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October 2018 Newsletter

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October 2018

Vol. 4, No. 1

Back to School

WELCOME

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT: MARTINE KEI GREEN-ROGERS

Happy October and beginning of fall!

As the seasons quickly turn there is much happening within the organization that we are excited to share. First and foremost, we want to thank you all for the ideas and input we have received thus far in order to make LMDA an organization that you can look to for comradery, conversation, resources, and other forms of emotional and financial support. We initiated some exciting partnerships (such as TCG and NPX) as a direct result of inquiries received from our membership. If there is some service, idea, etc. you would like us to look into, please do not hesitate to email me at President@LMDA.org to put forth that

idea. We constantly strive to make our service organization something you are proud of and we want you to value your membership.

We are getting very close to releasing details about our June conference. I hope you will be as excited as the members of the 2019 Conference committee are about the fun things being planned in Chicago. In the meantime, always check your regional Facebook page to see what exciting events are happening in your neck of the woods. There are some great events coming!

To end (since I am sure you are excited to dig into the contents of this newsletter) -- Happy Halloween (if you celebrate)!! Make sure you tag us in pictures of your costumes on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. We would love to feature the creative ways Literary Managers and Dramaturgs celebrate the holiday.

Eat some candy!

Martine Kei Green-Rogers, PhD
President, LMDA



LMDA IN THE ACADEMY

BY MORGAN GRAMBO

In September, we posed the question: who is tackling challenging, compelling work in an academic setting? Below are three undergraduate students, one graduate student, one PhD candidate, and one professor tackling projects that range from production dramaturgy to teaching new courses to managing a dramaturgy/social justice blog.

Jordan Scott Hardesty

Junior, BFA Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism at The Theatre School of DePaul University

Project: Co-Editor-in-Chief of [The Grappler](#)

Overview: Since its inception in 2010, The Grappler has been a blog dedicated to dramaturgy and dramatic criticism within The Theatre School of DePaul University. Features have included podcasts, reviews, articles, rants, anecdotes, event planning, and performances. From our studies of Lessing and *The Hamburg Dramaturgy*, a conversation about engaging with our institution has been pivotal in determining the work we want to pursue. What's thrilling about working on this project is that it has become an artistic incubator for us early-career dramaturgs to explore and experiment with our areas of interest ranging from opera to devised work.

Caitlyn Halvorsen

Senior, BA Theatre Arts with a Concentration in Design & Technology at SUNY New

Paltz

Project: Dramaturg, *Into the Woods*

Overview: One of my main focuses for *Into the Woods* involves examining how its characters both adhere to and subvert the tropes of the fairy tale stock characters they are based on. I am most interested in how this manifests in the Witch, as I recently conducted research on literary portrayals of witches in the Roman Empire. These early depictions informed many current western perceptions of witches, most notably the witch as the “anti-mother.” The Witch’s complex relationship with motherhood in *Into the Woods* is a fascinating comparative study to preceding depictions of witches that I am excited to continue exploring!

Bridget Anderson

MA in Theatre History and Criticism Candidate at Catholic University of America

Project: Research Assistant/Production Dramaturg, Signature in the Schools program at Signature Theatre (Arlington, VA)

Overview: I am the research assistant for the playwright who’s writing a new play for a small cast of high schoolers and the production dramaturg for the finished product. This year's topic centers around fascism and censorship. The play covers three time periods: 1930s Germany, contemporary USA, & a few years in the future. The play will draw from historical instances of resistance to fascism and speculate about a possible future state. We're incorporating communication mediums like performance art, radio, and newspapers. This project requires diligent research and collaboration with the production team—an ideal opportunity for a dramaturg. The play will be published by Samuel French post-production.

Kristen Tregar

PhD Candidate in the Department of Theatre & Dance at UC San Diego

Project: Teaching TDHT 101: Classical Women, an upper-level Theatre History course for undergraduate students

Overview: The students are reading classical texts to gain an understanding of Greek theatrical practices, and texts focused on ethnographic research and devising. Focusing on the experiences of classical female characters, the students are developing questions that will be used in interviews which will form the basis of a devised theatre project to be staged in March. I'm excited about the course because it allows students to interact with theatre history in a way that connects to the present, to author their own learning, and to attempt to make sense of the current political moment and relationships between gender, power, spheres of influence, and the performance of femininity.

Art Borreca

Associate Professor of Theatre Arts. Co-Head, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, MFA Programs in Playwriting and Dramaturgy at University of Iowa

Project: Dramaturg, *Iphigenia Point Blank: Story of the First Refugee, A film opera.*
Produced by the University of Iowa Partnership-in-the-Arts Program.

Overview: The work involves a residency of playwright Lisa Schlesinger, director Marion Schoevaert, composer Kinan Azmeh, and filmmaker Irina Patkanian. It combines text

concerts, composer Alan Menen, and filmmaker Mira Fakhri. It combines text, performance, film, and music to dramatize the legend of Iphigenia in the context of the current refugee crisis. My work has focused on researching connections among the Trojan War and the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria; and on establishing consistent production and publication versions of the script. It is exciting to be working with international collaborators engaging issues of war and peace, and with a director who says, “For me, it’s all about the dramaturgy.”

THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF INTRODUCING DRAMATURGY TO A DEPARTMENT

BY JANE BARNETTE, UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

When I moved to Lawrence, KS from Kennesaw, GA, I anticipated a culture shock for the regional differences, but I underestimated the impact of moving from a department steeped in a “dramaturgical sensibility” to one where dramaturgy did not exist as a stand-alone course. Happily, my colleagues encouraged me to teach dramaturgy, adaptation, and even adapturgy as soon as I arrived, and I have done so as frequently as possible, albeit as a “topics” course that is not (yet) in the catalog as dramaturgy per se. I have offered this topics course in dramaturgy at the undergraduate as well as graduate level, with greatest success when it is co-taught with KU English professor and local playwright Darren Canady.



While my position at Kansas does not include the title of resident dramaturg, I have nevertheless contributed in similar ways to how I functioned at Kennesaw State University, although these limited opportunities are in addition to my regular load. For the past several years, I have helped shape the blurbs and tag lines for the University Theatre season, mentored a dozen student dramaturgs for plays we produce, led talkbacks and moderated panels, and served as dramaturg for one guest director. I have also infused my non-dramaturgy courses with dramaturgical and adaptation studies opportunities, such as offering multiple translations or adaptations of texts to review side-by-side in History of Theatre courses, assigning lobby display style final projects for Script Analysis, and asking graduate students in a seminar on gender and sexuality to create podcast episodes.

However, it can be challenging to see progress in our department’s dramaturgical decisions. Like most departments, ours lacks the infrastructure necessary for faculty

engagement and oversight of student-led dramaturgy. In addition, the demands of a research-focused university like KU limit the time faculty members can spend reviewing program notes or supervising dramaturgs. Nor is there typically a budget line reserved for dramaturgical expenses, like those associated with building a compelling lobby display. These restrictions make it all the more difficult to build and nurture a dramaturgical sensibility within academic departments like mine.

And this is a real shame, especially in the current bombastic political climate of the United States, where nuanced and empathetic conversation is sorely lacking, both on- and off-campus across the country. Because, as most of us who will read and receive this newsletter are duly aware, dramaturgical diplomacy can counteract crises of misunderstanding, and deepen our community's appreciation of (theatrical and creative) *process* as well as product. For example, knowing background information about how a production was created deepens the potential enjoyment and understanding that spectators experience, and it's one of the expectations I have of production dramaturgy.

In addition, when plays are adapted from other sources, there is a potential for what I call *adapturgy*, or adaptation dramaturgy. In short, adapturgy combines the skills of new play dramaturgy with those of the production dramaturg, offering audiences insight not only about how the play was conceptualized by the design team and the director, but also how the adapter went about making their choices of what to include and what to cut—of the adaptation's style, tone, and milieu and how that compares to and/or changes our reading of the source. When thoughtful adapturgy is part of the theatrical experience, spectators report a desire to return to the source material, to encounter it afresh with the inspiration and aesthetic of the witnessed adaptation urging us to ask new questions of the source as well as the adapted piece. What a gift it is, to see a story we think we know in a different light. How might we interact differently if we could listen to each other's stories with such generosity? Dramaturgy teaches these skills, and encourages this receptivity.

How do we encourage our colleagues and our students to invest in dramaturgy and to attend to dramaturgical oversights like these? Ultimately, I think it must be reinforced both by the curriculum (at least one regularly-offered dramaturgy class) and the publicity/marketing wing of departmental productions. I suspect I am hardly alone in these observations—I welcome your feedback as students, staff, and faculty members who have experience in departments with nascent dramaturgical sensibilities. What can LMDA do as an organization to support efforts to entrench dramaturgy into academic departments and theatre productions?

Jane Barnette (jane@ku.edu) is an Associate Professor of Theatre and Dance, with an affiliation in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies in Theatre at the University of Kansas, where she teaches courses in dramaturgy, theatre history, and script analysis, as well as seminars in theatrical adaptation and the performance of gender and sexuality. Her recent book, Adapturgy: The Dramaturg's Art and Theatrical Adaptation, explores the powerful alchemy of dramaturgically-savvy

adaptations for the stage. Barnette's research includes Chicago-based touring theatre practice at the turn of the twentieth century, American pageantry, and depictions of "witch" characters onstage as well as in popular culture.

(Photography by Meg Kumin (2018). Used with permission.)

NEW REGIONAL EVENTS FOR 2018-2019

BY JACQUELINE GOLDFINGER



In the 2017-18 season, we had 250+ participants in 25 events around the country, plus we co-sponsored Company One's Boot Camp in Boston and Golden Thread's ReOrient Festival in San Francisco. Thank you to everyone who participated. It was wonderful to see so many returning faces and make new friends!

If you are not sure which region you belong to, scroll down to the bottom of the article to see a full list. You are welcome to belong to multiple regions or, if you are traveling, attend events in multiple regions.

At the summer conference, we received feedback that members would like to have more online events (for ease of participation in larger regions) and events that revolved around interest (rather than geography). As you will see below, we are implementing this feedback. Thanks to those of you who have participated in scheduling and topics surveys in your region. When you take one of those quick surveys, it allows us to tailor activities towards interested participants.

Save the Dates:

Make sure to join your regional Facebook page and watch the ListServ for details about the below events as well as new events added throughout the season. (A list of links to regional Facebook pages is at the bottom of this article.)

2018

- Boston Metro: October 5-7, Co-sponsor Company One Boot Camp
- Online Regional Event Open to All Members: October 13, Online Happy Hour Conversation: Living the Hyphenate Life with Alexandra Espinoza, Maybe Burke, Martine K. Green-Rogers, Madeline Oldham, Finn Lefevre, and Heidi Schmidt.
- Chicago Metro: October 15, Dramatists Guild and LMDA Mixer and Workshop at TimeLine

Theater

- Northwest: October 24, Online Networking Happy Hour
- Canada: October 25, Online Happy Hour and Discussion with Lindsay Lachance, Artistic Associate of the National Arts Centre's Indigenous Theatre
- Rockies/Butte/Big Sky: November 3, Coffee shop meet and greet with new Regional VPs
- Online Regional Event Open to All Members: November 5, Online Happy Hour and Conversation:Opera Dramaturgy & Devised Theater with Julia Bumke and Jess Applebaum
- Rockies/Butte/Big Sky: November 7, Online happy hour and networking
- Southern California: November 9, Show and discussion event at Greenway Court Theatre
- Mid-Atlantic: November 18, Networking and a show at Spooky Action Theatre
- Greater Mid-West: November 11, Online networking and happy hour
- Southeast: November 12, Online networking and happy hour
- Special Event: December, Happy hour and meet-up at the NNPN Conference in Sacramento (thanks to Kate Langsdorf for organizing this!)
- Metro NYC: December, Annual Holiday Party & Charity Drive in Manhattan

2019

- Plains: January, Networking and discussion event around INDECENT at KC Rep
- Metro Philly: January/February, Bake-Off and networking with local new work organizations
- Plains: April 1, Online happy hour and networking
- Third Coast: April, Networking and discussion event around WOLF AT THE DOOR at Kitchen Dog Theatre
- Florida: April, Networking and discussion event around THE CAKE at Asolo Theatre
- Metro NYC: May, Speed Networking Event
- Rockies/Butte/Big Sky: Spring, Online Panel on the Playwright/Dramaturg relationship
- Mid-Atlantic: Spring, A panel conversation on Civic Dramaturgy

In addition, we have a few regions that have already sponsored wonderful events this season! I would like to give a shout out to:

- Nakissa in the Bay Area Region for coordinating LMDA's co-sponsorship of the FURY Factory Festival in July
- Amy in Central Appalachia for organizing a show and conversation event around WORKING in July
- Talya in the Northeast for creating a Networking, Workshop and Conversation event around "Writing Gender" at WAM in August
- Rachel in Metro NYC for organizing a LMDA Night at the Public Theatre in August
- Kate in the Southwest for hosting a Toast to the New Season and networking event at the Gypsy Den in September

Please feel free to always reach out to your Regional VP. You can find their information here: <https://lmda.org/map>. You are always welcome to reach out directly to me as well at: regional@lmda.org.

We hope to see you at Regional activities this season!

Find your Facebook regional group here!

Canada

Butte (MT, ND, SD, UT, WY) *Butte and Big Sky/Rockies are working together this season and doing joint events

Big Sky/Rockies (CO)

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

Mid-Atlantic (DC/MD/DE)

Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT, PA)

Northwest (ID, OR, WA)

Southern California

Plains (KS, MO, NE)

Southeast (AL, LA, MS, eastern NC, SC, GA, southern TN)

Southwest (AZ, NV, NM, CA)

Third Coast (AR, OK, TX)



***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 (psst...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).

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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