



SHAKESPEARE AND LATINIDAD

Edited by Trevor Boffone and Carla Della Gatta

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Passion's Slave: Reminiscences on Latinx Shakespeares in Performance

Frankie J. Alvarez

Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do you.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, confiding in his close friend Horatio
William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Muéstrame un hombre que no sea esclavo de sus pasiones, y lo alojaré en mi corazón; sí, en el corazón del corazón como lo hago contigo.

Hamlet, Príncipe de Cuba, confiando en su buen amigo Horacio
Nilo Cruz, *Hamlet, Príncipe de Cuba*

It seems impossible to discuss Latinidad and Shakespeare without discussing the word so often used to describe Latinx people: *passionate*. It can feel like a rather reductive term, a generality carelessly applied to a vast and complex cultural identity that refuses to be defined and confined by one mere word. Nevertheless, passion was the key that would unlock my work in two Latinx Shakespearean productions between January 2011 and May 2012. At the time, I found myself in a most enviable position for any young actor fresh out of drama school: performing in three Shakespeare plays in two of the most respected regional theatres in America. In 2011, I was a company member at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), performing as Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, and as Lucius/Metellus Cimber in *Julius Caesar*. While performing those two productions in repertory, I was cast and began preparations for one of the most challenging and rewarding roles of my life: the titular role in the 2012 bilingual repertory production of *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* at the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Florida. Both *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* engaged in the bilingual nature of these characters, but the

productions dealt with these complexities in language in radically differing ways.

'Passion's slave' is an appropriate way to describe both Claudio and Hamlet. In one play, Claudio gets arrested and is condemned to die for fornication (sex before marriage), a crime of passion that could put one in prison back in the 1600s; in the other, Hamlet is charged with avenging the death of his father, who was murdered by Hamlet's uncle Claudius in an effort to usurp the Danish throne and legitimise his passionate affair with Hamlet's mother, Gertrude. Both young men set forth on a painful journey of self-reflection in an attempt to free themselves from the various passions that threaten their personal and professional lives.

Measure for Measure

OSF's 2011 production of *Measure for Measure*, directed by Bill Rauch, was set in an unspecified urban American metropolis in the 1970s, a radical era that reacted to the sexual freedom of the 1960s and forecast the moral clampdown of the conservative, Reagan-led 1980s. For Rauch, the multi-ethnoracial cast was not only illustrative of the increasing diversity of OSF's acting company, emblematic of his time as artistic director, but also reflective of the demographics of the United States and the very American way that race and class are so inextricably linked here. Claudio, Isabella and Angelo were all played by Latinx members of the company, while the duke who has left Angelo ruling the city was played by a white actor. Thus, we have an upwardly mobile Latino in Angelo who makes a clear example of a young Latino offender of the law in Claudio in order to show the greater community that he means to rule by the letter of the law regardless of any race-based sympathies. When the young novice Isabella pleads for her brother's life to Angelo, he propositions her: make love to me, and I'll free Claudio. This exchange sets the scene for the emotional rollercoaster of Act III, scene i.

This was my favourite scene to perform every night; we did it 120 times. It begins with the duke, in disguise as a friar, preparing Claudio's soul for his impending death. Claudio has two lines in this portion of the scene, which sandwich the friar's larger rumination on death. Though I didn't have much dialogue, I had the given circumstances of the scene and those layered within our setting to guide me along. At the top of the scene, I am escorted in handcuffs into the visitation room. As I sit, I slouch in my seat and look far off to the distance, actively disengaging from this priest, played by acclaimed actor and friend Anthony Heald; his whiteness is symbolic of a race that has actively oppressed my people for generations, while his friar garb is symbolic of a religion that provides me comfort while simultaneously oppressing me for the sole crime of loving my sole partner. A Latino youth in the 1970s – all

swagger and sideburns – finds no solace in the presence of this friar, and my body language conveys that: he slides a Bible towards me, and I push it right back towards him. As his monologue begins, I dialogue with him physically. The friar proclaims, ‘Be absolute for death; either death or life / Shall thereby be the sweeter’;¹ I roll my eyes and look away from him, rejecting his thesis. But as the friar proceeds, it becomes clear that his advanced age has taught him a few things about our daily wrestling match with mortality. Not only that, but the friar is the first person I engage with in the play who actually treats me like a grown man; that show of respect is not lost on me, and he begins to win my attention. The friar continues: ‘Thy best of rest is sleep, / And that thou oft provok’st, yet grossly fear’st / Thy death, which is no more.’² I smile at his rhetoric, so very empathetic to my current state: the only rest I could possibly find these days is in sleep, but I’m so scared of dying that I am sleepless, hence I get no rest. I begin to lean in as the friar concludes his speech, ‘Yet in this life / Lie hid more thousand deaths, yet death we fear, / That makes these odds all even.’³ We share a laugh at this, and in the span of thirty lines, the friar has taken me on a journey from resistant to his final blessing to grateful for his help and willing to die.

Once Isabella arrives, the chemistry in the air is irrevocably changed. The cultural connection of Latinidad helped amplify the storytelling and create real fireworks onstage. I rush to my only sister, eager for her consoling embrace, and am restrained by a guard and forced to my seat. She takes the friar’s old seat, eyeing the Bible that the friar has left behind for me. I take in the new circumstance: I haven’t seen my sister since she left home to become a novice, and this is the first time I see her in her nun’s garbs. In this production, we replaced a few of Shakespeare’s words with some Spanish phrases and colloquialisms; the ease with which we switch between languages is a sign not only of our familial comfort with each other but of the high stakes of the scene drawing out the primal language of our mother tongue. After obfuscating for forty-five lines or so, Isabella finally admits that there is one thing that will save me: ‘Dost thou think, Claudio, / If I would yield him my virginity / Thou mightst be freed?’⁴ I complete the pentameter of her line with utmost shock in my native language: ‘Dios mio, no puede ser.’⁵ She admits she must do it tonight, or I will die. I quickly reassure her, ‘Thou shalt not do’t.’ She adds, ‘Oh, were it but my life, / I’d throw it down for your deliverance / As frankly as a pin’; I respond again in Spanish, ‘Gracias, querida Isabel.’⁶ At this point, we hold hands, place them atop the Bible and begin to recite the Apostle’s Creed in Spanish.

This creed is familiar to many Latinx audiences of the Catholic faith and is usually recited in Spanish by the entire congregation. But in the middle of our recitation in *this* morbid context, I interrupt her and attempt to bargain with her: from my estimation, if Angelo is condemning me to death for a crime

that he willingly wants to commit with Isabella, then maybe it isn't too big a crime – or sin – at all. At this point, I stand and launch into Claudio's famous meditation on death: he fears the afterlife and is steadfast in his view that even the most abhorrent parts of life – 'age, ache, penury, imprisonment' – are a 'paradise' compared to 'what we fear of death'.⁷ As I throw the Bible to the ground, I plead to her on my knees: 'Hermanita, let me live. / Oye, what sin you do to save a brother's life, / Nature dispenses with the deed so far / That it becomes a virtue.'⁸ Isabella, in outright disgust and disappointment, insults me: 'O you beast!' Then she kicks it up a notch and chides me in Spanish, almost as if she were my mother: 'O cobarde sin fe! O desgraciado!'⁹ She condemns me to die, and I'm dragged away by the guard, crying out, 'O, escuchame, Isabela!'¹⁰ Even though Claudio only speaks in just four scenes of the play, there is a vast array of story that can be told non-verbally. It was always an incredible ride with Stephanie Beatriz, who played Isabella. Both of us are first-generation Latinx Americans, and the shared cultural knowledge of these two siblings and their passion for their respective causes always drove this scene to exciting heights. There were always new nuances to respond to and listen for, and Stephanie and I continued to challenge each other throughout our nine-month run. The bilingual nature of the scene helped deepen the familial relationship between Claudio and Isabella. We inherently accessed the distinct tone and musicality of a bilingual sibling relationship, and that specificity – the vast love, the bitter disappointment, the real passion – is what made the language choices really pop for audiences in a universal way.

While that scene functioned as the centerpiece of Bill's bilingual production, he also used bilingualism to startling effect in other scenes. When Angelo propositions Isabella, he uses Spanish as a tool to shrink the disconnect between them in an attempt to get her into bed with him. Later, when the unstable Mariana is introduced, she sees Angelo in a vision; Bill staged it so that Angelo would actually appear in the scene and sing a Mexican ballad to her. One of the most successful elements of this production, though, was the stunning music by mariachi band Las Colibrí. The production began with three Latina cleaning ladies cleaning the duke's boardroom. These women, the audience quickly learns, are the unseen – and unappreciated – force in the city keeping everything in order. They then transform into a beautiful mariachi band, and their presence functions as a Greek chorus throughout the show. Mariachi bands are traditionally present at Mexican celebrations and rites of passage: baptisms, funerals, birthdays and weddings. Las Colibrí's songs, all in Spanish, bookended scenes and introduced others, and they helped carry the emotional arc of the play up to and including the final breath that abruptly ended the show.

Hamlet, Prince of Cuba

A tragic violin theme escalates as the growing reverb of an electric guitar overtakes it, culminating in the percussive slamming of a chamber door. From the silence, we hear the unmistakable sound of a male Cuban voice singing a cappella, ‘Que sé con su mirada, desde los pies hasta el pecho’,¹¹ as our eyes focus in on a young man lying at the front of a dark and empty stage, dead. As the music continues, he rises, looks at us, and begins to change into a beautiful turn-of-the-century black suit. This was the opening beat for our bilingual repertory production of *Hamlet: Prince of Cuba*, a production that exists as Hamlet’s dying fever dream, as he tries in earnest to retrace the steps that led him to this precise moment and discover whether he was indeed successful in fulfilling the ghost’s charge.

The music of the show, designed by Fabian Obispo (with whom I had already worked on a few productions at Juilliard), helped transport the audience to an 1898 Havana ravaged by the Spanish–American War. More importantly, it also tuned the audience’s modern ear towards the vast array of human experience contained in Shakespeare’s famous language and introduced the audience to this distinctly Cuban royal family. Similar to *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet* exists at the busy intersection between politics, religion and family dynamics; it is as much about the political as it is about the personal.

When I auditioned for the role, I sent in a self-tape with two soliloquies: ‘To be or not to be’ in English into my bathroom mirror, and ‘O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I’ in Spanish on the Bowmer stage, where I had been performing *Measure for Measure*. A few weeks later, I got a call from my agent alerting me that I was in the final running for the role, and that the production’s director, Asolo Rep’s artistic director Michael Donald Edwards, was going to fly to Ashland to see me perform in *Measure for Measure*, and to watch both monologues in person. He arrived on a Wednesday, watched our *Measure* matinee, and conducted my in-person callback for an hour. By Thursday morning, I had the role.

From July 2011 to January 2012, I ate, slept and breathed *Hamlet*. I read every critical response I could get my hands on, looked up the meaning of each and every word I would say, and watched at least a dozen different interpretations of the role on film and at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. I didn’t take any notes from the other interpretations I examined; my prevailing thought was that if an idea were useful in my own interpretation, it would ultimately burrow its way into my subconscious and sneak its way into my performance.

Andhy Mendez (our Laertes, and a fellow first-generation Cuban American from Miami) and I were called down to Sarasota a week earlier than the rest of the cast in order to spend some time learning the complex rapier fight

that functions as the climax of the play. Though the play sets up Hamlet and Laertes as foils, it was important to us that they felt like brothers cleft in twain, that perhaps under different circumstances they would be close friends. The extra time on the fight proved to be extremely valuable for two reasons. By the time opening night rolled around, we had been refining the fight choreography for seven weeks, and the moves had become second nature. In fact, our fight choreographer Bruce Lecure became concerned during previews, when, adrenaline pumping through our veins, the fight ended up happening three times faster than intended! But, even more importantly, the extra week gave us some time on our own to bond; I truly believe that our budding friendship made its way into the dynamic between Hamlet and Laertes. The time that we spent together off stage – not only commiserating about our common upbringing by Cuban refugees in Miami but also revelling in the joy of two Cubans playing Cubans in a Shakespeare play – was crucial to our interpretation of their relationship.

My preparatory text work unlocked two key words: *obey* and *passion*. In the opening scene, Claudius announces to the court that Hamlet must not return to grad school in Wittenberg: ‘it is most retrograde to our desire’. Gertrude – my mother and my uncle’s new wife – agrees and pleads, ‘I beg you, stay with us.’ Hamlet responds: ‘I shall in all my best *obey* you, madam.’ This is where Hamlet lives for the first few scenes of the play, in a state of ‘unmanly grief’ and in full obedience of his elders, without any agency of his own.¹² As a Cuban man beloved by his people who was presumably next in line for the throne (it was no accident that my thick moustache and slicked-back hair were in absolute homage to the great Cuban poet-warrior José Martí), Hamlet is clearly not behaving as he normally would. The death of his father is a traumatic event that strips him of his lifeblood and prevents him from being his true self. He is sleepwalking through life – until the afterlife breathes new life into him!

In our production, after hearing from Horatio that he saw the ghost of the king, Hamlet visits a Santero priest. Amid a cleaning ritual involving cigar smoke and the blood of a chicken, the ghost appears and takes over Hamlet’s body. The ghost reveals that his death was not of a natural cause; he was *murdered* by his usurping brother. I had a mic on me specifically for this scene that allowed the sound engineer to amplify and modify my voice in the moment when the ghost assumes control over my faculties and issues his challenge:

If you have nature in you, bear it not.
 But howsoever you pursue this act,
 Taint not your mind nor let your soul contrive
 Against your mother aught.
 Leave her to heaven.¹³

Michael's insight proved immensely useful here: the ghost's demand is to 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder',¹⁴ but his challenge is to do it without corrupting Hamlet's mind, and without acting as judge, jury and executioner towards Hamlet's mother. This would be my guide every night and with every moment that Hamlet is paralysed by inaction or seduced by insanity: he cross-checks his plans and his impulses with the ghost's challenge.

From this point, my performance awakens, as Hamlet's life has a renewed purpose: 'The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!'¹⁵ It was important to me that my Hamlet use every ounce of energy, every muscle in his body and every synapse in his brain in service of 'setting it right' for his father. The next time I appear onstage, my hair is unkempt, my shirt is untucked, my suspenders are cross-gartered, and I pace about barefoot, consciously acting out my 'antic disposition'. Michael gave me absolute freedom in my blocking; the thought was that these characters truly have no idea what Hamlet is going to do next, so why not arrange it so we have no idea what Frankie is going to do next? Sometimes I did a full-on impression of Polonius; other times I collapsed on the ground and chewed on my toenails. In one special performance, I managed to flick Polonius off with my middle toe! It was an absolute privilege to be given that kind of freedom, and it was important to me not to abuse it; that freedom of impulse was always about enacting my objective at any given moment.

'O that this too too sullied flesh would melt' and 'To be or not to be' were both performed seated, the former on a chair and the latter on the ground. By contrast, 'O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!' and 'How all occasions do inform against me' were on my feet, kinetic, alive and inclusive of the audience. My Hamlet was an intense lover of clowning and theatre; he is overwhelmed with joy at the sight of the 'tragedians of the city' and moved to tears by the Player King's speech from *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. In fact, it is during 'O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!' that the word *passion* emerges again. Hamlet is baffled by the fact that the Player King could 'in a dream of passion / [. . .] force his soul so to his own conceit [. . .] / And all for nothing!'¹⁶ He is in absolute awe of the passion stirred within this actor over an imaginary circumstance, while also chiding himself for not being able to act on the very real circumstance of the ghost's charge.

It was my favourite soliloquy to perform. There are several twists and turns in it, and much like the rest of the show, the speech demands that the actor make discoveries on the lines and truly stay in the present moment. I'll never forget one performance where there was an older gentleman in the front row with a copy of *Hamlet*, faithfully following along with the text. He would hem and haw every time he noticed a text change or disagreed with the pronunciation of a word. By the end of the speech, I was at my wit's end with him. He had the audacity to say the words of the final couplet before I had

spoken them! I slid over to the lip of the stage right above his seat, snatched the play from his hands, and (as I leafed through it) delivered my final couplet with a knowing look to the audience: ‘the play’s the thing / Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king’.¹⁷ The audience let out a riotous laugh, and I was happy to see that same gentlemen at another performance, this time sans script, ready to enjoy the live performance happening in front of him. It can be a dangerous thing for an audience to worship at the altar of Shakespeare: his words were not meant to be read but rather were meant to come to life through the active use of the actors’ bodies. Those that cut off their performances at the neck are missing out on the exceptional physical opportunities presented by Shakespeare’s language. My physical training under the legendary Moni Yakim proved essential for me throughout our rehearsal period because it emphasises using the entire capacity of one’s body and impulses.

Once Claudius’s guilt is revealed in direct response to *The Mousetrap*, the play-within-the-play, Hamlet engages in a deliberate *lazzi* (a series of physical gags and bits in the commedia dell’arte tradition) in order to expose the king’s minions (Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) as the puppets they truly are. I rampage through the tragedian’s prop box and lampoon them all, managing to use a wig, the famous pipe, a red clown nose and even my impression of the boisterous Mexican comedian Cantinflas¹⁸ (though not time period appropriate, it proved to be a fun Easter egg for Latinx audiences). Hamlet continues to wield his morbid wit through his confrontations with Gertrude and Claudius, before being exiled to England. But once Hamlet sees a deliberate and commanding Fortinbras raise a powerful army all for a small plot of land, he begins to see how he can claim revenge without corrupting himself, and he returns to Cuba from his brief deportation as a deliberate and emboldened grown man. The moment when the gravedigger digs up Yorick’s skull becomes an opportunity for Hamlet to recall his more innocent and jovial upbringing with his beloved court jester and meditate on how death inevitably comes for us all. Holding Yorick’s skull up to my face, I would reminisce with him: ‘¿Qué se hizo de tus burlas, tus saltos, tus cantares, de aquellos chistes que hacían reventar de risa a todos en la mesa?’¹⁹ As I put one hand in my pocket, I’d discover something that had been hidden there throughout my entire exile: the tragedian’s red clown nose, a symbol of my inner child. I’d place the nose around Yorick’s skull and then commune with him again. When I hand him back to the gravedigger, he is no longer just another nameless skull, but a specific man buried in his signature nose. At this point, I learn that Ophelia is dead, and the burial of my personal clown nose is significant: it is now time to put away childish things and embrace my fate.

The idea of a Shakespeare repertory in both English and Spanish was inspirational, but in some ways Asolo Rep’s production left me hungry for an even more sustained and comprehensive immersion into the world of

bilingual Shakespeare. The plan was to have a total of twenty-six performances in English, with ten additional performances in Spanish that would run concurrently with the English version for the final few weeks of the run. Things did not go as smoothly as planned, however. The first issue was one of time. We had six weeks to rehearse and stage the text in English, but only ten days allotted for the Spanish. I had seven months to prep the English text; due to other writing commitments, we did not receive the final version of Nilo Cruz's translation of the text until fourteen days prior to opening night of the Spanish production. I could never have been able to memorise and execute the Spanish-language *Hamlet* without the help of two exceptional men: my dad, Frank Alvarez, who came up to visit for a weekend and helped me drill lines relentlessly; and our bilingual vocal coach Antonio Ocampo-Guzman, whose astonishing skill and insight proved integral to my entire rehearsal process. The second issue was one of language and casting. When I had been originally cast in July, I was told that we would have a fully bilingual cast performing in both the English and Spanish productions. However, when I arrived at Asolo in February of the next year, I learned that the ensemble actors playing Polonius, the gravedigger and the Player King were all Caucasian actors with no Spanish-speaking experience. On top of that, the production cast some of the third-year actors from Asolo Rep's graduate acting programme, and only one of the six was bilingual. As a result, Michael went down to Miami and cast two older actors to play the above ensemble roles for the Spanish production, while the grad student actors were to remain in both productions. The enlistment of a Player Queen, Marcellus, Osric and others who were obviously not Spanish speakers proved to be a detriment to the audience's ability to fully suspend disbelief. All told, the production felt less Cuban than it could have been. If there had been a deeper understanding of these issues by the artistic staff, if every effort had been made to have a truly bilingual cast, and if the Spanish translation (and by proxy the Spanish production) had been given the same amount of rehearsal time as the English (to all intents and purposes, it was a *new play* and should have been treated as such), the repertory would have been a much more satisfying experiment for all audiences. Which is not to say that this experiment was not exciting and fruitful: just that it also points to the greater potential for future bilingual repertory shows, provided that these issues of time and casting are tackled.

Nevertheless, every problem presents opportunities. For example, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Hamlet's grad school buds from Wittenberg, and their broken Spanish was both a charming circumstance to play with and further evidence of the growing gulf of understanding between Hamlet and his school chums. In fact, playing several scenes with two different actors as Polonius, the Player King and the gravedigger was another circumstance that forced me to stay in the present moment. I could not play

the Spanish scene in the same way as the English: not only was I playing the scene with a different scene partner, but Nilo's gorgeous translation was distinctly Cuban in tone and in word choice. My blocking varied for each scene, and each language forced me to use different tactics to get what I wanted. As we began to perform both productions in rep, I found that my performances were in constant conversation, and I would learn something from the Spanish version that would prove useful to me in the English version, and vice versa. Those last few weeks were an absolute whirlwind, and the Herculean task of getting to do both shows proved to be an exciting circumstance for audiences.

The word *passion* and its cognates are used in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* fourteen times in the First Folio edition.²⁰ The importance of the word took on a greater significance when we finally began sharing the production with Latinx audiences in Sarasota and Miami, Florida. I was floored by the conversations I was able to have at the stage door. Some memorable responses included: 'I feel so lucky that this was the first Shakespeare I've ever seen', 'I never knew Hamlet could be this *funny!*' and 'It was so powerful to see actors up there that looked and sounded like me'. But if an argument is to be made for the relevance of Latinx Shakespeares in performance, then it came from a young Cuban mom who brought her thirteen-year-old to see our final Spanish performance in Miami, on the eve of Mother's Day. As I signed her son's playbill, she shared, 'I want to see more Shakespeare in Spanish. I finally understood it – it felt like I was watching a telenovela.'

Two epic scripts somehow lodged in my brain, months of tireless preparation, and my entire self poured into this role: it all culminated in her beautiful and cathartic response. Under Michael's bold and inspired leadership, we managed to build a bridge from Shakespeare's dated language to the present-day arena where heightened and passionate Latinx stories are told, where the modern Latinx family's greatest provider of drama lies: the telenovela. We brought the past directly into the present.

Latinx Interventions in the Canon

In OSF's production of *Measure for Measure* and the Asolo Rep's *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*, both artistic directors staged shows that helped illuminate Shakespeare's text by casting Latinx actors in lead roles and using their cultural background and language in exciting and relevant ways. The bilingual exercise of both productions revealed the passion and density of emotion found in Shakespeare's text, and helped connect two centuries-old texts to the complexity of the modern Latinx family in a way that felt fresh, familiar and familial.

OSF's *Measure for Measure* shed light on the true circumstances of racism

and sexism within the distinctly white patriarchy in the United States, and the use of Spanish in particular highlighted the bifurcated nature of life in the distinctly American version of Bill Rauch's Vienna. In contrast, *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* was a story about a Latino man who is not a rapist, not a gangster, but a sweet prince, trying his absolute best to honour his father. It was a necessary statement, one that is more relevant than ever in these political times. It was an exceptional privilege to play Shakespeare's Hamlet as a Latino,²¹ in all his three-dimensional beauty and complexity. I sincerely hope that the future of Latinx Shakespeares – and all Latinx theatre – continues to grow and find its place in the American canon, free from the generalities and stereotypes that threaten to bury it.

Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edn, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Suzanne Gossett, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus and Gordon McMullan (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016), III.i.5–6.
2. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, III.i.17–19.
3. Ibid. III.i.39–42.
4. Ibid. III.i.96–8.
5. Ibid. III.i.98. 'O heavens, it cannot be.' All translations in this production were my own.
6. Ibid. III.i.102–5. 'Thanks, dear Isabel.'
7. Ibid. III.i.130–2.
8. Ibid. III.i.133–6. 'Sweet sister.'
9. Ibid. III.i.136–7. 'O faithless coward, O dishonest wretch!'
10. Ibid. III.i.148. 'Listen to me.'
11. Fabian Obispo, original music for *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* (2012). 'What do I know with his gaze, from feet to chest.'
12. Michael Donald Edwards, *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*, adapted from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (unpublished script, 12 March 2012), 2.
13. This is the line the author spoke on stage. In the final script, it reads, 'Fare you well at once.'
14. Edwards, *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*, 8.
15. Ibid. 10.
16. Ibid. 23.
17. Ibid. 24.
18. Cantinflas (1911–93) was a Mexican film actor and comedian known for language play.
19. Nilo Cruz, *Hamlet, Príncipe de Cuba*, adapted from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (unpublished script, 3 January 2012), 61. 'Where be your gibes

now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?’

20. Pervez Rizvi, *Shakespeare’s Text*, last updated 4 June 2019. Available at www.shakespearestext.com (last accessed 11 November 2020).
21. Although Hamlet has been played by (relatively few) other Latino actors, this was the first time the character of Hamlet was portrayed as a Latino or Latin American in any major regional, repertory or equity theatre in the United States.