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## René Buch... on why he founded Repertorio Español, its future and the younger generations.

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Theatre, opera, visual and fine arts are the forces that drove and set me on the path that eventually gave birth to the enterprise that is Repertorio Español today. That venture began forty years ago with a vision for artistic distinction and with a drive to introduce broad audiences to great theatre and to master playwrights that are still hardly known and grossly ignored by the theatrical world of the United States.

This dream has become a reality and I am proud of what we have accomplished. Not only have we created a strong, respected organization that has an outstanding ensemble of actors (performing in Spanish nonetheless), but we have also introduced thousands of adult and student audiences to the masterpieces of Federico García Lorca, Calderón de la Barca, Lope de Vega, and Tirso de Molina. Also, we have brought to the forefront the works of internationally renowned contemporary playwrights including those of Emilio Carballido (México), Robert Cossa (Argentina), Luis Rafael Sánchez (Puerto Rico) and Isaac Chocrón (Venezuela). Added to this are the recent contemporary works by new and/or emerging Hispanic American theatre artists like Nilo Cruz and Carmen Rivera, and the great theatre adaptations of some of the finest Latin American writers of our times including Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, and, most recently, Jorge Amado.

We have audiences, Board members, artists, current and past employees that tell me that Repertorio served as their first introduction to Spanish-language theatre; many to theatre itself. Knowing this fills my heart with joy and pride, but when I look towards the future, I realize the work of Repertorio is just beginning. The country's Hispanic population is exploding with the majority being under the age of 18. This has huge implications that will reverberate throughout every aspect of American life.

What concerns me is that we will have generations and generations of young Hispanics that will never learn to appreciate the excitement and magic of live theatre, never learn about the riches of their cultural heritage, never consider the arts as a profession and never see their own experiences depicted on stage. Concurrently are the generations of non-Latinos whose only knowledge of the Latino culture will be the diluted, one-dimensional and damaging images that permeate in mainstream and pop culture. All this makes the work of Repertorio more relevant than when we first began.

This is why Repertorio Español's work is so important nowadays. We are committed to bringing high quality productions to a broad audience, present new plays that are relevant to the experience of young Latinos, and making theatre accessible to a community that other theatres or institutions cannot. Most importantly, Repertorio tackles the voids I previously mentioned: it instills cultural pride among Hispanics from all Latin American countries, challenges misconceptions and ignorance about Spanish language, culture and traditions, and hopefully, creates and inspires the next generation of theatergoers and theatre artists. Our goal is to bring plays to the forefront that will make audiences think and challenge the perceptions of the world around them. Our aspiration is to set new generations on a path influenced by the arts and theatre.