

N.Y. THEATER TROUPE PLANS TRIP TO CUBA - Miami Herald, The (FL) - August 12, 1998 - page 1D

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New York City's renowned Teatro Repertorio Espanol plans to take its entire troupe to Cuba next month for two weeks of performances. "Everything's on the up-and-up. We've requested a license from the State Department," says Gilberto Zaldivar, cofounder of Repertorio. "We spent six months doing the paperwork." The group plans to stage the play *Revoltillo* (Broken Eggs) at the Hubert de Blanck Hall in Havana, beginning sometime between Sept. 26 and 29. The play deals with the problems of a Cuban family in Los Angeles in the 1980s. It was written by Eduardo Machado and is directed by Rene Buch. Both are Cuban exiles. *Revoltillo* was shown several years ago at Miami's International Festival of Hispanic Theater. It is the last play in a trilogy that includes *Las Damas Modernas de Guanabacoa* (The Modern Ladies from Guanabacoa) and *Fabiola*. Among the featured performers in the show are Puerto Rican actress Miriam Colon and Cuban singer-actress Ana Margarita Martinez Casado, best known to American audiences for her performances in the TV series *Que Pasa, USA?* Others in the cast of seven include Ricardo Barber and Rene Sanchez. "There are no political problems among artists," Zaldivar says of the trip to Cuba. "We can disagree politically with artists on the island, but we dialogue, we talk." Playwright Machado, who came to the United States in the 1960s as a child, heads the Writers Program at Columbia University in New York. He plans to attend the premiere in Havana. Repertorio's cultural relations with Cuba began in February, when, at Zaldivar's invitation, actors Vladimir Cruz and Omar Ali flew from Havana to join the New York cast of *Strawberry and Chocolate* for 25 performances. "There's great interest here" in reciprocal performances, says Zaldivar, who has lived in New York City since 1961. "When it comes to music and ballet, Cuban performers are always appearing here, and everybody comes to see them. Why not theater?" Last year, Zaldivar staged *Vagos Rumores* (Vague Rumors), by Cuban dramatist Abelardo Estorino, with three actors brought from Cuba. The play was paired with a monologue by Estorino, *Las Penas No Saben Nadar* (Sorrows Don't Know How To Swim). The twin bill played to full houses for three weeks and won an award from the Drama Critics Association. Traditionally, the Repertorio, founded in 1969, has specialized in classical theater and zarzuelas -- Spanish operettas. But beginning in 1993, it began to feature commissioned plays by Cuban and other Latin American authors. Zaldivar believes that *Revoltillo* will be well-received in Havana. "Most people in Cuba have relatives here, whom they'll see reflected in the play's characters," he says. In October, the Repertorio will stage in New York another Estorino play, *Parece Blanca* (She Seems White), which deals with racial and social conflicts in romantic relationships. Five of the 10 cast members will be Cubans from the island; the others will be Cuban Americans. After a month of performances, the guest performers will return to Cuba and be replaced by New York actors. "That's what you call an exchange," Zaldivar says.