Our next speaker is Damaris Serrano, who holds a PhD in Hispanic Cultural Studies and a Master of Comparative Literature from Michigan State. She has held various teaching and research positions at the University of Panama and has five times received Prestigious National Literary awards in the Republic of Panama. She is the author of numerous award-winning books and articles, serves as a researcher for the encyclopedia towards a history of Central American
literature's, and author for the Dictionary of Central American literature's. She has been a professor for 35 years in Panama and in the United States. She will talk to us about comics, swing, and vaudeville: The Transatlantic Connection. I can't wait to see how she puts all of that together. So I think that the best idea was to create a movie with that. I couldn't introduce all this swing and vaudeville and Ella Fitzgerald
and everything else but since all my

13
00:01:09,090 --> 00:01:16,320
research has always always been devoted
to bring new things to the classroom the

14
00:01:16,320 --> 00:01:23,850
movie was made in self by two of my
dearest students, former students, one

15
00:01:23,850 --> 00:01:29,130
from the school of medicine and a
current CoLA student, so it's a movie so

16
00:01:29,130 --> 00:01:34,259
I won't have to speak. It's about 12 minutes
so you can ask me questions afterwards,

17
00:01:34,259 --> 00:01:39,570
and yeah I brought from my research
about seven thousand pictures so I just

18
00:01:39,570 --> 00:01:43,189
brought a few of them here.

Comics, Swing and Vaudeville: The Transatlantic Connection. Monroe Doctrine,

Hispanic American War, big stick on one hand and on the other the slow disappearance of slavery and the emergence of independent nations. The

Isthmus of Panama gateway to the South Seas in 1513. Commercial Port of the Atlantic since the spanish conquest. Pathway for the gold rush. Sight of the
first Transcontinental Railroad. Meeting point and passageway. The French could not have built the canals of the North American spot and built. They did it at

the expense of intervening in foreign country policies, ending revolutions, and

buying consciences. The canal was built because Roosevelt imposed the Marshall discipline over the high rank employees and hired military engineers that could not desert. And among them, the people, actors in the drama the canal whose
historic recognition merely appears.
West Indians from Jamaica, Barbados,

Trinidad, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Coração,
St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent. Whose

arms built the two grand projects of modernity. We know of deaths, french

bankruptcy, segregation imposed by the USA with the silver employees at schools,

commissaries, fountains, houses, and even the air. The cultural profile of the

West Indian has not been adequately highlighted. Similar to the New Indian,
the Spaniard who has enriched in America,
the ideal of a better life embodied in

the Cologne man. The best campaign of
marketing and modernity was just an

employee stressed and white tipped to
promote this opportunity. These were the

workers who came by thousands and
thousands and died by thousands

dynamited in the vicinity of the
excavation. But in the midst of all from

bunk beds where they slept like those in
slave ships, they started to forage
a syncretic culture of work songs, feasts and preservants. White employees believed it was black magic, screams of the night, but throughout the lost towns, flooded when President Woodrow Wilson pushed the button in Washington to blow up the dam, and interoceanic transcontinental culture emerged. This culture would forever connect the West Indies, Panama, and the United States in an unending journey. During the 1930’s Panama became a
hub for interchange in a mandatory route, a place that witnessed the presence of personalities such as Albert Einstein, who visited the khatoon lox on December 18th 1931. A venue where the death of King George the Sixth and the visit of the newlywed Elizabeth the Second were important events since West Indians and Panama were British subjects. A place where years end, prominent members of the community received
greetings from the authorities of the

Empire. Also a place where religious authorities linked somehow to the US missionary enterprise became leaders of several organizations. The tone of their discourse range from social justice in the political context of lyrical Christmas views without a link to the country's social reality. From the P.C.W.I.E.A. Panama Canal, West Indian employees association to the Wesleyan Methodist church social life was led by the model we will rise and the black workers of
the Panama Canal founded associations

event of the community. The Mellow Moon

Company. The Esmean Entertainers. Leanora Este was born in Trinidad in 1907. Her parents took her to Panama along with her seven brothers. George P. Hinds was born in the city of Panama in 1909. As a child he had lived near the site of Emperador, where one had to head for protection whenever there was a dynamite explosion. Her mother worked at Las Cascadas School. A girl's whites-only
facility. At lunchtime I would take a little from each tray because I thought that was what was done until my mother told me that she had received a huge bill. I learnt to play the piano, art, music, as all young ladies of the time did. She learned piano, singing and all the social skills of a well educated high-class girl. That education at the beginning of the century and will prepare her for her role in life from choreographer to play writer from
member of the Panama Canal Red Cross to member of the gardening society. Nora moved back and forth between the boundaries of the silver-black population to the white-gold inhabitants of the Panama Canal. As a young man, George P. Hinds and George Sports he later became a trainer in athletics but theatre was his passion. As a married couple, George, Nora, and her siblings founded a company that traveled and excessively throughout the 30's, among colored towns and
white club houses and the best local entertainment centers. The Tabouli Hotel,

The Cotton Club in Colón and finally societies and lodges for better Negroes in the US Harlem New York and other parts of the world. Always looking towards Africa. [Equin] the Harlem Renaissance The Cotton Club was founded in the Atlantic City of Colón also called the Gold Coast, The Port of Entry for West Indians. The Vaudeville Theater
turned into the thematic and

representations of the fashionable in
New York. The Heart of Dixie Land, The

Bold Front and Reflected the same
structural complexity. Live band music,
drama, music and dances, comics skits and
even a boxing program before or after

since at the time the champion Panama Al
Brown traveled to Paris and developed in
the cultural environment and witty
dialogues live in Kentucky plantations
is equal to the hard work and hurting
discrimination of the workers who built

the canal between 1904 and 1914.

Panamanian Vaudeville becomes a part of the
global experience of black students
slavery. The spaces of no memory from
cultural center to ghost town, red tank
is an example of the evolution of towns
throughout the Canal Zone. The US Army
created it as barracks for single
soldiers and later moved west Indian
workers to the site. It became a cultural
center where the workers unions of the Isthmian Canal Commission met and where churches held cultural events it became one of the main venues for the performances. By a paradoxical logic the spaces where suffering, pain, and segregation took place will come in the Vaudeville experience in spaces of culture. The tour's up and down the Panama Canal Zone club houses, towns, and cultural venues became the new scenario where the Negroes
could regain identity. The smashing success and popularity allowed the troopers to break the separation at least during the hours when swing and plays happened. The troopers broaden their scope from the colored towns Silver City Cristóvão, Arcoiris, Gamboa, [Atereso], Pedro Miguel, Red Tank, La Boca to the big band hotels Tivoli and Washington. When the construction was over in 1914 the migration to the United States began and it was organized by groups, families, and
societies using the method called Susu Brotherhood. The one that led the

movement to Harlem to prepare the path for the rest that will migrate in the

future. According to Watkins and blood relations upon completion of the Panama

Canal construction the Silver Man meets Jim Crow and immigrants to the United

States especially to Harlem. [In the limbo] that occurred because they were neither

US citizens nor Panamanians, it was the
culture that gave them space when in

decree number 83 of 1931 bans the entrance of immigrants, the theatrical companies were not affected by the decree. The big swing bands [Fred Ramdeen] had seasonal events but also live music programs. He was an Indian descendant and had been born in Trinidad. He came with his parents and siblings to Panama at the beginning of the 20th century. Instead of embracing the Commerce as the
rest of the Indian community, he decided to be a musician. Carnival, ballroom shows, orchestra competitions were followed in the press. During the 30's Vaudeville and variety companies travel throughout the canal sun with pieces echoing the contemporary one to the United States. The Transatlantic connection was a corridor of cultural influences. The West Indians live in the threshold of living to prove themselves, achieving to better the community not
only their community but also the nations that have rejected them legally

more than once. At the end, Vaudeville was the act of reinsertion, the claim of identity the path to the hard-fought battle of citizenship. Vaudeville companies totally embrace swing and orchestras along with the troopers tour throughout Canal Zone towns. First among colored ones and later among luxurious club houses and hotels. Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington's music inspired by Harlem
dance companies totally occupied the cultural scene. While the American population high-ranking members of the armed forces and civilians transported everyday American life and encapsulated self in it the West Indian community echoed the fights of Marcus Garvey's universal Negro Improvement Association and created a connection that transcended its borders. Frivolous tone contrasts with the solemnity of the proposals for claiming human rights and
a transplant of territory. Swing and Vaudeville bettered and united immigrants from different islands. They sowed the seeds of national music, local combos and the Isthmian adaptation of Calypso. Almost a decade before [Terryhos Carter] agreement was signed, afro descendants became part of a governmental organization and participated in many aspects of culture, cinema, dance, theater, and music. The slogan was black and
indigenous people to the power. Towards

141
00:12:10,170 --> 00:12:14,760
the 70s in the now districts of the
canal area such as Paraiso and Pedro

142
00:12:14,760 --> 00:12:19,320
Miguel there appeared a second period of
Vaudeville theater but much more as a

143
00:12:19,320 --> 00:12:23,970
form of consciousness and pride and
ethnic roots. This arrow was similar to

144
00:12:23,970 --> 00:12:29,010
the Black Power movement in the US with
the intent of accomplishing model we

145
00:12:29,010 --> 00:12:36,000
will rise. Towards 1980 when the American
school system in Panama was closed, the

146
00:12:36,000 --> 00:12:39,690
new wave of migration of African descendants to the USA continued

00:12:39,690 --> 00:12:43,770
the cultural transatlantic connection.

[...]

00:12:44,950 --> 00:12:51,550
In the novel "Banana Bottom" written in 1921 by Claude Mckay, a Jamaican who was militant with the universal Negro Improvement Association in Harlem. He

00:12:51,550 --> 00:13:00,520
mentions the wise men of Panama who survived the hell of Lasaniya, the Panama Canal. Today the poets of Panamanian afro-descendants spin the globe. Some are
Some had been residents in New York, or live in Central America, or have completed the ellipses and have returned the Caribbean islands. They claim to the Panamanians, they now have more than one citizenship. This spirit of brotherhood is kept in culture and music. The swing and the Vaudeville patch the path to break the segregation.