

CTDA Press Release

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University of Miami Receives Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant to Develop Innovative Scholarly Resource on Cuban Theater

The University of Miami Libraries and the College of Arts and Sciences have received a \$172,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to rebuild the technical and organizational infrastructure for the Cuban Theater Digital Archive (CTDA, <http://scholar.library.miami.edu/archivoteatral/>), a unique digital collection of Cuban theater resources.

“The CTDA is a fantastic example of how the University of Miami Libraries support interdisciplinary scholarship using innovative new media,” said Dean and University Librarian William Walker. “We are grateful for the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s recognition of our commitment to this unique scholarly resource. We hope that our partnership with the College of Arts and Sciences will serve as a model for other creative digital humanities initiatives at the University of Miami and beyond.”

“Not only does this program provide an innovative approach to research, teaching, and learning in the humanities and the arts,” said Dean Leonidas Bachas of the College of Arts and Sciences, “it also explores new methods of scholarly publishing in a networked environment. The partnership between the Center for Latin American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Libraries is ideal, given the Center’s renewed focus on the Caribbean, as well as the Libraries’ extensive collections in this area.”

Established by Dr. Lillian Manzor, Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures and Latin American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences, and the University of Miami Libraries as the result of a 2005 Digital Library Fellowship, the CTDA’s purpose is threefold: it is a resource for teaching, learning, and research in Cuban theater and performance as well as in related fields; a community repository for important Cuban theatrical materials; and a

forum to foster scholarly communication in this field. As such, the CTDA participates in a virtual culture that allows for communication and exchange to take place between communities that are socially and geographically separated. The Digital Archive includes materials digitized and filmed in Cuba, as well as resources and information related to Cuban theater in the diaspora with a special focus on theater produced by the Cuban community in the United States.

This grant follows on the completion of a six-month research and planning initiative, also funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which determined the importance of the CTDA to the broader academic and cultural communities, as well as the need to rebuild its technical and organizational back-end. The new grant will support an overhaul of the CTDA's technical infrastructure to better support the long term contribution of new content from geographically dispersed partners. This work, led by the University of Miami Richter Library, will be complemented by an organizational restructuring led by the Center for Latin American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences.

With the aid of the Mellon Foundation, the year-long project of establishing a sustainable infrastructure for the CTDA will bring CTDA staff and international partners closer to their goal of creating the world's most comprehensive scholarly record of Cuban theater. It will also allow the CTDA to realize its mission of engaging educational, scholarly, artistic, and cultural communities across national boundaries in a collaborative virtual environment.

The grant will be led by Principal Investigators Lillian Manzor of the College of Arts and Sciences and Kyle Rimkus of the Richter Library.