

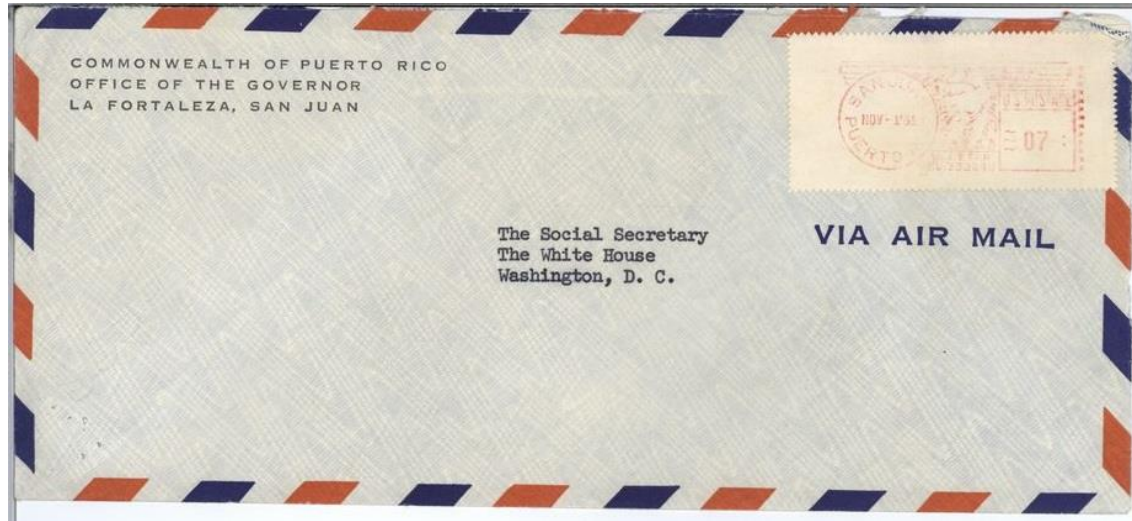
A Night to Remember: The Kennedys Honor the Governor of Puerto Rico with an Historic Concert



“I also want to welcome those of you who are in the world of music, and those who support those who are in the world of music. I think it is most important not that we regard artistic achievement and action as a part of our armor in these difficult days, but rather as an integral part of our free society.” John F. Kennedy, November 13, 1961

President Kennedy spoke these words at a White House dinner in honor of Governor Luis Muñoz Marín of Puerto Rico. There was an extra special event that occurred that evening. What made it a night to remember?

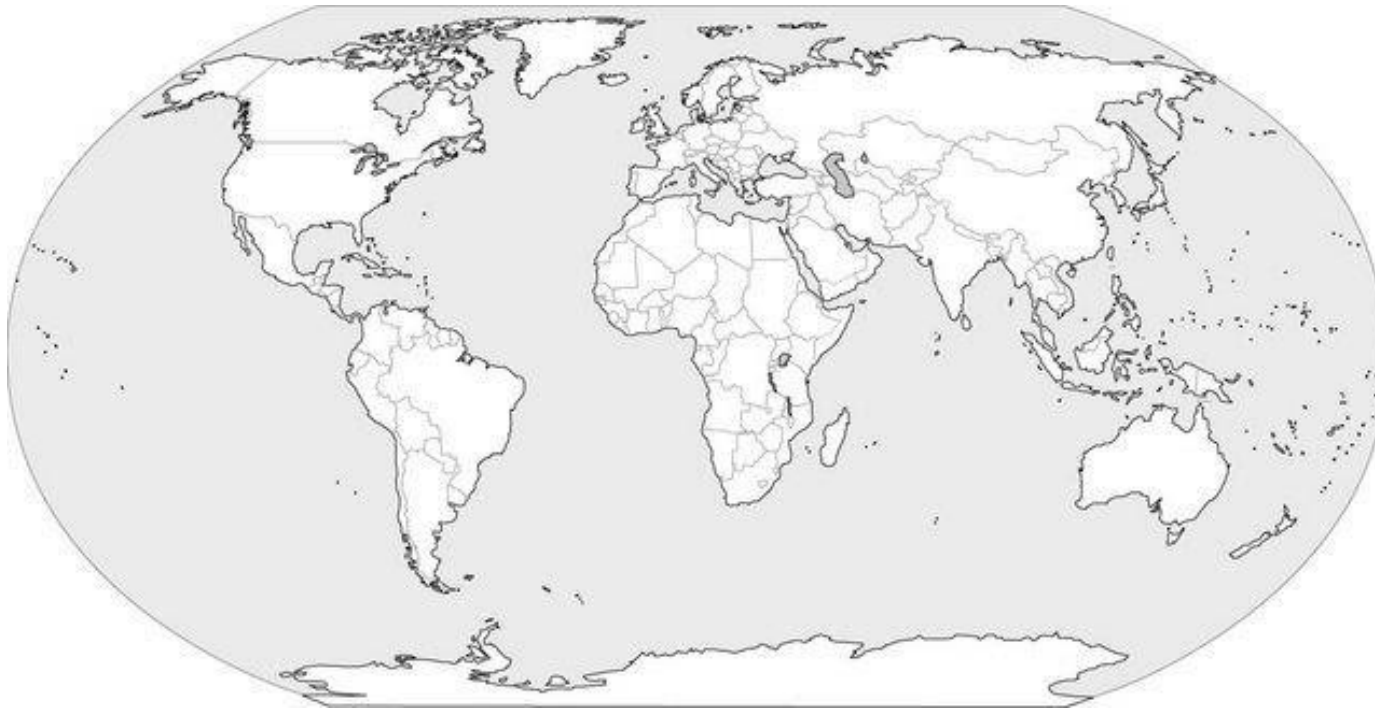
The President Invites Governor Luis Muñoz Marín to the White House



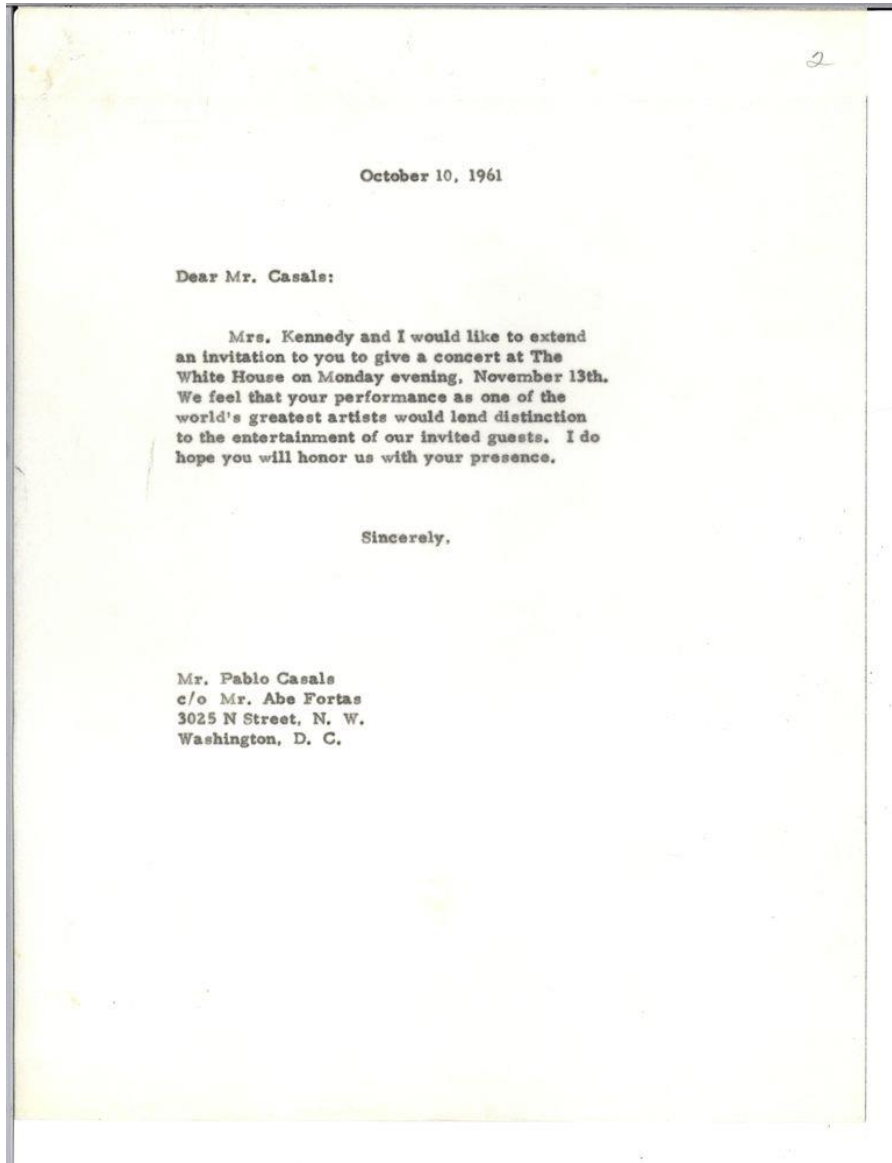
John F. Kennedy first met Luis Muñoz Marín in 1958, two years before Kennedy became president. He had great respect for Muñoz Marín who had served as governor of Puerto Rico since 1948. As president, he admired Muñoz Marín's leadership of Puerto Rico and looked to him for advice about South America. President and Jacqueline Kennedy invited the governor and his wife to a State Dinner, a formal welcome to the White House. What evidence can you find that shows the letter is from the governor of Puerto Rico? Do you think Marín accepted the invitation? Why? Why not?

A White House Concert: Connecting People Around the World

To honor Governor Muñoz Marín, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy had encouraged her husband to invite Pau (known as Pablo in English) Casals, one of the most well-known musicians in the world, to perform after the dinner. Casals was born in Catalonia, in Spain, but had moved to Puerto Rico. Can you find Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, and Spain on the map?



An Important Invitation

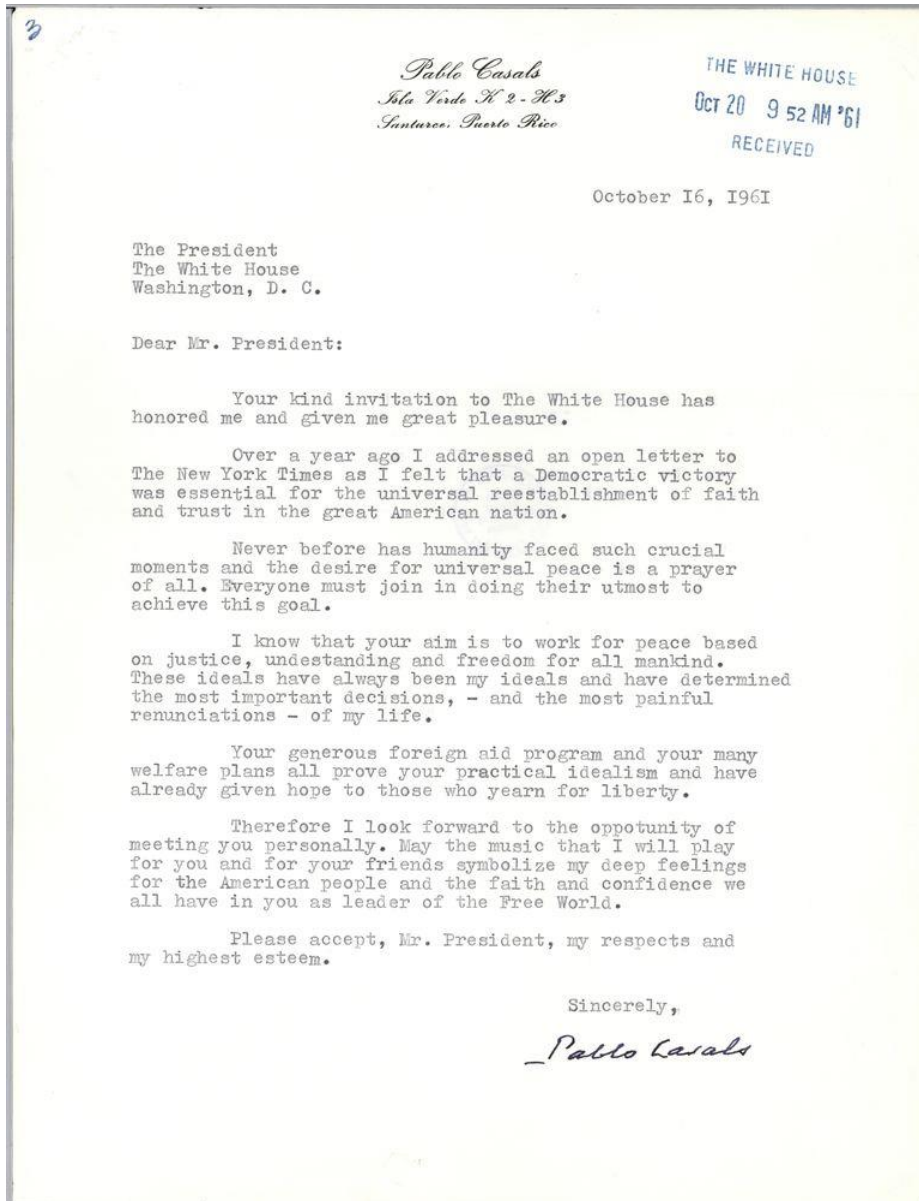


This is a copy of President Kennedy's invitation to Pablo Casals. It is not the original, so it does not have the President's signature (Mr. Casals would have received the original letter.)

1. When was the letter written?
2. What is the President inviting Casals to do?
3. What compliment is given in the letter?
4. Do you think Mr. Casals accepted the invitation?

Note: The address at the bottom is a Washington, DC address, not Pablo Casals's address in Puerto Rico. President Kennedy sent Mr. Abe Fortes to present the invitation in person. Why do you think he had Mr. Fortes deliver the letter in person?

A Difficult Decision



Although Casals greatly admired President Kennedy, it was difficult for him to accept the invitation. Casals had left Spain many years before because of Francisco Franco, a general who had taken over the country by force in 1939. Franco was a dictator, a ruler who does not share power, and his government imprisoned and killed many people. Casals was committed to freedom and did not believe that Franco should be the country's leader: he made a promise to himself that he would not perform in any country that accepted Franco as Spain's leader. Read Casals's letter to find out if he accepted the Kennedys' invitation. What evidence can you find that explains Casals's decision?

The President Welcomes Governor Luis Muñoz Marín to the White House

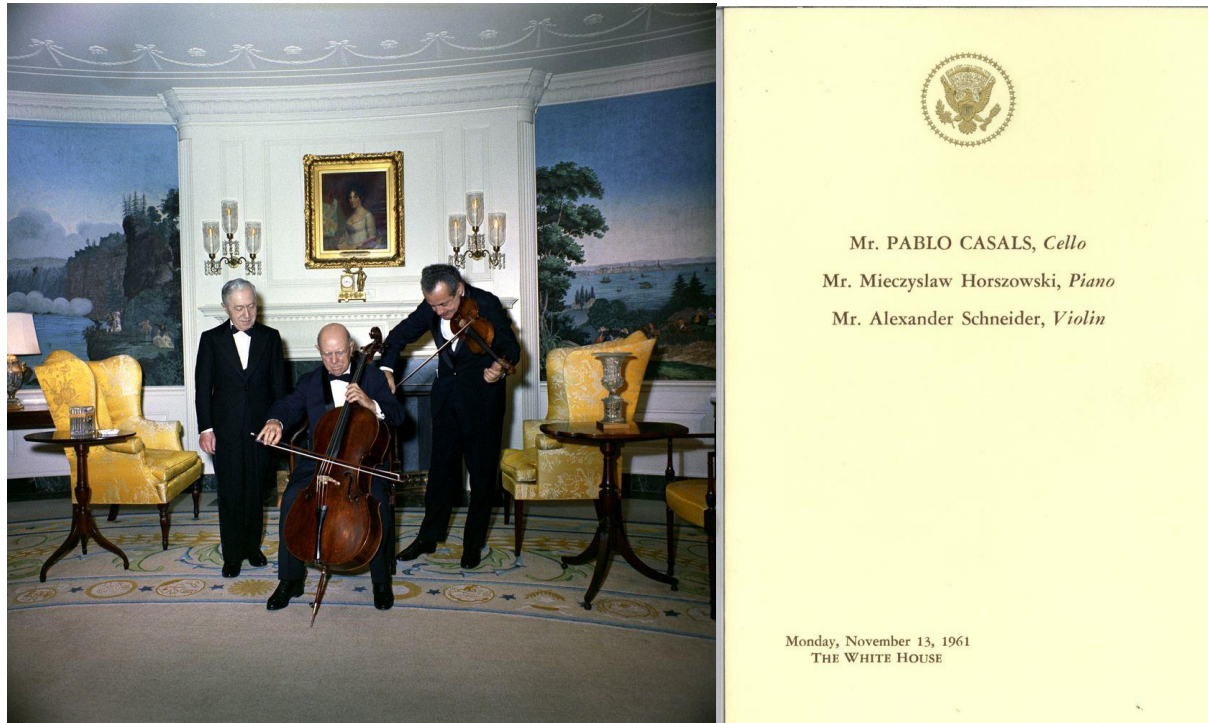


Governor Muñoz Marín accepted the invitation, too, and arrived on November 13, 1961 to attend the dinner with hundreds of guests that included officials from Puerto Rico, musicians, composers, writers, actors, and leaders in government and business.

What evidence can you find that shows this was a special occasion for an important guest?

Front row (L-R): President John F. Kennedy, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, First Lady of Puerto Rico Inés Mendoza de Muñoz, Governor Muñoz Marín. Back row (L-R): Military Aide to the President General Chester V. Clifton, Air Force Aide to the President Colonel Godfrey T. McHugh, Naval Aide to the President Captain Tazewell T. Shepard. Grand Staircase, Entrance Hall, White House, Washington, DC.

Practice Makes Perfect: Rehearsing in the White House's Diplomatic Room



Monday, November 13, 1961
THE WHITE HOUSE

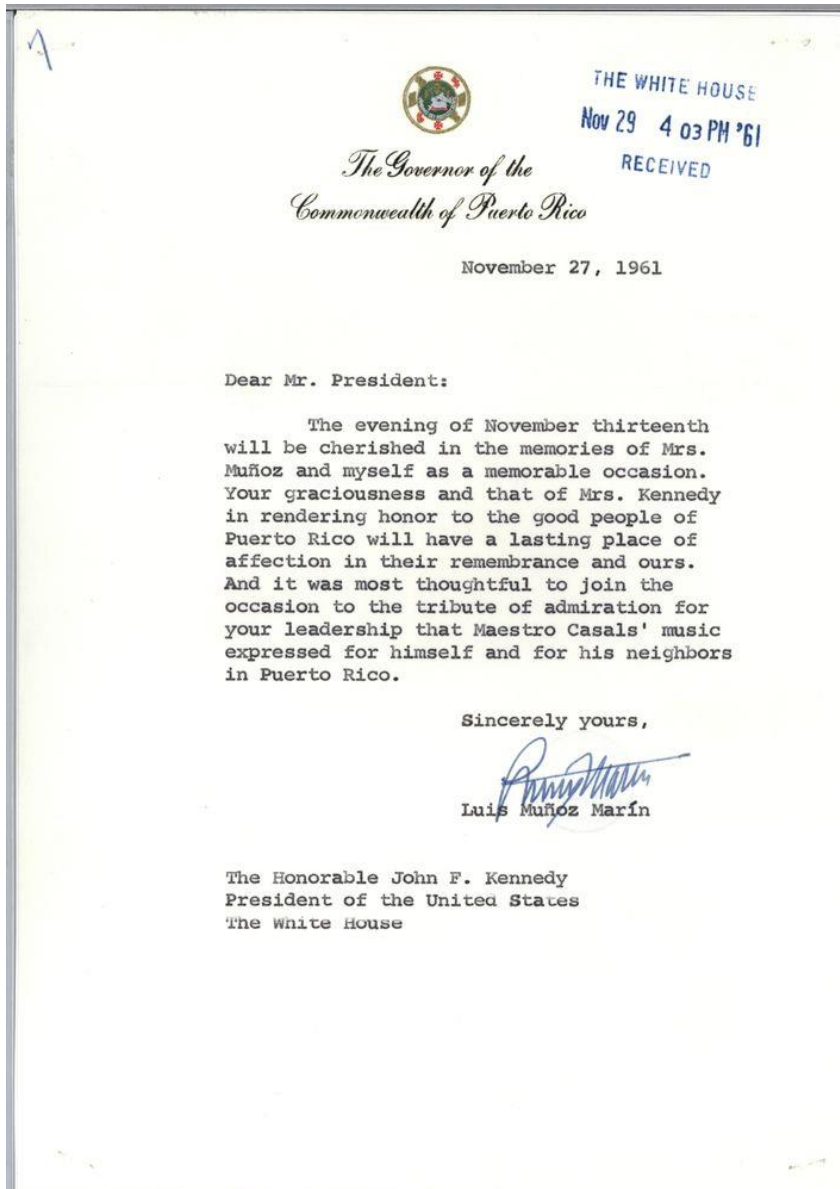
Casals (center) and the musicians who accompanied him for the concert arrived at the White House and prepared for the performance. Like Casals, they had left their homes in Europe years before because of a dictator – not Franco, but Adolf Hitler, whose government imprisoned and killed millions of people. Examine the program above to find the names of the two musicians. What instrument did each musician play in the concert? (One instrument is missing from the photograph.) Can you guess Casals's age? (Hint: he was born on December 29, 1876.)

Pablo Casals Performs in the East Room of the White House



Casals and his trio filled the White House's East Room with tender notes and energetic rhythm. After the planned program, Casals walked over to the President and whispered in his ear that he would play "Song of the Birds," a Catalan Christmas carol that represented his homeland and "his feelings and hope for freedom." Can you find Governor Muñoz Marín and his wife?

About Two Weeks Later...



The President and Mrs. Kennedy received many thank you notes following the dinner. Examine these letters to find the answers to:

1. When was the letter written?
2. When was it received?
3. To whom is it written?
4. Who wrote the letter?
5. What is the purpose of the letter?

Pablo Casals
Sala Verde N. 2 - N. 3
Santurce, Puerto Rico

THE WHITE HOUSE
Nov 21 3 47 PM '61
RECEIVED

November 17, 1961.

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your letter of November 14th and again, I have been moved by your very generous words.

Last Monday night I played with all my heart - and I feel that the results have been rewarding. I am grateful and happy if my humble tribute to you may have at the same time contributed to music and culture. That whole day of November 13th will always have a very special meaning for me. My visit and conversation with you have strengthened and confirmed my faith and hopes for our ideals of Peace and Freedom. Thank you, Mr. President.

We are still re-living the wonderful moments spent at the White House. There was much more than the honor we received - we were enriched by your and Mrs. Kennedy's human warmth and kindness.

May I repeat once more my respects and my affectionate wishes.

Pablo Casals

1. When was the letter written?
2. When was it received?
3. To whom is it written?
4. Who wrote the letter?
5. What does the letter reveal about the author?

President Kennedy Visits Puerto Rico



The month following the concert Governor Luis Muñoz Marín invited President and Mrs. Kennedy to Puerto Rico. Students from Latin American countries who were studying in Puerto Rico greeted the President upon his arrival at La Fortaleza, the Governor's mansion in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Pablo Casals joined the President and the Governor during the visit. Can you identify the four people in the photograph on the right?

A Legacy of Peace and Freedom



“My visit and conversation with you have confirmed and strengthened my faith and hopes for our ideals of Peace and Freedom.” ----- Pablo Casals to President Kennedy, 1961

In 1963, President Kennedy re-established the Presidential Medal of Freedom and announced the names of 31 artists, musicians, writers, and community leaders who would receive this high honor for their contributions to peace and culture. Pablo Casals and Luis Muñoz Marín were on the list.

Why do you think November 13, 1961 was a night to remember?