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LMDA Monthly Newsletter, October 2021

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Fall Fundraiser is still on!
Radiating Change: Building the Future of LMDA

We are in the final week of our Radiating Change fundraising campaign, and we’d like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has donated so far. If you have not yet donated, please consider donating something to help us meet our ambitious goal of matching the $14,725 we were able to raise this summer! Every little bit helps us in achieving our goals of being more accessible, innovative, and equitable.

For me, personally, LMDA has always been a place of community. Dramaturgy can be solitary work, and LMDA provides us an opportunity to come together and imagine what our sector could be. Dramaturgs are community builders. We are thoughtful, innovative people, who are deeply invested in scaffolding creative process. LMDA is fundamentally a service organization for Dramaturgs, and as our sector grows and changes, we need to build
change.

For more testimonials from folks like myself who have been deeply affected by the LMDA community, check out our Facebook and Instagram, where videos have been posted all month!

-Jenna Rodgers, board co-chair

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By Eliseo Valerio

Earlier this year, I began to evaluate my role in the American theater and asked myself many questions about its present state and future. Fortunately, this summer I learned in the 2021 Kennedy Center Dramaturgy Intensive that a questioning spirit is what makes a dramaturg a dramaturg. Over the course of a week, my cohort and I participated in virtual workshops on topics such as re-examining the role of the dramaturg, anti-racist theater, and new play production under the guidance of Mark Bly and Gregg Henry, co-founders of the Intensive, as well as Deputy Director Lynde Rosario and guest artists. We also took part in the 2021 LMDA Conference headed by Brenda Muñoz Salazar, Lourdes Guzmán González, Bryan Moore, Martine Kei Green-Rogers, Brian Quirt, and Ken Cerniglia, among others, in Mexico City. The Intensive which ran from June 19th-25th in its entirety not only helped me better conceptualize my role in the theater but also transformed my outlook on the field by pushing the boundaries on what dramaturgy can and should be.

Our week kicked off with a “Decolonizing the Theatre” workshop led by Tara Moses and Annalisa Dias of Groundwater Arts. Together we came up with tactics to promote decolonized practices in our own work, keeping in mind that colonization is a structure, not an event. This workshop made me think about my work as a teaching artist, and in Martine...
foster a culture of dramaturgy in the classroom where students are unafraid to ask questions.

The next day, Jesse Cameron Alick led us through a discussion about dramaturgy and institutional leadership at The Public Theater. Recently, I’ve thought a lot about the theater’s place in an era where activities are categorized as either essential or non-essential. Jesse’s workshop reassured us that theater can be made essential as it is present everywhere, from the rehearsal room to night clubs.

The Intensive also touched on dramaturgy in film and television. For Lenora Inez Brown’s workshop, our case study was The Underground Railroad, the TV adaptation of Colson Whitehead’s novel. We learned that an adaptation should strive to preserve the author’s vulnerability and that dramaturgs must respond to the writing. Lenora also advised us to work on plays that don’t quite speak our language, to learn how to take it apart to advise where the playwright’s voice could be added. Dramaturgy requires us to be cognizant of the implications of our artistic choices in everything from adaptation to season planning, and Adrien-Alice Hansel, the Literary Director of Studio Theatre, assured us of that responsibility later in the week.

In addition to meeting with artists like Amy Toruño who shared her play Temporary with us and Julie Felise Dubiner who led us through a conversation on her Dramaturgy Manifesto, we had the opportunity to observe dramaturgs at work—Heather Helinsky with Constance Congdon, Lynde Rosario, and Kelsey Mesa with guest playwrights Jessica Kahkoska, Franky Gonzalez, and Steven San Luis. We learned from Lynde that the best dramaturgs are the most adaptive, the worst are apathetic. The next day, Anne G. Morgan gave us more tools from her work as a literary manager at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center and American Shakespeare Center on how to be the playwright’s “person” during their residence.

The 2021 LMDA Conference in Mexico City provided me with a thorough introduction to dramaturgismo in preparation for my Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant in Mexico. The synchronous and asynchronous content that bookended the Intensive inspired me to use dramaturgy as a catalyst for cultural and artistic exchange. A moment that resonated with me was when Rocío Galicia, Researcher at the Rodolfo Usigli National Theatre Research, Documentation and Information Center, described the indigenous figure of La Malinche as the first Mexican dramaturg. As a Mexican American inspired by her role as a bridge between worlds and cultures, I wish to devote my craft to strengthening the artistic-cultural bridge between the United States and Mexico through dramaturgy and dramaturgismo.

Throughout the Intensive, we had the opportunity to share our reflections on the field. In these dedicated spaces, we discussed Mark’s essay, “The Dramaturgical Impulse: The Questioning Spirit or How Big is Your Universe?,” which helped me articulate in my own terms the artistic curiosity that prompts me to ask questions. In addition to emphasizing the importance of his mantra “listening till your ears bleed,” Mark inspired us to be “citizen-
serve as a call to action that I strive to answer in my practice.

The time I spent with my fellow dramaturgs provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the field and a foundation on which to continue building my practice. Even though the 2021 Kennedy Center Dramaturgy Intensive gave me more questions than answers (which is a good thing!), I left with a hunger to find dramaturgy in other fields, an insatiable curiosity for all things human, and with the goal of helping others recognize the ways in which dramaturgy is present in their everyday lives. Dramaturgy, for me, is the key to unlocking the senses and to living a fuller and more invigorating life both in the theater and beyond.

*Eliseo Valerio is a teaching artist and theater worker. He graduated with honors from Stanford in 2018 and is currently a Fulbright ETA in Guadalajara.*

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¡Hola a todxs!

I am very happy to be in touch with all of you again and share some exciting news from our team in México.

We are pleased to announce that LMDA Mexico will join the 41 Muestra Nacional de Teatro (41st National Theater Show) to host a panel titled *DRAMA...turgismo hecho México* (*DRAMA...turgy made in Mexico*) an exercise of listening and sharing experiences and points of view about the performing arts, culture, and entertainment shows in our country and its creation and production processes from the perspective of dramaturgy.

This event will be held from November 25th to December 4th, 2021 in Mexico City and Morelos, MX. Soon we will have more details about our presentation so stay tuned to our social media and Newsletter.

LMDA Mexico promotes the practice and professionalization of dramaturgy in Mexico, fosters dialogue and camaraderie within our growing network of dramaturgs and performing arts creators, and connects us with the community of LMDA in the United
If you want to be in touch, please email lmdamexico@gmail.com

¡Enhorabuena!
Brenda Muñoz (:  
VP LMDA México  
lmda.org/mexico

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#LMDA2022 Update

From Conference Chair Jacqueline Goldfinger

Thanks to everyone who has already signed-up to volunteer to help plan the Conference; either virtually or in-person! If you would like to help plan with us, make sure to complete this **Google Form** by November 20.

Proposal forms for both in-person activities and async video content will be released on December 1. They will be due March 15, 2022. We are also providing online workshops in "How to Write a Proposal" with Ilana Brownstein, "How to Easily Create a Short Async Video" with myself, and Mentorship opportunities organized by Phaedra Michelle Scott. We hope this will encourage more folks to apply, as you will have free access to additional tools and support!

Seeking Volunteer Translators:
LMDA seeks a few volunteers to help translate 2022 Conference materials from English into Spanish. While this work has already begun, we need a few more volunteers to assist with the process. If you are interested, contact Conference Chair Jacqueline Goldfinger(lmdanyc@gmail.com). We will need volunteers throughout the year so, if you cannot help now but are willing to help in the future, please still let us know. We will contact you at the time you specify in the future. Thank you!

Buscando traductores voluntarios:
La LMDA busca algunos voluntarios para ayudar a traducir los materiales de la Conferencia 2022 del inglés al español. Si bien este trabajo ya ha comenzado, necesitamos algunos voluntarios más para ayudar con el proceso. Si está interesado, comuníquese con la presidenta de la conferencia Jacqueline Goldfinger (lmdanyc@gmail.com). Necesitaremos voluntarios durante todo el año, así que, si no puede ayudar ahora pero está dispuesto a ayudar en el futuro, háganoslo saber. Nos pondremos en contacto contigo a la hora que especifiques en el futuro. ¡Gracias!
A Renewed Challenge for LMDA Members

Call: To amplify the collection of essays inaugurated at the beginning of the pandemic, LMDA seeks further dramaturgical responses – videos, creative works, and social media threads, other essays, among other formats – that boldly inspire, provoke, and explore theatre’s potential to transform through global crisis.

Eligibility: Current LMDA members (to renew or join, click here)

Deadline: October 31, 2021

Prompt: COVID-19 rapidly shuttered venues of all sizes in March 2020, and theatre and the millions of people who create and experience it in North America and many other parts of the world went on indeterminate hiatus to do our part to stop the spread. In recent months, season announcements and facility openings have tentatively begun. LMDA invites its members to look back on their experiences of challenge and transformation and to continue to imagine ways in which our art form will emerge from this crisis, changed for the better.

In this second year of life with COVID-19, and in the first phases of recovery and reopening, what will theatre look like this time? How can we center equity and be more inclusive? When we resume and reconnect, how might we do so more profoundly? What big ideas will transform theatre and its institutions for the next era? Which assumptions and habits will we be free to leave behind?

For DRAMATURING THE PHOENIX 2.0, let’s continue to imagine the “radical dramaturgy” that will lead theatre and performance into the next year, decade, and century. How do we build the foundations to heal from this year and move our communities, nations, and the globe forward? How do theatre artists lead as essential workers? How can dramaturgical actions and practices seeded in imagination shape the theatrical phoenix that will rise?

Target: LMDA wants to put its members’ incomparable brains and innovative impulses to work for the benefit of our community and the many others we touch, to showcase dramaturgy’s vital capacity to contextualize and articulate the possibilities of where we go from here and what it might mean. Our goal is to get every member of LMDA to contribute a response, whether individually or in collaboration (cuz that’s what we do best!).
**Region Facebook Groups**

- **Canada**
- **Mountain West** (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado)
- **Greater Midwest** (IL, IN, IA, western KY, MI, MN, OH, WI)
- **Metro Bay Area**
- **Metro Chicago**
- **Metro NYC**
- **Metro Boston**
- **Central Appalachia** (WV, VA, eastern KY, northern TN, and western NC)
- **Florida**
- **Metro Philadelphia**
- **Mexico**
- **Mid-Atlantic** (DC/Maryland/DE)
- **Northeast** (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York State, Rhode Island, Vermont, Pennsylvania)
- **Northwest** (Idaho, Oregon, Washington)
- **Southern California**
- **Plains** (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)
- **Southeast** (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, eastern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, southern Tennessee, western NC)
- **Southwest** (Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, California)
- **Third Coast** (Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas)

If you want to get more involved with dramaturgs in your region, please email [regional@lmda.org](mailto:regional@lmda.org)

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Did you know, if you use Amazon, you can donate to LMDA?

On the Amazon App:
1) Open the Amazing Shopping app on your phone
2) Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into ‘Settings’
3) Tap 'AmazonSmile' and fo
4) Select 'Get Started' and click through the instructions
5) Add LMDA as your charity

Thanks for your continued support!
Want to keep up with the conversation about the latest in dramaturgical activity?

- Follow us on Social Media (@LMDAmericas) by clicking on the logos below!

- Subscribe to our listserv