

Hampshire in Havana

Cuba Project Abstracts

Theme: **Performing Arts**

The abstracts listed here are for projects done on the Hampshire in Havana Cuba program, related to the theme of **Performing Arts (theater, music, dance)**. Projects are listed by year beginning in 2008, with the most recent year first and then in alphabetical order by last name. For questions about specific projects, please contact the Global Education Office.

Name: Frankie Colon

Year: S2018

Tutor: Mayra Rodríguez

Title: "Fragments Undressed"

Topic: Identity, Diaspora Politics, Spirituality, Mask Sculptures

Medium: Mask Sculptures and Performance

As an homage to the late dyke-Chicana-feminist Gloria Anzaldúa's unfinished thesis piece "Luz en lo oscuro," this installation is an exploration of divine feminine knowledge in the modern era of globalized information and the hybridization of "culture." From my own lens of diasporic belonging, I have created my own imagining of Anzaldúa's terms "Nepantla," a borrowed Indigenous Aztec concept describing a spiritual realm in between realities. This series of mixed-media figures is the first stage of my thesis, a construction of 'un espacio entre mundos y entre filosofías' filled with my own personal pantheon of spirit guides. These *diosas* represent a process of cultural/self-fragmentation and recognition of all that is dissonant coming together to create a place of wholeness. Additionally, borrowing from Elaine Scarry's theories from her work "The Body in Pain", I attempt to make explicit and hyper-visible the trauma of rebirth, as roots are severed and new realities emerge. I engage with these questions: How might we begin to conceptualize a form of cultural production based on qualities such as radical envisioning and intuition, rather than solely giving weight to the scientifically empirical? How might an attunement to corporeal memory and spiritual methodologies aid in the creation of an empathic and interdependent post-colonial framework?

Name: Nadia Milad Issa

Year: S2018

Tutor: Eva Despaigne-Trujillo

Title: "Akpwanlá/Akpwón: Oral Traditions as Memory and Black Iyalochxs leading Yoruba Chants in Sacred Spaces"

Topic: Regla de Ocha-Ifá, Music, Black Womxn Akpwóns

Medium: Auto-Ethnography and Performance

While in Cuba, I studied music of the Regla de Ocha-Ifá religion, specifically Yoruba Chants (*Cantos Yoruba*), Patakis (Yoruba tales), and Womxn Akpwóns (ceremonial singers). Music, like dance in Ocha, is vital as they are both integral to rituals, ceremonies and initiations, celebrations, and homage. Concretely, I researched the history of how Yoruba Chants and Patakis have been passed down and preserved. Doing this involved scholarly research with an expert in these traditions. I explored their present-day form and usage through ethnographic research methods that involved participant observation in both secular and religious spaces. I particularly centered Black Womxn and their participation in these spaces where men tend to dominate, as well as in Oral Historical Traditions. Today I will be singing Yoruba Chants for Egún (ancestors), and Orishas Elegguá and Yemayá alongside company members of Obini Batá. Aché!

Name: Fynta Sidime

Year: S2018

Tutor: Isabel Bustos and Isnavi Cardoso Diaz

Title: "Contemporary Cuban Dance and Theater: Black Women in Performance Space"

Topic: Theater, Black artists, Black Women, Racism

Medium: Essay and Performance

My research in Cuba was to first understand how Afro Cuban women are making theater, as a young woman from guinea, I wanted to develop skills in theater making that I could bring into my community. I wanted to understand choices they make as a director or playwright how does that affect the concept of the piece. I was also interested in movement and so I was able to take dance classes at Danza Teatro Retazos, and one-on-one folklore with dance instructor Isnavi. My essay explore the absence of black women in dance and theater companies in Habana, and what it means to not see people that share my identity in theater. Based on interview and attending rehearsals by the two companies I was studying Danza Teatro Retazos and Teatro El Público I wrote about their performances. For my final presentation I will perform a monologue, the first part of an auto-biography I am writing for my senior thesis project. I integrated dance into this opening piece that talks about three generations of women and their experience of separation, migration and trauma.

Name: Nadia Milad Issa

Year: S2017

Tutor: Bárbara Balbuena

Title: "¡Oni Yemayá! Bailando Rezos Encima de el Piso"

Topic: Regla de Ocha-Ifá, Dance, Music, Blackness, Womxnhood

Medium: Ethnographic Essay and Dance Performance

My project in Cuba was to study Regla de Ocha-Ifá, a Cuban popular traditional religion of origin Yoruba, its manifestations in both music and dance, and the influences of the ritual dances of the Orishas in Danza Moderna. I also specifically looked at the relationship between Afro-Cuban womxn dancers with the divinities, fundamentally Yemayá. I analyzed the connections and differences between spaces of professional dance, and the context of sacred spaces within the ceremonial ritual festives in this religion. The journey of this investigation is deep and personal, since I begun practicing Ocha, I now have an element of performance that is more profound, ancestral, and incredible. I feel the guidance of the Orishas, particularly when I dance. I wanted to know what has Ocha, and the Orishas, gifted to the Afro-Cuban womxn dancers who are practitioners of the religion, and those who are not initiated. For me, it was a dream come true, to be able to take Danza Moderna and Folklorica dance classes as well as having first hand experiences with ritual dances. This has filled my soul with happiness and love for the *Tambores*, *Güiros* and *Cajónes*. For the final presentation I will perform a co-choreographed solo of Today Yemayá's *yakotá*, *omolode*, y *chachalokafu* toques. Aché to all!

Name: Tulipan Velasquez Farley

Year: S2017

Tutor: Cary Diez

Title: "Dialogues Between the Holbox Mandolina and the Cuban Tres"

Topic: Holbox Mandolina, Cuban Tres, Cuban Identity

Medium: Essay and Music Performance

The way we play our instruments changes them, and they change us too—through music we dialogue across distances and beyond borders. This study proposes to investigate the elements that have contributed to the creation of a Cuban identity through musical expression, centering the *tres cubano* as a vehicle of national tradition. The focus is on the characteristics and processes that make an instrument uniquely local; the *tres* embodies transformation of its foreign chordophone precedents not only in the modification of its physical form, but in the way it is played, in the genres that have come from it, and in its influence on a wide variety of other genres. Its physical and musical characteristics illustrate the processes of transculturation that are key to expressions of Cuban identity. The instrument is a result of its unique context, and yet at the same time, it has become "universalized;" transcending its original genres, time, and place. The *tres* is a key component of Cuban traditional music, which continues to influence contemporary manifestations of music of all kinds.

Name: Tatiana Hargreaves

Year: S2016

Tutor: Caridad (Cary) Diez

Title: "Un Panorama Histórico y Actual del violín en Cuba"

Medium: Essay, Music Performance

During my three months in Cuba, I researched the history of the violin in Cuba while simultaneously getting to know many different violinists in La Habana. As a culmination of different research angles including library research, interviews, performances, and music exchanges, I wrote an extensive paper titled "Un Panorama Histórico y Actual del violín en Cuba", discussing the historic and contemporary uses of the violin in Cuban music from the first Catholic religious music to classical pieces, violin ritual music, contradanza, danzón, cha-cha-chá, charanga, and more. I found that two main themes shape the development of the violin in Cuba: 1) the majority of violinists have classical training from conservatories or music schools while being surrounded by traditional music, 2) the violin serves as a way to cross genres since the same violinists play in symphonic orchestras, as popular dance bands, religious ceremonies, etc. These patterns return throughout the history of the violin in Cuba and are still present today.

Name: Yolandi Guerrero

Year: S2015

Tutor: Caridad Diez

Title: Eat the skin / comete la piel

Topic: La Lupe, Cuban singer

Medium: Creative Writing, Poetry, Book

I had to keep my nails short for this one. had to roll up my sleeves, crack my wrist everyday, sleep with notebook by bedside, a pen at paper distance. i had to go to work and it was worth it.

My project is a labyrinth project. A maze I constructed. My goal with art but specifically with this piece, has never been about staying in the dark even while writing about blue subjects with blue pains filled with the sorrow of the struggle. It has never been about describing the chains, but about breaking them. It has always aimed to create an exit, a mode of transportation, that would bring me out to see the sun.

This project committed itself to prove that one, all lives matter, especially the ones that purposely eliminated & then left out of history books, over and over intended to erase them from public memory. and two, all human beings have an enamored gathering of ethnographic data that should be considered as taking very serious as valuable academic material.

The investigation I conducted in my search for existing information about La Lupe in Havana and Santiago of Cuba and in the United States, helped me understand that I never wanted to study her life in the first place. what I did want to do was learn about and with her in order to try to feel stronger within myself. it turns out I did both things at

the same time. i paid my respects to her artistic trajectory by gathering and forming a bibliography that i intend to leave to CIDMUC, the National Music Museum, and to my interviewees who also believed that La Lupe was not an artist that should have ever been placed in the margins or left out of the culture memory of this country.

I came out stronger than what i was before the project by being able to think deeply about the process of translation as physical metaphor for the way i conducted my research about La Lupe's life.

Name: Ellen Oliver

Year: S2015

Tutor: Bárbara Balbuena

Title: "Layers of the Onion: Identity, Space, and Location in Three Generations of Cuban Modern Dance"

Medium: Dance Performance

My project incorporates elements of writing, choreography, and performance. At the heart of my project is a choreographed solo dance called *La Cebolla*. My choreographic process was influenced by my research in Cuban modern dance, and I worked with themes of location, space, and identity. The movement in my choreography is inspired by Ai Ki Ram Jutsu martial arts classes, Universidad de las Artes modern dance classes, hip hop, contact improvisation, and my own identity and movement in Cuba. Additionally, onions became a metaphor for my process in this research: I have learned that Cuban dance is composed of many complex layers that grow throughout time. My research paper counterposes my personal experience of dance in Cuba with three generations of Cuban modern dance choreographers. I focus particularly on the post-1959 institutionalization and nationalization of Afro-Cuban cultural practices, ballet, and North American modern dance, as well as how the choreography of the current generation has become more fluid in response to changing conditions. Throughout this semester, I conducted interviews, attended rehearsals and performances, and participated in classes at the Universidad de las Artes. Additionally, I taught contact improvisation and presented my choreography at the Festival de las Artes.

Name: Lenka Saldo

Year: S2015

Tutor: Joaquín Borges

Title: ¿Te gusta el party? ¿Te gusta el dinero? ¿Te gusta reguetón? A mi también: ~Seeing Generational Change in Cuban Reguetón~

Topic: Reguetón music

Medium: Essay

This research essay argues that reguetón in Cuba reflects and produces a youth generation that celebrates a new era of globalism and commercialism in a deeply Cuban context. This musical genre itself originated outside the island, but today it has arrived at the center of Cuba's youth music scene. While Cuban artists work within the possibilities of their local context and also fuse reguetón with Cuban musical genres like timba, Cuban reguetón also represents the changing cultural values—and increasingly consumerist values—of younger Cubans. Cubanized reguetón emerges from the complicated relationship between commercial motives, Cuban institutional politics, and the aesthetic aspects of the music. In this essay I discuss the changing culture of the new generation in reguetón based on my ethnographic research, which included interviews with underground reguetoneros, commercial reguetoneros, producers, consumers, DJs, and dancers, as well as attending concerts and visiting home-based recording studios to see and experience the cultural movement. In Havana, reguetón is taking more and more forms, and the new generation is opening a door to the world by incorporating the global trend into their local culture.

Name: Iris Haas-Biel

Year: S2014

Tutor: Celia Cedeno

Title: Cuban Theater and the Collective Memory

Medium: Essay

Cuban theater has for a long time, but perhaps especially during and since the Special Period, been a way for the public to connect through and express their experiences and struggles. This semester, through interviews, readings, and analysis I have tried to understand the role of Cuban theater in relation to history and politics. I have found that theater creates a space in which people can experience the shared personal and felt histories that have not found representation in the official historical archive. From listening to principals in the history and present of Cuban theater, the role of theater in preserving collective memory became a key focus for me. "History is told by those who win but memory is collected by those who survive." Through analyzing two plays, *The Dwarf in the Bottle* and *Manteca*, I address collective memory, and also the distinctly Cuban sense of isolation and the power of language. I conclude with a discussion of *Antigonón* an exciting example of contemporary avant garde political theater.

Name: Pheonix Wyatt

Year: S2013

Tutor: Bárbara Balbuena

Title: "Lo lleva en La Sangre: El Casino y su representación de la dinámica racial de la esfera social cubana"

Medium: Essay

Over the course of the semester, Phoenix has researched both the historic and current role of *el casino* in the Cuban social sphere. She uses *el casino* as a vehicle through which to examine the wider social structure in Cuban society. By looking at the historical transformation of both *el casino* and Cuban identity, she shows the racial dynamic that, rooted in the pre-revolutionary Cuban social structure, has continued to change and still exists today. Her final ethnographical analysis combines academic texts, personal interviews, and first-hand experiences to show the relationship between *el casino* as a social medium and the discourse through which the Cuban racial dynamics have transformed. Phoenix's research explores *el casino* as a manifestation of the complex racial paradigm in Cuba. In her analysis, Phoenix argues two key aspects of *el casino* as a social manifestation: (1) Racial stigmas still exist to create racial divisions in the Cuban social sphere, and (2) *El casino* has and continues to be used as a catalyst to bridge the social divisions, reflecting the Cuban ideology of a *cubanidad* which is, as Martí wrote, "Man means more than black; more than white." It is through these two points that Phoenix identifies and explores the complex socio-economic structure in Cuban [*casino* dance] culture.

Name: Gabriella do Amaral

Year: S2012

Tutor: Grizel Hernández

Title: "Rapping stories untold: redefining rap, redefining selves, imagining a future 'after' the Special Period"

Medium: Essay

Gabriella's work centers on an investigation into the qualities of a contemporary Cuban hip-hop and the location of raperas within the field. Her work draws on an extensive examination of hip-hop in La Habana including engagement with its public sphere(s), its performances, its music and interviews with its artists. In a socio-economic climate where reggaeton has claimed the majority of the existing music market, and wherein the first "generation" of Cuban rappers have, in large part, emigrated, she studied the manner in which Cuban hip-hop has historically provided a space for political education, reclamation of a diasporic identity, and a platform from which to express opinions and generate dialogue. Her extensive field-work delves into this history from the memories of women associated with hip hop, and situates raperas as problematically isolated from Cuban social space and Cuban rap space. In her final paper, Gabriella analyzes how, from a position of social and political margins, raperas today understand and develop hip hop space.

Name: Diana Diaz

Year: S2012

Tutor: Celia Cedeño & Olga Marta Pérez

Title: "La mujer y la familia en la literatura y el teatro: un acercamiento a la realidad cubana contemporánea"

Medium: Essay

Diana's examination of Cuban narratives and plays produced after the 1959 Revolution attempts to reveal the presence of women as literary subjects through the vision of women writers and actresses and their endeavors to reflect their realities, reinterpreted artistically from different points of view. In her assessment, Diana first contextualizes the Cuban woman as a beneficiary of many public policies that protect and support her in becoming a professional, joining the labor force and fulfilling her reproductive role without jeopardizing her professional achievements. Drawing from interviews with writers, actresses and regular women, Diana concludes that it is specially during times of economic distress (i.e. the Special Period and its surviving effects) that women are expected to direct their home regardless of the equal participation commanded by the Family Code. In the selected works of narrative created by women writers of the nineties (Marilyn Bobes, Nancy Alonso, Maria Elena Llana, Lourdes de Armas, and Adelaida Fernandez de Juan) and plays with transcendental protagonist female characters produced by male playwrights after 1959 (Virgilio Piñera, Eugenio Hernandez, Alberto Pedro and Hector Quintero) for the lack of recognized female playwrights-, Diana identified five elements of contact with lived reality: the idealization of women in the private world and their rejection to live in limited societal roles, family in a social context, daily survival--the daily struggles of "resolver," and emigration as a possible solution--and the crisis of social and family values.

Name: Jasmine Washington

Year: S2012

Tutor: María Cristina Aldana

Title: "The Sacred and The Popular: Santería and The Rumba. An Exploration of Afro-Cuban Trans-Acculturation Through Dance"

Topic: Afro-Cuban Dances

Medium: Multi-media video

Jasmine's project focused on the trans-acculturation processes visible within Afro-Cuban culture through studying and observing Afro-Cuban dances focusing specifically on the cultures enslaved Africans brought to Cuba and the colonial Spanish cultural influence present in Cuba. During the first half of Jasmine's project, she was introduced to the dance techniques of two Afro-Cuban Dance forms: three Orishas (deities) within Santería; Elegua, Obbatalá, and Yemayá and three dance forms within the style of The Rumba: Yambú, Guaguancó, and Columbia. Besides dance techniques, Jasmine studied the historical context and evolution of these dance forms and interviewed believers and experts in the field. Her final project was a multimedia video comprised of photographs, video clips, audio from interviews and a music soundtrack.

Name: Andrew Feinberg
Year: S2011
Tutor: Radamés Giró
Title: "Cuban Musical Nationalism in the 19th Century"
Topic: Cuban music history and guitar
Medium: Essay, Music Performance

Andrew's work in Cuba consisted of two primary components: first, a survey of the history of Cuban music; and second, the performance of Cuban songs on guitar and tres. After exploring more than two centuries of Cuban music, Andrew elected to focus upon the role played by 19th Cuban music and musicians in molding a distinct Cuban national identity. While the Cuban wars of Independence were being organized and fought, Cuban musicians and composers were constructing bodies of work that were fundamental in the definition of Cuban music of the revolutionary era into the early years of the Republic. Andrew's essay demonstrates the role that the composers Cervantes, Samuel, White, and others had in the development of Cuban nationalism. He traces out the connections and distinctions between Cuban composers and their counterparts in Europe (whose work, as well, played into national constructions), the direct contributions some made to the cause of the revolution, and the influence of their work in the popular music of the following decades.

The second part of Andrew's project involved the performance of Cuban music, using Cuban instruments. Together with his tutor, he performed on guitar "Ansiedad De Ti" by René Touzet, and "Y Tú, Qué Has Hecho?" by Eusebio Delf'n. And very much on his own initiative, Andrew located and acquired a Cuban tres, gave himself a quick, self-directed and become proficient enough to perform exceedingly well on this instrument as part of the public presentation of his work.

Name: Katherine Kaity
Year: S2011
Tutor: Celia Cedeño
Title: Seguimos
Topic: Theater/Greek and Afro-Cuban mythology
Medium: Visual Essay

Kathy's work on theatre in Cuba grew out of her study during previous semesters dealing with the presence of Greek myths in Cuban plays (here, she focused in particular upon "Night of the Assassins" by Triana and "Electra Garrigó" by Piñera). She came to Cuba with the intention of continuing this exploration: she was and is fascinated by the use of ancient and recognizable story models, and how adapting them to contemporary stages can alter meanings and create new truths for an audience.

During her time in Cuba she broadened her study to incorporate Greek and Afro-Cuban mythology. Eugenio Hernandez Espinoza's "Mar'a Antonia" became a fixture of her work. She was able to attend rehearsals of the show's revival in Havana, 44 years after its original premier. Her relationship with "Mar'a Antonia" developed into one that was

both academic and personal-- she came to appreciate the historical context and language of the play and simultaneously, to recall her own quiet participation in the rehearsal process as a spectator and documenter.

Her final project, then, encompassed these relationships: she produced a visual essay which documented the play as both a revival of historical and societal importance and, at the same time, is itself a process study handled by Teatro Caribeño de Cuba with love and care.

Name: Nico Chávez-Courtright

Year: S2012

Tutor: Magda González-Grau

Title: Aquí, Luchando

Medium: Play

Nicola's time in Havana was spent conducting, transcribing, and editing over a dozen interviews with tobacco-sellers, informal tour guides, jineteros and jineteras (sex workers who cater to tourists), street vendors, and specialists to write her play, "Aquí, Luchando." The play was created as a piece of documentary theater; that is, all of the characters exist in real life, and their words are taken verbatim as the dialogue. "Aquí, Luchando," brings to life the informal economies that have grown out of the country's large tourism industry, and examines the relationships between Cuba, Cubans, and foreigners. Tourism, as the pillar of Cuba's economy, has been a relatively new phenomenon in the years since the Revolution that has fundamentally changed the fabric of Cuban society. "Aquí, Luchando" examines how these changes have been interpreted and absorbed on a micro level, and looks at what it means when survival depends on selling an image (or a body) to the outside world. The play also portrays Cubans' thoughts on the social divides that an ever-growing tourist economy has created and/or exacerbated, and the complex and conflicting relationships between Cubans and yumas (foreigners). "Aquí, Luchando" will be staged at Hampshire College in fall 2012 as a bilingual multimedia play that will involve audio and visuals recorded during the course of Nicola's fieldwork.

Name: Pamela Arbogast

Year: S2010

Tutor: Joaquín Borges

Title: Voices

Topic: Women Cuban Hip Hop

Medium: Essay

How do gender, race, and discourse affect music and musicians? How has the hip hop community related to these themes? This project attempts to analyze female presence within the larger Cuban hip hop scene. How have female rappers interacted with

this performative art form dominated by males? What disadvantages do they face as women and why?

Name: Frances McGrath

Year: S2010

Tutor: Radamés Giro

Title: "The Complexities, Development, and Contextualization of Cuban Music"

Medium: Essay

I spent my time in Cuba trying to better understand Cuban music. My work with my tutor, Radamés Giro, an incredibly knowledgeable musicologist, taught me that the music of the island is no way limited to any one genre, although often people assume that the tropical music connected with the Caribbean vacation is it. Through a study of different versions of a few classic Cuban songs, such as the very famous "El Manisero," and folk tunes like "Los Tres Golpes," I was able to look at every genre of Cuban music over time. Starting with contradanzas, and continuing to the Afro-Cuban jazz of the later half of the 20th century, in New York City and Havana, and to Cuban music and musicians today, and examining each song's context, I found an easier and narrower way to try and understand the very complex music of a complicated island.

Name: Esme Vaandrager

Year: S2010

Tutor: Celia Cedeño

Title: "The unending camino of the Cuban Theater: When the Horizon is a Wall"

Topic: Contemporary Cuban Theatre

Medium: Essay

I have spent three months in Cuba learning about the way contemporary Cuban theatre presents Cuban realities by seeing and reading plays and conducting interviews. Common themes I noted are family, emigration, ideological differences amongst generations, the struggle for daily for daily survival, and coded humor critiques of the Cuban political system. I am most drawn to texts that interpret Cuban-ness in a critical manner based on non-fictional historical and current events, including Alberto Pedro's Manteca, Mar Nuestro, and Delirio Habanero. Thus I fell in love with Josefina la viajera (Josefina the traveler), a monologue written by Cuban playwright Abilio Estévez, directed and adapted by Carlos D'az and starring Osvaldo Doimeadós. Josefina is a "crazy old lady" who has been traveling the world ever since she left her hometown in Oriente in eastern Cuba, one hundred and three years ago in the hopes that one day she will get to La Habana. Josefina's imaginary journey twists facts and dreams to tell the history of Cubans, their aspirations and constraints. Josefina's inability to travel is not only a burden for Cubans on the island, but for those who have left and are legally

and/or economically prevented from returning. Through my analysis of Josefina la viajera I have also come to better understand Cuba.

Name: Morgan Greenstreet

Year: S2009

Tutor: Lázaro Pederoso and Ruy López-Nussa

Title: N/A

Topic: Percussion/batá drums

Medium: Music Performance (?)

I have been interested in Cuban music for years, and perhaps before I even heard the recorded sounds of batá or rumba drumming, I knew that I wanted to come to Cuba to study percussion. Meanwhile, in the U.S., I began studying some basic Cuban rhythms on the drum set and percussion.

I arrived in Havana humble and ready to learn, but also believing that I had some kind of firm base to build on. But, as every Cuban musician knows and will tell you, "Si no tienes clave, no tienes nada." I still don't know if I really have clave, let alone bomba, that certain something that makes the difference between just playing the music and really making it cook. Still, I know what I am most interested in learning and through incredible chance and perseverance I ended up studying with a host of incredible teachers, most especially my tutors Lázaro Pederoso and Ruy López-Nussa but also César and Leo Moré Alfonso and others who taught me in one way or another. They have been extremely patient, supportive and innovative teachers; they are exactly the people I hoped to study with in Cuba.

With Lázaro I studied batá drums of Yoruban origin, which are traditionally used in the sacred context of Santería religious ceremonies. With the help of his grandson and Isabel Scull, Lázaro taught me the basic forms and variations of many of the most used rhythms in each of the three drums, Iyá, Itótele, and Okónkolo. This gave me a well-rounded understanding of these complex rhythms and of the functions of each of the drum.

With Ruy I studied some of the same batá rhythms adapted for the drumset, which is my main instrument. We also worked on other genres of Cuban Folkloric music such as the Rumba, Conga, and Abakuá, as well as techniques, concepts, and exercises for improvisation within these genres and traditions.

I don't yet fully know what the result of my studies will bring me as a musician or a person. I know that I will never play like a Cuban, nor is this my goal. I want to continue learning from the deep traditions and innovations alive in Cuba, while continuing to develop my own music and my own relationship to these traditions.

Name: Adam Lipsky
Year: S2008
Tutor: María de los Angeles Córdova
Title: Piano composition
Medium: Piano Composition

The project of studying music in Cuba has been the most recent step in the ongoing project of my wondering why I do what I do and, more specifically, why I play what I play. A large extent of my project over this time has been working on the physical and mental techniques of finding what you want to say with sound and, then, communicating it. This goes for verbal communication, as well as music.

My study of Cuban music itself has centered on rhythm. I have been seeing the contrast of the rhythms that live in the bodies of Cubans, versus the rhythms that are felt equally as unconsciously by people who have grown up in the U.S. I feel as though I have come to an understanding about the different ways in which our music can be felt.

Through the process of looking at music that I don't fully understand, the types of music that I do understand have come more into the spotlight. I have begun combining music from different parts of my life, which I have kept separate until now. This type of realization is more valuable than information.

This project has included countless late hours of study and practice on harmony. However, I mean harmony less in terms of the 'end-all, correct method,' but more in terms of learning the character of different colors that can be created. I speak of harmony in the way that the most simple and beautiful folk song may have one or two chords. The fact that it doesn't have much 'harmonic variation' is not important. If those chords were able to find a powerful color, then the infinite pool of 'harmony' was used well. Good harmony is not necessarily complicated chords. Good harmony is the realization of what feelings can be evoked by different combinations of sound.

I have selected four pieces that I feel best exhibit the collaboration of topics I have been working with: three original pieces and one by John Coltrane (Naima). While they have a wide range stylistically, they also draw from different harmonic techniques of creating color. The two foundational components that are present in all music are pitch and rhythm. The workings of this three-month project have expanded my understanding of these two concepts tremendously. This has been a small and powerful segment of the continuing path.

Name: Maria Walsh
Year: S2008
Tutor: Bárbara Balbuena

Title: "Los bailes populares cubanos y los estereotipos de genero"

Medium: Essay

How can dance simultaneously be a visualization of gender norms while at the same time also be a furthering of those stereotypes? My work in Cuba is about dance and gender, specifically the parallels between dance as performance and gender as performance, and how one kind of performance can reveal another. Through interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, I aim and hope to open up discussion and understand multiple ideas and opinions about (in)equality in gender through the lens of popular Cuban social dance. I use the term popular Cuban social dances to define non-ritual partner dances that are done for fun and/or as a social activity. The dances I specifically focus on are rumba and Cuban style salsa, called casino. Although they are different dances with their own histories, they are both partner dances constructed of a man and a woman, and additionally, casino often borrows rumba steps in improvisation. In both of these dance forms, there are steps that are specific to men and ones specific to women. Therefore, through recognizing differences between men and women in the physical act of dancing, I'm interested in looking at these differences from a more sociological point of view of preconceived and normalized perceptions of gender and gender roles.

Name: Unique Robinson

Year: S2008

Tutor: Roberto Zurbarano

Title: "Somo mujeres: luchando, pinchando--Entiende hermano? La presencia femenina en el Hip-Hop Cubano"

Topic: Cuban Hip-hop

Medium: Essay

Mi proyecto es sobre las mujeres en el Hip-Hop cubano, específicamente, en el Hip-Hop underground. En el mes de marzo, descubrí el proyecto Alzar la Voz, que agrupa a ocho mujeres raperas, que dicen su poesía en varios espacios de La Habana, intentando así preservar la "voz" de la mujer en el Hip-Hop. Este proyecto me permitió ir a conciertos y fiestas para examinar la vida y estilo de estas raperas y descubrir a través de entrevistas a cinco de ellas, su lucha dentro y afuera del Hip-Hop. Dentro del movimiento hip-hop, las mujeres tienen que luchar mucho para lograr su promoción y espacios para rapear, y para que se reconozca su calidad en la tarima, muchas veces igual o superior que la de los hombres raperos. Con sus canciones demuestran a los hombres que no tienen que usar sus cuerpos para vender su música, como lo hacen muchas raperas en Los Estados Unidos. En la escena social y doméstica, las mujeres raperas tienen que luchar no solo como mujeres, sino como negras. ¿Qué significa ser mujer negra en Cuba, un país donde se promueve la unidad y lo cubano, y se

desestimula el orgullo de ser negra; a pesar de fomentar el ideal de la mulata como patrón de belleza para hombres y mujeres tanto blancos como negros? Estas mujeres, con sus canciones, rechazan los ideales de belleza estereotipados, luchan por ser dueñas de sus cuerpos, de su pelo, y de sus mentes, y decir a otras mujeres que se unan a su lucha. También investigué el futuro del Hip-Hop en Cuba, y la posibilidad de una mayor audiencia fuera de esta comunidad que permitiera eliminar la indiferencia del público hacia sus canciones y cultura para de esta forma entablar un diálogo que vaya más allá de los ideales nacionalistas, lo cual ser'a beneficioso no solo para el futuro del Hip-Hop, sino también para el futuro de la nación cubana.