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LMDA Newsletters: Canada and the United States

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New & Noteworthy, January 2018

L. E. Webster

Jeremy Stoller

Jo Jo Stiletto

Jacqueline Goldfinger

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literary managers & dramaturgs
of the americas

new & noteworthy

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HAPPY LESSING WEEK!

It's the 239th birthday of dramaturgical forefather Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. As always, LMDA is celebrating by encouraging our members to honor their mentors with donations in their honor.



Visit lmda.org/lessing-week to learn more.

Read on for an interview with **burlesque dramaturg Jo Jo Stiletto**, some exciting regional updates from **Regional VP Jacqueline Goldfinger**, details on the 2018 LMDA Conference Call for Proposals, and more!



Q+A | JO JO STILETTO

A burlesque producer-historian-journalist-performer-dramaturg, and the 2014 elected Mayor of Seattle Burlesque, Jo Jo is a prime example of a “hyphenated artist.” Though rarely credited as a dramaturg, she always approaches her work with a dramaturgical sensibility.

What drew you to Burlesque as a specialty?

It's rare to find an art form where the majority of makers are women. There aren't good statistics out there, but I'm sure that - at least in the PNW - the majority of the burlesque producers are women, and the performers as well. It's a female-dominated, female-owned space.

How has your dramaturgy training served you in this field?

That training as a dramaturg has really benefited me as a burlesque producer - I do a lot of research on the source text (be it X-Files, Guardians of the Galaxy, Joss Whedon's entire career, whatever the case may be). A lot of burlesque producers are doing dramaturgical work but don't know it. In burlesque, everything that happens outside of the performer's acts is a producer's responsibility to design. The moment they walk in the door, I want them to walk into the world of the TV show, book, movie. I'm giving them a personal experience interacting with a world that has lived in their imagination, often in a really profound way. Sexuality makes people vulnerable. I've seen lots of folks brought to tears at these kinds of productions - by laughter, yes, but also by sadness or nostalgia.

You call yourself the “Professor of Nerdlesque.” How did you get that name, and can you briefly describe what nerdlesque is?

I gave myself that name because I've spent much of my career exploring our relationship to pop culture and existing texts through burlesque. I think there is as much meaning in burlesque Star Wars as in a modern interpretation of *Richard III*. Nerdlesque is a sub-sect of neo-burlesque - and it's generally made by and celebrates nerds, geeks, and fandoms. Phasers replace feather boas and D20's replace pastie tassles.

Seattle has a rich and long history of burlesque - what makes the Seattle burlesque community special? How do you see that community evolving?

We have had a longer history of Neo-burlesque than some other cities, thus Seattle has high standards for its burlesquers. You can't just slap a show together, it needs to be carefully curated. I also see lots of narrative- or text-inspired burlesque. As for how we are evolving, I see two things happening [in Seattle], and in the wider American burlesque community - I see an acknowledgement of our history as a political art form. But it's also by nature a joyful art form, there [also] seem to be a lot of very silly shows lately. There is a feeling of "Fuck it! Life is short - let's either do something meaningful or just have a blast together," which can be a breath of fresh air for queer performers and performers of color, since they are all too often shown as tragic or troubled figures. There is strength and power to be found in these low-brow art forms. I see this same transition happening in the stand up community, in improv, in drag.

How do you decide which show to do when? In other words, what's your version of "Why this play now?"

My team and I ask "Why burlesque this?" or "What is burlesque-able about this?" If you're going to "burlesque" something, you need people to LOVE it. Or love to hate it. Because of streaming media resources, younger women are getting into the science fiction and fantasy shows of the past, en masse. Burlesque is a way for these women to claim the stories they love, but which weren't generally made with their perspectives in mind.

What's next for you?

Last January I did a burlesque parody Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries fan show, based on this obscure Australian feminist television series- I did not think the small fandom would even fill the theater. But though small, they are also really committed and intense- and they did show up. We ended up selling out very quickly and needing an extension! That has led to a re-mounting of this show at the second annual Miss Fisher Con which is being held in Portland this summer.

For more on Jo Jo Stiletto, visit jojostiletto.com.

Interview by L. E. Webster

Interview by Jeremy Stoller

**Fom LMDA Regional VP
JACQUELINE GOLDFINGER**

Thank You, A New Region & More

Thanks to everyone who joined us either in-person or online for our regional events this fall! We had 135 participants in 14 events spread across the country. It was wonderful to hear what you are working on and dreaming about this season.

Plus, our Bay Area and Boston regions co-sponsored events with Golden Thread Productions and CompanyOne, respectively. It was great to roll up our sleeves and dive into deep collaborations with our community partners.



We are currently in the midst of planning both in-person and online events for the spring. If you have any idea, or would like to spearhead an event, just let me know.

We are looking for new Regional VPs for the Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Washington DC, West Virginia), Plains (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska), and Southeast (TN, NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS and LA) Regions. If you think you might be interested, let me know.

We are creating a new region of Central Appalachia (see below graphic) that will be represented by Amy Brooks. This new region will be focused on supporting rural literary managers and dramaturgs.



If you have an interest in serving dramaturgs in a very specific area, let me know. We can talk about creating regions within regions (much like Bay Area Region is also in the Northwest Region). All members are welcome to belong to multiple regions. if you think a hyper-local branch would be helpful, let me know.

Have a great new year!

- Jacqueline Goldfinger (regional@lmda.org)

announcements

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS
2018 LMDA Conference**

June 21-23, 2018

"Crossing Borders"

Toronto, Ontario - June 21-23, 2018

We seek diverse voices at the conference and invite LMDA members to propose contributions related to the conference theme. Contributions can take the form of panels, individual papers, lecture performances, praxis sessions, roundtables, workshops, performances, installations, etc.

Please submit your proposal of no more than 200 words using our [online submission form](#) by Monday, February 5, 2018. Please make sure your LMDA membership is current and that your profile bio is up to date on www.lmda.org. Notification of accepted proposals will be made by March 1, 2018.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

region:southwest

Los Angeles Happy Hour, Tuesday, Feb. 6: Bon Vivant in Atwater Village, 5:30 PM (or whenever you can get there) to 8:30 PM. Come for the networking, stay for the impressive cheese board. [3155 Glendale Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90039](#)

RSVP to kate.langsdorf@gmail.com, or just swing by. Text [240-883-4701](tel:240-883-4701) if you arrive and can't find us.

Want to keep up with the conversation about the latest in dramaturgical activity?

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