

**Peter and Ana Lowens University of Victoria Special Collections Student Fellowship  
Project Proposal by Rowan Watts, Faculty of Humanities**

I propose to research both the creative and administrative development of multicultural and collaborative theatre produced locally in Victoria throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Focusing on the Line de Guevara fonds in Special Collections, specifically de Guevara's drafts of plays that were conceived of and performed by citizens of Victoria who had no previous theatrical experience, which include the texts "I Wasn't Born Here" (1988), "Sisters/Strangers" (1996), and "Storytelling Our Lives" (2006) in the "Plays & Productions" subseries, I hope to illuminate why this period produced so much intercultural theatre, and how this sort of performance self-propagates and encourages audience members and emerging practitioners in Victoria to stage their own cultures. Although de Guevara has often described her productions as "multicultural" in interviews (a term contested by scholars for undermining social unity and promoting ethnic fragmentation), many of her performances, including those above, were created in collaboration with amateurs local to Victoria who belong to a wide range of vibrant and robust cultural lineages; thus, de Guevara's plays are better examples of interculturalism, which is the synthesis and transcendence of sociohistorical boundaries. My research project aims at mobilising this insight for the public.

I hope to create an audio guide that takes the listener on an aural tour of the dramaturgical process of one or more of de Guevara's plays, like a verbal narration of an object history as a museum, but of a play, from conception to performance. I intend to present the guide as a podcast, to be either hosted on the UVic Libraries website, or uploaded to Spotify as a special extended episode of The Clearihue Corner, a podcast affiliated with the UVic English Students' Association, with which I am also associated.<sup>1</sup> This podcast might

---

<sup>1</sup> I only suggest Spotify and The Clearihue Corner as a potential home for my research because I have discussed scholarship on this podcast before, so I am familiar with its production cycle, and because it has had years to generate an extant listenership whom my research might not have otherwise reached; nonetheless, my work would of course be happy to live anywhere.

include a lecture on my methodological approach to, and findings in, the archival material, and a dramatic reading of a script in Special Collections. Although these scripts were intended to be performed live, this sort of radio play as a podcast is more accessible for most. I hope to qualify this radio play by explaining to listeners the exigency of contributing to local intercultural theatre production, and suggesting how they might do so themselves.

Studying under Dr. Sasha Kovacs, I have been working with the theatrical artefacts and archives in Special Collections for almost a year. I investigated the Phoenix Theatre archives in her course titled THEA 414: Canadian Theatre History last spring, and have since been awarded a JCURA to explore the Lina de Guevara fonds, also under her supervision. The Peter and Ana Lowens Fellowships would enable me to further pursue the line of inquiry already started by my JCURA and share my research beyond the boundaries of the academy through the public-facing podcast. Theatre is necessarily a communal experience, so I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to mobilise this quality of knowledge to the broader Victoria community, who might learn the most about their home from de Guevara's sensitive yet robust calibre of performance.

Word Count: 498