

Winter 2004

LMDA Canada Newsletter, Winter 2003/2004

Brian Quirt

Natalie Corbett

Nicole Stamp

Jovanni Sy

Lisa O'Connell

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LMDA CANADA NEWSLETTER

Winter 2003/04

CONTENTS:

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

– BRIAN QUIRT

THE NAMING OF PROCESS AND THE PROCESS OF NAMING Or, “When You’re Doing This Work, You’re Doing Dramaturgy”

– NATALIE CORBETT

OPENING THE LENS... Mini-Conference, Day One

– NICOLE STAMP

COLLABORATION AND IDENTITY Mini-Conference, Day Two

– JOVANNI SY

'TURGS IN THE HOOD LMDA Annual Conference in Chicago

– LISA O'CONNELL

LMDA CANADA: MEMBERSHIP CONTACT LIST

February, 2004

Dear Colleagues...

LMDA Canada welcomes another group of new members this fall:

Stephen Colella (Toronto)	Martin Kinch (Vancouver)
Natasha Mytnowych (Toronto)	Pamela Delaney (Stratford)
Roni Hoffman (Toronto)	Pil Hansen (Toronto/Denmark)
Natalie Corbett (Toronto)	Stephanie Hayes (Vancouver)
Richard Wolfe (Vancouver)	Andrea Romaldi (Toronto)
Olivia Delachanel (Vancouver)	Erica Kopyto (Toronto)
Keren Zaiontz (Toronto)	Eric Rose (Theatre Calgary)
Kelly Robinson (Toronto)	

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings (see reverse). Contact information for our existing membership can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Thanks to those of you who have renewed your membership for 2003/04. If you're reading this but haven't renewed (check the mailing label to confirm), please do so. LMDA's activities, events and publications are dependent on your membership fees.

LMDA Canada is growing swiftly, recently surpassing the 100 member mark! Our annual winter meetings in Calgary have been a great success, and as you will read in the accompanying articles, our annual summer Mini-Conference in Toronto was full of fascinating conversation about creating theatre. Both events will continue next year and I hope you'll be able to join us at one or both events.

You should also plan to attend the LMDA's Annual International Conference, which is always a stimulating and productive weekend. Lisa O'Connell's report on last summer's sessions in Chicago will give you a taste of what you missed. Next year, we'll be meeting in the equally exciting theatre town of Philadelphia, home turf to LMDA President Michele Volansky. Philadelphia has seen many many productions of Canadian plays in the past five years, so I urge you to join us as we continue to promote Canadian plays, playwrights and process with our American colleagues.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me.



Brian Quirt - LMDA Canada

LMDA CANADA

EVENTS TO REMEMBER:

- **LMDA Canada Annual Meeting:** Friday March 5, 2004
Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary, AB 1 - 3:30pm
ATP playRites Festival Blitz Weekend
 - **PACT Conference:** June 2 - 5, 2004
Winnipeg, MB
 - **PGC Conference** June 4 - 6, 2004
Toronto, ON
 - **Magnetic North Theatre Festival** June 9 - 20, 2004
Edmonton, AB
 - **LMDA Annual Conference:** June 24 - 27, 2004
Philadelphia, PA
 - **Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy:** July 5 & 6, 2004
Toronto, ON
-

The Naming of Process and the Process of Naming, or, “When You’re Doing This Work, You’re Doing Dramaturgy”

Toronto Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy — July 7 & 8, 2003

by Natalie Corbett

There is something at once liberating and frustrating about the way that the terms dramaturg and dramaturgy refuse to be pinned down. It is as though the very flexibility of the practice sets off a chain reaction, igniting in me a desire to be able to position something, anything. It begins with the introductory session. I wouldn't call myself a dramaturg, per se. In title I've been the dramaturg of a theatre company at the University of Toronto for five years, and through that time I've been attempting to pin down the responsibilities and boundaries of my role. The small yellow sheets in front of me titled “when you do this work, you're doing dramaturgy” confirm my activities like a check list. In this assembly of talented and very active people, however, I drift nervously toward my title as academic. I wonder, not for the last time, how useful or inhibitive that distinction is, and what it says about the relationship between academia and the practice it examines. The list of current projects that develops as introductions continue around the room is truly impressive. As Brian suggested would happen the close of the introductory session brings with it a sense of accomplishment and respect. Many areas of the theatrical world, professional and non-professional, are represented. True to the topic at hand, it is a group that defies easy categorization.

I mention what may appear to be a fairly utilitarian portion of the conference because I think something key to the conference in general is captured in this moment. For almost three hours we define ourselves by what it is we do and what we think, by what frustrates us and what excites us. Affiliations and titles are mentioned, national identities are given, but for the rest of the conference what remains with me is a sense of individual activity that fuses into, for lack of a better term, an impression of a collective process. The session introduces what the conference partly confirms, that every process incorporates dramaturgy.

Playwrights Morwyn Brebner, Mieko Ouchi, and Sunil Kuruvilla in discussing their experiences all mention individuals that functioned as dramaturgs but did not work exclusively in that capacity. Directors frequently come up as examples of such hybrid figures. The sessions bring out the idea that musical collaborators and actors also provide input and assistance that is certainly dramaturgical. It is easy for me to imagine how these roles fulfill dramaturgical functions. What are slightly surprising to me are the compelling examples that Shauna Janssen, JP Robichaud and Naomi Campbell provide of how stage managers can fill the role of dramaturg in the function and design of the rehearsal process. It makes perfect sense, but I wouldn't have immediately identified

the stage manager as a potential dramaturg. Brian Quirt suggests at one point that a dramaturg is not necessary for every show, but that dramaturgy nonetheless takes place on every show. Dramaturgy, the talks at the conference also suggest, is a practice that extends beyond the limits of a production. On the first day Kendra Fanconi reports on the efforts of Vancouver's alternative companies to bring changes not merely to a production or a company, but to an industry. The implication that changing the regulatory and administrative elements that shape practice, agencies' funding formulas, for example, is connected to dramaturgical practice is new and fresh to me. Rahul Varma, charging the dramaturg with the challenge of forging a relationship between art and cultural diversity, calls for a dramaturgical process that questions and potentially subverts our national, or even North American, ideology. Dramaturgy at the outset is inextricably linked to identity, its formulation, its formation, and its alteration.

As each session expands the boundaries of dramaturgy I find myself once again looking for the solid ground of a definition. When is a dramaturg, as a separate entity, necessary on a production? If the responsibilities of the dramaturg are carried out by so many various individuals, how can an additional role be incorporated into the process without duplication? The stage managers address the second question by suggesting the necessity of open lines of communication. There also seems to be a general, if informal and light-hearted, consensus among the playwrights on the first question. Sunil describes the "State Farm Insurance Dramaturg". Having a dramaturg, he suggests, is like paying car insurance – you always feel you are paying too much until one day you really need it. When are dramaturgs necessary? When they are good. When they are trusted. When they function in a close and respectful relationship with a playwright. When they show you something that you might not otherwise have seen. When they slip seamlessly into the process. This is a daunting answer. It is not a definition that lends itself easily to a contractual job description. But it does seem to support what I have felt since the introductory session of the conference. It is a role, perhaps more than any other in the theatre, whose very definition is in its process.

As I leave I still feel vaguely troubled about the practicalities of the dramaturg's role in theatrical collaboration, but my mind is elsewhere. The conference seems to have imparted to everyone a general enthusiasm. It appears to have given people new ideas and new energy to go out and explore. At the end of the day what ultimately remains is a celebration of process. That is where my mind is, not on definitions any longer, but on what I'll *do* next.

Natalie Corbett is currently pursuing her PhD at the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama at the University of Toronto. In her spare time she also acts as the dramaturg for StageBlue Productions.

Opening the Lens. . .

Notes from the LMDA Dramaturgy Mini-Conference – Day One: July 8, 2003

by Nicole Stamp

In a sleepy muggy, and cavernous theatre, 50 surprisingly alert people met for a conversation about dramaturgy and the process of creating and mounting new works of theatre. Chair Brian Quirt paid special attention to the objectives of:

(a) “opening the lens” to other places, thus avoiding Torontocentricity (that may not be a real word but I’m sure you’ll agree it damn well should be, and we can start by applying it to practically everything that happens in Ontario, this conference happily excepted).

(b) networking: attendees were urged to consider themselves participants, not observers. Quirt pointed out that the most useful part of a conference is meeting other artists during lunch; so this conference involved lengthy, engaging introductions and generous breaks.

Quirt asked each person in the room to introduce him/herself, speak about upcoming projects, and identify the specific “dramaturgical itch” which had prompted their attendance. The itches were varied and interesting, and could have warranted a conference of their own for scratching. Here are a few notables: (BTW, I’m no stenographer, so these are paraphrased. Sue me for libel at nicolestamp @ hotmail.com).

- Too much of Canadian Theatre is product-driven. While a traditional goal of arts funding has been to create new Canadian work, perhaps a new goal should be to create a support for the PROCESS of creating new work. Also, how can we acquire the vocabulary to seduce commercial interest into arts funding? (*Denis LeFebvre, Arts Programme Coordinator, Laidlaw Foundation*)
- How best to dramaturge movement-based, textless pieces? (*Glenda Sterling, Albertan Actor, Director, Dramaturg, and Movement Coach*)
- What can you tell me so I can go home and dramaturge confidently, and when challenged, say “Listen you, I was at the Dramaturg Conference and this is what a dramaturg is SUPPOSED to do, so SHADDAP!” (*Richard Vaillancourt, Cobblestone Festival*)
- How do you effectively dramaturge by e-mail? (*Joanna Falck, Literary Assistant, Tarragon*)
- Why do we need dramaturgs anyway? Shakespeare never had one. I want someone to tell me how his plays would’ve been better if he’d had one. (*Jonathan DeSouza, London Ont. playwright, actor, and musician*)
- How can I create a vibrant collective piece with the dramaturgical foresight to avoid the plague of the “episodic pastiche”? (*Simon Heath, AD of SHED Co., Toronto*)
- How come my finely honed dramaturgical skills vanish when I’m the one who wrote the play? (*David Copelin*)

- When is the final “E” and the soft “G” of “dramaturge” preferable to the truncated and hard “G” of “dramaturg”? (*various participants aired various preferences*)

Kendra Fanconi reported on the recent Progress Lab (a conference attended by Vancouver alternative theatre companies including Boca Del Lupo, SKAM, New World, Radix, Urban Ink., Felix Culpa, and Electric Co.). The epiphany: Canadian Theatre is young, and therefore has a young hierarchical structure, which can be redesigned and personalized. After cheekily listing traits shared by all present (*We are... irreverent, risky, affordable, collaborative, site specific, accessible both in price and content, scrappy, innovative, creation-based, non-narrative, non-hierarchical, multi-disciplinary, local, eclectic, frugal, exhausted, balls-to-the-wall, etc...*), the group also affirmed the belief that *they are like their audience* — and they will find appreciative audience for the work that they themselves like, particularly among the culturally adventurous demographic, who perhaps don't see much theatre, but who will come in droves for an experience (such as a site specific piece).

Among Progress Lab's goals:

- place Vancouver on the international map as a destination & cultural centre for artistic innovation
- create in Vancouver a landscape of midsize theatres operating on \$1M budgets
- pool resources: software, mailing lists, emergency petty cash, audience demographics, a tour booker, a comic book newsletter.
- acquire a workshop lab with rehearsal and admin. space
- align production schedules with grouped show openings to attract more attention
- collaborate between companies: e.g., a site specific *Everyman Cycle*, where each company stages one episode, and the mini shows run concurrently, perhaps in a park
- campaign CAEA for regulations more appropriate to site specific work
- open rehearsal halls so other artists can observe new processes
- finally, with a mixture of optimism and practicality, they discussed a possible fundraiser to buy a carload of lottery tickets, aiming for a \$5M jackpot, proceeds to be shared amongst participants.

Fanconi described some Progress Lab companies' philosophies of creation, which was fascinating and inspiring. To name a very few: Electric Co.'s method for *Flop* (8 months of research, jamming w/ visual aids, games, and physical ideas, using games like “what's the hardest possible way to do this activity?”, and so creating cleverly illogical stage business, collective writing, storyboarding, and a final 3-week rehearsal period). Radix mandates that text be written only IN the rehearsal hall. New World bases its political work on Persian models of creation. Calgary's One Yellow Rabbit has managed a 23 year collaboration with a philosophy of “re-spect”, literally, “looking twice”: Look #1 might yield “*You're an asshole*”... but Look #2 supplements that with “*...and I want to know where you're coming from.*” Finally, Fanconi quoted Blake Brooker, OYR's artistic director: “Society is ill. But it has pockets of health, and creation is one of these. Artists have a duty to society to create.” (*Lab transcripts are available at <kendraf@axion.net>.*)

Rahul Varma, an issue-based playwright born in India and longtime Canadian resident, spoke of his experience developing *Bhopal*, a political / documentary play examining the personal aftermath of a terrible industrial accident, set against a backdrop of globalization, development, and post-colonialism. In 1984, a gas-chamber-like explosion in a factory in Bhopal, India, killed 3000 people immediately, and over 20,000 in the ensuing years. Caused by American companies committing human rights and worker safety violations that could never have occurred in a First World country, Varma blames the tragedy not on faulty chemistry, but on imperialism and racism. As a visual aid, Varma brought a card reading, "This is the price we pay for development", with a gruesome, staring image of a dead child's face – a photo so disturbing that eventually a listener politely turned it face down. Varma described a newsreel image of another child, whose mother had survived the blast while pregnant; this baby was born with transparent skin through which her organs were plainly visible. The infant's silent and unimaginable pain symbolized to Varma the fundamental lack of respect for human dignity that was at the root of the accident in Bhopal.

With deadpan angst Varma described the "dramaturgical process that [he] was subjected to" as the play was developed – bad experiences including a translation that altered the text without his consent, and major changes in rehearsal that he was not happy with. He anticipates a better experience when the play is remounted in Toronto this fall, and in the meantime, he raised a number of pertinent questions, including: how to take historical information from his own cultural experience, rather than always relying on media accounts, and the theatre makers' responsibility to publicize controversial information that the media habitually overlook (as an example, he mentioned the long-standing affiliations between the Bush family and various Iraqi scapegoats). He also proposed the dramaturge as a source of political morality and political challenge to the writer, as opposed to the more traditional role of mere technical challenge. Continued diversity in Canadian Arts is a major priority for Varma, who advocates pluralism, mixing, anti-ghettoization, and true equality of diverse experience, and raises thought provoking questions about the nature of modern dramaturgy: is it interculturally competent, or is it merely another form of colonial oppression? His work attempts to foster dissent, even to the point of smearing or implicating perpetrators, and possibly deliberately being sued for libel, which would raise awareness of the issue and make for one hell of a publicity stunt. Subtlety is merely an avoidance of the ugly parts of the issue, Varma maintains; theatre's role is to theatricalize and incite. Rahul Varma can be contacted at <rahulv@videotron.ca>, and *Bhopal* will be presented by Cahoots at Toronto's Theatre Centre in October, 2003, directed by Guillermo Verdecchia.

Nicole Stamp recently wrote, directed, and performed a solo show called "better parts" that she dramaturged on its feet during the run... by bugging audience members for reactions, and making nightly revisions. Keep an eye out for it, because it's not done yet- and YOU might have the golden dramaturgical nugget that makes it all click! Nicole thinks "dramaturge" should rhyme with "on the verge".

Collaboration & Identity

Notes from the LMDA Dramaturgy Mini-Conference – Day Two: July 8, 2003

by Jovanni Sy

Two recurring themes emerged from the second day of this year's LMDA Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy. In the morning session, Morwyn Brebner, Mieko Ouchi and the troika of Naomi Campbell, Shauna Janssen, and JP Robichaud all touted the benefits of on-going collaboration. In the afternoon, Diane Roberts and Sunil Kuruvilla discussed the meaning of identity in theatre.

Speaking in shorthand

In his keynote address to the Canadian Theatre Conference in May 2002, Daniel Brooks noted:

You have heard it countless times, but I will repeat it: Truly the greatest resource the theatre has is time. Not money, but time. And time is not money. Time is time ... If I were to ask the people who work behind the scenes in Canadian theatre for one thing, it would be to take this plea for more time to heart, and consider seriously whether or not we actually do squander some of the beauty that is theatrical time.

The morning participants offered, if not an antidote, then at least a soothing salve for the time-eating disease that plagues Canadian theatre: working with familiar collaborators.

In her entertaining and informative account of creating *Little Mercy's First Murder*, Morwyn Brebner talked about the "integration of process". For her, this meant knowing her collaborators, working with a familiar director (Eda Holmes), and "not negotiating personal territory".

The comment about personal territory struck a chord with many in the room. Anyone who works in theatre will at some point receive feedback (solicited or otherwise) from a director/dramaturg/signer of paycheques. When dealing with a new colleague, this is usually structured as: (a) reassuring hand-holding followed by, (b) a gut-wrenching attack on one's creative process.

Think of all the time spent tiptoeing around fragile egos with phrases such as,

"Really great changes. It's fabulous what you're trying to do and I see where you're going but ..."

"You've made a wonderfully bold choice but ..."

"I really love the fabric you've chosen but ..."

One of the great benefits of repeat collaborators is that mutual trust and respect have already been established. Prefacing platitudes can be omitted. Criticism can be accepted as commentary on the work not the person. Pockets of time are liberated by simply saying what one means without

having to think about how to phrase it.

Morwyn alluded to this while describing her relationship with Eda. She spoke of “speaking in shorthand” with Eda – a common language that evolved from their first meeting at NTS and later collaborating on Morwyn’s first Tarragon play, *Music for Contortionist*. She clearly appreciated the frank nature of their dialogue. She described Eda’s role as asking directorial rather than dramaturgical questions.

Interestingly, Morwyn didn’t view dramaturges as collaborators *per se*. She defined her field of collaborators as the creative team on a new production “plus one (usually the Artistic Director)”. She sees dramaturges as outside eyes and also stated that the “writer/dramaturg relationship is not hand-holding”. Clearly this was not her relationship with the late Urjo Kareda. Commenting on an early draft that she now describes as bleak, Urjo told her that in musicals “audiences want more comfort”. This led to a substantial revision.

Morwyn also spoke enthusiastically of her relationship with composers Paul Sportelli and Jay Turvey. Their association began on *Music for Contortionist*. A song that the three of them created on that show was part of the inspiration to write a musical together.

She made several interesting observations about the differences between writing plays and musicals. Because they are such a beloved art form, musicals carry a greater burden of expectation. The “extra layer of theatricality” elevates the stakes for the audience. She feels that she knows more now about songwriting such as leaving room for the music. Music can provide subtext, nuance, and ambience so it’s important to allow it its own space.

On a closing note, here are two quotations Morwyn provided in her lively session (the first her own, the second from John Lahr):

“Good lyrics have a feeling of inevitability.”

“Subtlety in a musical is about as welcome as primness in a whore.”

Theatrical Facilitators

In their session on stage managing new works, Naomi Campbell, Shauna Janssen, and JP Robichaud also praised the time-saving benefits of working with familiar artists. They also had more personal reasons for maintaining on-going collaborations: their preferred directors invest them as full artistic partners. JP reminded the audience that a stage manager is “a participant not an employee.”

JP felt his role on new productions is “less as a stage manager and more as a theatrical facilitator”. He explained that he often acted as a “mediator, diplomat, and interpreter” – especially between script and design. Many designers, he said, aren’t aware of technical constraints. He went on to

say that “young directors don’t seem to realize that a stage manager is a tool.”

“A resource,” suggested Naomi after the laughter subsided.

Naomi views stage managers on new works as “technical dramaturges or director’s dramaturges”. Clearly the panelists have little passion for working on plays from the standard repertoire. And they have no interest in working within the traditionally defined confines of stage management. Naomi spoke for all three when she said, “you have to pay me a lot more money not to have an opinion”.

A largely overlooked dramaturgical contribution that stage managers make is their ability to define the rehearsal process. Shauna talked about the freedom she had in shaping the workday. For her, every production requires its own unique way of rehearsing which only comes by getting to know the people involved with the rehearsal. From one of her early experiences:

Sometimes an actor or director or designer would bring up script problems with the writer present. Rehearsals would grind to a halt. So I’d try to create ground rules for discussion.

The issue of time and the need to manage it wisely came up for all three. On improvisation-based new works, Shauna said, one can’t always assume that the standard eight-hour day is the most effective model. “There’s clock time and there’s energy time.”

At the conclusion of their session, they were asked to complete the sentence, “As a stage manager, my primary responsibility is” JP immediately responded “everything.” After some thought, Shauna said she sometimes tells herself “it’s not about having overall control over the process. When there’s a snag, I remind myself that I’m working with people. That’s my big guiding principle.”

Too many chefs

Mieko Ouchi’s *The Red Priest* was a play that started very much as a solo exercise and matured over four years with the help with trusted collaborators.

The genesis of her play was an evening of short performances commissioned by Workshop West Theatre in Edmonton. Each piece was to be performed on a common set that suggested a French formal garden.

An image of a woman running through the garden came to Mieko and she wrote five monologues set to Vivaldi concerti. It was always her intention that the pieces were to be performed specifically to the music. At first she found this imprisoning; ultimately, it became emancipating. She herself performed the role of the aristocratic French lady to great enthusiasm.

When Workshop West artistic director Ron Jenkins suggested that she expand the monologues into a full-length play, she started by making Vivaldi himself a character and writing five companion monologues for him.

Eventually, the play would receive a number of readings and workshops in Edmonton, Calgary, Banff, and Ottawa. An interesting situation occurred at the 2002 Banff playRites Colony. The play had already been chosen by Alberta Theatre Projects for their playRites Festival. At the colony, there were *five* separate dramaturges working *The Red Priest*. (Sympathetic groans from the audience at this point.) Some of them, however, were offering general dramaturgical advice. Others were focussed only on production dramaturgy. Mieko recalled feeling overwhelmed at one note session. Finally, one of the dramaturges reminded everyone that this was Mieko's first narrative play – a detail that was easily overlooked given her impressive accomplishments as a filmmaker, director, and performer. From that point, the five dramaturges agreed to speak with one voice.

Throughout the session, Mieko spoke of the importance of her relationship with director Ron Jenkins and with Ashley Wright, the actor playing Vivaldi. With Ron, she particularly appreciated the contrast between “his staccato male-driven temperament and her own sensibility”. She described her relationship with Ron and Ashley as organic. She thought it was enormously helpful that all three of them had experience as actors, writers, and directors.

The fourth key collaborator in *The Red Priest* was Vivaldi himself. Mieko contrasted the final reading at Banff which was performed without music with the staged reading done at On The Verge in Ottawa a few weeks later with the accompaniment and live music. Many who had attended both workshops felt they were hearing a different play.

The Red Priest ran nearly three months at ATP and has two separate productions scheduled for April 2004 –at the Globe Theatre in Regina and Tarragon Theatre in Toronto.

“I'm more of a Welsh woman”

In the afternoon sessions, director/dramaturg Diane Roberts and playwright Sunil Kuruvilla examined the role of identity in theatre. Diane has spent many years asking the question, “What makes a Black play a Black play?” She recently travelled to Chicago and London to continue her investigation.

After visiting several black theatre ensembles, she came back with these observations:

The theatre of the African diaspora often exhibits:

- a sense of communality
- common ancestral iconography and values
- a sense of spectacle

Later, Sunil Kuruvilla took the audience through the fascinating evolution of his play, *Rice Boy*. The play was written while Sunil was a student at the Yale School of Drama. It received its first production at Yale Rep and a second U.S. production directed by Chay Yew before its Canadian premiere at CanStage in 2003.

Working with dramaturg Iris Turcott, Sunil made significant changes to his script to tailor it to a Canadian audience. He noted the irony given that the play was written by a Canadian and half of it is set in Kitchener, Ontario.

Sunil expressed his desire not to constantly revisit South Asian themes. Indeed, his play *Fighting Words* is the story of Welsh women awaiting the return of their men from a championship boxing match.

When an audience member asked tongue-in-cheek if *Fighting Words* was an Indian play, Sunil replied with a laugh, “Actually, I’m more of a Welsh woman than an Indian boy.”

Jovanni Sy is an actor, writer and the Associate Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre Projects in Toronto.

'turgs in the Hood

LMDA Annual Conference — Chicago, June 2003

by Lisa O'Connell

You couldn't make it. Didn't have the time, the budget, the wherewithal to scoot off to Chicago for this year's LMDA conference. We missed you.

The theme was 'border crossings'. Literary managers/dramaturges cross many different borders in the course of our workday: intellectual, aesthetic, managerial, interpersonal and structural. The artistic results of our process cross borders as well: geographic, generational, cultural, ethnic, economic, professional and academic – to name but a few.

In Chicago, we explored, exposed and exploded the concept of diversity in all matters of theatre while imbibing a few glasses of wine and several good meals. In due course, we expanded our stomachs along with our minds.

Here are a few small snippets of what you missed:

- Mark Bly discussing how working on *M/M/C (Medea/Macbeth/Cinderella)* by Bill Ruach at Yale Repertory Theatre encouraged him to look outside the box and explore new definitions of dramaturgy and community. Bly recalled that when working on the piece he looked specifically at the movement between these three popular forms of theatre: Greek, Shakespearean and Musicals. He then asked himself, "what's the fourth story?" – the structure/frametale that brings them all together. For Bly, it became all about 'hidden spaces'. He confessed that he wasn't happy with the final conceit used for the frametale – a rather conventional 'stage manager' device – and that after much thought he discovered that "time was the fourth story" – stage time/audience time and the resulting elasticity that resulted from the pressure the three plays placed on the space. That, and the characters awareness themselves of their space and the pressures within. Bly is eager to look at the project again with this new perspective.
- Ilana Brownstein, Literary Manager at the Huntington in Boston, Mass., spoke as part of the 'diversifying the audience' session. She spoke of an exciting new initiative her theatre undertook when producing Kia Corthoron's *Breathe, Boom*. They invited civic leaders from the Boston area: two police officers, an ex-gang member, an actor from the play, and an academic for 'Girl Gangs - Get out While You Can', a gathering of between 400-500 teens where the social issues that were discussed in the play were further explored. The evening was promoted prior to the event on local rap stations; the commercial used was created by a local artist who attended rehearsals, became

familiar with the play and was paid to write a rap and tour local schools and speak about his involvement. Brownstein reported that it was a great experience in audience development for the Huntington. "The show did not sell well but sold to an audience we wanted to develop." Single ticket buyers were high for the show with 45% of the total audience under 30 years, a huge change in their audience profile. "We took a hit on budget but we moved further ahead with out aesthetic vision."

- LMDA President Michelle Volansky led the always inspirational "We Do Not Dream" session with a revivalist zeal. Among the chorus of alleluias:

- Encourage our writers to write not for the theatre that they KNOW but the theatre that they WANT
- Look before you leap. Ask yourself: three steps down the road does this decision/action reinforce the status quo?
- CD's don't cost \$45 (US, the venue was Chicago) but theatre does. What does this mean to younger audiences? Should they 'pay their age'?
- Who are the NOT HOT emerging writers? Look beneath the current favourites.
- I WILL be a pain in the ass to the development office for more \$\$'s.
- I will commit to do a show I do not know how to do – that which has more unknowns for me than knowns.

The closing banquet included inspiring tributes to Mallory Catlett, Michael Bigelow Dixon, Morgan Jenness – with her Obie! – and Brian Quirt who was honoured with the Elliott Hayes Award, which was presented to him by Liz Engelman.

It was a fabulous conference. Don't miss next year!

Lisa O'Connell is Literary Manager at Theatre and Company in Kitchener, Ontario. Lisa co-wrote Tales of the Snowy Woods – faerie tales adapted from the Brothers Grimm, with Henry Bakker and Adam Cowart, which opens November 27, 2003, at Theatre and Company.

LMDA Canada – Membership List

(September, 2003)

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- Norman Armour**
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- Henry Bakker**
- Bruce Barton**
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- Andrew Houston** -
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- Shain Jaffe** -
- Lise Ann Johnson** -
- Denis Johnston** -
- Elena Kaufman** -
- Magdalena Kazubowski-Houston** -
- Kathryn Kelly** -
- Martin Kinch** -
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- Stephane Kirkland** -
- DD Kugler**
- Maureen Labonté**
- Liesl Lafferty**
- Laurie Lam**
- Byron Laviolette**
- Vanessa Lebourais**
- Jo Ledingham**
- Jennifer Lord**
- Betony Main**
- Jackie Maxwell**

- Catherine McNally** -
- Marie Mendenhall** -
- Deirdre Murphy** -
- Jenny Munday** -
- Natasha Mytnowych** -
- Winston Neutell** -
- Yvette Nolan** -
- Erika Norrie** -
- Lisa O'Connell** -
- Natalie Papoutsis** -
- Robin Patterson** -
- Wendy Philpott** -
- Sarah Polkinghorne** -
- Kathleen Pollard** -
- Vanessa Porteous** -
- Gerry Potter** -
- Elyne Quan** -
- Brian Quirt** -
- Gyllian Raby** -
- Lisa Ravensbergen** -
- Angela Rebeiro** -

- Brian Richmond** -
- Diane Roberts** -
- Richard Rose** -
- Judith Rudakoff** -
- Simone Salazar** -
- Stuart Scadron-Wattles** -
- Sarah Stanley** -
- Andrey Tarasiuk** -
- Vicki Stroich** -
- Jovanni Sy** -
- Heidi Taylor** -
- Vern Thiessen** -
- Kelly Thornton** -
- Becky Todor** -
- Iris Turcott** -
- Susana Uchatius** -
- Victor Ustare** -
- Michele Louise Valiquette** -
- Rahul Varma** -
- Lisa Voth** -
- Craig Walker** -
- Bob White** -
- Adrienne Wong** -
- Jacob Zimmer** -

If your affiliation, location or email address has changed, please contact me and I'll update our records. Thanks.

Literary Manager and Dramaturgs of the Americas

Who Are We?

Literary Manager and Dramaturgs of the Americas is the service organization for Canadian and American literary managers and dramaturgs, founded in 1985 to affirm, examine and develop these professional activities.

LMDA Canada

The semi-autonomous Canadian Caucus of LMDA meets regularly in Calgary at the ATP playRites Festival Blitz Weekend, holds a dramaturgy conference in Toronto in July, distributes its own newsletter and promotes the development of practical and innovative approaches to dramaturgy.

Among the programs and services LMDA offers to members are:

- **LMDA Review** – news and articles published quarterly.
- **LMDA Script Exchange** – notes on new plays from colleagues.
- **Production Notebooks Project** – dramaturg diaries or casebooks published by the Theatre Communications Group documenting the conception, research, planning and realization of outstanding theatre productions.
- **LMDA Discussion Listserv and Website** – announcements and lively discussion of contemporary practice, and a wide range of resources for dramaturgs, literary managers and theatre companies. Visit us at: www.lmda.org
- **Annual International Conference** – the four-day conference, held each June in a Canadian or American city, consists of provocative panels, boisterous break-out groups, workshops, master classes, guest speakers and exploration of local dramaturgical activity. The exchange of ideas – which often extends deep into the night – is serious fun.
- **Advocacy Caucus** – examines and reports on current working conditions.
- **University Caucus** – provides a liaison between training and liberal arts programs and the profession; it publishes a guide to training programs, source books for teachers and a bibliography of relevant resource material.
- **Early Career Dramaturgs** – this program identifies new members of the profession and works to establish them in productive professional affiliations; it also publishes a guide to internships.

Interested in Joining?

Dues are \$60 for Active Members and \$25 for Students. All on-going memberships expire on the first of June each year prior to the annual conference, with the exception of *first time* memberships received between January and the end of May. These new memberships will extend to June 1 of the following year. Please see our website for further information, or send form on the reverse....

LMDA CANADA: 36 St. Paul Street • Toronto, ON • M5A 3H3 • CANADA

**LMDA
Membership Application**

Name _____
Title _____
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Street _____
City _____ Prov. _____
Postal Code _____
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Type of Membership:

Active _____ \$60 Cdn

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What are your principal areas of interest?

LMDA Canada Membership Categories:

Active: Open to full-time and part-time professionals working in fields of literary management and dramaturgy. All privileges and services including voting rights and eligibility for office.

Student: Open to students in performing arts and literature programs or related disciplines. Applicants for this category please enclose a photocopy of current student ID.



Please make your cheque or money order out to LMDA Canada and mail with this form to
LMDA Canada, 36 St. Paul Street, Toronto, ON, M5A 3H3.

For more information, please contact Brian Quirt at bquirt@interlog.com. Thank you.