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STAFF PHOTO | MICHELLE LEPIANKA CARTER

Scholar artists rehearse Friday in the Allen Bales Theatre on the University of Alabama campus for "Alcestis Ascending."

# Alabama-Cuba Initiative gives rise to new play at UA

'Alcestis Ascending' to preview July 1-5 at Allen Bales Theatre

By Mark Hughes Cobb  
Staff Writer

**A**lthough many things have changed since 2009, when Frank Egusquiza was last in Tuscaloosa as part of the Cuban-American research exchange that became "Un Sueno De Una Noche De Verano," the familiarity of the city's

faces and places outweighs its differences.

While warming up for a run-through of the new play "Alcestis Ascending," greeting friends new and old with hugs and brilliant smiles, he looked around and searched for the right words in English.

"I feel like I am home," Egusquiza said.

It is the fourth project of the Alabama-Cuba Initiative to wind through translations of text and movement, a fusing of the spirits of U.S. and Cuban styles of performance, to result in one theatrical moment: "Alcestis Ascending." It will feature more

than a dozen Cuban scholar-actor-dancers, joined by some University of Alabama students, and will be performed in Tuscaloosa July 1-5, before moving to an off-off-Broadway run in New York City, then down to Havana to open a theater there.

But it's only the second of such projects for which Seth Panitch, the UA professor who directs and oversees this facet of the program, was able to bring the Cubans to Tuscaloosa for study and rehearsal. Several of those who worked on "Un Sueno De Una Noche De Verano" (a Cuban-language translation of

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