation was voluntary and not remunerated. Likewise, despite very reasonable tickets prices, whose proceeds went to sustaining their clubs and charities, both at home and abroad, the Latin theatre-going public also could no longer financially support public theatre at the level it had before. Non-FTP, Tampa Latin theatre did not disappear during the Depression, only the number of performances by foreign professionals coming through while on Latin American and U.S. tours declined significantly. A survey of Depression-era, Tampa Latin newspapers (primarily *La Gaceta*) reveals that there was at least some locally-produced theatre being performed immediately before and after the FTP in Tampa, and even a small amount during the fourteen-month experiment.

In an vibrant example of immigrant moxie, two Tampa Latins’ entrepreneurial spirits, Joseph Chamoun, a theatre impresario, and T. B. Castiglia, a Juvenile Court judge, having heard of the success of the FTP in other cities (and in other languages), directly contacted Federal Theatre authorities in Washington, D.C., about the possibility of establishing a Spanish-language FTP theatre unit in Tampa in 1936 (Kanellos 156). For Washington, their initiative was unique and very appealing. Here was an example of a place in which, with little effort or investment (little theatrical training, because of all the experienced theatre professionals, and a place with an existing theatre audience and venues), the FTP could establish itself, with only a bit of financial support. For Tampa Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians, local, community theatre was a long-time tradition, dating back to the late

nineteenth century. Thus was created the Spanish-language, Tampa Federal Theatre Project, the nation's only Spanish-language unit, right in Ybor City.¹⁴ Most of the Project's performances were held in the theatre at Ybor City's Centro Asturiano club.



Centro Asturiano building at 1913 Nebraska Ave. in Ybor City (Tampa), Florida. Courtesy of the Robertson & Fresh Photographic Collection of Tampa Photographs.

The Tampa Unit was really four units, one English-language group, two "Spanish" units, and an Italian Opera Company. Early in 1936, the Italian Opera Company was shifted from the Federal Theatre Project to the Federal Music Project, leaving three units, two called the "Spanish" and "Cuban" units, and the other the "Repertory" unit, which performed exclusively in English (and actually had vaudeville, circus and puppet components, as well). These units were assembled with a number of local male and female actors, set designers, painters, costume designers, and stage hands who found themselves jobless or underemployed after the onset of the Depression. The importance of this development in Tampa's Latin Quarter, and not in other larger cities such as San Antonio, Los Angeles or New York, with firmly established professional, Spanish-language theatre companies, should not be underestimated. Chamoun and Castiglia managed to attract Washington's attention

to Tampa allowed Tampa's non-professional and ethnic, working-class theatre and trump better-known, big-city, professional troupes in procuring support from the U.S. government for keeping Tampa Latin actors, musicians, etc., who produced their craft, entertained and educated thousands, and earned a living wage through at least part of the Depression.

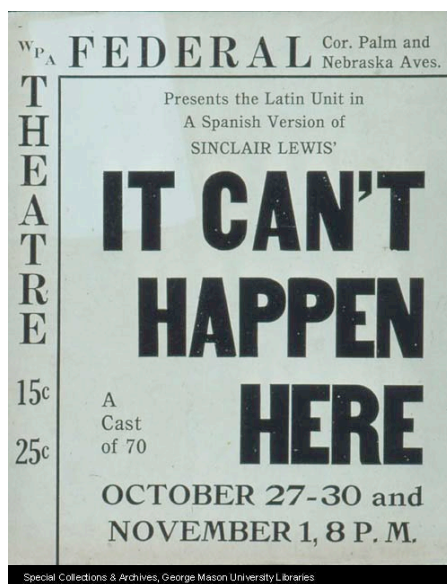
Interestingly, U.S. government financing of theatre as an education and recreational tool was not unheard of prior to the Depression and New Deal era. In fact, it was rather prevalent in certain areas of the country—New York, Los Angeles, Massachusetts, and the Mid-West. Notwithstanding, even then, a controversy arose regarding the use of government funds to support professional and not amateur theatre, “between those who favored a social service theory of dramatics and the professional theatre people whose goals were at odds with the government-sponsored theatre programs” (McDonald 492). As far as Tampa's Latin theatre was concerned, it had always employed amateurs and professionals alike. The Washington office did not concern itself with this issue when it established the Tampa FTP, so this debate did not really affect the Tampa Latin unit in particular. Yet, the essence of this disagreement, drama as processual and social, “as a structure for showing how artistic activity can and indeed does offer an individual or people a controlled means for (re)evaluating and even (re)structuring a social order,” or drama as entertainment, still serves to foreshadow many other controversies that emerged from the second New Deal involving all the Arts and worker programs (Ashley 22).¹⁵

Tampa Latin-style theatre: radically “traditional”

Prior to the establishment of the FTP, the early and mid-Depression years in Tampa brought with them or coincided with a number of other factors that greatly shook the community's foundations, e.g., a steady decline in cigar factory jobs; the mechanization of the cigar industry; management's dismissal, in 1931, of the cigar factory *lectores*, who on a daily basis read newspapers and classic literature (e.g., Cervantes, Hugo, Dickens) to the workers and were essential to their continued education; their replacement by popular radio in the workplace; a revolution in Cuba (1933), resulting in a new, Platt Amendment-free, constitution; the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936); and increased urban vigilantism aimed at many union-supporting Latins on the part of racially and politically motivated white Tampans.¹⁶ Much of the popular theatre that was performed and even written locally in the years leading up to the establishment of the FTP reflected many of these and other themes.¹⁷ Concomitantly, however, the community was enjoying standard *zarzuelas*, opera, classic Spanish theatre, and what came to be the most popular—Cuban *teatro bufo* and

revues.¹⁸ What in nineteenth-century Cuba had begun as *teatro bufo*, a performance practice resulting from the colonial tension between a white *criollo* desire for independence from Spain and its coincident difficulty in imagining an inclusive national community, continued and evolved into an immigrant iteration, in Tampa.¹⁹ It served as a source of satire and comic relief from the tension between the immigrants' desires to maintain Old World identity and the community's need to evolve into New World citizens completely prepared to carry out their roles and exercise their rights as Americans. This immigrant, Cuban-style, theatre reflected quintessentially Tampa Latin characteristics; for example, working-class solidarity, and a progressive, democratic ideology, always in a comedic context. For other Latin ethnics (Spaniards and Italians/Sicilians) to become Tampa Latin in the 1920s and 1930s, it meant adopting cigar worker values such as those mentioned above (the Italians/Sicilians additionally had to learn the community's *lingua franca*, Spanish). This Latin "melting pot," was really an *ajiaco criollo*, a Cuban-style *criollo* stew.²⁰ Its usefulness as a vehicle for negotiating identity and resisting total American assimilation pressures began to be tested in the Depression era and fully matured by the 1940s and 50s.²¹

When the WPA's Federal Theatre Project opened to the public in 1936, under the direction of Tampa's own Manuel Aparicio, the Centro Asturiano club and building made American theatre history. Joining Aparicio in the artistic management of the troupe was renowned musical artist Máximo Echegaray. Members of the cast included well-known, local theatre professionals, many of whom were Cuban, others Spanish.²² Aparicio's Federal Theatre troupe performed from March 5, 1936 to July 22, 1937. Among the plays, mostly *zarzuelas* suggested by Aparicio himself, although there were some revues and satires, were *La malquerida* (The Passion Flower), a rural tragedy about incest; *El niño judío* (The Jewish Child), about greed and mistaken identity; *Molinos de viento* (Windmills), concerning the allure of foreignness and power versus the inescapability of fate; the ever-popular *Los gavilanes*, (The Sparrowhawks), which pays homage to the Spanish *indiano* (a native of Spain who emigrates to the Americas, to make money, and then returns to his native land); a Spanish-language adaptation of Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here*, which I will discuss later; *Eva*, an adaptation of Luis Mariano de Larra's *Las hijas de Eva* (Eva's Daughters); *El rey que rabió*, featuring an abusive monarch who wants to know his subjects' true feelings for him; and *El mundo en la mano*, (The World in One's Hand), a revue commissioned by the FTP, and written by Manuel Aparicio and Salvador Toledo.²³



Cover of English-language playbill for the Latin unit's, Spanish-language version of Sinclair Lewis's "It Can't Happen Here." Courtesy of Special Collections & Archives, George Mason University Libraries.

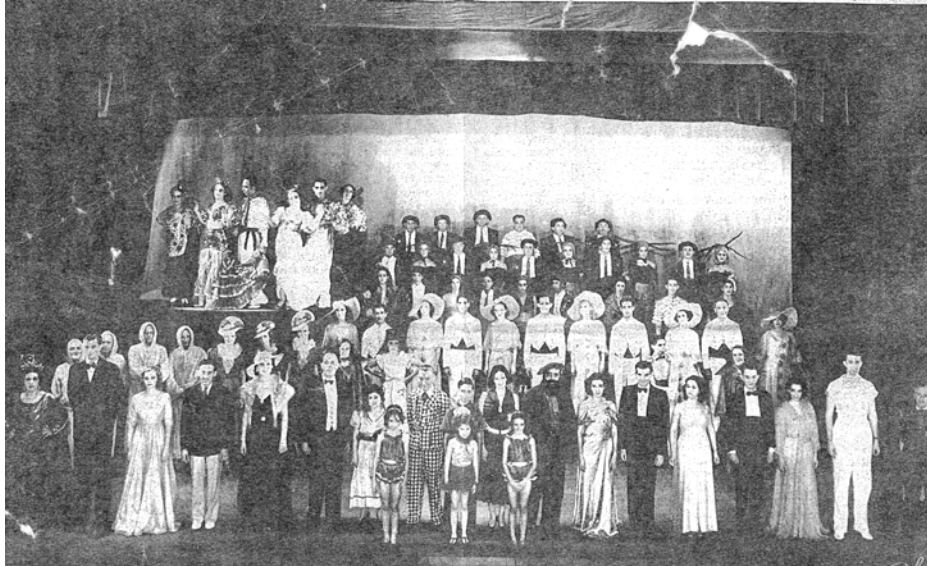
Some of these, along with the other standards, were performed in Jacksonville as well. A radio script dated August 25, 1936, and attached to a semi-monthly report from FTP District Supervisor Daniel Fager, discusses the Project's desire to hold over *Los gavilanes*, and makes a pitch for English speakers to go see the show.²⁴ Another report makes a similar case for *El niño judío*. There is also archival evidence of productions involving collaboration between the Spanish-Cuban and American units in *Latin Revue*, *Revue Internationale*, *Hollywood Revue*, *Follow the Parade*, *The Modern Rip*, *Minstrel Show and Vaudeville*, *Devil's Diary*, *The Sports Parade* and *Ready, Aim, Fire*.²⁵

Kanellos, in his landmark book *A History of Hispanic Theatre in the United States. Origins to 1940*, indicates that only socially relevant plays performed by the Tampa Latin unit were *O Say Can You Sing* and *It Can't Happen Here* (in Spanish) (159). Yet much of what was performed by the Tampa Latin unit, and the socio-historical context in which this occurred—in a segregated city of the U.S. south—did have a social and political relevance for the community's working-class theatre-goers. In a community with an active labor movement, anarchists, anti-fascists and Cubans who chose to escape the violence and misery of the 1930s on their island nation, *zarzuelas* about negotiating morality (*El conde de Luxemburgo*, anti-semitism (*El niño judío*), or puppet monarchies and corrupt administrations (*El rey que rabió*), for example, did not serve as entertainment only for a public with a highly developed level of political sophistication.²⁶

Americanization with a Latin Flavor: “the yeast which makes the dough rise”²⁷

Tampa’s Spanish-language FTP did serve a didactic purpose for the Latin community in Tampa, something about which the national and regional directors were never completely aware. In this sense, much of the theatre that was performed by the Spanish-Cuban unit did fulfill at least some of the Federal Theatre’s goals. It was educational and promoted the value of assimilation, to some limited extent, but its frequently underlying message may not have been what the FTP directorship had in mind. Because none of the FTP higher-level personnel understood Spanish, the content of much of what was performed by the Spanish-Latin unit was lost to them. It seems they didn’t worry about that. Nevertheless, in their journey from immigrants, to ethnics, to Americans, Tampa Latins, as represented in their local and FTP theatre, made what to some might seem an unscheduled layover.

El Mundo en la Mano is a case study of how a revue conceived and commissioned by the Florida FTP’s administration, and intended to promote American patriotism and the Good Neighbor Policy—in Spanish—was contradictory, at best. Tampa theatre veterans Manuel Aparicio and Salvador Toledo wrote most its sketches; Toledo, in particular, was experienced in writing for the Tampa Latin audience. Yet, had the FTP been able to understand the play’s language and devices, it might have deemed it unwittingly or, perhaps even deliberately, ambiguous. On the surface, Aparicio and Toledo infused their play with a celebration of U.S. sanctioned “internationalism” and neighborly cooperation among nations through nostalgic visits to different countries around the globe. This definition of “internationalism” was more in keeping with U.S. government’s concern with needing to protect the entire hemisphere, echoing sentiments expressed in the Monroe Doctrine, and less along the lines of true, workers’ internationalism, labor activism, unionism, or socialism—very familiar fare for Tampa’s unionized cigar workers. In considering *El Mundo en la Mano* a little more carefully, the FTP authorities might have seen that the play could be hinting at future U.S. power and influence around the world (it included a trip to the Far East, as well), in a twentieth-century expression of Manifest Destiny.



Cast of the FTP commissioned and locally written *El Mundo en la Mano* posing on state at the Centro Asturiano theatre. Courtesy of the Robertson & Fresh Photograph Collection of Tampa Photographs. University of South Florida Special Collections.

The actual “world” tour created by the two local writers involved Tampa natives visiting a number of countries, among them Mexico, Cuba, Spain, and Italy, the last three representing the birthplace of most of Tampa’s Latin, first-generation immigrants. What may have seemed like a U.S.-centered, world tour to the FTP officials was in fact a visit to the “old country”—hardly a pitch for U.S.-style influence around the world. On the contrary, the visits were celebrations of immigrant customs and values as they were practiced and held in Tampa. The Tampa Latin audience interpreted the show as a celebration of their distinct, diverse roots, something they had always done through their own local theatre performances and other performative practices (e.g., ethnic mutual aid society functions, children’s and youth theatre performances, theme-based, festive holiday celebrations, and the readings of the cigar factory *lector*). *El Mundo en la Mano* most certainly did not embrace the “melting pot,” but rather the Cuban *ajjaco*.

Another case in point is Guerrero and Ramos Martín’s famous 1923 *zarzuela Los gavilanes* [The Sparrowhawks]. A favorite amongst Tampa’s Latin cigar workers, it was performed by the Spanish-language FTP unit, and even held over, due to its popularity and continued ticket sales. In this operetta, an *indiano* finds that upon going home, after fifty years, he cannot buy love and happiness, despite his fortune. His decision to allow his “prey” (a young girl whose family he has promised to lift out of poverty) to marry her beloved, and pay for her wedding, and use his fortune to improve life in his impoverished town, celebrates selflessness as well as communitarian, working-class, and Catholic social values, not surprising for a Spanish popular operetta of its time. Yet another important and

very dear theme to immigrant Spanish cigar workers in Tampa involved something akin to a “right of return,” to go back to Spain as a successful *indiano*, a frequently unobtainable goal that was additionally exacerbated by the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), which made going back almost impossible.²⁸ To them, *Los gavilanes* represented not precisely a chimera but something that few Spanish immigrants could ever attain, earning and saving enough of a fortune to go back, change their family members’ lot and earn the respect of their “home” communities.

The play’s themes of eternal return and working class morality, and the fact that the FTP, with its assimilating goals, paid for it to be produced, again highlights the way in which the Tampa Spanish-language units, with their local, cigar maker membership, undermined the assimilatory aims of the WPA. Tampa Latins continued to celebrate and promote Old World and local values. Once again, we have an example of the FTP’s administration misinterpretation of the reason for this specific audience’s enthusiasm for a play. Plays like *Los gavilanes* (and *El Mundo en la Mano*) were popular much before the FTP’s presence in Tampa and continued to be so well after its disappearance.

Controversial theatre: the Federal Theatre strikes back

It Can’t Happen Here, adapted by Sinclair Lewis from his own novel, was chosen by the national Federal Theatre Project, with the approval of the Federal Play Policy Board and the WPA, for simultaneous debuts in seventeen different American cities.²⁹ It was specifically selected to protest the increasingly conservative government’s impending shutdown of the Federal Theatre. The fact that the play was done in English, Yiddish, and Spanish indicates just how instrumental the FTP administration intended it to be in heightening the American public’s consciousness about the events both at home and in Europe, and the need for the United States to be on guard both within and without.

The conservative assault on New Deal policies, the FTP in particular, since it was Federal One’s flagship program, began nearly at their inception. Flanagan, writing in her memoir of the Federal Theatre Project, recalled that Mr. E.E. McCleish of the FTP’s Washington office tried to implement a promotion plan for Lewis’ theatrical adaption of *It Can’t Happen Here* (ICHH), giving orders to all project throughout the country:

[Avoid] all controversial issues—political angles of any degree—special appeals—racial or group appeals—or inferences in any of these directions, since Federal Theatre is interested only in presenting good theatre, neither adapting nor assuming any

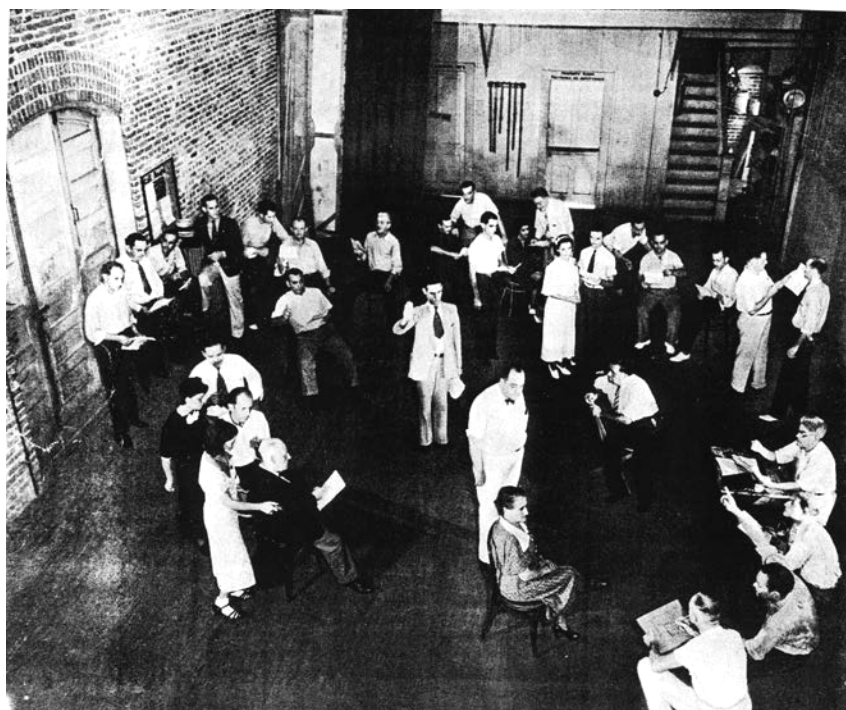
viewpoint beyond presenting a new and vital drama of our times, emerging from the social and economic forces of the day . . . Also forbidden in most positive terms are any references to any foreign power, any policy of a foreign power, the personalities of any foreign power or government; any comparison between the United States and any specific foreign power, system, personality, etc. Our business is with a play of our time and country by a great writer of our time and country and our job is wholly a job of theatre. (*Arena* 121)

The FTP Florida director commissioned an eleventh hour translation of the play into Spanish. The play's ungrammatically translated title alone—*Esto lo no pasará aquí* [sic]—is evidence enough of how truly unusable it was. Then, Lynch worried that the Latin unit might have trouble with it getting it ready in time. This was due to the lateness of the translation of the manuscript, a lack of time, and difficulty she anticipated that actors would have because of the stylistic difference between Lewis's play and the material they were accustomed to performing. It differed from traditional, Spanish performance tradition in important ways, the greatest of which was the use of prompters, as the following excerpt from an interview with Lynch reveals: "[We] had been fighting our way through this down in Miami, and they sent us a literal translation . . . Of course, everything is done by the 'puntador' [sic], the man in the box. They had to learn their lines, and they couldn't understand why they had to learn their lines" (Interview with Dorothea Lynch 52).

Apparently, Lynch preferred to believe that members of the Spanish unit would have difficulty in learning their lines because of their accustomed use of a prompter and not because the late arriving and badly translated script gave the group less than two weeks to rehearse. Nor did she seem to recognize that certain elements of the translated version, which came from Washington and had to be corrected at the last minute by company members themselves, might not have resonated with the Tampa Latin audience because of the foreignness not of its theme, but of its names, places, and behaviors. Although the script was translated into Spanish, it remained a thoroughly American play, containing equally American points of reference (this was not necessarily the case in the Negro and Yiddish versions). The Florida director attributed audience response, or lack thereof, to an inability to understand the underlying message of the play, which dealt with ultra-conservatism and fascism.

In this interview, Lynch blatantly stated that the Tampa audience was too limited in its understanding of the play's content: "[ICHH] drew larger crowds than they did in Miami...because the Spanish people got word, you know, that it was a little above their heads, I wasn't exactly... it didn't have any music for one thing. Everything else they ever

did had music . . .” (Interview with Dorothea Lynch 54, emphasis mine). While it is true that musical plays were quite popular in Tampa, it is not true that Tampa audiences did not come out for dramas (she was unaware of the popularity of traditional Spanish drama in Tampa). It is probable that if Lynch had handed the play over to the Spanish unit’s director, Manuel Aparicio, and his company in a timely manner not only could they have translated it themselves, but probably transformed it, message and all, into a Spanish- or even Cuban-style drama to which the players and their audience could relate.



Rehearsal of Latin cast of *It Can't Happen Here* in Spanish, at the Centro Asturiano theatre, October 1938. Manuel Aparicio is at center stage (all in white), and Salvador Toledo is behind him, with his hand raised. Courtesy of *La Gaceta* newspaper (3210 East 7th Avenue, Tampa, FL 33605-4302)

By the mid-1930s, Tampa Latin theatre had a long history of politically and socially relevant theatre. It had similarly transformed classical plays and *zarzuelas*; the same could have been done with the Lewis play. In other cities where ICHH was staged, such as Seattle, where a Negro unit produced it, alterations were made to the script and cast to increase the play’s impact. The Negro unit cast whites in the roles involving the few town citizens who were fascist sympathizers while the rest of the townspeople were black. The Yiddish version set the entire play, albeit ambiguously, within the context of the increasingly dangerous situation in Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe (despite the D.C. order not to make references to foreign countries or governments). Even in Tampa, English-speaking, bilingual

Latins were cast in the fascist sympathizer roles, while the rest of the cast played Spanish-speaking Latins (pitting the English-speaking fascists against the English-speaking ingénues), but this was not enough.

The play did not enjoy the success other Spanish-language productions did, despite the clever casting, which perhaps did not sufficiently modify its “foreignness” for its Latin audience. In addition, there really was little time for the unit to properly rehearse the last minute translation, which might have contributed to less than optimal performances. Instead, Lynch chose to ignore these factors and preferred to insinuate that the Latin theatre unit and its audience lacked the wherewithal to understand the political significance of Lewis’s work. In an interview, which takes on what becomes a familiar and increasingly patronizing tone, she commented of the Spanish unit’s endeavors that “[it] didn’t attract the Spanish people. *They didn’t know what the heck it was all about, naturally*” (Arena 129, emphasis mine).

Lynch did not only express misgivings about the Latin units even doing ICHH but also about the explanatory pamphlet that had been written about ICHH for the Tampa audience. Of the content of the pamphlet, she said:

I read this thing, and thought, “My God,” if they go out with this, and somebody drops it outside the theatre, and somebody finds it, they’ll say, “Oh, sure. It’s Communistic. This Federal Theatre is just like we thought it was going to be.” So, I said, “We’re not going to use this.” I said, “It would be absolutely suicidal to have this spread around and have the press get at it and have them think that it’s done seriously and not as a parody.” Well, it wasn’t too long before we got a red-hot wire, “Destroy. So we did, in a hurry” (“Interview with Dorothea Lynch” 54).

In considering the sophisticated political experience of both the Cubans and Spaniards who were involved in the Spanish-language units, as well as that of the Tampa Latin community at large, it is obvious that Lynch had not bothered to learn very much about the people under her direction, or their theatre. Moreover, and more specifically, fascism was hardly an unknown concept for the Ybor City populace in the wake of the Spanish Civil War, whose beginning in 1936 coincided precisely with the Tampa FTP. The majority of Tampa Latins were anti-fascist to the core, with the exception of a small number of upper class, religiously observant Spanish Catholics. The same could be said about local Italians in the face of continued aggression on the part of Mussolini’s “Black Shirts” in Ethiopia and Italy. It coincided precisely with the Tampa FTP. The day after the national debut of English, Yiddish, and Spanish versions of *It Can’t Happen Here*, in Los Angeles,

Boston, San Francisco, Tampa, Birmingham, Bridgeport, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Yonkers, Indianapolis, Omaha, Miami, Newark, Seattle, and Tacoma, Adolf Hitler invaded the demilitarized Rhineland, and set the European stage for a decade of fascist invasion, war, and genocide. Tampa's cigar workers and actors responded by raising money to support the Republican (i.e. the Spanish Second Republic) cause in Spain, rescue Spanish orphans, and send ambulances and supplies. The community's theatres, pro-Soviet, Internationalist and Brigadist film series, and other club activities took on the responsibility of raising the necessary funds.

Of witch hunts and red scares: The death of state-sponsored Latin theatre in Tampa

While the entire national project was under attack, in Tampa, as throughout the country, there was an intensely paranoid fear of being blacklisted during these years. The very same Congress that had earlier approved the WPA and all its projects now had a new, ultra-conservative committee, the Dies Committee, whose sole purpose was to investigate un-American activities, foreshadowing the McCarthyism of two decades later. The pernicious effects of the Dies Committee were felt strongly in Tampa, where the FTP was targeted and decimated.³⁰ The Federal Theatre Project's national director was correct in her prediction that this would happen. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, by 1937, Tampa was one of the top eleven centers of repression against unions, and had "laws suspending habeas corpus, prohibiting picketing, condoning illegal searches and seizures, and limiting free speech and other forms of expression" (Biles 91).³¹

Emergency Relief Appropriation Act policies for most types of relief were similar to the later WPA policies. Eighty-five percent of the money used the public relief programs was used to hire the unemployed for work relief jobs like the FTP (Sorensen and Fishback 6). In *Public Relief*, Josephine Brown notes that the 1935 FERA policy forbade discrimination against non-residents, blacks, aliens, and veterans" (250). In Tampa, where due to the close proximity to and relationship with Cuba, and the strong bond created by the cigar industry, the impact of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act (which essentially shut the door to much immigration, even European) was attenuated. Approximately 40 percent of the theatre professionals who worked with the Spanish-language FTP (25 individuals) were "aliens." In 1937, after changes in the ERA's wording, they (most of whom had come to the U.S. prior to 1924 and were the most experienced stage veterans) were removed from the relief roles. Many of the older members had remained unaware that they were required to undergo an

official process of naturalization. They thought they would automatically become citizens because of their many years in the country, or because they had U.S.-born children.

Many prominent Latin businessmen tried to intervene when news of the Spanish unit's dissolution became known. In the following letter, the *Centro Español* president in 1937, Francisco Fernández Rey, made a fervent plea to Florida State Director Frank Ingram (after Dorothea Lynch), focusing on the threat this new policy posed to the survival of Tampa Latins:

The technical nature of the artistic work required of these persons who are being laid off cannot be supplied by others and necessarily would in no way help the employment of American Citizens to discontinue the said Project . . . [The] majority of Latin Actors who are being laid off are men and women who have lived many years in the United States, making the United States their home, obeying its laws, paying taxes, raising families, and the majority of them have American-born children to support who would suffer privations and even hunger were their parents to be left permanently without employment . . . [The] discontinuance of the Theatrical Project would be a loss to the City of Tampa from an educational and cultural standpoint . . . (Letter from Fernández Rey n.p.)

Fernández Rey provides a logical analysis of the repercussions that the end of the FTP would have on highly skilled workers, who were law-abiding, tax-paying people with American-born children. He also points out the educational and cultural value that the FTP brought not only to Latins, but also to the whole city. To put this in a national perspective, by March 9, 1939, in a press conference given by a representative of the Work Relief Administration, Colonel Harrington explains that approximately "30,000 . . . aliens [who would lose relief jobs will be those] who [had] first papers because we were not employing any aliens who did not have first papers prior to the passage of the first legislation" ("Harrington Press Conference" n.p.).

The government's "ethnic" cleansing of many of these Latins (and liberal Jews and blacks in other companies) decimated the Tampa Spanish and Cuban companies. The remaining younger, English-speaking, and US citizen actors and theatre professionals of the Tampa FTP were dispersed to English-language units elsewhere in Florida. The total destruction of the Federal Theatre and other WPA projects came two years later. Tampa's Spanish-language Federal Theatre came to an abrupt end because of anti-immigrant, anti-progressive legislation that F.D.R. was unable to prevent. His "New Deal" and all progressive liberals came under attack. It is easy to see why in that political climate Tampa

Latins would become immediate targets; some of them were foreign, and all of them were from a community known for its working-class cooperativism and internationalist tendencies. They had created an economically independent and successful Latin society within Tampa, a segregated city in the Jim Crow South, but without help from greater Anglo Tampa. Furthermore, this Latin society's lingua franca was Spanish; its culture was Cuban, Spanish, and Italian; and, politics were radical and transnational.

Upon termination of the Latin FTP in Tampa, Dorothea Lynch filed a report with the national FTP suggesting necessary changes that would be essential to any future, government-funded, Spanish-language theatre project. Among them was Lynch's recommendation that the issue of citizenship be clarified:

While the traditions of the theatre involved should be preserved, they should be used in the interests of international good will, in this case the heightening of our "Good Neighbor Policy" with South America. Or they should be used to increase the understanding of the finest things in the "Old country" by young Americans who have not been able to travel. Members of the company should participate in an Americanizing process . . . This is partly a matter of adjusting character to the democratic idea. (Kanellos 160)

FTP national director, Hallie Flanagan, believed that the Federal Theatre should "continue to be, among other things, a thorn in the flesh of the body politic" ("Theater and Geography" 465). In her article "Theater and Geography," Flanagan explained that the people involved in making theatre, the "playwrights, directors, designers, actors and technicians" had to "become aware of the new frontier in America, a frontier not narrowly political or sectional, but universal . . ." (465). Furthermore, when considering the FTP's contribution to art she concludes that "[art] is created by and exists for people. It cannot be imagined either on the giving or receiving end except in relation to people . . . Federal Theatre has done as much, and no more for art that it has been able to do for life—the life of its own workers, and its own audiences" (466).

According to U.S. Hispanic theatre scholar Nicolás Kanellos, Lynch was implying that those Latins who participated in the Tampa project had failed to fully understand the Americanizing goal of the WPA (Kanellos 159). In fact, there is more than sufficient evidence to disprove the notion that Tampa Latins "just didn't get it." The crux of the contest in this particular instance of Federal Theatre resulted between Washington, D.C.'s desire to Americanize or homogenize immigrants, by expounding upon the virtues of the "imagined community," and an immigrant desire to become American but totally lose a

sense of self. In fact, immigrant values were not always juxtaposed to American ones, as much of the finest, most highly regarded, national FTP material can attest. It is also true that the Tampa Latinos didn't necessary see a total contradiction between being ethnic Americans and good Americans.

Notes

¹ Both the Spanish-language *latino* and Tampa's English-language "Latin" predate the adoption of the English "Latino," whose first known use as a noun was documented in 1946, and as an adjective in 1974. See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/latino>; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Latino>. Even so, the identity referenced by Tampa use of the English term "Latin" includes those of Cuban, Spanish and Italian descent, which is closer to the Spanish definition of *latino*, an adjective that describes peoples, customs and languages that derive from Latin. See http://buscon.rae.es/draeI/SrvltConsulta?TIPO_BUS=3&LEMA=latino. "Latins" are the historical and contemporary descendants of the original Cubans, Spaniards and Sicilians/Italians who settled in Tampa. While many first generation immigrants rejected the term, as it was applied to them by the city's mainstream, Anglo population, the name was subsequently adopted generations to represent a more public, collective version of their identity, which began to emerge in the 1920s and 30s, as a result of prolonged cohabitation, intermarriage, common agendas, and external assimilatory pressures.

For the sake of simplicity, and because the Federal Theatre Project itself employed the British spelling of "theater," in this article (and whenever it is not in a proper name or appearing in a quote) I will refer to theatrical writing, producing, performing, etc., as "theatre," and not the U.S. spelling of the word. However, I would have preferred not to erase the difference between the two spellings, and their concomitant cultural, political and class contexts. Instead, I would have rather preserved the apposition, particularly since the Federal Theatre Project was envisioned as an "American" enterprise (despite its possibly more classist spelling).

² "Directed by Hallie Flanagan . . . the Theatre Project employed 12,700 theatre workers at its peak. State units were established in 31 states and New York City, with most states in turn creating more than one company or unit within their own jurisdictions. Federal Theatre units presented more than 1,000 performances each month before nearly one million people -- 78% of these audience members were admitted free of charge, many seeing live theatre for the first time. The Federal Theatre Project produced over 1,200 plays in its four-year history, introducing 100 new playwrights." See Adams, Don and Arlene Goldbard. "New Deal Cultural Programs: Experiments in Cultural Democracy." <http://www.wgcd.org/policy/US/newdeal.html>

³ The change in wording regarding relief eligibility in the 1937 version of the Emergency Relief Appropriate Act stipulated that they could not be involved with relief work unless there was proof that no other, American-born person met the requirements for it. In Latin Tampa, the effect of this stipulation was further exacerbated by the fact that some Latin theatre workers were either additionally employed at cigar factories, or had a family member who was working. Yet, FTP regulations did permit the hiring of "professional" personnel to make particular theatrical units viable.

⁴ For more information about the birth of Spanish-language theatre in Key West, see Emilio del Río, *Yo fui uno de los fundadores de Ybor City*. Tampa: Por el autor, 1972: 2-6.

⁵ For more information about the birth of Spanish-language theatre in Ybor City (Tampa), see Emilio del Río, *Yo fui uno de los fundadores de Ybor City*, 11.

⁶ For more information about José Martí's early visit to Ybor City, during which he met with Cuban patriots at the Liceo Cubano, see Emilio del Río, *Yo fui uno de los fundadores de Ybor City*, 11-12; "José Martí in Tampa." *Tampa Bay History* 18:1 (1996): 65-66.

⁷ For information about the origin and practice of the *lector* in Tampa, see Araceli Tinajero, *El Lector: A History of the Cigar Factory Reader* (University of Texas Press, 2010); José Rivero Muñiz, "La Lectura en las Tabacquerías." *Revista*, 190-272; José Rivero Muñiz, "La Lectura en las Tabacquerías." *Hoy*, 78; Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, 89; and, Louis Pérez, Jr., "Reminiscences of a *Lector*: Cuban Cigar Workers in Tampa." *Florida Historical Quarterly* 53 (April 1975): 443-49.

⁸ For more discussion about Cuban *choteo*, see Jorge Mañach, *Indagación del choteo*. Miami: Universal, 1991: 51-94.

⁹ In the context of Cubans, Spaniards and Italians in Tampa, "Tampa Latin," or more properly *tampeño*, has been and continues to be used by descendants of pre-Castro Cubans, Spaniards and Italians as a demonym or gentilic term denoting a collective identity created from the shared cultural experiences of members of these national groups in their segregated neighborhoods, workplaces and social spaces.

¹⁰ I borrow this term from Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" of November 19, 1863, to describe the Federal Theatre Project because it aptly captures the spirit behind the FTP's and Hallie Flanagan's vision for the program, and in the intention of the president who created the WPA.

¹¹ For an account of how Hallie Flanagan became the National Director of the Federal Theatre Project, see Flanagan, Hallie. *Arena*. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1940; Isaacs, Edith J. R. "Portrait of a Theatre: America-1935." *Theatre Arts Monthly* 17 (January 1933): 32-42; Whitman, Willson. *Bread and Circuses: A study of Federal Theatre*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1937; McDonald, William F. *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969; Mathews, Jane. *The Federal Theatre 1935-1939: Plays, Relief and Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967; Rice, Elmer. *The Living Theatre*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959; Brown, Lorraine and John O'Connor (eds). *Free, Adult, and Uncensored: The Living History of the Federal Theatre Project*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1978.

¹² For information about Marc Blitzstein's "The Cradle Will Rock," the controversy that erupted surrounding its banning by the FTP, and subsequent unauthorized performance, see <http://www.newlinetheatre.com/cradle.html>

¹³ A comment made by Harry Hopkins to Hallie Flanagan in his first interview with her in Washington, D.C. (*Arena* 9).

¹⁴ A visionary in her view of what American theatre could and should be. Flanagan actually foresaw the need to establish a number of different units, to reflect the nation's ethnic, social, and linguistic diversity. These included the *Living Newspaper*, popular price theatre, with Yiddish theatre, Negro theatre, some German-language theatre in N.Y, a bit of French-language theatre in Los Angeles, some Chinese-language theatre in San Francisco and, of course, the Spanish-language theatre in Tampa, Florida (there were a few other foreign-language theatre groups scattered about the country). See Bonnie Nelson Schwartz. *Voices from the Federal Theatre* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003): xii.

¹⁵ During first days of FDR's first administration (the first New Deal), he passed banking reform laws, emergency relief programs, work relief programs, and agricultural programs. The second New Deal included union protection programs, the Social Security Act, and programs to aid tenant farmers and migrant workers, e.g. the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Federal One (the Federal Theatre, Music, Art, and Writers Projects). See Flynn, Kathryn A. and Richard Polese. *The New Deal: A 75th Anniversary Celebration*. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2008.

¹⁶ Urban vigilantism in the American South was essentially a product of conservative backlash against workers, labor organizers, immigrants, blacks, and Socialists and Communists. In Tampa, it emerged almost simultaneously with the very birth of Ybor City, in 1886, and continued through the 1940s. Acts of vigilantism ranged from lynching to flogging, tar-and-feathering, and forcible eviction from the community. For a thorough examination of urban vigilantism during the 1930s in Tampa see Ingalls, Bob. *Urban Vigilantes in the New South. Tampa, 1882-1936*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993: xv-xx; 163-204.

¹⁷ Although a complete list of plays is not available, the following translated titles and brief descriptions support the notion that Latin Tampa supported educational, and civic and politically

motivated theatre—*The New Regime* (a criticism of the Catholic church), *Long Live the Chains!* (a call to all cigar makers to unionize), *The Bad Pastors* (a Socialist drama by Octavius Mirabeau about striking factory workers' demands being met with repression and violence), *Soul of a Cuban Peasant* (about extreme poverty in the Cuban countryside), *Borinquen* (a nationalistic play about Puerto Rico and its colonial status), and *Where There's a Will There's a Way* (a benefit performance on behalf of jailed strikers).

¹⁸ Examples of the pre- and post-FTP theatrical fare in Latin Tampa include locally and imported *zarzuelas* (e.g., *The Sparrowhawks*); visiting opera and theatre companies (e.g., El Gran Teatro Español, the Compañía de Opereta, the Manhattan Grand Opera Association) performing e.g., "The Merry Widow" [in Spanish], "Il Trovatore," and "Rigoletto"; serious dramas (e.g., *Don Juan Tenorio*, *The Passion Flower*), or popular revues (e.g., by Los Charros Mexicanos de Mondragón).

¹⁹ For a discussion of the parallels and differences between the origins of Cuban *bufo* and the Tampa genre see Kenya C. Dworkin y Méndez, "La patria que nace de lejos: Cuba y lo cubano en la vanguardia de Martí." *Cuban Studies* 36 (2004): 1-22; "De bufos y otros patriotas: En torno al teatro cubano de los tabaqueros tampeños." *Gestos. Teoría y Práctica del Teatro Hispano* 14:27 (1999): 85-100; "The Tradition of Hispanic Theater and the WPA Federal Theatre Project in Tampa-Ybor City, Florida." *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage* II. Houston: University of Houston Press, 1996: 279-94; and, "From Factory to Footlights: Original Spanish-language Cigar Worker Theatre in Ybor City and West Tampa, Florida," *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage* III. Houston: University of Houston Press, 1998: 332-50.

²⁰ The use of the term *ajijaco criollo* for describing Cuban identity was first coined by Cuban anthropologist Don Fernando Ortiz, in a lecture that was first published in *Revista Bimestre Cubana* 3: 14 (marzo-abril 1949): 161-186. Cuban-American literary scholar and writer Gustavo Pérez Firmat uses the term Cuban *ajijaco* to illustrate how Cuban identity took its basic Spanish ingredients, from which one gets a *cocido español* [a Spanish stew] and added to them African and indigenous elements too. The resulting *ajijaco* is an edible metaphor indicative of assimilation and transculturation.

²¹ The idiom of Cuban *bufo* came straight out of the streets of Havana, with irreverent and satirical language full of double entendre and sexual or political innuendo. When Cuban émigrés brought it to Tampa, it retained these qualities, and additionally incorporated vocabulary specific to the Latin community, e.g., Spanish-English code switching, *anglicismos*, English, and even some Sicilian or Italian, all of which authenticated the location and character of the place's people and action, and the development of their identity as a community.

²² Some of these professional actors included Manuel Aparicio, Chela Martínez, the Ramírez sisters (Carmen and Pilar), Salvador Toledo, Jaime Fernández, Manolita León, Matilde López, Serafín Rodríguez, Manuel García, and Johnny Martínez. In total, the Spanish-Cuban unit of the FTP numbered about 40 actors.

²³ Other Spanish-language FTP performances included *El conde de mi puchungo* (The Count of My Sweetheart)" (a parody of the standard *zarzuela* *El conde de Luxemburgo* with veiled sexual overtones), *De parientes hasta los pelos* (Fed Up with Relations), *El método Gorritz* ([possibly] The Moocher Method), *La viejecita* (The Old Woman), *Cuesta abajo* (Downhill), *Donde las dan las toman* (What Goes Around Comes Around), *Eva*, and *El maestro del ballet* (The Ballet Teacher), *La viejecita* (The Little Old Lady), *La Gaceta* (possibly a Spanish-language adaptation of the FTP's *Living Newspaper*), *Estrellita* (Little Star), *Cuesta Abajo* (Downhill), *Del cuadro español* (From the Spanish Scene), and *El Borracho* (The Drunkard).

²⁴ The playbill is bilingual and contains an English-language synopsis of the zarzuela's theme and story, not unlike many opera playbills today. The playbill is located in the National Archives. Record Group 69, Box 71, Folder 2.

²⁵ *Ibid*, unmarked folder.

²⁶ For a basic overview of the source and level of political sophistication and activism attained by Tampa's cigar workers, see Ann L. Henderson and Gary R. Mormino, *Spanish Pathways in Florida*. Sarasota: Florida Humanities Council, 1991: 40-44.

²⁷ In an address in which discussed the impact of the Federal Theatre Project in some of the poorest parts of the country, Hallie Flanagan is quoted as having said:

"Tremendous things are happening in the world of politics, in the field of light, in the realm of science; and if the theatre cannot capture some of the quality of this excitement in the plays it does and the way it does them it will die of yawning, with or without government subsidy... Corchetes? Giving apoplexy to people who consider it radical for a government-sponsored theatre to produce plays on subjects vitally concerning the governed is one function of the theatre. The relation between art and necessity lies at the root of the Federal Theatre. Theatre: not the frosting on the cake but the yeast which makes the break rise" (Hahn 197). See Hahn, Paula. "Hallie Flanagan: practical visionary." in Chinoy, Helen Krich and Linda Walsh Jenkins (eds). *Women in American Theatre*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2005.

²⁸ *Indianos* is what economically successful, returning Spaniards, who came back with money, and built homes and gardens reflecting their sojourn in the Americas, were called in Asturias and Galicia, Spain.

²⁹ The Federal Play Policy Board, an organ of the Federal government and the FTP, revised hundreds of English-language plays for suitability of their content for American audiences. After review, and with a recommendation from the Play Policy Bureau, the National Service Bureau was the entity whose responsibility it was to award permission to produce a particular play to a specific theatre group.

³⁰ For a labor focused, general account of this period and earlier in Tampa, see Robert P. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882-1936*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1988.

³¹³¹ See Brenner, Anita and S. S. Winthrop, *Tampa's Reign of Terror*. New York: International Labor Defense, 1933, 2-16, for details on the onslaught of red baiting and political repression in Tampa in the twenties and thirties.

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