

Latin American Library brings 1960s radionovelas to the digital age

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Radionovelas like La Hora Trece, which translates to The Thirteenth Hour, will be digitized and made available online thanks to a grant awarded to the Latin American Library at Tulane. (Photo from the Latin American Library at Tulane)

In a move that will make important works of Latino popular culture more widely available, the Latin American Library at Tulane University will digitize 36 of 135 audio recordings in the Louis J. Boeri and Minín Bujones Boeri Collection of Cuban American Radionovelas. The recordings have been unavailable to the public since their original broadcasts in the 1960s.

The digitization is supported by a \$229,189 Digitizing Hidden Collections grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). CLIR is an independent, nonprofit organization that forges strategies to enhance research, teaching and learning environments in collaboration with libraries, cultural institutions and communities of higher learning. The highly competitive grant program is made possible by funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Tulane's project was only one of 14 selected from a total of 125 applications nationwide.

"This work will highlight the contributions of exiled Cuban scriptwriters, actors and technicians, creating access to these programs and providing a unique window into the forging of an early Spanish-speaking audience in the U.S.," says Christine Hernández, Curator of Special Collections of the Latin American Library.

The audio recordings were produced by Miami-based America's Productions between 1963 and 1970, and transmitted by over 200 radio stations in Latin America and Spain, by U.S. Spanish-language stations, and by the U.S. government. The radio programs were originally recorded on reel-to-reel audiotape, a fragile and obsolete format; digitization is today the only option that will make this content accessible. The digitized *radionovelas* will be freely available worldwide within the [Tulane University Digital Library](#).

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The radionovelas are housed in The Louis J. Boeri and Minín Bujones Boeri Collection of Cuban-American Radionovelas.