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Teresa Kilzi

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**literary managers & dramaturgs
of the americas**

new & noteworthy

June 2018

Vol. 3, No. 9

Conference Wrap-Up



If you weren't able to join us in Toronto you can still keep up with the conversation.

Read #LMDA18 conference tweets click [HERE](#).

Watch the video archives from HowlRound.com [HERE](#).

THANK YOU

LETTERS FROM THE PAST AND CURRENT PRESIDENTS

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Last weekend in Toronto I concluded my term as LMDA President. Our 33rd annual conference was superbly conceived and organized by Joanna Falck and Corianna Moffatt and seamlessly executed by administrator Lindsey Barr, logistics coordinator Joseph Burdi, and the best team of volunteers we've ever had. I extend my deepest gratitude to LMDA Canada for their essential support and to everyone who attended and contributed to this success.

I also want to thank the entire membership for your trust and support throughout these past two years. I'm humbled to have served you and thrilled with what we have accomplished together. I very much look forward to LMDA's bright future under the leadership of Martine Kei Green-Rogers and her top-notch executive team!

Best wishes,
Ken Cerniglia
LMDA Past President
he/him



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am truly humbled by the amazing events and conversations from our conference as well as the support I received during my time as President-Elect. The incoming and remaining members of LMDA leadership are excited about building upon the infrastructure that Ken and his Executive Board (along with Brian and the rest of the Board) worked tirelessly to strengthen for the benefit of our mighty community. We have some very ambitious plans for the upcoming two years which includes updating the front end of our website to make it more of an interactive gathering place for you and to make our community even more open, diverse, and inclusive to everyone committing acts of dramaturgy! We hope to bolster our support of early career dramaturgs while also preparing our middle to late career dramaturgs for the evolution of their careers! As a result, please keep the lines of communications open with us. We are here to serve so please help us help you. If there is any programming, workshops, community building activities, membership benefits, etc. that you can think of that will help you - please share. We will work together to make it occur. In addition, if anyone has grant writing skills and some spare time -- please think about helping us. We will need as many hands on deck as possible to create the next steps for LMDA.

I look forward to seeing you all in the field and/or at the next conference.

Martine Kei Green-Rogers
LMDA President
She/Her/Hers



ECD Travel Grant Recipients

RESPONSES FROM THEIR FIRST CONFERENCE

Teresa Kilzi

“It’s been so busy back home! Where are you based?”

“This trip is so welcome; we just opened our show! What have you been doing lately?”

“That’s exciting! Congratulations! What do you have coming up?”



All of these questions are innocuous and well-intended, but to a recent grad without a job in sight, the only mildly polite reaction I could muster was a panicked smile most of the time. I’m not based anywhere right now. I just finished two intense years of graduate study, so the only thing I’ve been doing is fighting with ProQuest and figuring out how to return fifty library books in one solo trip on the local bus. As far I know, I don’t have anything coming up. And that’s okay.

I’m learning to be at peace with not knowing and not having answers, which seems counterintuitive to this whole dramaturgy thing, but the more I explore this idea in my work, the more I realize how essential it is to what we do as dramaturgs and how we engage with our community as theatre artists.

It was my first time at an LMDA annual conference and the first time I had been in one room with that many people who knew what dramaturgy was, let alone were dramaturgs themselves. I was astounded by the sheer certainty of self that oozed from every person I met. Confident, friendly people readily offering their names and their experiences. It’s exciting! And intimidating! But it didn’t take long to move past the initial shock of getting acquainted with all of these incredible people and get to the work we went to Toronto to do.

The 2018 conference theme, Crossing Borders, takes on literal geographic and political meanings, but it also acknowledges that borders aren’t always examined or easily articulated. As soon as we got into our first few sessions, it became apparent that by articulating our hesitations, privileges, fears, and instances of not knowing, that’s when growth and learning could begin. Naming these borders does not hinder our collective progress towards becoming better people and artists. Instead, it gives us room to dismantle, reinterpret, and renegotiate the structures of power that oppress us, offers opportunities for reparations and acknowledgments, and fosters a collaborative culture that uplifts, supports, listens to, and amplifies those people who need it most. Dynamically inclusive intersectionality based in action and respect.

Of course, these are goals that cannot possibly be solved in a few days at a conference centre

definitely helped. It is the continual effort of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, through the individual actions of its members, that makes the difference. We don't have the answers, but we want to know, and we want to do something about it. That's dramaturgy.

I'm still not sure where I'm going, but after a few days in Toronto, I feel less alone in figuring out what my next steps are. Whether I end up working as a scholar, administrator, director, or even as a dramaturg, knowing that there are people out there putting in the work in their communities encourages me to find mine and do the same.

Teresa is a musical theatre scholar and dramaturg. Having recently graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Theatre Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she is pursuing freelance dramaturgy opportunities as well as developing her research focusing on the works on Stephen Sondheim. teresakilzi.com/



Sierra Carlson

The chance to attend the 2018 LMDA Conference in Toronto was an amazing gift and I didn't want to waste a moment. Dramaturgs and theatre artists from all around the world joined for three days to share work, drinks, and big questions. I set up a note-taking process the day before the conference to ensure that I wouldn't miss a thing. The night before each conference day, I looked over the schedule and wrote in my own notebook which sessions I would be attending. Below this scribbled schedule I asked myself three questions that I would respond to at the end of the day. How was today? What did you learn? What will you do tomorrow?

In the spirit of radical honesty, I have chosen to share my journal entries from the conference week answering those three questions.

Day 1:

Today was an amazing day! This was my first day at my first ever LMDA conference, and I feel as if I found a home. I became good friends with a group of ECDs, young and more established. I feel better and better about my decision to have studied theatre. I have found an accountability friend. I am capable. Today I learned about a Canadian Podcast about the nation's history. They were wonderful because they don't frame themselves as historians, they're just curious. I love that. The quote of the day... "RFBQ. Really F*cking Big Questions." Drinks and dinner were weird yet fun. The buzzwords: Current. Dynamic. Nimble.

The Goal for Tomorrow: I want to network with older dramaturgs.

Day 2:

Today was rough. Today was work. Boy, was it exhausting work. Hot Topics sent me off on a great start with a DRAG of institutional and "professional" racism in a style resonant of Audre

Lorde and other POC disruptors. I died. I loved. And then...Fictional Identity. The panel discussion itself felt off. I wasn't sure what I was watching or what I was gaining or why I was watching it. Then I went to lunch with another ECD to break that down. The ECD session that came next was informative and inspiring. I got to sit in a room and listen to a bunch of innovative dramaturgs at the beginning of their career.

The Goal for Tomorrow: I want to leave my mark.

Day 3:

Early morning. I got up to make it to the early morning session conducted by a new "old-friend." The plenary session was eye-opening. I've never felt a room shift like that before. It was the feeling of energy. Electricity. Thought. "Money, Money, Money" was overwhelming. Money is overwhelming, debt is crushing, and employment is a big question mark. After that session, I took a stroll with a fellow ECD to talk about that panel and it suddenly wasn't so overwhelming. The annual meeting was THRILLING. It was a sneak peek of what's to come and I am buying a ticket to that show! I want a front row seat. In fact, I'm subscribing to whole gosh dang future. I want to see what happens next.

The Goal for Tomorrow: Don't let this all become a memory.

Since I've returned to Virginia, I've been thinking a lot about the theme of this year's conference: crossing borders. Crossing borders can be thrilling. It can mean travel, new experience, adventure, relationships. Crossing borders can be terrifying. It can mean leaving something or someone behind, new dangers, uncertainty. Having just graduated from James Madison University with a BA in Theatre and Dance, I am staring down a border that seems to be racing toward me rather than the other way around. The week of the 2018 LMDA Conference in Toronto, families were being separated after crossing a border. Today, as I write this, the Supreme Court has voted to uphold a travel ban that will limit who can cross a border based on the boundaries they were born within. My mind is buzzing and I'm not sure what to do with that yet, but it was my three days at LMDA that set something off, that lit a spark. Now I continue to ask myself the questions I asked each day at the conference. How was today? What did I learn? And most importantly, what will I do tomorrow?

Sierra Carlson is a graduate of James Madison University's Theatre Studies Program. She has served as a dramaturg on several new play works in Virginia and New York. Sierra has already received multiple national awards for her work as a dramaturg, playwright, and critic. She is excited to start the next phase of her career as she pursues dramaturgy opportunities in Chicago.

CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHTS

DRAMATURGS & #METOO: A CONFERENCE REPORT

ILANA M. BROWNSTEIN

As #metoo & #timesup have broadly taken root over the last year, theatremakers of all disciplines have spoken their truths for the first time, finding others who have had similar experiences, awakening to the scope of the issue in communities large and small.

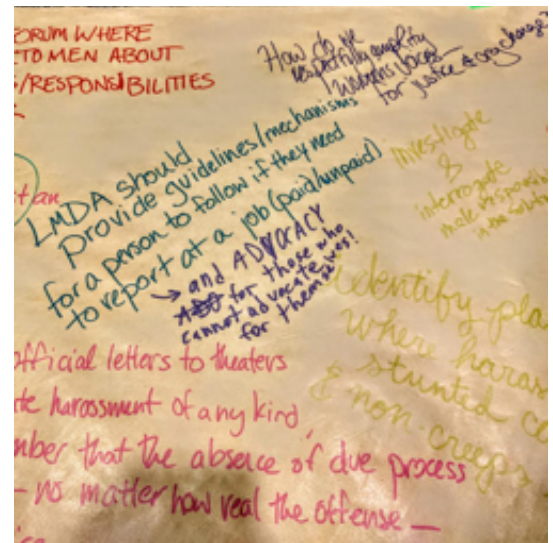
The dramaturgy field poses a particular set of concerns: the discipline is highly feminized, some dramaturgs are still routinely disempowered, and many — especially early career dramaturgs — are silenced around issues of sexual harassment,

assault, gender-based bullying and hostile work environment. For the LMDA 2018 conference, I proposed a process for gathering #metoo anecdotal data from the dramaturgy field. Do we have an accurate sense of how widespread the problem is (and not just regarding dramaturgs as victims, but also as abusers)? I think not. I was spurred on by the recent open-access database “[Sexual Harassment in the Academy](#)” curated by Dr. Karen Kelsey (you can search for this on her website, [theprofessorisin.com](#)). The power of that document is in making secrets visible. I wondered, what can we do as an organization to create similar visibility and modes of support for those who have been subject to harassment? There is a power in telling our stories. However, in the months since the conference session was proposed, the wider theatre world experienced several upheavals with regards to this subject. It became clear that story collection and testimonials at LMDA were not necessarily (a) the most useful step for an organization that is not an investigative organ, or (b) the healthiest, especially if we did not plan to have specialists in sexual trauma on hand to moderate and support the process of revelation.

In conversation with Ken Cerniglia and Martine Kei Green-Rogers, I adapted the session to primarily be one where we worked towards action steps. This work was accompanied by a call for input from conference attendees through a response-wall installation at our venue, as well as an online form, which can be found here: <https://goo.gl/B5QUtP>. The form is open to everyone. You can share your thoughts with us there, and access a list of resources addressing sexual harassment in the theatre.

The #metoo session was attended by 33 people, which included only 5 male-identified folks. A full update will be forthcoming, but the most immediate action steps recommended by the group were:

- A formal LMDA code of conduct which would apply to membership, as well as be incorporated into LMDA’s sample contracts
- Plenary- or Keynote-level focus on issues of sexual harassment at the next conference
- Creation of a “safety team” — a group of conference volunteers who can help attendees navigate tricky situations with other attendees
- Advance transparency of featured guests and registered attendees for upcoming conferences so survivors of sexual harassment can check if a conference will be safe for them to attend



• Creation of a sexual harassment working group, comprised of LMDA members. The working group is still forming. If you'd like to be included on updates, please email LMDA VP for Advocacy, Jess Applebaum (advocacy@lmda.org).

BRUCE D. THIBODEAU

Joining us in Toronto was Dr. Bruce D. Thibodeau, President and Founder of [Arts Consulting Group](#) (ACG), which is currently managing the search for Artistic Director at Long Wharf Theatre. Click [HERE](#) to read the job posting.

Thibodeau's attendance was part of an effort to begin preparing our middle and late career dramaturgs for potential next steps in their careers. We will continue reaching out to recruiters to attend future conferences.



***Missed out on Toronto?
Join us in Chicago for #LMDA19***

Put it on your calendar now - June 20-22, 2019.
Keep an eye on lmda.org/conference for
information for next year's conference!

CALL FOR TRANSLATORS

As we look ahead to #LMDA20 (pssst...in Mexico City), we could use help with a few things - 1) LMDA members who can translate the call for the 2019 and 2020 conference into Spanish/Portuguese, 2) Names/contact information for translators in Mexico City 3) Leads on potential artists to connect with in Mexico and the surrounding area.

Please send any leads to Martine (president@lmda.org).



LMDA Speed Dating in NYC May 2018

Are you hearing about your regional meetups? If not, visit lmda.org/map to find out who your LMDA Regional Representative is.

If you are working in a region that does not yet have a region-specific group, and you would like one as a way to connect with others, apply for program funding, and other benefits, please reach out to VP Board Member Jacqueline Goldfinger: regional@lmda.org.

Interested in contributing to the next newsletter? Have content ideas?

E-mail communications@lmda.org.

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

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