

2005

## LMDA's 20th Anniversary 1985-2005: Celebrating the First Twenty Years

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# LMDA'S 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

1985 • 2005

celebrating the first twenty years

**Imda**

literary managers and  
dramaturgs of the americas





# Imda

## literary managers and dramaturgs of the americas

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*Special Thanks to our Contributors and to everyone who appears  
in this book and to so many others who have helped advocate for  
literary managers and dramaturgs.*



**lmda**

literary managers and  
dramaturgs of the americas

## Only the Beginning...

by **Mark Bly**

**LMDA Board Chair**

Mark Bly is Senior Dramaturg at Arena Stage. He served twelve seasons as Associate Artistic Director at Yale Rep and Chair of the Playwriting Program at Yale School of Drama. This season, he dramaturged *Anna in The Tropics* at Arena Stage. He dramaturged the Broadway production of *Execution of Justice* and premiere of Suzan-Lori Parks's *The America Play* at Yale Rep and Public Theater. Mr. Bly has served as a play reader for the O'Neill Theater Center. He was the creator and co-director of the Yale Playwrights at New Dramatists Program and Play Reading Festival. He did his graduate work at Yale, and wrote and edited Volumes I and II of *Production Notebooks*. Mr. Bly has served as LMDA Board Chair for the past five years.

*I believe in the dreams of the future more than the history of the past.*

—Thomas Jefferson

With the publication of this book we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, popularly known as LMDA. Other portions of this book will illuminate the origins and evolution of LMDA with various interviews and shared anecdotes by past LMDA Presidents and others who helped to bring this unique organization to life. The "LMDA Chronology," which past President Geoff Proehl and I created with the assistance of several colleagues, will also offer insights into the key generative and developmental moments from LMDA's twenty-year history.

But even in the midst of our anniversary celebration I must humbly point out that the history of LMDA is not the history of dramaturgy in America. Those legendary monthly meetings of a small group of literary managers in New York City in the late 1970s to the early 1980s gave birth to an organization, but the profession itself already existed on this continent. John Corbin, Edwin Sheldon (who helped Wilder on *Our Town*), Kaufmann and Hart, Arthur Ballet, and the individuals working at the O'Neill Conference in Connecticut are examples of earlier dramaturgs. Also, one must acknowledge the work of select dramaturgs in such far-flung geographical sites as Costa Mesa, Louisville, San Francisco and Minneapolis in the early 1980s, when pioneering efforts were made to expand our office-bound notions of dramaturgy outward into the rehearsal spaces. Outside of New York City there were already dramaturgical fault-lines forming across the theatrical landscape of our continent long before the emergence of LMDA.

Over the past twenty years individual dramaturgs have continued to create varying models of dramaturgy in America. *The Elegant Universe* String Theory guru Brian Greene has spoken about how in the exotic, sub-atomic realm "...some particles vibrate so much they must move into another dimension." In dramaturgy



**Photo:** All conference photo taken at the 1999 Annual Conference "Setting the Table: A Working Retreat" at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

*Photo: Ellen Mease*

a similar phenomenon has manifested itself. We have gone beyond being merely researchers and script readers to being that artist who also helps the director and the other artists to shape the acting, design, directing, and textual values, as well as culturally sensitive aesthetic approaches. Many of us have taken our dramaturgical impulses and employed them as producers, artistic directors, teachers, story editors in film and television, or as dramaturgs in opera and dance.

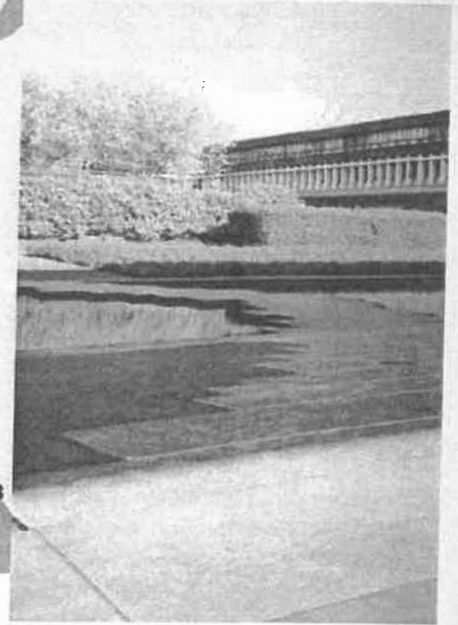
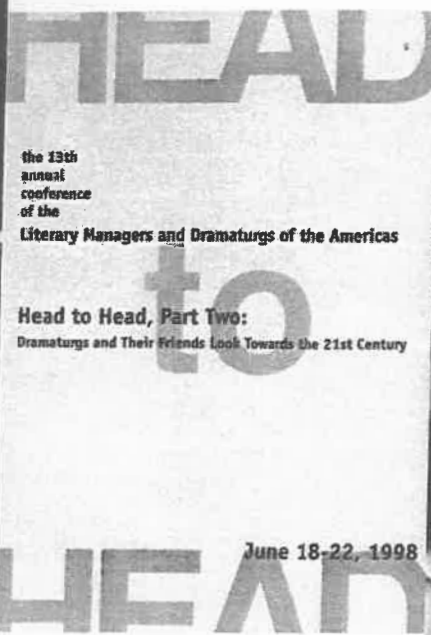
Along with the changes in our modes of operation, our conceptions of ourselves have changed. We have moved beyond calling ourselves the "conscience of the theater." We have shed such dramaturgical hubris to arrive at an understanding that if our theater is to matter, if it is to be a living cultural organism that evolves and resists calcification, we must strive to create a theater community in which *everyone* has a conscience, or in Lessing's words, the "candle-snuffer is a (David) Garrick." The Guthrie Theater senior dramaturg Michael Lupu has reminded us that at its core dramaturgy is a function first and a profession second. The critical judgment and aesthetic insights on which modern dramaturgs sometimes pride themselves have existed throughout history and are not exclusive to one modern profession.

Over twenty years ago in an interview I echoed Dieter Stürm and Peter Stein when I talked about the need for the "questioning spirit" to be at the center of our work. I have come to believe that this impulse, the "questioning spirit," is genetically hardwired into some of us individuals who are either cursed or blessed with this distinction, depending upon your perspective. Over a decade ago the Chauvet cave paintings in France were discovered, revealing a Paleolithic gallery of horses, lions and rhinos. Perhaps at Chauvet approximately 30,000 years ago a lone figure stood in the dark cave next to an Ice Age Leonardo da Vinci or Frieda Kahlo: an apprentice, clan shaman, or child held a flickering torch or Paleolithic palette and while gazing at the wonder

before them nevertheless dared to question the mystical expression newly created on the cave wall.

It is my hope that as we celebrate this 20th Anniversary of the birth of LMDA we dramaturgs will boldly use our innate strengths of fierce curiosity and obsessive belief in the power of the imagination for the benefit of our larger artistic community and world. Our own 21st century was born without an Edvard Munch to chronicle on canvas its terrifying birth cry. We have instead the diluted, homogenized drone of the mass media. The stage and film legend Arthur Laurents, who has spent the greater part of his life fighting against many forms of intimidation and intolerance, said recently in a post-play discussion at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., "The silence in America is deafening."

After twenty revolutions around the nearest star and a roughly 18,800,000,000 kilometer journey through space, we at LMDA are making a concerted effort to engage our world. As this book is published, we are making connections with playwrights, dramaturgs and educators in Russia, the British Isles and Israel. We are discussing plans for an additional 2006 Mexico City LMDA Conference where South, Central and North American dramaturgs, playwrights and educators will converge to discuss new plays and our diverse artistic processes, deploying our art to create new global communities, transcending borders. Our next great and continuing task as an organization and as a profession is to discover how we can best help our theaters and fellow artists so that our art form can have a meaningful and lasting impact on all our communities. Surely, that will be a task worth our embracing and one that will be worthy of an organization that only now after two decades is beginning to divine its true destiny.



# A Brief History Of LMDA

by D.J. Hopkins and Pannill Camp

**D.J. Hopkins** is currently a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis. In August he will start as Assistant Professor at San Diego State University. He has served as dramaturg for Joe Chaikin, Tina Landau, Chuck Mee, Naomi Iizuka, Les Waters, Robert Woodruff, Chay Yew, and others. He holds a PhD in and an MFA, both from UCSD. He is LMDA's co-Vice President for External Communications and co-editor for the LMDA newsletter, *Review*.

**Photo 1:** Ntozake Shange with Clay Goss at the 1991 Annual Conference.  
**Image 2:** Cover to conference packet for 1998 Annual Conference.  
**Photo 3:** Simon Fraser University, near Vancouver, Canada, host of the 2002 Annual Conference.

*Photo 1: Mark Garvin  
Photo 3: Shelley Orr*

*This document is a product of hybrid authorship. When Pannill Camp served as the LMDA Intern, he prepared an unpublished article called "A Working History of LMDA: The Early Years," which documented the organization from its inception in 1985 up to 1992. Pannill conceived the "History" as a work in progress that others would build upon. With Pannill's consent, I'm doing so now.*

*In composing this narrative, I was faced with a dilemma: it has not been possible to include the names of all the people whose contributions have had a lasting effect on LMDA. As a result, this document focuses on LMDA itself; institutional trends and developments are the main topics. For details, names, and more information, see Geoff Proehl and Mark Bly's "Living Chronology," an important resource for LMDA history.*

—D.J.H.

In the summer of 1986, roughly coincident with LMDA's first anniversary, Alexis Greene recalled the origins of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas in a "Note" in *Theater* magazine. Prior to the formation of LMDA,

dramaturgs in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area had been meeting informally [...] to take a pause from artistic directors and hurried work schedules, share thoughts about playwrights, and express frustration with the challenges of carving a niche for dramaturgs in the contemporary American theatre. (56)

On the occasion of LMDA's twentieth anniversary, Greene's agenda items remain important reasons that members come together. Over the last nineteen years, the goals and programs of LMDA have developed in response to the needs of a membership that now includes full time, freelance, faculty, and student dramaturgs, as well as playwrights, directors, scholars, and others who whose interests have, at one time or another, intersected with those of literary managers and dramaturgs.

LMDA as an organization has its roots in New York City. In the 1970s, interest in the practice of dramaturgy in the New York area emerged partially in response to a desire to develop new plays at places like the O'Neill Theater Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, and Circle Rep; dramaturgs were also at work with New York-based avant-garde companies like the Open Theatre. In the early 1980s, New York dramaturgs began to meet on a regular basis. These meetings were informal affairs: small groups met at restaurants or brown-bagged lunch at the offices of New Dramatists on Manhattan.

Of course, by the time dramaturgs were meeting in New York City, the work of dramaturgy had already spread across North America, and the job titles "literary manager" and "dramaturg" were increasingly common features of US and Canadian theatres. University courses and programs in production dramaturgy had emerged in the 1970s, and the Theatre Communications Group had held national conferences on the field in 1979 and 1981. LMDA was formed in response to the growing national interest in dramaturgy and from the recognition that the informal meetings in New York City satisfied the need for "networking and information sharing," but only among a few practitioners of a field that was spread across the continent.

Early in 1984, Alexis Greene and Cynthia Lee Jenner conceived of a service organization that could keep dramaturgs in productive contact with each other. Greene and Jenner generated the initial bylaws for what would be called "Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America." On 19 July 1985, LMDA's status as a non-profit organization was approved. Greene was elected the first president. As a fledgling resource for dramaturgs and literary managers, LMDA's initial priorities were simple: to keep members informed about the profession and to promote understanding about the field in the broader theatre community. Most of the early work was done from Greene's home and the New Dramatists office.

The first LMDA conference was held in 1986, appropriately enough at New Dramatists. The two conference topics reflected the concerns of the profession at the time: "What is a Dramaturg?" and "Ways of Working with Playwrights." The annual tradition of an international conference has since become one of the most important features of the LMDA calendar. The LMDA newsletter, which would later be called *Review*, was first published that same year.

The organization worked to expand its membership and visibility with mailings, announcements, newsletters, and pluck. To attract members beyond Manhattan, Jenner organized the second LMDA conference at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The presidents immediately following Greene emphasized efforts to broaden the conversation about dramaturgy, exemplified by the 1989 conference in San Francisco, at which dramaturgs working in television and film contributed their insights on the profession.

During her three years as LMDA president (from July of

1989), Anne Cattaneo guided LMDA through a period of dynamic development. One of Cattaneo's contributions was the introduction of regional vice-presidents. The goal of the regional VP initiative was to keep LMDA members in closer contact with the president through their regional representatives, with the added hope that local meetings could take the place of the informal lunches from which the organization grew.

Other LMDA programs and initiatives developed in the 1980s and early 90s include: the LMDA Job Phone, a hotline that tracked dramaturgy job openings; the LMDA *Script Exchange* created by Lynn Thomson, who ran it until organizational funds could be channeled for its support; the *Production Notebooks* project, initiated by Mark Bly in 1991; and an electronic bulletin board, the forerunner of LMDA's email listserv, was created by Richard Finkelstein.

An important turning point in the history of the organization occurred at the 1990 conference in Chicago. Members elected to pluralize LMDA's name, officially changing it to "Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas." The change reflected the growing number of Canadian members of LMDA (and cleverly allowed all the old stationery to remain in use.) Solidifying LMDA's organizational identity, designers Shelley Rena and Patrick O'Neill donated the now familiar fingerprint logo, which appeared for the first time on the cover of *Review* in 1991.

Presidents continued to support and build LMDA's programs in the US and Canada. The National Theatre Translation Fund, founded by Carey Perloff and coordinated by LMDA, awarded its first round of grants in 1992. In 1993, LMDA held its first bi-lingual conference at McGill University in Montreal, and in the same year DD Kugler became the first Canadian officer of LMDA. At the 1996 LMDA conference in Toronto, Brian Quirt agreed to serve as chair for the new Canadian Caucus of LMDA, joining the LMDA Executive Committee as VP Canada. (See Brian's history of LMDA Canada.) Also in 1996, the LMDA Advocacy Caucus was formed by Lynn Thomson. The work of the Advocacy Caucus would lead to LMDA's employment guidelines, to be ratified by members in 2001.

The early 1990s also saw the emergence of the University Caucus as a feature of LMDA. UCaucus members, lead by Susan Jonas, organized a pre-conference in advance of the 1992 annual conference. The UCaucus has since provided opportunities for LMDA members to discuss the role of dramaturgy in higher education. The UCaucus established an email listserv in 1994; this communication resource would become the LMDA Listserv, one of LMDA's most popular services. In 1995, Elizabeth Ramirez and John Lutterbie established the Dramaturgy Focus Group at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, beginning an important organizational affiliation, and providing an additional outlet for LMDA's UCaucus members. Two important UCaucus-supported publications appeared in 1997: *The Production Notebooks*, edited by Mark Bly, and *Dramaturgy*



## PREAMBLE

The basic principle of this organization is that dramaturgy and literary managers are establishing themselves as permanent artistic fields within the American theatre and that now we must turn our attention to helping these new fields mature and grow more vigorous. Dramaturgs and literary managers provide critical, historical, and humanist insights for writers, performers, directors, and audiences alike and thus have the potential for becoming the artistic consciences of the theatre and related forms, the potential for strengthening the vitality of the arts in this country.

Through this organization, we will create a national network that will reaffirm and broaden the roles we have already come to play and will expand the possibilities of the fields to ~~the~~ media and institutions. Wherever there is a relationship between writer and audience, there is a need for the artistry of the dramaturg or the literary manager. *place*

Therefore, the purposes of this organization are to cultivate, develop, and promote the fields of dramaturgy and literary managers through the creation of a national not-for-profit corporation that will perform the following functions:

- (1) Educate the public regarding the functions of dramaturgs and literary managers within the theatre, the university, and within related performing arts fields;
- (2) Promote the use of dramaturgs and literary managers within the theatre, the university, and within related performing arts fields;
- (3) Establish a communications network among the membership;
- (4) Organize an information bank, publications, seminars, symposia, workshops, conferences, and classes;
- (5) Organize residencies for dramaturgs and literary managers in performing arts and educational organizations;
- (6) Conduct and carry on the work of the corporation exclusively in such a manner as to be subject to the provisions of Section 501 (c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and not for profit but exclusively for charitable and educational purposes.

A draft copy of LMDA's By-laws, dated September 10, 1984 (complete with handwritten revisions).

in *American Theatre*, edited by Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu; a second volume of *The Production Notebooks* appeared in 2001. These publications showcase the work of numerous LMDA members, and are valuable texts for our field and for theatre studies more broadly.

In 1997 and 1998 LMDA inaugurated two awards designed to acknowledge the achievement of dramaturgs in North American theatre. The Lessing Award for Lifetime Achievement in Dramaturgy was first presented in 1998; the Lessing Award continues to celebrate the work of those who have made substantial, sustained contributions to dramaturgy and to the theatre in general. In the same year, Michael Bigelow Dixon and Amy Wegener announced the creation of the LMDA Prize in Dramaturgy, the Elliott Hayes Award. The Elliott Hayes Award is presented annually in recognition and celebration of dramaturgical contributions to specific recent theatre projects. The first award was presented in 1999.

The end of the twentieth century saw the beginning of an institutional commitment to the "Dramaturg as Creator," as the 2000 conference theme declared, and dramaturgy in the

21st century has pursued this theme. Since its inception LMDA has broadened its objectives, moved past the self-reflexive explorations that marked its early years, and worked to support and validate the efforts of members. LMDA has now begun to promote new original projects. Current President Liz Engelman has fostered such initiatives: several individuals and teams have already received support from the recently inaugurated Dramaturg Driven fund, which awards money to a wide range of dramaturg-initiated performances and projects.

Consonant with LMDA's history of continually expanding the conversation about theatre, Engelman and Board Chair Mark Bly are pursuing an international agenda that has put the organization in contact with dramaturgs, writers, and other theatre artists in Mexico, Russia, and the United Kingdom. And internet collaboration with Winston Neutel on has led to an active email discussion group and a reinvigorated LMDA website, both valuable and accessible resources for members and non-members alike. These projects suggest the direction in which LMDA is moving: while continuing to provide advocacy, support, and a communication network, LMDA is broadening its perspective and connecting its members with artists and ideas from around the world.

Nineteen years ago, Alexis Greene concluded her assessment of LMDA's first year by acknowledging that: "it is this sense of community purpose that, finally, this organization [...] is hoping to fuel." Echoing that sentiment, Geoff Proehl (the indefatigable chronicler of our organization) wrote in 1998 that "LMDA began with a small community of people who came together to eat and to drink and to talk." Over the last twenty years our organization has been shaped by changes large and small—and more transformations are sure to come in the next twenty—yet community and conversation remain the hallmarks of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.

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# LMDA Canada—a history

by Brian Quirt

**Brian Quirt is a Toronto-based director and dramaturg. As Artistic Director of Nightswimming, Brian has commissioned more than a dozen new works of dance and drama. In addition to his work with Nightswimming, Brian is Chair, LMDA Canada (Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas) and from 1998 to 2004 was Company Dramaturg at Toronto's Factory Theatre.**

Although LMDA had a number of influential and active Canadian members prior to 1996, LMDA Canada dates from a meeting of the Canadian Caucus held at that summer's annual conference in Toronto. Inspired by DD Kugler's call to action, the meeting supported the creation of a Canadian Caucus that would advocate for Canadian members and promote Canadian issues to the membership.

DD Kugler had been a long time member by 1996 and encouraged me and other Canadians to join LMDA and attend its conferences. The 1993 Conference in Montreal had begun the slow process of creating an identity for Canada within LMDA, and had started to generate new Canadian members. At that meeting in Toronto, we decided to take advantage of the momentum created during the Conference to launch a membership drive and to address a number of challenges in terms of Canadian involvement in the larger organization.

I agreed to chair the Canadian Caucus and was pleased to bring a Canadian voice to Executive meetings and to the annual general meeting at subsequent Conferences. It quickly became apparent that LMDA's administrative woes during this period presented a substantial impediment to potential Canadian members. Cashing membership fee cheques was complicated and time consuming; mailings to Canadian members often went astray; service from the over-extended New York office was at best spotty.

LMDA Canada was the solution, although it took several years to fully establish. Our goal was to provide better and more immediate benefits to Canadian members, and in doing so to expand Canadian membership in LMDA. We wanted to foster a national conversation about dramaturgical process, specifically related to new play creation, and to provide meeting points for Canadian members to discuss issues and topics specific to our national theatre culture. Further, we hoped that this nascent dramaturgical organization would in time promote the work of Canadian artists, particularly playwrights, among our American colleagues. We found that as LMDA Canada grew our members gained

a higher profile at LMDA Conferences and have had an impact on the nature of how dramaturgy is discussed by the entire organization.

The initial hurdles were administrative, and problems with cheques and mailings continued. The answer, which I proposed at the 1999 New York City Conference, was a semi-autonomous LMDA Canada which would collect membership fees of all Canadian members, publish a bi-annual Canadian newsletter and use those fees to support LMDA events in Canada. Instituting those administrative improvements has led to a greatly expanded membership base in Canada, growing from barely thirty at the 1996 Conference to more than 100 today. Furthermore, LMDA Canada has helped foster a growing sense of community in the Canadian dramaturgical field, particularly through two events founded in 1997.

On February 28, 1997, Alberta Theatre Projects hosted the first annual winter meeting of LMDA Canada during its playRites Festival Blitz Weekend. Over the years, this meeting has brought together dozens of dramaturgs, emerging and experienced alike, for an afternoon of discussion and information-sharing. Hosted then by Rob Moffatt and Bob White, and more recently by Vanessa Porteous and Vicki Stroich, this gathering has given some cohesion to the widely dispersed membership and has helped identify topics of specifically Canadian interest for future Conferences.

The second event was the Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy, presented by LMDA Canada and the Theatre Centre, July 11 and 12, 1997. This annual two-day conference focuses on case studies of specific productions, asking the dramaturg, playwright or director to review the creative process and production. It has been a very successful addition to Toronto's performing arts scene, attracting larger crowds each year. Designed as a free event, featuring at least two artists from elsewhere in the country, and devoted entirely to dramaturgical process, the Mini-Conference receives substantial support from the Toronto Arts Council and now boasts an illustrious list of past speakers.

LMDA Canada published a Canadian edition of the *Employment Guidelines* (2002), has promoted LMDA to students across the country, and represents LMDA at other events and conferences throughout Canada. Offering Canadian-specific advice to artists and institutions with questions about our field, LMDA Canada has helped dramaturgs earn a solid place in the Canadian theatre community.

# BEING THERE: chance memories of a kitchen dog

by Morgan Jenness

**Morgan Jenness spent over a decade at the New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater in various capacities ranging from literary manager to Director of Play Development to Associate Producer. She was Associate Artistic Director at the New York Theater Workshop, and an Associate Director at the Los Angeles Theater Center. She has worked as a dramaturg, workshop director, and/or artistic consultant at theaters and new play programs across the country. She has participated as a visiting artist in several playwriting programs and is currently on the adjunct faculty at Fordham University. In 1998 Ms. Jenness joined the late, lamented Helen Merrill Ltd. as Creative Director and recently moved to the Literary Department at Abrams Artists Agency. In 2002 she won a Special Obie for Long Time Support of Playwrights.**

In Jerzy Kosinski's *Being There*, Chance is beleaguered by various individuals—convinced by his simplicity that he is something he is not—to give his view on a range of philosophical and political matters. Chance's answers often are simply—you have to tend your garden.

Like Chance, and by chance, I never started out to be where I have ended up—never thought about being a dramaturg. In some ways I had lived like a kitchen dog. There are several definitions for what this is—mine is: You leave your door open as you take out the trash, and on your return there is a scruffy little stray sitting in the middle of the floor, looking pathetic, somewhat cute, harmless and very hungry so you take pity on it, feed it and let it stay. Like many people in theater I started as a performer, doing other odd jobs to support my hopes. I had the great stroke of luck (in Colleen Dewhurst's kitchen actually) to meet Lynn Holst, through her former colleague at the Public, Melanie Carvill. Lynn invited me to assist her on a marvelous series she was starting, "Poets at The Public" and to generally help out around the literary office. This was in 1979, and the Public was accepting unsolicited scripts—over 2,000 a year were coming in. There were a number of readers streaming in and out, including people like Linda Hunt, Novella Nelson, Jim Milton, Peregrine Whittlesley and countless others, and since I'd always loved reading plays I asked Lynn's colleague, Robert Blacker, if perhaps I could try out as a reader. I remember the day well. I literally stood near Robert's desk and read the script, making comments about both its strengths and weaknesses throughout and when I'd finished, Robert looked strangely (I think certainly somewhat surprised) at me and said—you know, you just might be a dramaturg.

I had never heard the words "dramaturg" or "dramaturgy" before and I thought it sounded like something one did with a shovel and certainly got rather dirty doing it. Being a kitchen dog, however, I also tended to feel that any door that was potentially opened to me was perhaps worth going through. So I became an official reader and tried to learn as much as possible about this strange activity from everyone around me.

Lynn and the head of the literary department, Gail Merrifield Papp, periodically went to these lunches with other dramaturgs and literary managers in New



**Photos:** Morgan Jenness (above and below, left) sharing her OBIE award with the LMDA membership, as Michele Volansky celebrates at the 2003 Annual Conference in Chicago.

*Photos: Cynthia SoRelle*

York (and sometimes guests from theaters in other parts of the country) and one spring day I was generously invited to come along.

The lunches happened in various places, sometimes hosted at New Dramatists—this particular afternoon was at *Chez Madeleine*, a little bistro near Manhattan Plaza. There were about a dozen people—the ones I remember being there were André Bishop (then literary manager at Playwrights Horizons), Anne Cattaneo, the late Rod Marriott from Circle Rep whom I immediately developed a crush on, Cynthia Jenner, Alexis Greene and, I believe, Steve Carter and Susan Gregg.

I don't remember exactly the actual specifics of the conversation, or even everyone who was at the table that day (apologies to them). I do remember that I was beyond thrilled to be included and sat quietly (for me) listening to

the discussion. Perhaps the rosy, hazy glow of faulty memory has softened edges that may have been there, but I don't remember a lot of complaining about job circumstances and lack of appreciation, or even that much grandstanding or sniping. I do remember being quite struck with the idea that here were people that were really dedicated to a mission, quietly helping to create an environment which was supportive and challenging for theater artists, people that were integrally involved in a shaping a theater landscape at large, and that perhaps my original reaction to the word dramaturg defining someone who got dirty using a shovel was perhaps not so farfetched. Listening to the conversation it often struck me similar to the conversations had by great and dedicated gardeners—talking about tilling and fertilizing the soil of their individual theatrical garden plots and tending the seedlings and plants which were growing in them. There were discussions that felt they were about an extreme sensitivity and dedication to the care and nurturing of living organisms, playwright and play, weeding and pruning, some discussion of bringing the ultimate fruit and flowers to the marketplace, but there was a sense of service to something larger that really impressed me quite profoundly.

I think that day was when I decided that that being involved with a process that brought both high quality nutrition and great beauty into the society was something well worth dedicating one's self to, and though there have been times of great drought, cultural kudzu, devouring insects, poisonous chemicals seeping into the ground water (feel free to bring your own metaphorical definitions), and too much marketplace pressure on what should be an organic process, it's still something I feel is important—and I think that simple statement from that simple yet complex character is indeed absolutely correct—You need to tend the garden.

Perhaps chance has brought me to actually being a kitchen garden dog.

\* \* \*

Special thanks to the gardeners of the Public Theater who so first inspired me and allowed me to be there: Gail Merrifield Papp, Meir Ribalow, Melanie Carvill, Lynn Holst, Robert Blacker, Bill Hart, and the ultimate dramaturg—Joseph Papp.



# Interviews with the Past Presidents of LMDA

by Nichole Gantshar

**Nichole Gantshar is the associate literary manager at Syracuse Stage. In her other life she masquerades as a newspaper editor. Her freelance articles have also appeared on CBS Sportsline and in Women's Basketball, Ice Age, Skating, Scene and Volleyball Magazine. This past season, she finally got to merge her two worlds while dramaturging a production of *The Front Page*. Nichole's also worked for Playwrights Horizons, Richmond Art Theater, The Richmond Ballet, National Actor's Theater, The Milwaukee Ballet and Pittsburgh Public Theater. Nichole has a MFA in dramaturgy from SUNY Stony Brook.**

**Three of our past presidents.**

**Photo 1:** Victoria Abrash.

**Photo 2:** Anne Cattaneo.

**Photo 3:** DD Kugler.

*Photos 1 & 3: Barbara Gollob*

*Photo 2: Sarah Krulwich*

I hope these interviews will serve as more than a look back at LMDA's past. Our intention with this project was to learn a bit about LMDA's past and the people who helped create it. It's exciting to hear Anne Cattaneo talk about the creative fever of her tenure. The interviews also look to LMDA's future. My hope is that these interviews will be something you will keep and refer back to when you need to be reminded why we do what we do.

As David Copelin said, "That's always the hope, that the next thing you read or the next thing you see will remind you why you went into this." It inspired me to hear Tim Sanford, Artistic Director of Playwrights Horizons, say his mentors were every playwright he had worked with throughout his career.

I went to my 20<sup>th</sup> high school reunion a few years ago. It was glorious to reunite with people who knew my past and remembered my dreams. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LMDA's founding gave me the same opportunity. I had known most of the former presidents for years. One had been my dramaturgy professor, another got me back into the profession after I left.

So enjoy your 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

## Alexis Greene

### LMDA President 1985-1986, 1987-1988

**Nichole Gantshar:** What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?

Alexis Greene: I was president twice: the first year of LMDA, in 1986, and again during its third year. I would say the biggest challenge was to prove that we were an organization with staying power, that our reason for coming into being was sufficient to sustain the organization indefinitely.

**What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

I'm most proud that the organization gained a foothold with members and the theatre community, that we proved the organization was necessary and effective.

On a practical level, I was proud that I was able to secure a home at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, for after our early years at New Dramatists, we had to find another venue. CASTA, largely through the assistance of Edwin Wilson, gave us a free home for many years.

**How has the profession changed since you were president?**

I think it's clear that the profession has become generally accepted, that playwrights and directors assume that, when they work at a theatre, chances are there will be a dramaturg on hand to participate. Clearly, also, the role of literary manager has become accepted on the staffs of most theatres, where once upon a time they were a rarity.

**What were your goals as president? What were the roadblocks? Has any of that changed?**

Again, my goal as president was mainly to increase the acceptance of this field that was relatively new in the American theatre. To be sure, there had always been "play doctors," but the idea of a dramaturg, a person who knew theatre in a practical way and also a scholarly way, was new, and the concept of a permanent literary manager on the staff of a theatre was also comparatively fresh. I wanted to establish the viability of the organization by establishing the tradition of an annual conference, and I achieved that. I and the members wanted to convince theatres that dramaturgs and literary managers should be paid more, should not be in the category of "last hired, first fired," and my success on that score was limited.

**Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

A funny anecdote...that's a hard one. I have memories of heading down to the post office with Larry Maslon and getting out enormous mailings. I have fond memories of sitting around New Dramatists during our brown-bag lunches [editor's note: LMDA first began as a series of lunches in NYC. The members would meet from time to time for the

**Alexis Greene** is an author, editor, theater critic, and dramaturg. Her most recent books include the biography *Lucille Lortel: The Queen of Off Broadway* (Limelight Editions) and *Women As Playwrights: Three Decades of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize*, which she edited for University of Texas Press. As a Literary Manager, most recently she ran the Herrick Theatre Foundation's new play competition at the Barrington Stage Company (2003-2004). Currently she reviews Off-Broadway for the *Hollywood Reporter*. Ms. Greene holds a PhD from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, from which she received an Alumni Achievement Award in 2005. She was co-founder and first president of LMDA.

lunches Greene mentions]. I remember our annual conference at the O'Neill Playwrights Center, and listening to Joe Chaikin talk haltingly but beautifully about theatre. I remember sitting in C. Lee Jenner's living room in Greenwich Village (Jenner was co-founder with me) and hearing our pro-bono lawyer tell everyone in the place, which was crowded with dramaturgs, that, if our organization made it past the five-year mark, we would probably survive. So I don't know about funny, but those are some of the moments of our birth that I recall.

**Who was your mentor?**

Well, I suppose if I had a mentor it would have been Rod Marriott, the wonderful dramaturg and literary manager for Circle Repertory Company, who would sit in those brown-bag lunch sessions and talk quietly about plays, and I learned about new plays and young playwrights simply by listening to him. Susan Gregg, who at the time was literary manager at New Dramatists and is now associate artistic director at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, was also enormously helpful.

**Are you still a dramaturg and involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

Currently I am literary manager at the Barrington Stage Company in Sheffield, Massachusetts, where last year I ran a national playwriting competition. But that is really a part-time job, and I have always mingled dramaturgical duties with other work, such as writing books about theatre and reviewing theatre.

**What excites you about the profession? Has that changed over the years?**

What excited me back in 1986 and still excites me now is that the profession allows you to work with new writers and new plays. Obviously dramaturgy is vitally important when rehearsing and producing classical plays, but I've always been drawn to new writers. To me, there is something about helping a play move from the moment it lands on your desk, to a reading, to a workshop, and then to a full production that is incredibly creative and rewarding. It's a long, long process, potentially full of pitfalls. Can you convince your artistic director that the play is worth taking a chance on? Is the playwright open to working on the script? Can you get the best actors, the best director for the play? But on those occasions when it happens, there's a kind of joy in it.



## Cynthia Lee Jenner

### LMDA President 1986-1987

**Image:** Brochure cover from the 1987 LMDA Annual Conference in Minneapolis.

**What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

The biggest challenge was logistical and financial. All the money we really had was from dues. We wanted LMDA to be a national organization, not a tri-state organization. That was terribly important.

Alexis Greene had been the first president. When the organization was founded, Alex was head of one committee—incorporation—and I the other—bylaws. We incorporated as a New York state organization. She wanted to be president the first time. I didn't want to become president after her, but she said I had to because of continuity. So, I took on the second round. For our first conference, we brought in speakers from out of town, a subsidized conference at Columbia University. And we also had our first out of town in Minneapolis—which we wouldn't have been able to do without the wonderful Mark Bly.

Alexis got out a couple of newsletters, and I got four out. The newsletter was meant for people outside the tri-state areas so they could feel they were participating and not in the shadow of NYC. We were only two years old.

**What accomplishment are you most proud of from your tenure?**

We met with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, and they said there were many not-for profit organizations begun every year. Of those new organizations, 95 percent are done in three years. It's rare to survive. So it's a pat on the back for the organization that it's still around.

The biggest challenge has always been to raise money. I wanted to leave a legacy for the next president. None of this is very philosophical, and it wasn't entirely possible to do everything we wanted. But we were able to get our 501c(3) status so contributions were tax deductible.

I am most proud of the fact we survived and had the out-of-town convention.

## How has the profession changed since you were president?

I haven't the faintest idea. I do know the word dramaturg is not as foreign in theater circles as it was then. I'm also glad playwrights and other practitioners aren't so hostile to it.

I'm also happy ... I think a dramaturg can earn a living wage now. That was not possible when we first started.

When we began, LMDA provided a forum for incoming dramaturgs to discuss mutual concerns. I don't think the challenges are different than they were: Networking, staying alive, setting up contacts where we can help and nurture playwrights.

## Who was your mentor?

Only one of my mentors was a dramaturg. I started out to be an actor. I went to Yale. I was the class of 64. [I started under] Dean [Curtis] Canfield and left under Dean [Robert] Brustein, who wasn't interested in our group of folks. At a certain point during my acting career, I decided I would not like to go out of town again. I needed something to do and signed up for an archeology course, something to keep my mind moving. Down the hall was a friend in a class taught by Harold Clurman. Pretty soon, I had a masters degree. He taught me how to read a script in a way that wasn't from an actor's perspective. That was critical.

That led me to be a journalist. There my mentor in that was Eileen Barth. Then there was my undergraduate professor James O. Barnhill at Brown. Later I would say to him, "I want to try..." and he would say, "You need to go here," and "You need to go to the O'Neill." At that time, critics functioned as dramaturgs.

After that ... Bonnie Marranca had been dramaturg at American Place Theatre. She wanted to leave and said, "You would be the perfect person to do this." Throughout my life there was a little collection of people who helped me take steps through doors. What was behind those doors was the perfect background of a dramaturg ... the ability to look at a text and see whether it would be a play. Was it a good text...? Is it literature or is it theater? Would it work on stage? When I learned to write myself, I was able to tell if the writing was good. You always know but now I knew why.

## Do you have a funny anecdote from your tenure?

It was so long ago!

## Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?

I'm 65 and retired now. My last job in the profession was as a professor at Rutgers.

LITERARY MANAGERS AND DRAMATURGS OF AMERICA, INC.

First Annual Meeting and Conference

DRAMATURGY AND PRODUCTION

August 21-23, 1986  
New Dramatists  
424 West 44th Street  
New York, New York

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 1986 - 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

REPORT ON LMDA  
Alexis Greene, President

ARTISTIC AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS IN THE FACE OF FINANCIAL DEFICITS  
Mark Bly - Literary Manager/Associate Dramaturg, The Guthrie Theatre  
David Copelin - Dramaturg  
Alexis Greene - Literary Manager, George Street Playhouse  
Joan Patchen - Executive Director, The Playwrights' Center  
Richard Pectengill - Dramaturg, Court Theatre

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
COCKTAIL PARTY  
(Cash Bar)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 1986 - 10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

DRAMATURGY FOR THE NON-LINEAR THEATRE  
Anne Cattaneo - Dramaturg, The Second Stage and The Acting Company  
David King - Dramaturg, The American National Theater  
Jonathan Marks - Literary Director, American Repertory Theatre

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

THE DRAMATURG AS OBJECTIVE VOICE IN REHEARSAL  
Mark Bly - Literary Manager/Associate Dramaturg, The Guthrie Theatre  
Anne Cattaneo - Dramaturg, The Second Stage and The Acting Company  
Oskar Sostis - Dramaturg, Eureka Theatre Company  
Emily Mann - Playwright and Director

After an initial panel discussion, the panelists and the conference participants will break up into smaller groups for further discussion.

More...

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS: Alexis Greene, Robert Weikins, Allen Davis

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 1986 - 10:00 AM - 12 NOON

CROSSOVER AUDIENCES: CHOOSING PLAYS TO REACH A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE, AND REACHING OUT TO A WIDER AUDIENCE  
SaraLeigh Carnay - Dramaturg  
Edward M. Cohen - Associate Director, Jewish Repertory Theatre  
Allen Davis III - Director Playwrights Workshop, Puerto Rican Travelling Theatre  
Fred Hudson - Artistic Director, Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center

LMDA BUSINESS MEETING 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

2:00 PM - 3:45 PM

TELEVISION STORY EDITING AS DRAMATURGY  
Corinne Jacker - Playwright and Story Editor  
Jose Rivera - Playwright and author of The House of Ramon Isidias  
Luis Soto - President, De Soto Productions; director, The House of Ramon Isidias for "American Playhouse" on PBS.

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

DRAMATURGY AND THE CLASSICS TODAY: WHO 'OWNS' THE SCRIPT?  
Michael Lupu - Dramaturg, The Guthrie Theatre  
Lawrence Maslon - Dramaturg

Other panelists to be announced

6:15 PM - Announcement of new LMDA Executive Committee, to be followed by a cocktail party (cash bar).

LMDA would like to extend its thanks to Tom Dunn and the staff of New Dramatists for support in organizing this conference.

ALL PANELS AND EVENTS WILL TAKE PLACE AT NEW DRAMATISTS, 424 W. 44th St. BETWEEN 9th and 10th AVENUES. FOR MORE INFORMATION: (212) 489-0812.

Images: Above, the schedule of events for the First LMDA Annual Conference at New Dramatists in August of 1986.



# David Copelin

## LMDA President 1988-1989

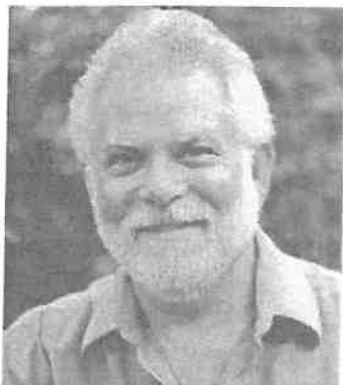


Photo: David Copelin

### How did you get involved with LMDA?

In 1975, I was hired as Literary Manager by the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. I'd been a teacher at the University of California, and I was also what is called a "snot-nosed Yalie," with a D.F.A. from the Drama School, an attitude, and very little actual experience of the theatre. My learning curve with Gordon Davidson was steep, and I fell off it more than once. He was very patient. The country's literary managers met haphazardly, but meet we did, at the O'Neill and a few other places. There was talk as early as 1976 of forming a literary managers' union. When I mentioned this to Bill Wingate, the Taper's Managing Director, he replied, "You'll all be fired." I think he was kidding.

In 1980, I moved to New York to be the first Literary Manager at New Dramatists. I found that the other dramaturgs in the city met monthly for lunch and discussion of common challenges and achievements. In 1985, thanks to the efforts of Alexis Greene, Cynthia Jenner and others, LMDA was born. I was one of the founding members. In 1988, Alexis and the late Rod Marriott called me up and said, "Have we got a deal for you." That's how I became president. I had the time and the interest so I did it.

### What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?

Challenges, plural and interconnected. First was LMDA's credibility with its own membership. We had maybe 300 members then, but the infrastructure wasn't very good at keeping track of them. We had a database, but somehow no one knew how to make it work properly. We were lame at chasing people to pay their dues, though many did so because they believed in the organization's potential.

There also was some uncertainty at the time about whether dramaturgy as a profession was a flash in the pan. It seemed to me that there was a real possibility that dramaturgy might be taken over by universities and turned into a primarily academic enterprise, thus estranging it from the professional theatre as a whole. This hasn't happened, thanks to the wisdom of such university-based dramaturgs as Geoff Proehl. He wanted us to get on-line years before most of us knew what the Internet was, or could do. Can you imagine LMDA without e-mail and our glorious, cranky listserv?

Starting in the mid-1970s, as the number of available theatres increased, the number of new scripts submitted to them also increased. They had to be read; most theatres at least pretended to be seriously interested in producing new plays, and some actually specialized in so doing. Funds from the Ford Foundation, and later from the NEA Theatre Program under Arthur Ballet, jump-started the mass hiring by resident theatres of people who could function as literary managers and dramaturgs. But when such funds dried up, there was a question as to whether the theatres would find other support to enable them to keep their literary departments (which was usually one person trying to do everything).

Our sense of uncertainty went along with the common feeling of being overworked, underpaid and underappreciated. There was a lot of frustration. Some of it had to do with a generation gap, I think. The frequent combination of older artistic directors and younger dramaturgs caused some friction, which in the best situations was mitigated by strong personalities learning to work together for the good of the theatre. Dramaturgs tend to be well-read, have earned degrees, and can

articulate their thoughts, but these are not always advantages in an artistic enterprise that often mistrusts intellectuals on sight. Not without reason.

**What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

The best thing I did for LMDA was to ask Anne Cattaneo to become president when my term was over!

I also recruited our first Canadian members, DD Kugler and Michael Devine, and we had our first annual Conference on the West Coast. I wasn't sure that we could create a good conference in San Francisco from 3000 miles away, but thanks to Larry Eilenberg and others, we did. I still have letters of gratitude from people who attended.

**How has the profession changed since you were president?**

It's grown up and it's expanded. I think we are much more confident in who we are, sure that we have a place in the North American theatre, and that one of our highest functions is to challenge the forces of rampant commercialism. Yes, levels of public subsidy are far too low, but someone has to be on the side of the best theatre, not just the most simpleminded, gooey, and trivial. After all, "bums in seats" have brains and hearts attached. The good artistic directors know this, and they need someone around them who is focused on a different "bottom line" than managers or board members sometimes are.

Jon Jory once criticized dramaturgs who didn't seem to have

Educated at Columbia and Yale, David Copelin taught theatre at the University of California before becoming Literary Manager of the Mark Taper Forum in 1975. Moving to New York to be the first Literary Manager at New Dramatists, he created the ScriptShare program and recruited the organization's first national members. Later, David held various dramaturgical posts at the Phoenix Theater, CBS/Fox Video, and Warner Bros. Pictures. During a stint as Director of Play Development at Arena Stage, David became one of LMDA's founding members. In 1988, he was elected President of LMDA. After more teaching at NYU, the University of Texas, and Louisiana State University, David ran the Playwrights Unit of Marin Theatre Company in California. In 1996, he moved to Toronto, where he was Artistic Director of ScriptLab from 1999 to 2003. Following the publication of his book *Practical Playwriting* in 1998, David began teaching playwriting and working as a freelance dramaturg. His dark comedy *Bella Donna* won the Moondance International Film Festival's Seahorse Award for Best Stage Play in 2004, and it has just received the New Play Award from the 2005 Toronto Fringe Festival. *Bella Donna* will be produced there in July.

any vision, who didn't challenge him. He called the timid dramaturgs "Peoriaturgs," as in, "But will it play in Peoria?"

I remember when Doug Wager and Jim Nicola [David's colleagues at Arena Stage] went to see *The Gospel at Colonus* and said "We have to do this at Arena." And Zelda Fichandler, Arena's founder and Producing Director, skeptical at first, ultimately went to Arena's board of trustees for extra money. *Gospel* is a huge show, a real budget-buster. The board responded to her plea, and the production was a great success. Ultimately any theatre has to be run by artists, not accountants.

**Can you share a funny anecdote or story from your tenure?**

Anne Bogart gave the keynote speech at the LMDA Conference in 1989. She said something which hit me then and has resonated ever since: that something was Art, "and consequently not meant to last." I think she was getting at what the late Garland Wright used to say: "When I do a classic play, I'm not interested in what makes it a classic. I'm interested in what makes it a play."

**Who was your mentor?**

Robert Brustein. I had him my freshman year at Columbia. He was a terrific teacher. When he was made Dean at Yale Drama School, I followed him up there, and I was his TA for a while. He introduced me to the great literature of the theatre. Gordon Davidson also was a mentor. Bob taught me why, Gordon taught me how.

**Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

I'm primarily a playwright these days. It's a lot harder than dramaturgy, and the pay is even worse. But so what? I'm still a freelance dramaturg, and I teach scriptwriting through a workshop in Toronto called *Practical Playwriting*, which is also the title of a book I wrote a few years ago.

**What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

It's still the same. When you are reading someone's script and it blows you away, it renews everything. That's always the hope—that the next play you read or the next production you see will remind you of why you went into this odd business. It happens rarely, but it does happen.

I'm also excited that there has been a change in the way other theatre artists look at us. A lot of directors and playwrights used to be wary of dramaturgs, fearing that we were rigid, prescriptive, cold, intellectual theoreticians who would tell writers how to write and directors how to direct. But as time has gone by, playwrights, directors, and dramaturgs have learned how to work together, how to trust each other's expertise, and how to negotiate boundaries. Alisa Solomon's old cry of "Samurai dramaturg!" is heard no more.

# Anne Cattaneo

## LMDA President 1989-1992



Photo: Anne Cattaneo  
photo: Sara Krulwich

### What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?

The biggest challenge was to extend the range of LMDA's activities, to raise its visibility at a time when the profession's visibility was growing. And I tried to do it by expanding the number of programs. I wanted to make it a really national organization. I started the regional vice presidents and approached the Canadians about joining the organization. We changed the names to Literary Managers and Dramaturg of the Americas and hoped South America would be next.

The regional VPs (vice presidents) were an important addition. I didn't want conferences to be created only by New York people. I really wanted to be organized and working with dramaturgs in each host city. We had to have a real structure in the organization. I also started the *Script Exchange* [with Lynn Thomson], which I thought was an important idea—literary managers sharing work and advocating work they admired with each other. This is actually what we do, whereas we are perceived as people who reject writers.

We also got Mark Bly's Production Diaries project started. And administered the National Theater Translation Fund for three years. We raised some money from the Mellon and Pew but eventually couldn't keep it going (after several years). Now everyone is interested in translation. The translation fund was an idea ahead of its time. I couldn't continue it past its pilot years.

### What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?

Those programs (detailed above) worked well, and I'm happy that they did. I'm glad the regional VP structure is still in place and the *Script Exchange* has continued. I also am grateful to Susan Bougetz and Emily Morse for getting the New Dramaturgs' program underway.

I had hoped the Production Diaries would continue. Mark finished a second volume. It was a brilliant conceit on his part to show the work of dramaturgs.

During my tenure, there were things I wasn't able to accomplish. I wanted to write a contract for dramaturgs and my dream was to merge LMDA into SSDC (The Society for Stage Directors and Choreographers). I wanted to make our work Tony eligible, so dramaturgs could also become Tony voters. I wanted to make it a union, a guild along the lines of those protecting choreographers, directors, designers and playwrights. We had a number of meetings about that, but I wasn't able to make it happen. I thought the profession was on an upswing. I thought bringing it under the auspices of the SSDC, would mean they would represent dramaturgs. And then the *Rent* case came and blew everything out of the water. It wasn't the time.

### How has the profession changed since you were president?

It seems as if there was very interesting work being done [in the 90s. When Anne was president]. Janice Paran [at the McCarter Theater] was working with Emily [Mann] on *Having Our Say*. Shelby [Jiggets] was working on *Bring in da Noise*, [at the Public Theater] Lynn [Thomson] was working on *Rent*. I was doing *Orchards* [based on Chekhov short stories]. Oskar [Eustis] was doing *Angels [in America]*. And the work was coming] out of regional theaters and to Broadway.

The profession hasn't been as visible in that type of large arena as it was during the time. The *Rent* case had its fallout. There were numbers [of playwrights and theaters] that won't work with dramaturgs. It's taken a while to recover from that. The Public and others won't credit dramaturgs, but that will change now with Oskar [Eustis] at the Public.

Four or five years ago, a group of us went to the Dramatists' Guild. Oskar, myself, Mark Bly Janice Paran, Emily Mann, whose idea it was. We spoke to the Dramatists Guild Council, an august group, which included Edward Albee. And my impression was that since then the relationship between

**Anne Cattaneo is the dramaturg of Lincoln Center Theater and the creator and head of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab. A three term past president of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, she is the recipient of LMDA's first Lessing Award for lifetime achievement of dramaturgy. She has worked widely as a dramaturg on classical plays with directors such as James Lapine, Robert Wilson, Adrian Hall, Jack O'Brien, Robert Falls, Mark Lamos and JoAnne Akalaitis. As the director of the Playworks Program at the Phoenix Theater during the late 1970s, she commissioned and developed plays by Wendy Wasserstein (*Isn't It Romantic*) Mustapha Matura (*Meetings*) and Christopher Durang (*Beyond Therapy*). For the Acting Company, she created two projects: *Orchards* (published by Knopf and Broadway Play Publishing) which presented seven Chekhov stories adapted for the stage by Maria Irene Fornes, Spalding Gray, John Guare, David Mamet, Wendy Wasserstein, Michael Weller and Samm-Art Williams, and *Love's Fire* (published by William Morrow) responses to Shakespeare sonnets by Eric Bogosian, William Finn, John Guare, Tony Kushner, Marsha Norman, Ntozake Shange and Wendy Wasserstein. Her own translations of 20th Century German playwrights include Brecht's *Galileo* (Goodman Theater, 1986, starring Brian Dennehy) and Botho Strauss's *Big and Little* (Phoenix production starring Barbara Barrie, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.) She is currently on the faculty at Juilliard.**

playwrights and dramaturgs have slightly eased up. There was so much dramaturg bashing in the past. We were brutally honest with them and I think we made a good impression. We are not the enemy and we are not really the problem. We were honest about the advocacy we do—which in their heart of hearts they know. They know we are the ones advocating new works. We are not the ones stopping new work. That's being perceived more by the playwrights.

### Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?

I remember with great pleasure the conferences I put together. The amazing banquet in Seattle. It was a beautiful lodge and grounds only available for Native Americans, which we were able to use courtesy of one of our host theaters. The Philadelphia conference was very interesting ... Atlanta. Chicago. There were of course a lot of bars, in addition to the theater sessions. Each one had its own flavor and done with the help of the people in that particular city.

### Who was your mentor?

Botho Strauss and Dieter Stürm. They were both dramaturgs at the Berlin Schaubühne in the 70s. Botho also was working as a playwright.

### Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?

I work with dramaturgs from time to time, but it isn't enough. I'm a member. Unfortunately, the LMDA conferences are always in June, when my Directors Lab takes place, so I haven't been able to go the conference for some time. The Lab goes in when the rooms here at Lincoln Center are empty. We have 300 people working around the clock, and I can't get to anything, including my son's birthday party. This year, I had hoped the conference would be in May.

### What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?

It's a wonderful profession and endlessly new one. I just finished an interesting year. We did *Henry IV*, *Rivals*, and I did an interesting piece on the side with Mark Lamos called *Renaissance Muse* featuring Andreas Scholl, a brilliant young German counter tenor. The whole Directors Lab—it is only appropriate it came out of dramaturgy. I'm raising two kids who are entering their teens. I'm now at a point where I'm thinking of writing a book. I want to create another project. It's good to push yourself to be in a creative—to do new things. I've always been very fond of the profession for that reason. It has great flexibility and you can make out of it what you want. I've stayed in the profession and kept the title of dramaturg because in a way no one knows what you can or can't do—I hope I've expanded the boundaries a little.

# Victoria Abrash

LMDA President 1992-1994



Photo: Victoria Abrash

## **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

Continuing and growing programs with a tiny staff and limited funding.

The main solutions I found during my tenure were:

- 1) Reaching out to the members to share and pursue their ideas for LMDA and to try to make widespread participation as appealing and accessible as possible.
- 2) Emily Morse, and no account of this time period at LMDA should overlook Emily's importance as LMDA's administrator. She was the only paid staff at the time. She kept the office running smoothly, kept members in the loop, made the programs and communications possible and made everyone she dealt with on LMDA's behalf feel good. LMDA owes a lot to her.

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

The main issues were communication, building stability and programmatic strength. I inherited a strong, active organization from Anne Cattaneo, and continuing and growing the programming was a challenge. And yes, I would say that they were accomplished. I am perhaps most proud of opening LMDA actively to its Canadian membership as it had not been before. LMDA had just changed its name to "Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas," instead of "of America," largely to make sure that the organization was not seen as limited to the United States. The Canadian membership was small but significant and I wanted to make sure that it became a clearly integral part of the organization. DD Kugler came on as the first Canadian VP, and the first LMDA conference in Canada was the fabulous bilingual conference held in Montreal in 1993, with DD bringing Shelley Tepperman on to lead our Canadian organizational team.

Other challenges and activities of my presidency: Though LMDA is famously rooted in NYC lunchtime gatherings, other than the conference, there had been little activity outside New York, so we also put a priority on activating the regional vice presidents, who organized events for dramaturgs in different areas. In New York, we reached out to other organizations and held several public events collaboratively with the Dramatists Guild and the SSD&C Foundation. New Dramaturgs was also very active, with regular gatherings, discount tickets and post show discussion events and the like. The University pre-conference grew, under Geoff Proehl and Susan Jonas's guidance, along with LMDA's publications—the Dramaturgy Teaching *Source Book*, the listings of dramaturgy training programs and dramaturgy internships, and the *Script Exchange*, which Lynn Thomson began and edited. The National Theatre Translation Fund, which had been developed by Carey Perloff and brought to LMDA by Anne Cattaneo was going strong under

Roysten Coppinger's leadership, supporting theatre translations. I had many conversations with the CUNY theatre program in an attempt to develop a dramaturgy database or archive, which could perhaps have held production protocols, information on translations and adaptations, research, program notes and other dramaturgical materials as a resource, but it proved to be an elusive goal. Geoff Proehl suggested at this time that he'd like to look into setting up a dramaturgy email list, and I said that would be great if he could figure out how to do it. The dramaturgy listserv is really my only connection to LMDA now, and I think it is a hugely important service to the field.

**How has the profession changed since you were president?**

Dramaturgy is simply more of a given now—we used to have circular conversations about whether dramaturgy was really a profession, etc, etc. Whether writers and directors wanted us, whether theatres would hire us. We had to make the argument about how someone always fulfilled the dramaturgical function in theatre, whether anyone held the title or had skills or training or not—probably the same kind of tedious conversation that the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen had to have about directing 125 years ago. Now there's really no question that dramaturgy is a critical contribution to the theatre. Most resident theatres expect to have a dramaturg as soon as they can afford one (or even before).

**Victoria Abrash** has served as a dramaturg for a wide range of theatres including the Mark Taper Forum, the Public Theatre, the Acting Company and many others on both new works and classics. Her long relationship with Ping Chong & Company included co-adapting *The Edda* with director Ping Chong for the Lincoln Center Festival and editing and conducting an interview with Chong for his recently published anthology, *The East/West Quartet*. She has also served as a dramaturg on the staff of the Philadelphia Drama Guild, the Women's Project and Productions, Manhattan Theatre Club and Second Stage. Since 1999, she has been the director of the TCG National Conference for Theatre Communications Group, for whom she also served as executive producer of *Preserving the Legacy*, a series of videotaped oral history interviews with nine leaders of the American theatre. She currently teaches theatre at Eugene Lang College of the New School University and has also taught at SUNY Purchase, Fordham University, Marymount Manhattan, Williams College, SUNY Stonybrook and elsewhere. She writes educational and production materials for Lincoln Center Theater and elsewhere, has served as a panelist and screener for many new play programs, and is a site reporter for the National Endowment for the Arts.



Richard Pettengill and Victoria Abrash on a panel at the 1993 LMDA Annual Conference. Photo: Barbara Gollob

Most writers and directors who have come up in the past 20-25 years expect to work with a dramaturg and know how to do so productively. There are dramaturgs in dance, opera, dramaturgs get lured away to film, TV and Disney, dramaturgs now sometimes get title page program credit, there are jokes about dramaturgy in the *New Yorker*, because it's assumed that a literate audience will know what a dramaturg is—the profession has come out of the corners to a central position in the field.

It still requires long hours of work for usually insufficient money and insufficient credit, but it is no longer in the corners.

**Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

I don't know if I can.

**Who was your mentor?**

As is the case for many of the mid and younger generations in our profession, Anne Cattaneo was my mentor. I first heard that there was such a thing as a dramaturg from Annie, and she has been and continues to be a teacher, a support and an inspiration.

**Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

I do still work as a dramaturg, and I remained actively involved with LMDA for several years after my presidency, on the board and organizing the New York LMDA Conference, but these days my main connection to LMDA is through the listserv.

**What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

The potential, the variety, the excitement of collaboration, the pleasure of working with talented people to bring a new, meaningful work of theatre into being continue to excite me. That hasn't changed.

# Tim Sanford

## LMDA Co-President 1994-1996



Photo: Tim Sanford

photo: Susan Johann

### **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

I would say interestingly enough it was the person who came before me in the job, which also turned out to be the biggest challenge facing me when I became artistic director at Playwrights Horizons. Andre Bishop created big shoes to fill. And that was a big challenge for Don Scardino, then for me. In the same way, LMDA had grown so much as an organization under Anne Cattaneo and Vicki Abrash—they had created so many programs and initiatives—that it was tough to live up to their example.

### **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

We did a conference in Los Angeles and one in Toronto. I'm proud that I got Bob Whitehead to speak as our keynote. My impression—but there may be lots of factors—was after the Toronto conference the Canadian contingency took hold a lot more.

I also was very interested in developing the regional identities. It was an area that hadn't been built up. That was something I thought was important. LMDA grew out of informal regional meetings. The concept had been created, but there wasn't much happening in that area. I put effort into having members in each region, encouraging people to have more ongoing regional interaction. Fostering opportunities was important for our identity.

The roadblocks in accomplishing our goals were money. In terms of energy, LMDA had run so much on volunteer energy. And it burned people out. Our part time administrator was moving on to other horizons and it was quite challenging to find someone starting from scratch, part time, to administrate the organization. It is very difficult when you have rotating presidents on a volunteer basis. None of our treasurers had particular training as a budget person. We experimented with keeping prices down. I remember being very happy about getting a NYSCA grant, and also relieved because it was also about the time that the NEA was shutting down.

### **How has the profession changed since you were president?**

I now have a Literary Manager (Lisa Timmel) with a degree in dramaturgy. The Literary Manager before Lisa was a writer. And my training was not in dramaturgy. I think the teaching of dramaturgy may be settling in so that there are more well trained dramaturgs.

**Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

My car was broken into during the LA conference. During a screening of *The Heidi Chronicles*, my wallet disappeared. I thought it was gone, and then it was delivered back to me three months later.

**Who was your mentor?**

I've learned from every writer I've worked with. A lot of playwrights I've worked with are my mentors. When you work with someone like Craig Lucas or Chris Durang—there are all these people—you learn something from them. Andre Bishop. Eric Overmyer. Michael Shurtleff, they are all my mentors.

**Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

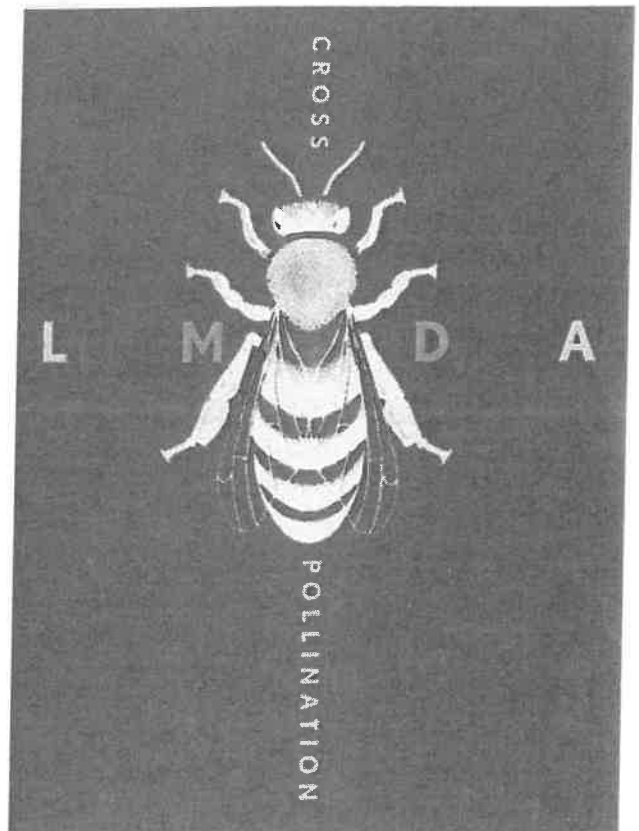
In my day, we said dramaturgy was a function, not a job. Yes, I am a dramaturg because I'm working on new plays.

**What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

The field excites me. I don't get excited by the profession but by the activity. I'm ceaselessly inspired by the originality, perseverance, intelligence and big heartedness of the community of playwrights and musical-theater writers in our country.

I was very into expanding the notion of what a dramaturg is. My pet peeve was the fact we're called dramaturgs and literary managers and the implied separation of the jobs. When I was co-president, everyone wanted to be a dramaturg. Yet there are far more jobs as Literary Managers. And certainly at our theater, the Literary Manager is the linchpin of the organization, in terms of finding plays and being able to see their potential. I hope that spilt between the "LM" and the "D" is narrowing.

You will remember [the interviewer was a reader for Tim] how tough we were in our standard of how to read a play and write about it. We're still just as tough. I think it's important to keep our standards of reading and analysis as high as we expect the standards of our writers to be. And from my experience, those standards are indeed very high and very inspiring.



**Image:** The brochure image from the Tenth Annual LMDA Conference, entitled "Cross-Pollination in the Theater: Art, Enterprise, and Dramaturgy." The conference was held in Los Angeles from June 23-26, 1995.

**Tim Sanford** is the Artistic Director of Playwrights Horizons, where he has served since 1984, beginning as a literary intern, then serving for nine years as Literary Manager and two years as Associate Artistic Director, before assuming leadership of the theater in January 1996. In his tenure he has produced writers as diverse as Billy Aronson, Keith Bunin, David Cale, Kirsten Childs, Kia Corthron, Brian Crawley & Jeanine Tesori, Tom Donaghy, Richard Dresser, Christopher Durang, Amy Freed, Jessica Goldberg, Adam Guettel & Tina Landau, Peter Hedges, Christopher Kyle, James Lapine, Kenneth Lonergan, Wendy MacLeod, Marlane Meyer, Richard Nelson, Lynn Nottage, Kira Obolensky, Theresa Rebeck, José Rivera, James Ryan, Christopher Shinn, Nicky Silver, Evan Smith, Kelly Stuart, Kathleen Tolan, and James Valcq & Fred Alley. He is a past President of The Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and a contributor to *Dramaturgy in American Theater*. He has a B.A. from Occidental College and a Ph.D. in Dramatic Literature from Stanford University.



# Erin Sanders

LMDA Co-President 1994-1996



Photo: Erin Sanders

## **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

The biggest challenge is still money. There was never really enough. There were lots of hopes about the things we were going to do. We were always struggling to get funds and do everything on as limited a budget as we could without raising dues. But everyone was a volunteer.

The second challenge was the mission. What was the best analogy for what we were doing? Were we a guild or were we a service organization or a union? Should we try to help our members get some collective bargaining powers so there was more standardization of what dramaturgs would be paid? Or should we focus on elevating the profession more—so it would be seen as a more necessary component in theater? Or was it more like a guild, helping to get health insurance and those types of things? Should there be funds for catastrophic events or if something happens like unemployment insurance, workman's compensation?

Different issues have been important in LMDA at various times of our history. What were the differences between the professional and the academic realms? We [as dramaturgs] don't get paid enough money. People say, "I'm freelance, and I can't make a living." Afterward, the debate becomes more about the philosophical and esoteric points of the profession. We wanted to examine the finer points of new play development. Other people were more concerned how to use LMDA to help get tenure.

Time was always one challenge. We were an all-volunteer organization, so that was a big issue. As president you had to have something of a sympathetic work environment. And a lot of that had to come from your theater. When I was co-president, I was at Second Stage and [the AD] Carole Rothman was very supportive, but at the same time she didn't want it to impact any of the professional work I was doing.

Office space was always a problem for the organization. Where should it be? The CUNY space wasn't very functional. We had a part-time administrator. That was an obstacle. She was a really great person, but she was paid very little, so things slipped. It was hard balancing our idealistic goals with the nuts and bolts goal of serving people, and doing it every day.

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

The LA conference was really successful. It made some of the movie people more aware of what we did. We were able to get an early screening of Wendy Wasserstein's movie *Heidi Chronicles* for LMDA members. We had a good conversation

with not just the production folks, but we also worked closely with the marketers. So we got an idea of how HBO was marketing this production, and how that would cross over into the theater world. We also had a number of discussions about the interpretation of theatrical works into other media.

I've always felt theater will flourish more if it can cross medias. Solely live theater has a dwindling audience. There's always more competition for other kinds of media entertainment. The pricepoint for theater makes it more of an elite art form. Theater needs to be either a crossover or there needs to be a good amount of more affordable kinds of theater to draw in its audience.

#### **How has the profession changed since you were president?**

I'm really pretty out of touch. What I hope has changed is that it's become much more of a service organization. I would hope it would serve more as a guild or a union. I hope we have more of a codified role for dramaturgs and could get the standard of living up a little bit. It would be nice if the pay were something based around some sort of level of

**Erin Sanders was Co-President of LMDA from 1994-1996 and VP NY Metro Region for years before that. He was the Literary Manager and Dramaturg at Second Stage Theatre through much of the 90s. His produced plays include *Sally Marr and Her Escorts*, co-written with Joan Rivers and Lonny Price, which ran on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theater in 1994 and garnered a Tony nomination for Ms. Rivers; Erin also wrote the screen treatment which was optioned to Universal Pictures. His other plays include *Dear Miss America* (WestBank, HOME, Edinburgh Festival Fringe), *Little Men* (Public Theater), and *Snapshots* (HOME, Miranda Theater Company). In addition, he wrote television scripts for CTW's *Ghost Writer* and ABC Daytime's *One Life to Live*.**

After a period as an ex-patriot in Costa Rica, accompanying his wife on her Fulbright Grant, Erin moved steadily into the world of new media, advertising and marketing. He rode the dot.com wave as a Creative Director with some of the top online agencies, working on a number of cutting edge web-based projects for Sting, Tommy Hilfiger, the infamous Boo.com, Zagats, the Discovery Channel and many others. He is currently a Creative Director, consultant and writer working on brand-building, cross-media marketing, and advertising projects for a variety of clients.

Erin lives in Maplewood, New Jersey, where he still writes and spends as much time as possible with his two children, Nell and Yoshi.

an union scale—so people would see it is a necessary role.

#### **Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

As we all know, dramaturgs are a yuck a minute. I remember everyone was doing a conga line at the party at the Atlanta conference.

#### **Who was your mentor?**

Everyone's mentor was Anne Cattaneo. She's a trailblazer in making it a profession. Mark Bly was very smart about elevating the profession. Robin Goodman and Carole Rothman at Second Stage were good Artistic Directors who had the ability to nurture new plays. I also learned a lot working with Lynda Barry [Erin worked with her on her play *The Good Times are Killing Me*] because she was not of the profession. But she had a unique voice and instinctual ability for writing. No one was going to know that voice better than she did. My work with her was more about helping a playwright structure a play. It was probably the tightest collaboration I ever had.

#### **Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

No. However, when I was a dramaturg, I saw what I did as straddling the worlds of theater and diplomacy, helping people see what they want to do in a non-threatening way and encouraging that.

Playwriting is a very schizophrenic world. Half your time is spent in solitude, and all of a sudden next, you are thrown into a makeshift community in which you have to develop the work. Playwrights have a different world of solitary, finding a vision, and executing it in a broad community of interpreters. The dramaturg is ambassador between those two worlds. And that skill is important in a lot of different worlds.

So I still use those skills. I'm a creative director in advertising now—in an Internet-based marketing company—and I deal with lots of different kinds of clients who have different expectations. I try to harmonize that and come up with creative ideas of how they will better sell their products.

#### **What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

I miss aspects of the collaboration of the theater world. I miss the feeling of getting something up, now its live and happening. I love how it is slightly different every night.

...I also hope there is a dramaturg mentor program.

[Editors' note: LMDA now sponsors an Early Career group that includes an ongoing mentoring program, headed by Bronwyn Eisenberg.]

# Jayne Koszyn

## LMDA President 1996-1998

### What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?

That's a complicated question. Personally, it was a challenge because smack in the middle of my tenure I was hired by BAM. [Jayne left the Huntington Theater Company in Boston in 1996 to become BAM's first Director of Education and Humanities.] I was faced with running a large department in a much larger institution. It was challenging to do both my new BAM job and the Presidency.

For LMDA, I set out to raise its visibility and of the profession in general. I really felt that we needed to generate more respect for dramaturgy. Part of it might have been an attitude of "Who are these people who are supposed to be so smart?" Part of it was our fault, of playing the role of the lone intellectual and not being generous enough. Part of it was sheer self-abnegation by some dramaturgs themselves: "I love what I do. It's extraordinarily rewarding. You don't need to pay me that much, since I'm lucky to be here." [The challenge was] to raise the consciousness of strong dramaturgs who were not demanding enough for their work—financially and psychically. I must say that outside the profession, more people today seem to know what the word is and what it means.

Back when I was President, I consciously set about to change the perception of dramaturgs as external to the process, frill or fringe. I got press about dramaturgs. I wrote in newsletters, and other places, of the down-trodden nature of the profession and how we can change it. It was great working with Lynn Thomson [the dramaturg on *Rent*] who really took a stand in her work as a dramaturg. We had the *Rent* case [When Jonathan Larson died, his parents fought Lynn over the credit she would receive for helping Jonathan develop the piece] and the financial hurdle to get over to get her compensated. [Lynn's effort was] a rallying point for the members to take notice of what they did. Lynn became head of this advocacy committee. The committee's full-fledged inception roughly coincided with the *Rent* case and gave dramaturgs more visibility, compensation, and recognition.

The other challenge was financial. LMDA was in debt when I came on as president. I worked to get it in the black, which I succeeded in doing. We were able to generate enough earned and contributed income.

### What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?

I've already mentioned delivering a surplus budget, but there was more than that. Someone said, "You can create

light by being the candle itself or by being the reflection." I guess dramaturgs were trained in some respect to be reflections. My biggest accomplishment was, I hope, making strong leadership choices—always with input from the Board Chairman and the executive committee, but choices nonetheless—such as filing the amicus brief for the *Rent* case. While I certainly received some criticism—there was a vocal minority that felt every single member should have been vetted before the decision was made—I moved as though the governing body that had been elected by the membership was empowered to make swift, fast decisions. I think it made some people uncomfortable, since many dramaturgs I knew were not often allowed in their institutions to have too much power—but I felt it was an important statement to make on behalf of the profession and therefore supported Lynn and the principles she stood by. The fact that the long-term result of such decisions has been the remarkable work of LMDA's advocacy committee, with its portfolio of sample contracts and guidelines, is what I'm truly most proud of. I wanted dramaturgs to be the candlelight, not merely the reflection. It's good to take a stand.

We got a lot of press during those two years. I don't take full credit by any means for raising the visibility so substantially—that was Lynn's courageous work. But I do feel that we controlled the message enough to get quite a bit of national coverage.

### How has the profession changed since you were president?

I would be lying if I said I really knew. I will tell you what I think dramaturgy as both a perception and a way of life did for me in my career. Dramaturgy has given me a platform to stand on and it honed my collaborative skills. It taught me to be a good listener. Dramaturgy taught me that one must always think before acting. The only way to go is to do really careful research before making a decision or setting pen to paper. Even if there is a quick deadline, you don't jump those phases. I was a staff dramaturg for a long time alongside a busy directing and teaching career. Now, I am producing more and those skills were honed during the 15 years I practiced dramaturgy. I would never expect my career trajectory go another way.

What I have a problem with is and I hope this has changed—that dramaturgs are woefully underpaid. I have a problem with the fact they are not compensated as much as, say, the chief development officer. The dramaturg is feeding ideas to development, the board, establishing programs that are fundable, and the dramaturg is often at fundraising meetings. Dramaturgs work with young people, get good

citizenship and PR for the organization. And it's important to remember ideas have fiduciary currency. On the flip side, if the dramaturg is perceived as an "earner" the way that a development person is perceived as an "earner," dramaturgs would simply be paid more.

I'm forever indebted to the Huntington Theater for having allowed me the flexibility, acknowledging my need to grow, and giving me a home for 10 seasons. I created the position there, and I was one of the lucky ones.

So it's heartening to me when I hear about the [recent] work of the advocacy committee. At BAM, I learned more about fundraising. As I say, I think developing that side of dramaturgs is essential.

**Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

Well, it doesn't sound very funny, but there was a lot of trial and error spending the huge amount of time I spent finding my successor. It started in January before turning over the office in June. Maybe it was the controversy of the *Rent* case, I'm not sure. I will not forget the frantic phone call to Tim

**Jayne Koszyn** is the president and founder of Jayme Koszyn Consulting (JKC), which conceives, produces and fundraises for creative projects at universities and cultural organizations. JKC has in collaboration with its partners raised over \$4 million since its inception in 2002 in support of creative, educational and community programs, many of which were conceived exclusively by JKC. After creating the position of chief dramaturg at Boston's Huntington Theater Company, where she ran its Humanities Forum and spearheaded its new play development program *Breaking Ground*, Koszyn became the first director of BAM's Department of Education and Humanities. Between 1996 and 2001, Koszyn conceived and implemented seventeen humanities, education and community programs serving 14,000 school children and 18,000 adult audience members a year; she also presented international artists, including Mary Zimmerman, Stella Den Haag, Peter Carey, Don Byron, and Vernon Reid. Koszyn's charge was to raise the support funding for the program in collaboration with BAM leadership, BAM's Planning and Development Department and a Board Education committee, about \$1.1 million annually. Koszyn has written essays on dramaturgy and producing, and, while also directing productions in Boston, taught on the theater faculties of Boston College, the Boston University Theater School and its Institute from 1989-1996. Koszyn is a Telluride Scholar and an alumna of the Hackley School, Princeton University, and the Boston University Theatre School (MFA).

Sanford at the 11th hour, saying still no one had been able to take over. Finally, Geoff Proehl agreed, the first person from the academic conference to be president.

**Who was your mentor?**

Zelda Fichhandler [Founder of Arena Stage]. She hadn't seen my directing work, but advised me: "You have a dramaturgical mind. It's great you are a director but here's something else you should try." It was my last year of graduate school. I was 25; I was assistant director for *The Crucible* at Arena. Lloyd Rose was the literary manager there and did amazing research for this production, and I was blown away. I couldn't believe what this woman had done. I stole all of her ideas of how to steep the acting company in "mulch" of ideas. Zelda and Lloyd were incredibly influential, and Zelda basically got me my first Literary Manager job, which was in NYC. [Then at BAM] Harvey [Lichtenstein], Joe Melillo and Karen [Hopkins] were defining mentors in my career.

**Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

I daily thank my dramaturgical background training and experience. I'm not functioning as a literal dramaturg. I do mostly producing and fundraising and a lot of strategic consulting for cultural institutions and universities. But literally, figuratively and indebtedly yes, I am.

**What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

I love the stained inky fingers in rehearsal. I see my 5-year-old son creating scripts and stories. That energy is the same I experienced in the Huntington theater rehearsal hall. I loved that *joie de vivre*, being one of the people who worked that room. In theater, initially you are a loner, absorbing, dreaming on and then preparing the script. You go from that quiet, or not so quiet, space in your head to something so public and noisy. Great plays ask questions, and they demand that you ask those questions of yourself. I just felt to be steeped in that, in the early part of my career, was the best, most exciting experience one could have. Jim Lewis once said to me each production was post doctorate work in a subject. I loved learning all there was to learn about war-torn Dresden or 13<sup>th</sup> century France or the game of billiards. I miss aspects of that.

Those creative endeavors merged with intellectual ones is the greatest training in the world for anything anyone might aspire to ... dramaturgy forces you to communicate with others and draw the strengths out of all sort of personalities and egos. I run my own business now and work with a lot of different people: from city government, corporations, cultural and academic institutions. Every day, whether consciously or not, I thank the training, the down and dirty, nitty-gritty work in rehearsal. The thinking world is your oyster when you are a dramaturg.

# Geoff Proehl

## LMDA President 1998-2000

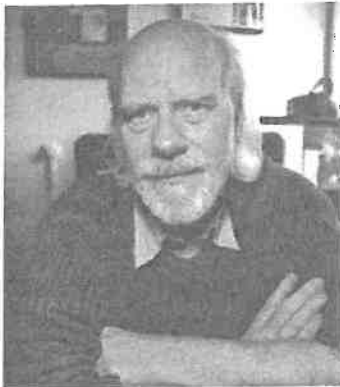


Photo: Geoff Proehl

### **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

It was simply—or not so simply—providing basic services on a minimal budget. By basic services, I mean processing memberships, putting together a membership directory, doing a newsletter, paying the bills and applying for grants. That may not seem like a whole lot. But when you have 400 members, it can be overwhelming. We've always had really great administrators who have been willing to support the organization and willing to work beyond the hours. We don't have enough of a staffing budget to do that stuff.

### **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

I'm most proud of any people who became involved or stayed involved or re-enrolled in the organization. It seems to me, at the center of LMDA, is a desire to bring together people who are interested the idea of dramaturgy, the practice of dramaturgy, the profession of dramaturgy. That to me is the best accomplishment.

My basic goal was to help provide basic services. And I think that did we accomplish that, but it was always a challenge. The roadblocks were not enough staff, and that service organizations rely on volunteerism. Dramaturgs, they are busy all the time. I was lucky, because somewhat idiosyncratically, I'm an academic. And academia has that time built into it.... I got credit [for my work] from my boss.

The other goal was the organization, taking some time, seeing where we are and where we were and where we wanted to go. Paul Walsh [dramaturg at A.C.T. in San Francisco] called for that. Our conference, at University of Puget Sound, was a retreat on a campus. It wasn't organized around a city, it was a chance for members to come together and talk about what they were doing.

I didn't accomplish that goal, but during those two years the advocacy caucus was really active on discussions on the guidelines. The work really came to fruition during DD's term. I'm glad I was able to facilitate this organization.

### **How has the profession changed since you were president?**

It hasn't changed all that much. It's only been three or four years. [But] It seemed at the most recent conference seemed like there were more students and younger folks. People continue to be interested in change. The organization seems to get younger all the time. I had a student come here from LA who had already dramaturged three or four shows. Kindergartners are doing dramaturgy.

### **Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

The conference at George Mason was a symphony of cataclysms. The campus got hit by lightning and was without power. DD and I were running around and hauling gallons of coffee to campus.

And another thing that should have been an omen, we looked at the nametags. Instead of saying Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, they said "Literary Managers and Dramaturgy of the Americas." That was the conference DD looked out the back window, as we drove away, and said, "I hope I never see this place again" or something like that.

I also remember all of us getting together on campus for a party that probably wasn't strictly legal. People were posted as watchouts. Another time, a bunch of us were standing outside in the parking lot, and Tom Shafer nearly blew a tire. [And the interviewer has to disclose that Geoff and I got stopped, with a trunk full of beer, by a cop because I was driving the wrong way in the parking lot.]

And the party we had on the last night, at some crowded place, was awesome. There was a live band. It was a wonderful conference because everyone was so good-natured about all the missteps.

**Geoff Proehl teaches, dramaturgs, and directs at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. Prior to coming to Puget Sound, he taught dramaturgy and supervised the work of graduate student dramaturgs on university and professional productions at Villanova University. He has authored a study of American family drama: *Coming Home Again: American Family Drama and the Figure of the Prodigal* (Fairleigh Dickinson, 1997). He contributed to and co-edited, with Susan Jonas and Michael Lupu, *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book* (Harcourt Brace, 1997). His essays on dramaturgy have appeared in the *The Encyclopedia of English Studies and the Language Arts*, *The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, *Theater Topics*, and *Canadian Theatre Review*. Proehl's web site, dramaturgy northwest (1996 to the present), was amongst the first in the field. From the fall of 1998 to the spring of 2001, he edited and contributed to six issues of the *LMDA Review*, the professional newsletter of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.**

A former conference planner and focus group representative for dramaturgy in the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Proehl was president of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas from 1998-2000. Professionally, he has worked with the Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, the People's Light and Theatre Company, Tacoma Actors Guild, the Museum of Glass, and the New Harmony Project. His degrees include a BA from George Fox College, an MFA in directing from Wayne State University, and a PhD in directing and dramatic criticism from Stanford University.

### **Who was your mentor?**

Michael Lupu was and still is. We had him come to Villanova [where Geoff used to teach]. He taught me not be interested in a cookbook on "how to" [...be a dramaturg.] He taught me, I'm not interested in training people. I'm interested in having an education. Michael's ability to think critically and philosophically, with a great deal of insight and emotional commitment about what the profession could be influenced me. He taught me what the profession could be if we were all at our best. He's an amazing person. Just at the time you're agreeing with him, he'll switch sides. He loves to tease out a question or problem and keep working at it.

### **Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

In my current relationship, I run the archives. I'm also still involved in the university caucus, and I'm on the board. The last professional gig I did was at Guthrie for *Antony and Cleopatra* that Mark Lamos directed.

### **What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

Maybe this is too idiosyncratic ... its capacity for sadness and for joy. I guess that's what excites me about theater. Within the profession, there is the chance to bring your intellectual self, emotional self, and your creative self and as many as you can think of to the process. Near the heart of that is something like the experience of Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Sonya in *Vanya*. There's some great surprise at both how wonderful and perplexing life can be to live with those characters and that moment.

I totally loved being president and totally loved not [being president] afterward. It was really fun because of the people.

# DD Kugler

## LMDA President 2000-2002



Photo: DD Kugler

### **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

I would say it was money—primarily the lack of it—and organizational structure. I followed Geoff Proehl [as president]. His tenure was incredibly dynamic, inclusive and full of ideas. My presidency had more to do with providing a working structure and determining what we could actually afford to do—in terms of investment in people and time.

Another challenge for me was being the first Canadian president. Even though the organization is international, it clearly has a New York City bias. We are set up under New York state law, and our primary funder still is NYSCA (New York State Council on the Arts). Not only being Canadian—but living in Vancouver—put me at a continental remove from the office, our bank accounts and our primary funder. Ultimately, my Canadian-ness was not a problem, but my remove was.

And there were a series of distractions: office moves and changes in administrators. It's hard to deal with those transitions while you are so far away. It also feels like you are in crisis management, and you don't have time to deal with the larger issues you would like to get to. I wanted to work on the bylaws during my presidency, and I didn't get to them until I was past president.

### **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

The biggest accomplishment came from the legacy of Geoff's term—we were able to ratify the Employment Guidelines. That will have the most long-term effect. I am most proud of the improvements in LMDA's organizational structure that have served the following presidents. I'm also extremely proud of our two conferences—that's where I put most of my energy—in Denver and Vancouver.

### **How has the profession changed since you were president?**

There's a lot more of us—that's one. The Canadian membership has grown through contact with LMDA. Oddly, it has put us in touch with ourselves. I'm also encouraged by the increasingly international impulse of the organization in the last year or so—an effort to push beyond Canada. The organization has essentially been the United States and Canada, so I'm encouraged there's a desire for movement south.

### **Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

At the Chicago [2003] conference, just before Brian Quirt received his Elliott Hayes Award, I gestured, bumped his hand, spilling red wine on the crotch of his light-coloured pants. Brian was aghast. I didn't know he was going to be receiving the award in minutes, but he knew, and he ran to wash his pants in the bathroom.

I can't remember what followed, but I remember that moment of horror.

I also remember walking around after the San Francisco [1989] conference looking for John Brunner's science fiction novel *The Dramaturges of Yan*, and buying 13 or 14 copies to send to friends. I still have a copy on my shelf.

#### Who was your mentor?

Geoff Proehl. Anne Cattaneo, especially in terms of LMDA. Her on-going vision for LMDA—what it wanted to be, where it could go. Geoff continued her inspirational legacy. I had the opportunity to finish up many things Geoff started.

Mark Bly was chairman of the Board, and he was a huge partner while I was president—as was Canadian VP Brian Quirt. My conference chairs—Gretchen Haley and Carri Ratazzi in Denver [2001], Rachel Ditor and Megan Monaghan in Vancouver [2002]—got inside the yoke with me, and pulled.

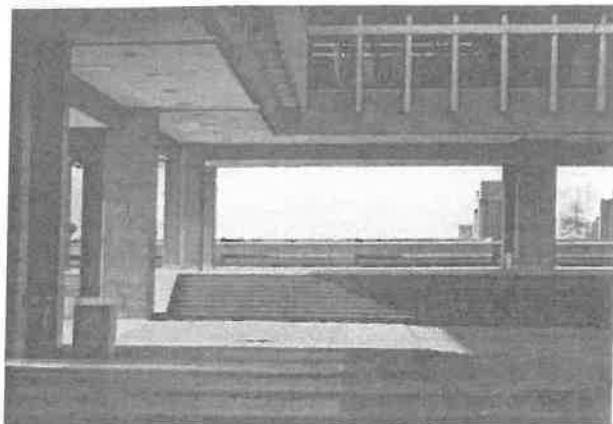
I didn't have any formal theater training until I was 36. There also weren't that many dramaturgs here. I bumbled

**DD Kugler is a freelance director/dramaturg and, since 1998, a tenured Associate Professor in the Theatre Area of School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, where he teaches directing, dramaturgy, playmaking, and theatre history. His SFU productions include Howard Barker's *Seven Lears*, Charles Mee's *Big Love*, and Michael Hollingsworth's *History of the Village of the Small Huts: Laurier*.**

During eight seasons as Production Dramaturg with Toronto's Necessary Angel Theatre, he adapted Marc Diamond's *Property* and, in collaboration with Artistic Director Richard Rose, he co-authored *Newhouse*, as well as the adaptations of Michael Ondaatje's *Coming Through Slaughter*, and Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. During five seasons as Artistic Director of Edmonton's Northern Light Theatre, Kugler primarily developed and directed new work by Canadians: Tom Cone's *True Mummy*, Connie Gault's *Otherwise Bob*, Vern Thiessen's *Blowfish*, and Colleen Wagner's *The Monument*.

Since moving to Vancouver, Kugler has collaborated as dramaturg on the premiere of Lucia Frangione's *Espresso*, and with Battery Opera in the development of three dance/theatre productions, *Spektator*, *Cyclops*, and *Reptile-Diva*.

Kugler served a two-year term (2000-02) as the first Canadian president of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA).



**Photo:** Simon Fraser University, near Vancouver, Canada, where the 2002 LMDA Annual Conference was held.

*Photo: Shelley Orr*

along doing what I was doing. When I came to my first LMDA conference in 1989, I realized: "Oh, this is what I've been doing."

Reading Mark Bly's interviews in *Theater* magazine [Fall/Summer, 1986] was an eye-opening experience. It clarified for me that other people were dealing with the same issues. I found it refreshing that dramaturgy was such a rich and problematic field—that it required a whole range of approaches.

I also grew as a dramaturg in my eight years working with artistic director, Richard Rose at Necessary Angel Theatre in Toronto—it was a great collaborative relationship.

#### Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?

Primarily, my connection to LMDA is now the conferences. I attend them. As past president, I occasionally am in touch with the president, but it's very informal. I'm also still working on the revision of the bylaws.

I teach an undergraduate dramaturgy course, and I have ongoing freelance dramaturgical collaborations across Canada in theatre and dance.

#### What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?

The thing that most excites me is the greater numbers of freelance dramaturgs—working collaboratively on projects solely because of shared artistic interests. There's an increasing possibility of imagining yourself as a project-driven dramaturg. I have qualms about institutional dramaturgy—you can easily end up serving the institution's needs, rather than the needs of the artists, or even the needs of project.



# Michele Volansky

LMDA President 2002-2004



Photo: Michele Volansky

## **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

I think it was maintaining the generosity of spirit set forth by DD Kugler and Geoff Proehl. They both did such remarkable things for LMDA that I felt a certain responsibility to keep up their energy and outlook for the organization. In terms of practical challenges, like every President, we were hunting for money and people to take ownership of various tasks.

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

Two things. One was the huge number of emerging dramaturgs at the conference in Philly. It says that both the organization and the profession have a definite future. The other was being able to pass the “torch” on to someone for whom I have enormous respect and adoration, Liz Engelman. Leaving the position in her capable hands told me that I had done something right.

We wanted to revamp the Web site and that happened. We wanted to have a conference that spoke to the world at-large, and I think we accomplished that both in Chicago and in Philadelphia. I wanted us to expand our circle of friends and topics of conversation. I also wanted to put forward the notion of dramaturgs as leaders, in theaters, in the culture and in the society. I feel like we are doing things to nurture that instinct.

In terms of things that I didn’t get done; well, I think every President has that list. I wish that there had been more time and more money to do things like finding a way to provide a health-care option. I wish that I had figured out how to really raise money. I wish that we could have figured out to pay our administrator a lot more money.

## **How has the profession changed since you were president?**

I’ve only been out a year, so it is hard to answer that, other than to again say that there are so many emerging dramaturgs who are able to participate in a lot of different ways.

## **Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

I don’t think there is anything funnier than watching Mark Bly dancing with me at a gay bar in Chicago—we’ve been dancing at conferences for a number of years now, and I’m not sure who laughs harder, us or our “audience.” However,

watching 150 dramaturgs learn how to “speed date” comes pretty close.

**Who was your mentor?**

Geoff Proehl, without a doubt. I would also add Rick Davis, Lee Devin and Mark Bly. Each one has offered, over the years, a wealth of wisdom, encouragement and nurturing. I'd still be sitting in my parent's living room had it not been for them.

**Are you still involved in LMDA, or as a dramaturg?**

I am. As a former president, I sit on the board for a year, which is a real treat. I have to say that being president of this

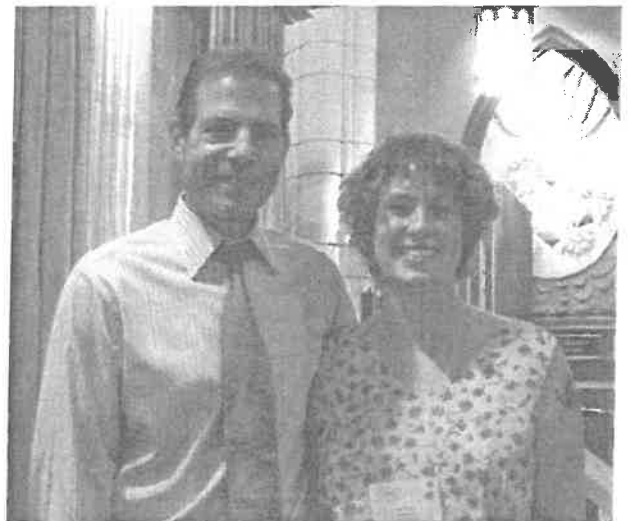
**Michele Volansky** is Assistant Professor of Drama at Washington College (MD), from which she earned a B.A. in English. She has worked on over one hundred new and established plays in her professional career, developing new works by such writers as Sam Shepard, Daniel Stern, Warren Leight, Jeffrey Hatcher, Bruce Graham, Tina Landau, Charles L. Mee and Bruce Norris, along with many others. Her work on Shepard's rewrite of *Buried Child* (directed by Gary Sinise) and Dale Wasserman's *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (directed by Terry Kinney and starring Gary Sinise) earned her two Broadway credits and participation in the Tony Award for Best Revival of *Cuckoo's Nest*. She has guest dramaturged at the Arden Theater Company, South Coast Rep, the Atlantic Theatre Company, Victory Gardens and Next Theatre, in addition to her staff time at Actors Theatre of Louisville (1992-95), Steppenwolf Theatre Company (1995-2000) and Philadelphia Theatre Company (2000-2004). Her own play *Whispering City* was produced as part of the Steppenwolf Arts Exchange Program in the Fall of 1999. Ms. Volansky has served as an artistic consultant for the TCG playwright residency program, a reader for the Eugene O'Neill Center's National Playwrights Conference, as well as a grants review panelist for the 5-County Arts Council and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. She is the 1999 inaugural co-recipient of the Elliott Hayes Award for Dramaturgy and was the President of LMDA, the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (2002-2004). Ms. Volansky is a member of the Advisory Board for *TheatreForum* magazine, an artistic advisor for both the Chicago-based Serendipity Theatre Company and Chicago Dramatists and serves on the advisory board of PlayPenn. She is currently working on a playwriting book with Bruce Graham, as well as two projects with Philadelphia-area playwrights. Volansky also holds an M.A. in theater from Villanova University.

amazing organization is a real honor, but it does take a lot out of one, so I've been keeping low. However, I anticipate a roaring return in the next couple of years.

As far as maintaining a degree of involvement in active dramaturgy, I think the saying goes, “once a dramaturg, always a dramaturg.”

**What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

Everything excites me about the profession, from the spirit of camaraderie to the amazing community of support to this endless font of knowledge. I love knowing that there are couple hundred people standing behind you, at nearly every professional turn one makes. I continue to be amazed at how plays come together, and feel strongly that it is due, in large part, to the contextual abilities of the dramaturgs working in the US and Canada.



**Photo 1 (top):** Rick Stengel (left) of The National Constitution Center gave the keynote speech at the 2004 LMDA Conference in Philadelphia. He is pictured here with Michele Volansky.

**Photo 2:** A popular icebreaker, “Speed Dating,” in the house of the Wilma Theater at the conference in Philadelphia.

Photos: Cynthia SoRelle

# Liz Engelman

LMDA President 2004-2006



Photo: Liz Engelman

## **What was the biggest challenge facing the organization during your presidency?**

The boring but true answer is money. We have extended ourselves so much in the last few years—with programs, ideas and energy for new guiding principles for these programs. I felt that it was time to give some money for dramaturgs to initiate programs, to initiate residencies. I wanted to insure that regional activity continued to grow. And what makes this happen is money. The boring answer is money. The more esthetic or spiritual answer to the question is that LMDA is still balancing between leading and serving. How do we respond to this? Programs and opportunities can carry the profession forward. It's important that other people realize dramaturgs are leaders and initiators. It's necessary to note that dramaturgs are not the one-kind variety, and that dramaturgs have their place at the table. It's important that others realize dramaturgs can be active leaders and the ones with the ideas.

Another challenge is that dramaturgs and literary managers are notoriously the busiest members of the profession. All of our members are so overextended that finding the time to move the organization forward is virtually impossible. I've managed to combat much of this by the good fortune of having an awesomely energized, enthusiastic and completely committed Executive team.

## **What accomplishment are you most proud of during your tenure?**

So far (I've still got a year to go!) I'm most proud of the fact we are able to say here's some money to come up with an idea. We can now say here are a few crumbs to develop your meal and serve it to the public. It's all in an attempt to make members active and feel included. We're changing the web site around to make it more accessible, more up-to-date, and the nexus of information. Everyone should be looking to us to find out what is happening around this country, Canada, and beyond. It's important that we're thinking about issues beyond "where's my next job" ... I want the organization to identify others outside of our usual frame of reference. For example, who can we talk to about theatre-making in Mexico? How do we connect with the dramaturgs in England? I want to discuss the broader ideas, more universal ideas beyond solely what we do inside the rehearsal room.

I must also say that being president of this organization during its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year is a true honor, and to co-edit this 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book with the indomitable Shelley Orr to celebrate and share in LMDA's illustrious history, and to connect the past with the present as we look to the future has been a true labor of love.

**When you look back on your presidency 10 years from now, what would you like to have changed?**

I would like to see dramaturgs infiltrating the population. I don't mean to make it sound militaristic, but I would like to see dramaturgs running theaters, see more dramaturgs such as Morgan [Jenness] who work as creative agents, see more dramaturgs not affiliated with a theater creating and producing projects. I want to see dramaturgs like Ben Cameron who are heading up organizations like TCG. I want to see dramaturgs in leadership positions, with vision no matter what the job description.

**Can you share a funny anecdote/favorite story from during your tenure?**

When we were planning the conference in Tacoma ... Geoff planned an amazing conference that would take us back to LMDA's roots and values. We had high ideals of what we wanted the conference to be, and to address. Then, we went a little crazy. On Geoff's orders, Louise [McKay] and I spent

**Liz Engelman is a freelance dramaturg who lives in Minneapolis. Most recently she was the Literary Director of the McCarter Theatre, where she is now a Literary Affiliate. Liz has served as the Director of New Play Development at ACT Theatre in Seattle, Washington, Literary Manager/Dramaturg at Seattle's Intiman Theatre, and as Assistant Literary Manager at Actors Theatre of Louisville. She has worked on the development of new plays at The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, ASK Theatre Projects, New York Theatre Workshop, the O'Neill Playwrights Conference, and South Coast Rep. She has directed new plays at Mixed Blood Theatre, The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, and Carleton College. Liz has been a guest at Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Puget Sound, Cornish College of the Arts, and has taught playwriting at Freehold Studio Theatre Lab and The Playwrights' Center. She studied dramaturgy and new play development at Brown and Columbia universities, where she received her BA and MFA in theatre and dramaturgy, respectively. Liz is the co-editor with Michael Bigelow Dixon of several collections of plays and is currently co-editing two volumes of monologues by women with Tori Haring-Smith. She has published articles in *Theatre Topics* and *TheatreForum*. She serves on the Advisory Board of the National New Play Network, is a Consultant for The Playwrights' Center (where she coordinates their New Plays on Campus Program), Mixed Blood Theatre and Florida Stage. Liz is the President of LMDA, Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.**

what I think was hours in the stationery store finding out what would be the exact representative sticker for the members' name tags. If you lived in Iowa, for example, would your sticker be a bee or cow or rainbow? We thought it was more important than the conference agenda. And we laughed a lot.

It was also memorable—a trip, actually—seeing Richard Pettengill being a whirling dervish on the cruise we took in Toronto—or was it Seattle? Toronto. Someone said, dramaturgs can't dance. But when you are on a boat, you dance.

**Who was your mentor?**

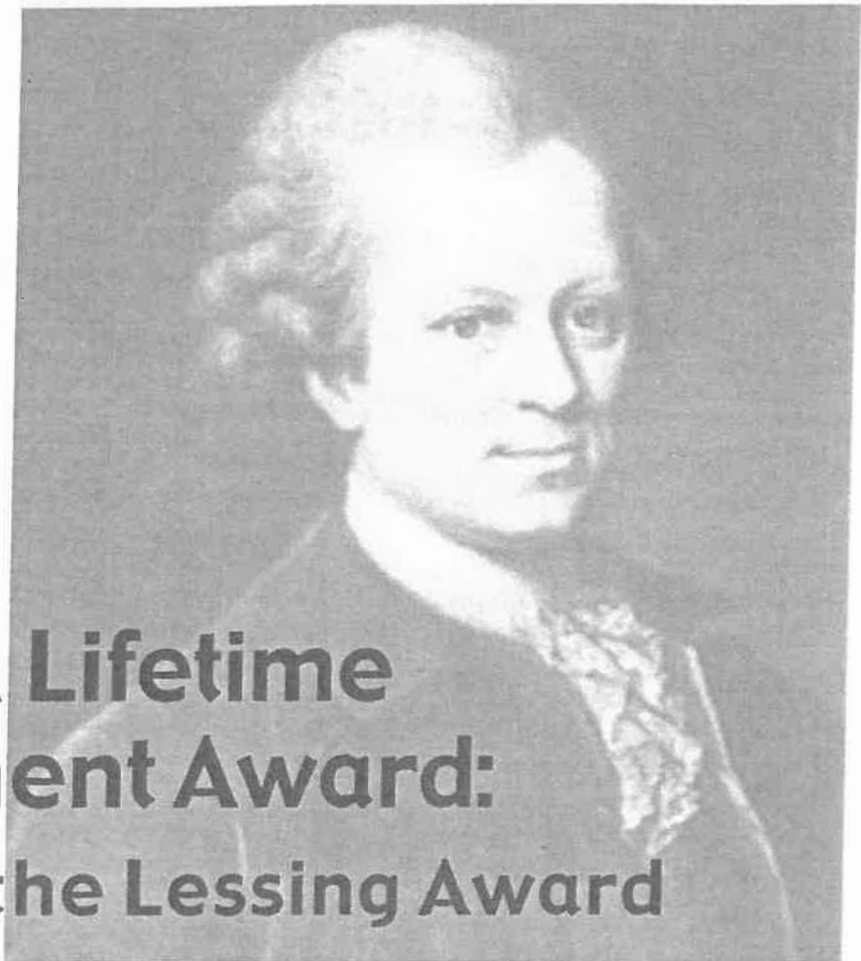
There were stages. When I was 17 and taking a class in literature and madness (appropriate for all dramaturgs!) my teacher at the time said to me, "You should be a dramaturg." That was Ann Ciccolella, who is now one of our conference planners in Austin. So it's coming full circle for me on our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Ann launched me, at 17, into this profession. Then there's Michael Dixon, who when I was an intern in Louisville taught me that the playwright knows more about their play than anybody. He taught me that to be a dramaturg is to be respectful and hospitable and, most of all, a friend. And there's Geoff Proehl, who showed me by example that if you felt strongly about something, you make it happen yourself, and brought me onto the executive committee. And then, of course, Mark Bly, who never stops. And did I say Michael Dixon?

**What excites you about the profession? Why? Has that changed over the years?**

What excites me has changed. When I first got into this profession, what excited me most was helping writers realize their story onstage and being in the room with the writers. Now, I think what excites me most is finding opportunities for writers when I'm not in the room. It's about getting writers into the room in the first place.

# The LMDA Lifetime Achievement Award: Portraits of the Lessing Award

by Maxine Kern



**Maxine Kern** is a freelance dramaturg working with various theaters and playwrights. She teaches American Drama and Theater History at Stony Brook University. Her recent dramaturgy projects include: *Twained* by Joseph Ritz at The Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo; *Little Pitfalls* by Marketa Blahova at The Immigrant Theatre Project, and *The Last One Hundred Years/Joanna Baillie* at The Juggernaut Theater. She is presently on LMDA's Executive Committee, and a member of The League of Professional Women in Theatre.

## Gotthold Lessing

The Lessing Lifetime Achievement Awards granted by LMDA in 1998 and 2002 have honored dramaturgs of distinction, vision and perception that resemble the theatrical and literary life of the dramaturg Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Lessing lived between 1729 & 1781 in Germany, and originated the tradition of the life of a dramaturg. He held several literary positions and worked in various literary venues, always attempting to make economic ends meet and to keep his critical dramatic commentary abroad in the world. Early in his career as a translator of Voltaire's plays, he and Voltaire parted ways over a disagreement concerning Voltaire's principles of dramatic classicism. Both a critical thinker and a creative writer Lessing set high goals for dramaturgy. As a playwright, Lessing wrote the plays *Minna von Barnhelm*, a classic of German comedy, *Miss Sara Sampson*, the first German domestic tragedy, *Emilia Galotti*, a prose tragedy, *Nathan the Wise*, a famous play which has been translated and performed often in contemporary times, among several others. As a critic and dramaturgical advisor to the Hamburg National Theater, Lessing's writings and reviews describing principles of drama were published in the widely read *Hamburg Dramaturgy*. His studies of philosophy and poetry led him to publish the significant writing, *Laocoon, An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*.

LMDA recognizes and celebrates Anne Cattaneo and Arthur Ballet with a Lessing Lifetime Achievement Award as dramaturgs who have continued this tradition of commitment to the aesthetic, philosophical, and lively theatrical arts.

## Anne Cattaneo

As a three-term president of LMDA, a longtime dramaturg for Lincoln Center, a theater history faculty member at The Juilliard School, Drama Division, an Editor for the Lincoln Center Theater Review, and the director of the Playworks Program at the historic Phoenix Theater, Anne's contribution to dramaturgy and playwriting has been far reaching. Among her many dramaturgical projects; she has commissioned and produced plays by Wendy Wasserstein, Mustapha Matura, and Christopher Durang among others at the Phoenix Theater. For the Acting Company she created *Orchards*, producing short stories by Anton Chekhov for the stage adapted by playwrights, Maria Irene Fornes, Spalding Gray, John Guare, David Mamet, Wendy Wasserstein, Michael Weller, and Samm-Art Williams. She also designed the unique production of *Love's Fire*, presenting adaptations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* by Eric Bogosian, William Finn, John Guare, Tony Kushner, Marsha Norman, Ntozake Shange and Wendy Wasserstein. Her own translations include Brecht's *Galileo* and Botho Strauss' *Big and Little*. Keenly aware of the needs of contemporary theater in her New York City theater milieu, she has created and administers the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, which brings together the talents of directors, playwrights and dramaturgs every summer and continues to connect these artists throughout their careers.

### Interview with Anne Cattaneo

**MAXINE: In what ways has theater changed and in what ways has it stayed the same for you during your time as a dramaturg for the Phoenix and Lincoln Center Theaters?**

ANNE: I think so much of anyone's life in the theater is bound up with what is going on in the larger theater community during a particular decade, and where you find yourself in your own personal life. These things change over time. If you work hard and prepare yourself for the tasks at hand, and if you hold to the highest ideals by associating yourself, advocating and supporting the best artists you know, your life in the theater can take you to interesting places. This is possible to the degree your health, finances and family life allow—these factors come into play as you go along, too.

I was fortunate to find out about the field from two people I still consider the *ne plus ultra* of our profession—the German dramaturgs Botho Strauss and Dieter Stürm, who were working as the resident dramaturgs for Peter Stein at the Berlin Schaubühne right at the time I got my first job in NYC. I knew them both well. I adored them personally and I was dumbfounded by the range of their knowledge of theater and the brilliance and stage worthiness (if that is a word) of their ideas. They had enough ideas to program and interpret season upon season of plays of the greatest variety.

So for me the bar was set pretty high. At the Phoenix at that

time, I was deeply involved, as we all were, in the new play scene and I tried as best as I could to foster and encourage good new work and forge friendly long-term allegiances with writers. After that, I got interested in creating what I now think is a kind of over-used genre both in theater and publishing—the anthology evening, which resulted in *Orchards* and *Love's Fire*. And of course, I spent some time trying to work creatively as a dramaturg on classical plays in the way I had seen Botho and Dieter do. In this area, I would cite my work on Mark Lamos's production of *Measure for Measure* here at LCT, on Langston Hughes and Zora Hurston's *Mulebone* directed by Michael Schultz also here (though produced on Broadway) and Bob Fall's production of Brecht's *Galileo* at the Goodman as particularly happy and fruitful collaborations. Most recently, I have enjoyed working with Shi-Zheng Chen, whose *Orphan of Zhao* we co-produced here with the Lincoln Center Festival in 2003.

The Directors Lab came out of our thinking in the early 90s about why we felt the New Play movement among younger artists was getting stalled in the not-for-profit theaters. It has proven to be a very interesting, flexible, and I think innovative way to involve large numbers of young artists in the workings of a theater; as well as to pass along a lot of practical, and, at the same time, highly inspirational ideas about theater that need to get down to the next generation and aren't getting there. All of these things I see as a dramaturg's job. I had many opportunities to change my title over the years, but I always kept it because I liked the fact that no one knew what it was and so I was free to invent whatever I wanted to do. I tried hard at the end of my term as LMDA president to bring the organization under the arm of SSDC so that the profession would gain more legitimacy in contract negotiating, as Tony voters, and I had hoped this might lead to a Tony for Dramaturgy. But I was tired by then, and the time wasn't ready. I also spent a lot of time (with Carey Perloff) trying to get a large national initiative about theater translation underway, and failed. Now (15 years later) there is interest in the area and I know if our National Theater Translation Fund's large range of initiatives had been in existence, the way would be paved today.

**Could you recount the occasion upon which you were awarded the Lessing Lifetime Achievement Award?**

I have especially fond memories of receiving the Lessing Award for several reasons. People like us are never awarded anything—and perhaps that's the way it's meant to be—but getting an actual certificate with the word Lifetime on it, makes you feel something momentous has happened in your life. And for me, that combined with the setting: an excellent dim sum restaurant in Chinatown filled with dramaturgs on a late weekend morning, added to the thrill. Finally, I was most touched because the award and tribute came with the words of two friends and dramaturgs I admire most: Vicky Abrash and Mark Bly.

## Arthur Ballet

Arthur Ballet taught at the University of Minnesota for over thirty years, he founded and headed the Office for Advanced Drama Research to help connect playwrights to producing theaters, he was a dramaturg at the Guthrie Theater and others, was director of the theater program at the National Endowment for the Arts, is an advisory editor for *New Theatre Quarterly*, and has edited fourteen volumes of *Playwrights for Tomorrow*. Dr. Ballet is now retired.

### Arthur Ballet delivered the following speech upon his acceptance of the 2002 Lessing Award.

Aristotle, Lessing, Martin Esslin, Kenneth Tynan ... they were smart, creative dramaturgs. They gave us insight, interpretive ordering, new talents to watch and to admire. My own responses to plays were hardly earthshaking, rarely intellectual, and always emotional. I habitually stage the plays I read in my imagination ... their "meaning" is usually what they "are" for me. I could never really enlighten a script except by hoping to stage it... or to get it staged.

My standard, I guess, finally was: is it worth rehearsing, staging? Is it stage able? Would I pay to see it, to hear it, to think about it? If seen, would I remember it? Oddly, although I've championed new playwrights for much of the past fifty years, I must confess that my favorites are... as you may have suspected:

- Shakespeare, of course, with *Lear* at the top of the list.
- Beckett, because he spoke with the voice of my time ...the absurdity of the time and the space I've lived in.
- Brandon Thomas because he wrote the almost perfect farce in *Charlie's Aunt*.
- Tennessee Williams, for the romantic, heart-wrenching images of his poetry and his characters.
- Thornton Wilder, because in *Our Town* he evoked what Americans pretend or wish they are or were.
- And lastly, Sophocles, because in *Oedipus* (just an hour or so long I remind you) we have the greatest, the most profound, the most devastating, the most moving and the most shocking play of all time.

You disagree? You cannot. It's my list. Make your own ... treasure it, and defend it.

## Jim Leverett

The impulse to celebrate dramaturgy in the world of theater began within LMDA from its inception. Even before the Lessing Lifetime Achievement Award was inaugurated, LMDA sought to recognize outstanding work in dramaturgy. In 1988, Alexis Greene, then president of LMDA asked Jim Leverett to accept LMDA's first Outstanding Achievement Award. Ever mindful of the life of a dramaturg she wrote:

James Leverett began his career as an actor on Broadway and beyond. He served as director of Literary Services at Theatre Communications Group, where he initiated many publications. In 1988, he received the first Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas award for services to the field. He is the author of introductions to Harvey Fierstein's *Torchsong Trilogy* and Spalding Gray's *Swimming to Cambodia*, as well as writings in numerous other national and international publications. He has worked as dramaturg throughout the United States, most recently at the Berkshire Theatre Festival. Currently, he is Associate Professor in the Department of Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism at the Yale School of Drama. He also serves on the faculty of Columbia University's School of the Arts.

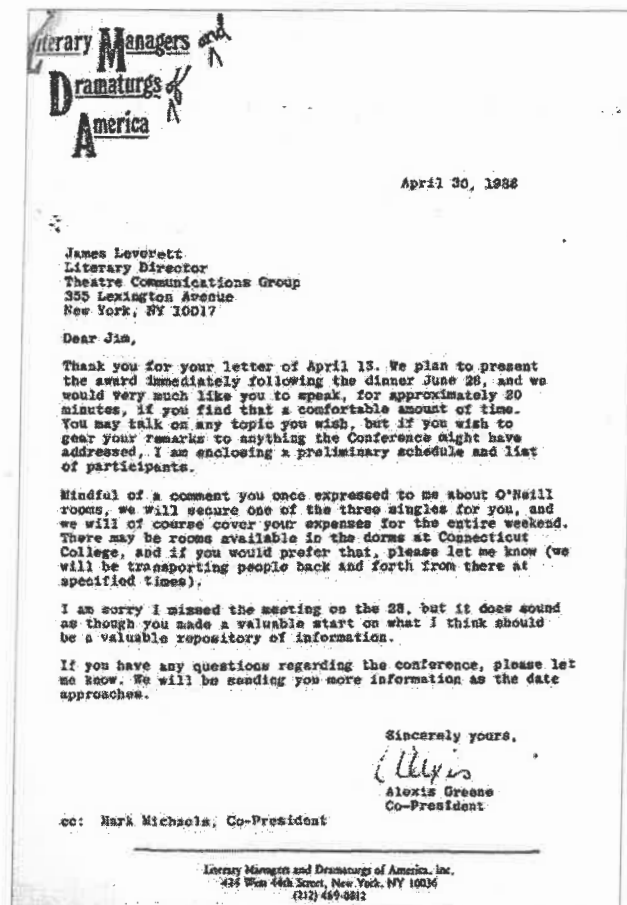


Image: The letter sent by Alexis Greene to Jim Leverett in 1988 notifying him of his award from LMDA.

# lmda bookmarks

The two bookmarks reproduced below were created by Geoff Proehl to educate and raise awareness of the functions fulfilled by dramaturgs and literary managers.

<p><b>What is dramaturgy?</b> (when you do this work, you're doing dramaturgy)</p> <p><b>Research and Development</b> Help develop the mission Help plan the season Help look for scripts</p> <p><b>New Plays</b> Solicit scripts from writers and agents Read and evaluate new scripts Track and file those scripts Negotiate with agents Prepare adaptations and translations Commission new work Organize the in-house play reading program</p> <p>Organize the new play reading program for subscribers Help bring new plays into full production Support those writers whose visions capture our minds and hearts</p> <p><b>Production Dramaturgy</b> Locate drafts and versions Collate, cut, track, edit, rewrite, construct, arrange Secure permissions to use copyrighted material Find songs, pictures, stories, videos Help the designer do the research Help the director do the casting Help the marketers and developers</p> <p>Seek and present pathways into the world of the play Gather and present given circumstances for the company Gather and arrange images, sounds, and ideas for rehearsal</p>	<p>Explore and present the worlds of the play, the author of the script, the script's production history, the relevant criticism Conceive the forms of the script as it grows Stay on course when all goes well Maintain some calm when all goes ill (as it will) Create the lobby display Love the work</p> <p><b>Arts in Education</b> Establish relationships with local educators Help them use theatre to support curricula Prepare study guides Develop production web sites Write and edit program materials Organize and lead pre- and post-show discussions Plan and lead seminars and symposia</p> <p><b>Advocacy</b> Affirm the function, explore the practice, and promote the profession of dramaturgy and literary management Nourish the arts: in schools, in communities, and around the world</p> <p><b>Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas</b> Elizabeth Engelman, President &lt;l.engelman@worldnet.att.net&gt; PO Box #728, Village Station New York, NY 10014 lmdanyc@hotmail.com; www.lmda.org In Canada, Brian Quirt, Chair, Canadian Caucus &lt;bquirt@interlog.com&gt; 36 St. Paul Street, Toronto, ON, M5A 3H3 ©2004</p>	<p><b>What is dramaturgy?</b> (when you use these words, you're committing dramaturgy)</p> <p><b>Structure</b> Action Accretion Beginning/Middle/End Conflict/Crisis/Climax/Catharsis Continuity/Discontinuity Diminishment/Emphasis Episodic Exposition/Foreshadowing Form/Content Fragmentation Key Information Innovation/Convention/Cliche/Parody Image Imminence/Closure/Openness Linearity Metaphor Musicality/Pace Part-to-Whole Plot Point of Attack/Dénouement Recognition/Reversal Repetition/Pattern/Reincorporation Rhythm Story Tension</p> <p><b>Character</b> Choice Colors/Layers Context Empathy Familiar Faces (Hero/Villain/Braggart/Parasite/Seductress/ Dirty Old Man/Young Lover, etc.) Journey/Arc Honesty/Compassion</p>	<p><b>Impulse/Incongruity</b> Motivation Passion/Pity/Fear Probability Suffering/Pain Transformation</p> <p><b>Meaning</b> Contact/Relevancy Idea/Concept</p> <p><b>Language</b> Connotation/Denotation Figures of Speech Innuendo/Sub-text</p> <p><b>Production Elements</b> Locale/Time Light/Color/Darkness Song/Music/Sound Costumes/Props/Space Slides/Film/Video</p> <p><b>Genre and Style</b> Comedy/Romance Melodrama, Satire/Tragedy, etc. Expressionism Realism/Surrealism Epic Theater/Theatricalism, etc.</p> <p><b>Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas</b> Elizabeth Engelman, President &lt;l.engelman@worldnet.att.net&gt; PO Box #728, Village Station New York, NY 10014 lmdanyc@hotmail.com; www.lmda.org In Canada, Brian Quirt, Chair, Canadian Caucus &lt;bquirt@interlog.com&gt; 36 St. Paul Street, Toronto, ON, M5A 3H3 ©2004</p>
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Front, above. Back, at right.

Front, above. Back, at right.





# The Elliott Hayes Award: A Thumbprint History

By Michael Bigelow Dixon with Amy Wegener

**Michael Bigelow Dixon** is Literary Director/Artistic Associate at the Guthrie Theater, and previously worked at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Alley Theatre and South Coast Rep. He's directed numerous world premieres of new American plays, co-edited 30 volumes of plays and criticism, written more than 20 produced plays, and was a Theatre Management Fellow at The National Endowment for the Arts.

**Amy Wegener** is the Literary Manager at the Guthrie Theater. Before moving to Minneapolis, she was the Dramaturg/Director of New Play Development at Actors Theatre of Louisville, where she worked for six seasons. Amy is a graduate of Princeton University, and holds a master's degree in theatre from Northwestern University.

Since its inception in 1999, the Elliott Hayes Award has honored exemplary work by LMDA member and non-member dramaturgs in the USA and Canada. By celebrating the impressive achievements of our colleagues, the award calls attention to dramaturgs across the continent and serves as a valuable form of advocacy for the profession.

We first proposed the idea for an LMDA Prize in Dramaturgy in our "Editors' Note" in the January, 1998 issue of the *LMDA Review* (Vol. 8, Issue 2). We were asked to serve as guest editors for an issue that would represent the organization's response to recent incidents of criticism and controversy within the profession and the press.

In our "Editors' Note" for that issue of the *LMDA Review* we articulated several initiatives. First, we wanted to invite non-members to reflect on their accomplishments in order to bridge the division between members and non-members, and to change the tone of the professional "argument" from complaint to a more productive discussion of shared interests. We also proposed that LMDA present an annual prize for excellence in dramaturgy. "Our hope," we wrote, "is that the award will be used as an opportunity to highlight successful working methods and models for artistic collaboration."

The creation of the LMDA Prize in Dramaturgy, named in honor of Elliott Hayes, was made possible by Elliott's sister, Alycin Hayes, and by the generosity of his partner, Ken Nutt, along with numerous individual gifts. A dual citizen of Canada and the USA, Elliott was the dramaturg and literary manager at The Stratford Festival in Canada prior to his untimely death in a car accident in 1995.

The following guidelines were announced in the fall of 1998. The LMDA Prize in Dramaturgy awards \$500 in recognition of exemplary contributions by dramaturgs to the conception, development and production of theatre or to educational projects in dramaturgy in the Americas over the past two years. Projects

may include, but are not limited to productions, publications, season planning and implementation, educational programs or advocacy for the profession.

The philosophical foundation of this award—like that of dramaturgy itself—rests in the belief that art benefits from examination on the parts of both artist and audience, and that creative inspiration accompanied by analysis and reflection is most likely to lead to productions and projects that fulfill the spiritual, social and personal potential of the theatrical event.

Also inherent in the guidelines is the belief that the dramaturg participates fully and uniquely in the collaborative act of making theatre and in promoting social discourse around the theatrical event. To validate the significance of the dramaturg's contributions—and to raise awareness among other theatre professionals—a letter of nomination from another collaborating artist, dramaturg, or project consultant is part of the application form.

The five criteria for evaluating applications, in no particular order, are as follows:

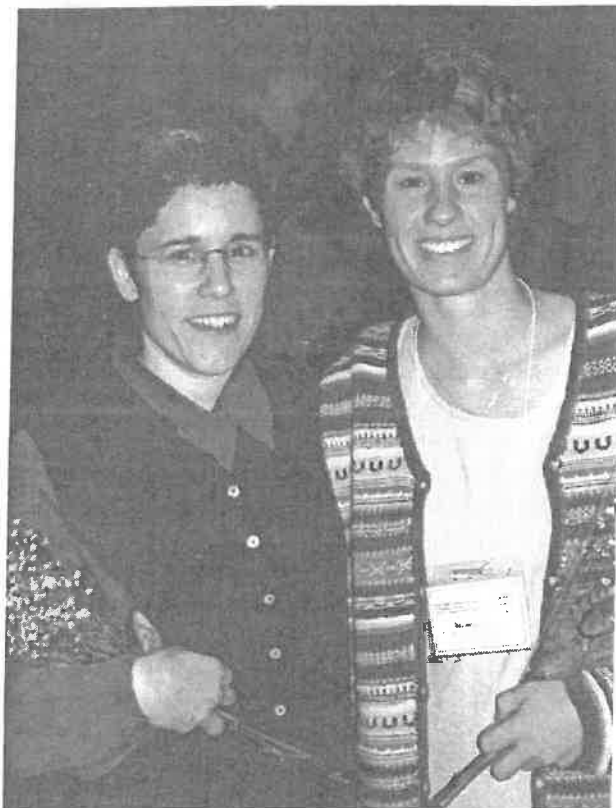
- **Distinctiveness:** what is creative about the dramaturg's approach to the project or what is unusually compelling in the dramaturgical analysis.
- **Contextualization:** how is the project enhanced by dramaturgical analysis or research.
- **Impact:** in what ways are the audience, artists or institution enriched by the dramaturgical ideas and execution.
- **Ethics:** how are issues that might be raised by the terms of the collaboration or changing responsibilities dealt with and/or resolved.
- **Significance:** how does this project inform, challenge or advance the field of dramaturgy.

The winners of the Elliott Hayes Award have been selected by a rotating panel of three judges—all LMDA members—who include:

- 1999: Harriet Power, Amy Wegener, Bob White;  
2000: Liz Engelman, Michael Kinghorn, DD Kugler;  
2001: Des Gallant, Mary Resing, Gavin Witt;  
2002: Henry Bakker, Kae Koger, Paul Walsh;  
2003: Michael Bigelow Dixon, Liz Engelman,  
Melissa Kievman;  
2004: Matt Di Cintio, Ed Sobel, Victoria Stroich;  
2005: Rachel Ditor, James Magruder, Geoff Proehl.

The first eleven recipients of the Elliott Hayes Award are:

- Michele Volansky and Lue Morgan Douthit (1999)  
Rebecca Rugg and Lynn M. Thomson (2000)  
Judith Rudakoff (2001)  
Megan Monaghan and Freddie Ashley (2002)  
Brian Quirt and Mallory Catlett (2003)  
Scott Horstein (2004)  
Lee Devin (2005)



**Photo 1 (top):** Lue Morgan Douthit and Michele Volansky at the 1999 LMDA Annual Conference after they were named the first recipients of the Elliott Hayes Award.

**Photo 2 (bottom):** Mallory Catlett and Brian Quirt after they received their Elliott Hayes Awards at the 2003 LMDA Annual Conference.

Photo 1: Ellen Mease  
Photo 2: Cynthia SoRelle

# 1999—Michele Volansky

## Space

Michele Volansky's winning project recounts her close collaboration with writer-director Tina Landau on the creation of Landau's *Space*, commissioned and premiered by Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 1997. *Space* was subsequently produced at the Public Theater and the Mark Taper Forum.



Michele Volansky

### Selections from the Project Description

Steppenwolf's artistic director Martha Lavey, Tina and I began to have conversations about what her next project should be....We read a lot of plays....And then, one day, Tina casually mentioned, "You know. I did this play, a workshop really, at A.R.T. It's about space. And solitude. And alien abduction. And maybe lupus. Faith? I've always, always loved the ideas in it—it's haunted me since A.R.T. Oh, and I wrote it."

Martha and I looked at one another. "Let's do it."

I read a skeleton script (the project was now officially called *Space* and was announced as part of our 1997-98 season) and the goals of the project for me were immediately clear. Figure out what the play was about, in addition to, or in spite of, what Tina claimed it was about. Do a workshop with ensemble members to figure out if Viewpoints (as a tool in the creation of a new script) and Steppenwolf could, in fact, exist in the same universe. And incubate, birth and nurture this passion play of Tina's in any way I could.

In thinking back to *Space* now...I can attest to the fact that it was, without a doubt, the most difficult, demanding, traumatic and energizing piece that I've ever been involved in....It defined who I am as a dramaturg. We can talk all we like about structure and the nature of story, but when it comes down to it, ninety-nine percent of the development of new work is a unique combination of personality (the artists involved), taste (of the artists involved) and trust (between the artists involved). I'm still not certain what that elusive last one percent is all about. I carry this lesson, and that one percent, with me always....

Tina and I meet during the LMDA conference at Yale. She's right in the middle of her first rewrite.... I've spent some time trolling around the Internet looking for tidbits on Stephen Hawking, on religion and alien abduction. My prized possession: "52 indicators of UFO encounters or abduction by aliens." She's delighted. It makes her laugh.

We go back to the pesky script:

How do you make the necessary scientific language, as well as what I call "psychobabble," accessible and tangible? What is the role of the abductees in furthering the relationship between the two main characters, Allan (a psychiatrist) and Bernadette (a radio astronomer)? What does Bernadette want? What purpose do the "trips" serve? How can we up the stakes in Allan's quest for information? When Allan says that he is "this close to an answer," what's the question at this moment? What is this play about at the core?

The last question lingers with us for a while. It will become the question that drives us throughout the workshop, throughout the production....

For me, the bulk of the work that I do in rehearsal involves the ongoing questions about the play's heartbeat. I bring into rehearsal three members of an abductee support group. We learn that they prefer the term "experiencers." The image murals that I place on the walls are constantly being filled with images I continue to bring in, with images the cast brings in. The cast devours the books Tina and I have been reading for six months....

Tina and I spend a great deal of time together in pre-views, cutting, trimming, shaping, defining....Audiences are responding overwhelmingly to the play. It moves them, it delights them, it is unlike anything they've seen either at Steppenwolf or any other theatre before....I feel like a true collaborator on this piece – reviews, audience response, peer feedback all will impact me in a way I've not previously experienced.

### Selection from Letter of Nomination

"What I appreciated most in the actual writing of *Space* was the way Michele entered the mindset of the piece, tried to open herself to narrative and theatrical choices that were perhaps not conventional but entirely appropriate for this odd, poetic play I was trying to make. Rather than imposing traditional notions of 'good playwriting' onto a work that was relatively experimental and non-naturalistic in its form, Michele tried to understand my impulses, tried to support and strengthen what was singular in style about the piece. To this day, I thank her most deeply for this: being open and adventurous enough to stand fully behind what is most out-there about the piece, most risky, and most possible to fail, rather than what seemed to 'work' best."

—Tina Landau, writer/director of *Space*

**Michele Volansky is Assistant Professor of Drama at Washington College. She has worked at Philadelphia Theatre Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company and the Actors Theatre of Louisville and has worked on over 100 new and established plays. She has guest dramaturged at theaters across the country and holds an M.A. from Villanova University.**

## 1999—Lue Morgan Douthit

### *Les Blancs* by Lorraine Hansberry

*“Working at a theatre dedicated to the classics, I have found that dead playwrights need protection as much as living ones do,”* wrote Douthit in her description of her work on *Les Blancs* with director Timothy Bond at Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Through rigorous script meetings, the team thoroughly discussed the



Lue Morgan Douthit

text before rehearsals began; later, on stage with the Arena version, they had the idea to flip the first several scenes back to the original sequence—for which Douthit convincingly secured the permission from the estate. Douthit also performed feats of analysis, research, and audience outreach for the production.

#### **Selections from the Project Description**

**Textual Analysis:** ...In the original version, the play begins in the mission and then the second scene is in the hut. By switching the scenes, it established the story of the African brothers. The overall sense from reading this version is that the play became more personal, rather than political.

It also created a long scene in the mission, which ends with an important scene with Charlie and Tshembe...basically outlining the “theme” of the play: “I have seen too much of the world to believe that those who raided Africa ever loved the white race either.” Hansberry is making a case for the complexities of the African situation through the character of Tshembe, who has been educated in Europe and who has come home for his father’s funeral, a father who was a village chief. The situation and the solution of what to do in Africa is not as clear as black and white, and the play places each character on a line, asking us to identify with the politics which seem closest to us. Do we identify with the Boer/racist militia man Major Rice or with the radical, tribesman/servant Peter, who advocates revolution? Tshembe is pulled by both extremes and by all the arguments in between. We began to feel that Hansberry’s intention with the script was to be more global than personal.

As we were authorized to use the Arena Stage version, we diligently worked on it in rehearsal. But it kept gnawing at

**Lue Morgan Douthit is currently the Director of Literary Development and Dramaturgy at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in dramatic theory and criticism as well as an M.F.A. in directing/playwriting.**

us that the rhythm of the first act was not working. We tried many different approaches, kept reblocking, until finally we were on stage and got the idea to switch the scenes....

What we discovered by switching the scenes back to the original was that the emotional flow worked very well. We weren’t tired by the end of the long mission scene, so we could hear the argument between Charlie and Tshembe, which establishes the point of the play. Also by generating the rhythm of 3 scenes—mission, hut, mission—we got a sense of the passing of time....

**Usual Research Matters:** ....A play written in the 60s, set in the mid-50s...and being produced in 1998—which of these timelines does one focus on? In this case, I was very interested to know what sources were available to Lorraine as she was working on this play...I dug into those resources and discovered whole philosophical passages from John Bunche’s theory of race, as espoused by Tshembe in the second act, and her knowledge of African history which she got from her uncle Leo Hansberry, a well-known scholar.

**Outreach Opportunities:** ....In coordination with the Education Department, I agreed to host an educational weekend, entitled “Unfolding *Les Blancs*”....This is when I arranged for Dr. Margaret Wilkerson [of The University of California at Berkeley, the foremost authority on Hansberry] to come to OSF, to give a public lecture....

**Conclusion:** ....Since there is so little known about *Les Blancs*, it was like working on a new play. As a matter of fact, I had dismissed the play earlier in my career while doing research on Hansberry. Without giving it a chance, I had believed the advertising on it: that it was an incomplete play and therefore not worthy of study. While it is hard to determine how much Robert Nemiroff might have written to complete the play for its production in 1970 (it took him 5 years after her death to find a producer), what I have come to believe about it, however, is that “incomplete” only means she never saw it performed....Both Tim and I are very proud of the text work we did on this production and in some ways we feel that we honored Hansberry’s original intention.

#### **Selection from Letters of Nomination**

“It was an honor and a blessing to have Lue as a dramaturg.... Lue’s presence throughout rehearsals and her notes and suggestions on character development, storytelling and dramatic action were invaluable. Her approach to dramaturgy is invigorating, challenging, supportive, and pushes the envelope of the entire role dramaturgy must play if the American theatre is to advance.”

—Timothy Bond, Associate Artistic Director,  
Oregon Shakespeare Festival

## 2000—Rebecca Rugg

### *The People vs. The God of Vengeance*

Rebecca Rugg worked over a three-year period on a new performance text that interlaced historical documents with selections from Sholem Asch's play *God of Vengeance*. The play premiered as an MFA thesis production directed by Rebecca Taichmann at the Yale School of Drama.



Rebecca Rugg

#### Selections from the Project Description

...Sholem Asch's *The God of Vengeance* (1907) was one of the most popular plays of the Yiddish stage, by one of its most prolific and controversial writers. Once translated into English, *The God of Vengeance* was produced at the Greenwich Village Theater, the Provincetown Theater, and then moved uptown to the Apollo Theater, to Broadway. The play's extremely controversial subject matter—lesbian love, prostitution, impoverished Eastern European Jewish life—aroused the fires of censorship, homophobia, sexism and anti-Semitism. The Broadway production was closed and the actors, director, and producer found guilty of obscenity. The story of this play's production continues to be relevant, since issues of sex, censorship, and obscenity continue to occupy the national political arena, we found the story of this play to be very timely.

*The People vs. The God of Vengeance* interweaves Asch's play, excerpts from the obscenity trial transcripts, and other archival source material. The result is a searching theatrical event that provides more questions than answers about ethical, cultural, and political issues. Is the urge to censor ever justified? Is it always based on fear and hatred, or ever on other, more understandable urges? Because theater audiences are mostly "the converted"—i.e., staunch believers in the First Amendment—this show does not set out to preach to them. Rather, it requires an examination of the deeply held belief in free speech, through which audiences will hopefully deepen their understanding of why it is so important.

With the very smart advice of theater historian Joseph Roach, the idea was hatched to combine material from the trial transcript and from the Asch original. Once my collaborator Rebecca Taichman and I had decided to create a

**Rebecca Ann Rugg** is writing a book about American musical theater and national culture. She was formerly the Director of New Projects at The Joseph Papp Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival.

piece dealing with the story of the play's production, the questions multiplied: what story did we want to tell? Our responsibilities to the truth of the historical event, the truth of the play, and to our own impulses were competing. The ability to shape the events to tell a neat, positive story was a momentary temptation. The urge to joyously recover a positive history was frustrated by constantly finding that history was more complex than we wanted it to be. That was probably the most important lesson of the research process... my avenues of research encompassed the histories of Yiddish theater, of Jewish New York, of the First Amendment, and of Sholem Asch and other people involved in the trial. Since the process of developing the piece took place while we were both in graduate school, we were supported by the resources of a major research institution—as I discovered to my great glee, Yale's libraries housed the Sholem Asch papers and those of Harry Weinberger, the show's charismatic Broadway producer and eventual defense lawyer.

We attempted to interest writers in coming on board the project with us, but in retrospect, were probably too invested in our version of the play's development to bring on a new person with another set of responses to the material. Eventually we decided that the director, Rebecca Taichman should pursue writing the play herself. My dramaturgical roles at this point shifted drastically. I had to distance my personal investment in the project in order to move into script development. Maintaining a healthy distance was a major dramaturgical skill that I gained in this phase.

This project provided an education in dramaturgical politics, dramatic structure, extended research, theatrical writing, and above all, collaboration. It provided the opportunity to learn about the successes and pitfalls of continued collaboration, through every phase of a project's development. By far the best thing about it was that it remained interesting—and I think that's the recipe for dramaturgical happiness—working on projects which require, and can sustain, passionate intellectual engagement.

#### Selections from Letters of Nomination

"I can't stress how vital Rugg has been to this process in a way that sets the standard for all dramaturgs. The initial idea to combine the play and trial was, as I understand it, Rugg's. Key aspects of the research hinged on Rugg's ardent work in the Yale archives. With Taichman and the help of a playwright, she co-authored the [initial] script. Once the workshop went into production, Rugg served as production dramaturg ...I don't know of another project where a single dramaturgy student has worn so many different 'dramaturgy hats,' and with such success."

—Harley Erdman, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

## 2000—Lynn M. Thomson

# Curriculum Development and Advocacy

*This project documents Lynn M. Thomson's accomplishments in two areas: Education Programs and Advocacy. Her initiatives that reshaped the M.F.A. Program in Dramaturgy and Theatre Criticism at Brooklyn College reflect her interests in collaboration, research, new American plays and theatre education, as well as her belief*



Lynn M. Thomson

*that the dramaturg is an artist. Her career-long work in advocacy was highlighted by the formation of an Advocacy Caucus; the writing of a report on standards, practices and conditions in the field; and her use of the Rent lawsuit to argue for fairness in the realm of credit and compensation for dramaturgs.*

### Selections from Project Description # 1—Curriculum Development/Education Initiative

In the fall of 1997, I was appointed Head of the M.F.A. Program in Dramaturgy and Theater Criticism at Brooklyn College. I brought to the Department of Theater a special interest in collaboration, as well as a long history in developing new American plays. I have initiated major curricular changes that have served students, the department, the university, and the community in ways that reflect my interests.

- I have reshaped the program so that there is a balance and cohesiveness between practice and study. The result has been the training of the dramaturg as an artist, fully participating in the making of theatre through specialized skills in collaboration and critical method applied to creative work....

- I initiated, in 1998, a series of panels, now titled "Talking With....," devised and executed by graduate student dramaturgs with my close supervision...
- For the first time, all playbills include program notes by dramaturgs; for the first time, all productions, use dramaturgs; dramaturgs receive appropriate billing.
- For the first time, dramaturgs assisted student directors on pre-thesis and thesis play selection. Many of the dramaturg/director teams went on to work together on a production that became a thesis project for both director and dramaturg.

**Curriculum development:** collaboration with School of Education to create the foundations of a Theatre/Education initiative...

- I wrote outlines for two new courses in theatre and

education...

- ...I championed an interconnection between student matinees and courses.
- I instituted high school matinees....For the first time, a study guide was authored by the production dramaturg, in collaboration with the teachers and teaching artists....

### Selections from Project Description # 2—Advocacy

...Throughout 1997-98, I formed a committee and the Advocacy Caucus began to meet regularly. Out of those meetings... emerged a report, offering suggestions and ruminations on the current working conditions of dramaturgs, with particular attention to credit and compensation.... My goal is to offer information, well-researched, raise questions, raise awareness about both the current practice and potential of the field, establish common ground so that we in theatre, and the we that consists of dramaturgs and any other group, can do better work....

As I have written, I filed the *Rent* lawsuit in large part driven by concerns about the inequities in our profession and the theatre, and the long-term damage such conduct was doing to this work I revered. I decided to use the suit as a platform, as best I could, to speak against unethical practices, the need for due recognition of dramaturgs in compensation and credit, issues I had heard repeated through many stories from many colleagues, and in my own experiences....

My deepest belief is that as we change the conditions in which we work and as I and others struggle for equity in all arenas, the ethical climate will improve and the work that can be imagined will reach farther.

### Selection From Letter of Nomination

"Lynn is one of the most gifted and visionary dramaturgs and educators I have ever encountered. Her brilliance, passion, humor, tremendous insights into all areas of theater and beyond, genuine interest in others' opinions, high standards, careful and thoughtful advisement, and ability to turn every class into a rewarding experience, make her an exemplary teacher."

—Donna Linderman, Department of Theater,  
Brooklyn College

**Lynn M. Thomson—dramaturg, director and teacher—has devoted herself for over twenty years to the development and production of new American plays. Dramaturgy: Philadelphia Theatre Company, Circle Repertory Company; *Rent*, on and off-Broadway. Co-author, *Between the Lines: The Process of Dramaturgy*. M.F.A., Directing, Temple University; Ph.D., New York University.**

## 2001—Judith Rudakoff

### *Revealed by Fire:* a multidisciplinary dance work with text and photography

Judith Rudakoff's work as dramaturg for this multidisciplinary work involved collaboration with nearly every aspect of the production from concept evolution to choreographic development to writing the original play-text to interactive/commemorative lobby display and presenter/souvenir booklet.



Judith Rudakoff

#### **Selections from the Project Description**

This multidisciplinary work (classical bharata natyam/eastern and contemporary/western dance, text, photography, original music) brings together many styles and genres of performance. Perhaps in this alone it could be seen as a unique original work of collaboration by senior and mid-career artists. But there is something more important about *Revealed by Fire* that places it in a different perspective, for the collaborating artists and for audiences.

Lata Pada, choreographer and conceptualizer of the work, has chosen, after fifteen years of mourning, of healing and of moving forward, to focus a full-length major work on the loss of her husband and two daughters aboard the Air India jet that was allegedly bombed by Sikh terrorists over the Irish Sea. All 329 passengers were killed in this tragedy and it is only a few weeks ago that the Canadian RCMP announced that two men had been arrested as suspects in this case....

As a traditional Indian woman, Pada was involved in an arranged marriage at a very young age. She was forced to give up her dreams of becoming a medical doctor and instead became "a wife" and then "a mother." One of the many challenges of collaborating on *Revealed by Fire* has been to strike a balance between the chronicling of the tragedy and the events before and after it, and the path of the central figure, Lata Pada, towards redefining who she was. We articulated the primary theme of the piece early on:

**Judith Rudakoff has worked as a developmental dramaturg across Canada for two decades, from Whitehorse, Yukon to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to Iqaluit, Nunavut and points in between. Internationally, her innovative transcultural creative methodology, applying Russian Lomo photography and *The Four Elements*, has been used in Cuba, England, South Africa, and Denmark.**

The identity of a woman emerges as she enters, goes through and survives extreme tests of her worthiness.

In dramaturging the narrative and in creating the original text for this piece, this was certainly my greatest challenge. How to give honour to the sense of loss and the truly horrific events that shifted Lata Pada's life while still emphasizing the forward moving journey through the fire to a new sense of power and identity. Long discussions, research on the historical events through archival materials and much study of Sita, the Indian goddess who was given a series of tests of fire, agnipariksha, to prove her faithfulness, her worthiness and ultimately, to allow her to move past other people's definitions towards a self-identified understanding of who she was and what her place was in the world.

We are also working very closely together to create an installation/interactive commemorative display that will be part of the performance....

The choreography by Lata Pada, the photographic/visual elements, captured by Lata Pada and renowned photographer Cylla von Tiedemann, in India, the music by R. A. Ramamani and Timothy Sullivan and my own original text are all vital elements in this creative synergy. The intensity of emotional involvement has been both a dramaturgical challenge to deal with as well as a strong motivator for participation. This work often feels as if it is part of a ritual of healing. It is certainly a transformative event that cannot help but affect audiences as it has deeply affected all of the creative collaborators.

#### **Selections from Letters of Nomination**

"Dance dramaturgy is an emerging field and I believe that Judith is one of its pioneers.... She has enhanced my choreographical process by identifying the central themes that emerged in the concepts I revealed in my early work and our numerous discussions about the project. Judith brought to this discussion an impressive knowledge of mythology as well as a unique understanding of how such exploration can inform the development of performance art. Her use of mythology and particularly her focus on parallels between my experience and female characters in Indian mytho-religious stories gave me new insight into my work and personal experience... Perhaps the greatest indication of her tremendous insight into the piece is the performance text she has crafted. This surpasses the typical work of a dramaturg, but what she has written demonstrates a profound understanding of the work, and the cultural and personal ethos from which it derives. The text is evocative, complex and truthful..."

—Lata Pada, Artistic Director, Sampradaya  
Dance Creations

## 2002—Megan Monaghan and Freddie Ashley

### *Dark into Light, Light into Darkness:* Atlanta Artists Respond

*These collaborating dramaturgs selected and edited texts and coordinated many facets of a concert reading for the Atlanta community on stage at the Alliance Theatre two weeks following the attacks of 9/11/2001.*

#### **Selections from the Project Description**

...In response to the shock, horror, confusion, anger and mourning that absorbed our community after the terrorist attacks, the Alliance decided to respond by doing what we as theater artists do: presenting great texts to each other, texts that can contain the enormous emotions with which our community was now forced to grapple.

We decided to seek the participation and support of a wide cross-section of Atlanta's theater community, and of journalists, musicians and other public figures, as well. We connected with the local branch of the American Red Cross and arranged to have the evening be a fund-raiser for their relief efforts on behalf of those affected directly by the attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

In its final form, the program which was entitled "Dark into Light, Light into Darkness: Atlanta Artists Respond" included 13 readings of excerpts of plays, poems, a Psalm, and selections from some of the great historical documents of American identity. There were also two musical pieces and a communal reading of a poem at the end, in which the audience participated....

We hosted the event on Monday, September 24, 2001. It was a one-time-only event, free and open to the public. We took no reservations, but after the fact we estimated that over 650 people attended. Audience members had the opportunity to donate funds to the Red Cross before or after the event if they wished; in the end, we raised well over \$ 8,000 to donate to the relief efforts. Most importantly, we created a public space in which our community could share mutual support in a time of devastation, and be reminded



Freddie Ashley



Megan Monaghan

of who we are as Americans and what we value—freedom, peace, compassion, and the American legacy of belief in the power of a pluralistic society.

Megan Monaghan: ...Before this project, I had never had the luxury of working with another dramaturg. And while one could easily imagine that egos would have been more sensitive than usual, in this situation where I'd come in as a new boss and we had this very important event to create, in fact I was impressed with how seamlessly Freddie and I learned to mesh our points of view in service of the greater goal of the event. I also had rarely been charged with creating the actual text of a theater piece. This opportunity let me stretch my capacities in that regard. My experience of creating "Dark into Light, Light into Darkness" encompassed the collaborative and communicative aspects that characterize excellent dramaturgy.

Freddie Ashley: ...The assembling of "Dark into Light, Light into Darkness" was deeply meaningful. It began and ended as nothing more or less than putting into action all those ideals we hold about not only our own company, but also about the art form itself... Also, the role of the theater-going experience in the search for what it means to be a human being found a new, immediate significance with the audience and artists, who had all come together to share that mutual quest. Megan and I had the profound opportunity and pleasure to further explore the role of the dramaturg in that collective search for humanity.

#### **Selections from Letters of Nomination**

"...With a keen eye towards that which dramatized mourning, sorrow, valor, courage and the most noble aspects of the human soul, Ms. Monaghan and Mr. Ashley structured an evening that possessed an undeniable power and contributed to healing the community in a way that only live performance can...."

—Kent Gash, Associate Artistic Director, Alliance Theatre

**Freddie Ashley** is Literary Associate of the Alliance Theatre, where he has been dramaturg for over twenty productions. He also serves on the faculty of Kennesaw State University. He holds a BFA in Theatre with honors from Shorter College and an MFA in Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Megan Monaghan**—Literary Director of the Alliance Theatre Company in Atlanta, GA. Previously, Director of Playwright Services at The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, and Director of New Play Development at Frontera @ Hyde Park Theatre in Austin, TX. MFA, Directing, the University of Texas at Austin. BA, Emory University.



## 2003—Mallory Catlett

### The First 100 Years: The Professional Female Playwright

*This project celebrates the work of five professional female British playwrights from the mid-17th to early 19th centuries. The celebration provided a forum to examine issues raised by the women's historical success and current anonymity. The project was carried out on a city-wide scale involving theater professionals and academics throughout New York City.*



Mallory Catlett

#### Selections from the Project Description

**THE FIRST 100 YEARS: The Professional Female Playwright** is a theatrical initiative designed to bring the works and lives of professional female playwrights of the 17th and 18th Century England to the attention of the theatrical community here in New York City. It has been developed and presented by the Juggernaut Theatre Company and co-directed by Gwynn MacDonald and myself, Mallory Catlett. This is a project designed first and foremost to increase access to mostly forgotten plays and to plant the seeds of these plays in the minds and hearts of theater artists, in the hopes that one day these women might become common knowledge in theater history and their plays a common occurrence in the classical repertoire. We have designed a three-part project to address both the grandeur of our desire and the limitations of our working lives and that of our community.

#### Part One: The Symposium

On October 26, 2002, at the American Airlines Theater on Broadway in New York City we launched the project with a symposium that brought together scholars, directors, playwrights, actors and dramaturgs to celebrate the first hundred years of the professional female playwright in England. Our focus was two-fold: 1) to introduce the work historically through the insights of scholars alongside a selection of scenes read by talented actors who could bring this writing to life, and 2) to address why in 2002 this project is necessary. We wanted to both excite the audience about the work itself, but also to draw attention to the failure of theater history to record this contribution....

#### Part Two: The Reading & Discussion Series

The Reading & Discussion is the heart of the project and is currently in progress. In an effort to create a series that reflected both the depth of artistic output of individual writ-

ers, and the expanse of this output over time, we selected five prominent playwrights—Aphra Behn (1640-89), Susanna Centlivre (1669-1723), Hannah Cowley (1743-1809), Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821) and Joanna Baillie (1762-1851)—whose work spans from the Restoration to early Romanticism. Each of these writers enjoyed popular and financial success in their time and four of the five were insured a production every time they wrote a play.

#### Part Three: Artists Roundtable—Looking Forward

As the Symposium relied heavily on the observations and insights of the scholarly community, the roundtable will focus on the experiences of the theater community. The goal of this panel will be to gather the artists who have participated in the series—actors, dramaturgs, directors—and to discuss our interaction with the plays and how our assumptions and expectations were either confirmed or challenged. Ultimately it is important for us to leave the project clearly focused on the reality of producing these works or new works inspired by them in the future....

It became clear to me that there was a lot of work to be done with these writers. There were gaps to be bridged between scholars and theater people, between playwrights and their own history, and between these plays and those who should be directing, designing, dramaturging, adapting, acting and producing them. I felt as though I had a project on my hands, one that would offer me a substantial education, if only I could get the city of New York to teach the course.

#### Selection from the Letters of Nomination

"NYSCA Theater Program Associate Susan Jonas called it 'a hugely visionary project dedicated to no less than revitalizing the American repertoire by bringing to the attention of an extremely diverse group of theatre artists, the excellent writing of women playwrights who are almost entirely unproduced in our time...'. When Mallory took what was originally her well-developed idea and began to work in partnership with a co-director she did so taking an approach of absolute collaboration in a context of thoughtful analysis, what I recognize now as the ethos of dramaturgy itself."

—Gwynn MacDonald, Artistic Director,  
The Juggernaut Theatre Company

**Mallory Catlett is a freelance dramaturg & director who splits her time working in NYC and Vancouver. Her work has been funded by Canada Council for the Arts, NY Council for Arts & the NY Council for the Humanities. She is currently an Artist-in-Residence at HERE Arts Center in NYC.**

## 2003—Brian Quirt

# Nightswimming

*This project honors the unique process employed by Nightswimming, a dramaturgical company which develops new plays, performance works and dance—and then seeks established theatre companies to produce those works.*



Brian Quirt

### Selections from the Project Description

Established in 1994 by director/dramaturg Brian Quirt, Nightswimming challenges its writers, choreographers, and musicians to explore innovative ways of working, and with them, plans a unique developmental pathway. The creative needs of the commissioned artists, and the theatrical process they wish to pursue, determines Nightswimming's activities and programs....

Nightswimming commissions, or initiates, new works that explore the emotional relationship between history, landscape, and memory. We are particularly interested in the process of adaptation from existing works of literature and non-fiction, and often utilize poetic text, music, and choreographic movement in our exploration of new forms of expression.

Nightswimming initiates projects by asking an artist to propose an idea that they feel—because of its form or content or even cast size—they would not be able to pursue without this commission. In other words, we want to work with artists on pieces that they never thought they would be able to create....

Once a project has been determined, we commission the artist (playwright, choreographer, composer), and design a long-term developmental process. We put money in the writers' hands up-front, in commissions ranging from \$ 2,000 to \$ 6,000. These fees are for a first draft only; for subsequent drafts, and workshops, they receive additional fees.

As they create, they have access to Brian [Quirt, Artistic Director] and Naomi [Campbell, Producer] for conversation, research, encouragement, advice and, if they wish, deadlines. When the time is right we schedule a reading or a workshop. Our workshops are designed to discover the world of the new play, and to explore its particular theatricality. Every workshop clarifies the writers' intentions, and increases our ability to realize those intentions theatrically.

Nightswimming does *not* produce the work we develop. We place all of our expertise at the service of the artist's development of their work. But artists create with an expectation of performance, so we spend a great deal of time and

effort seeking theatre partners for the development process, and especially, theatre partners who will assume the responsibility of production....

Nightswimming always includes research as part of the developmental process. *The Whirlpool* was an investigation into narrative dance; *Lake Nora Arms* explored the demands of a *capella* singing on stage; several works engaged with the challenges of adaptation, or the integration of choreography into text-based theatre.

Yet theatrical research unrelated to a new work—pure research, if you will—could prove extremely valuable. Nightswimming's Pure Research Program is a theatrical experiment not linked to project-development. Our intent is to pursue primary, practical studio research into provocative theatrical questions of form and performance. We will provide space, money, and resources.

"Pure research" means that if an artist wants to explore the theatrical implications of silence, or how the techniques of shiatsu could be applied to a rehearsal process, or the application of live DJ-ed music, or how to stage 19th century Marxist tracts (to cite examples from the seminal workshops I programmed at the Theatre Centre)—and can articulate why that exploration is important—then Nightswimming will offer the means to conduct that research.

### Selections from Letters of Nomination

"Brian Quirt and Nightswimming made an enormous impact on the creation, development and production of *Beauty*. In fact, *Beauty* would not exist in the way it does without Mr. Quirt's involvement in the project; it simply would not be the same piece....In creating *Beauty* Brian has been an essential collaborative partner; contributing a wealth of research, ideas and guidance.... Throughout the creative process, Brian read the meaning in my work, taught me how to discover it myself, see and listen to it. He encouraged me to pursue the rich undermined potential in so many areas of my work. Brian does not shape or mold others to his vision, rather, he reveals through his dramaturgical expertise the possibilities of what one can do, what one can become within the limitless potential of the art form."

—Julia Sasso, Artistic Director, Julia Sasso dances

**Brian Quirt is a Toronto-based director and dramaturg. As Artistic Director of Nightswimming, Brian has commissioned more than a dozen new works of dance and drama. In addition to his work with Nightswimming, Brian is Chair, LMDA Canada (Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas) and from 1998 to 2004 was Company Dramaturg at Toronto's Factory Theatre.**

## 2004—Scott Horstein

# Dramaturgy for David Edgar's *Pentecost*

This project recounts Scott Horstein's in-depth and far-reaching work as dramaturg for two productions of *Pentecost*, one at *The Evidence Room* in Los Angeles and the second at *The Old Globe* in San Diego.



Scott Horstein

### Selections from the Project Description

#### Intro: A New Guest

"We are the sum of all the people who've invaded us. We are, involuntarily, each other's guests." This is the moral of David Edgar's *Pentecost*, as uttered by his character Leo Katz, a radical American art historian....

National identity has great power but is also an unstable, shifting thing....Like national identity, the dramatic identity of a play has great power, but is an unstable, shifting thing, the sum of all who engage with and occupy it.

My dramaturgy for two productions of *Pentecost* represents a body of freelance work that I hope has reaffirmed and expanded the profession. I was drawn to dramaturg the play by the sheer challenge of the text, as well as by a feeling of powerlessness following the September 11th attacks, by wanting my dramaturgy to have a political impact, to use it to cross borders, connecting cultures, artists, audiences, and institutions.

#### Dramaturgy Magnified: Connecting Cultures

*Pentecost* magnifies the standard dramaturg tasks of research, text analysis, and audience outreach. In addition to sheer length, the play involves simultaneous scenes, some of which are not fully scripted and do not take place in English; a radical, *Winter's Tale*-like shift in story at intermission; oblique yet essential passing dialogue references that double back to similar references in earlier scenes; and speech that through its density, length of phrase, and language variation demands the same playing strategies as heightened classical text....

#### Dramaturgy as Déjà vu: Connecting Communities and Institutions

...I became a sort of walking production notebook, and seized the opportunity to make my research more robust and write a Globe newsletter article about *Pentecost* as a worldwide theatrical phenomenon. I met with the Globe's "theme team" of marketing and PR staff to explain the nature of the play and brief them on potential communities to target, relaying to them private and press contacts from L.A. and now from San Diego. These contacts ultimately led

to group sales events with the local Bulgarian and Kurdish communities.

#### Dramaturgy as Advocacy: Connecting the Profession

...As part of my work on *Pentecost* I curated one of the few lobby displays at the Globe in recent years....The end product consisted of a six-panel series on Giotto and art conservation, as well as a world map locating the constituent nations of *Pentecost* and their relationship to the San Diego immigrant population.

In tandem with vocal coach Jan Gist, I worked with the cast on heightened-text techniques, highlighting key information and using it to drive through to the end of a line; maintained consultation with Associate Artistic Director Karen Carpenter about the progress of rehearsals; and was featured in the Globe's public-access weekly television program as well as in the local *North County Times*. By the time the play opened, the value of dramaturgy to the act of theater-making had become apparent enough for Managing Director Lou Spisto to single me out for recognition at an opening night function for donors and board members.

If *Pentecost* works as a play, it works through linguistic overload, by which literal meaning becomes less important than gesture, sound, and overall story, linking David Edgar's writing to the Shakespearean tradition and expanding that tradition for a globalized age.

If dramaturgy works, it works through summing up every element of the theatrical experience and processing it into a story. I used my position as freelancer to tell the story of the play far and wide to as much of the *Pentecost* community as possible, to the artists, staff, audiences, and the community at large. To borrow David Edgar's phrase, a play is the sum of all who invade it, and the dramaturg is both participant in and chronicler of that invasion.

#### Selection from Letters of Nomination

"Scott's dramaturgical participation in the show was key to its success....From Scott's meticulously chosen, potent research to his perspicacity and great good humor in the rehearsal hall, I have come to rely on him. Though he is in the early stages of his career, Scott collaborates with cast, writer, and director as if he had been doing this kind of work for some time."

—Mark Lamos, Director, *Pentecost*, Old Globe Theater

**Scott Horstein is the inaugural Literary Manager at Cornerstone Theater Company and Literary Director at the Black Dahlia Theatre. Freelance dramaturg credits include *The Philanderer* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Resurrection Blues*, *Complete Female Stage Beauty*, *Orson's Shadow* (Old Globe). Scott is Lecturer in Dramaturgy at UCSD.**

## 2005—Lee Devin

### Artful Making

This unusual application of dramaturgical knowledge involves the conception and writing of a book titled *Artful Making*. Written by Rob Austin and Lee Devin, *Artful Making* uses descriptions and accounts of theatre methods (rehearsal, acting exercises, etc.) to suggest ways in which business managers and software developers can think about and do their work.



Lee Devin

#### Selections from the Project Description

This project doesn't fit very well into the standard expectations for an exercise in dramaturgy. We didn't develop a script, or make one into a play. While I did dramaturgical things (research, conversation, writing, conceiving and reconceiving), they didn't assist in a conventional theatre activity. The project has generated several products that show no sign of ending.

This project began as research into a broad topic: do the collaborative methods of theatre (especially rehearsal) offer new pathways for understanding and accomplishing the kinds of business activity Peter Drucker has called "knowledge work"? Rob Austin, a professor at the Harvard Business School, had begun thinking along these lines while writing a book on measurement and control in business. I began work on *Artful Making* when Rob called me one day and...wanted to know if I'd be interested in joining him... I pounced. My position as dramaturg at People's Light and Theatre offered us access to the processes of a modern regional theatre known for its collaborative work methods. In addition, the company values clear thinking and articulate conversation; they give good interviews....

Not much useful has been written about collaboration. We dramaturgs invoke the term and claim the process as our own. But I don't think anyone has set down a clear description of how you go about it. Rob and I took as a starting point Lynn Thomson's "Collaboration is a conversation from which everyone comes away with a new idea." But the

**Lee Devin taught at UVA, Vassar, and Swarthmore. At Swarthmore, he created a liberal arts theatre with acting at the center, to prepare students for careers outside the showbiz. He retired from teaching in 2002 and began at People's Light in 1975, as acting coach, actor, and dramaturg. 2003: published *Artful Making*. New career: dramaturging business.**

notion of using the other's ideas as material for making your own (including and reconceiving) emerged from our discussions and writing and is, I think, an original contribution to dramaturgy and theatre art generally. So, I hope, is the conception of the qualities of rehearsal and their arrangement....

*Artful Making* takes a baby step toward creating a vocabulary and theoretical framework for thinking hard about rehearsal. As do actors and directors, dramaturgs spend the bulk of their creative time in rehearsal, but our tools for learning how to improve the use of that time are at best rudimentary. The scheme of qualities suggested in the book, together with the concept of rehearsal as a *making process of interdependent elements*, creates a pathway that may lead us to better, more gratifying art. It does this by describing rehearsal as making, its steps interdependent with its final product, but different to it. Rehearsal as making permits us to think about those interdependent parts in new ways, to value them for themselves, and to realize that, as materials, none of them is ever lost to the final product....

It's vital to remember that *Artful Making* presents an ideal of the theatre, not a how-to-do-it manual. Hubert Heffner used to say that Aristotle's *Poetics* addressed the "theoretically best tragedy." I've aspired to that as the dramaturg in this project. *Artful Making's* ideal theatre will never come to perfect fruition: it's full of mutually exclusive necessities; and real life will be full of tradeoffs. But clearly conceived and persuasively presented, an ideal can be a model, a guide, a light in the wilderness. Industrial methods and metaphors dominate the idea of a theatre for so many of our colleagues. Liberating concepts such as release, collaboration, ensemble, and play have never even gotten to the table for them. It's just possible that the argument and examples of *Artful Making*, a slipping in from the edge as it were, can make a difference, can start movement toward a more engaged, more humanely satisfying theatre for artists and spectators alike. That's my hope, anyhow.

#### Selection from Letter of Nomination

"For me...the most personally rewarding aspect of this work has been collaboration on the project itself. It hasn't always been easy. Business scholars and theatre professionals speak very different languages and think in very different categories. A great deal of effort went into synthesizing a common language to allow us to work well together. In the end, though, we've been able to create ideas and expressions of ideas that couldn't have come from either of us individually....Perhaps the breadth of this collaboration and the success with which very different fields have been bridged is the best indication of Lee's accomplishment. A difficult job done well has led to innovative and exciting outcomes."

—Robert D. Austin, Harvard Business School

# LMDA's Residency Programs

## Compiled by Maxine Kern

**Maxine Kern** is a freelance dramaturg working with various theaters and playwrights. She teaches American Drama and Theater History at Stony Brook University. Her recent dramaturgy projects include: *Twained* by Joseph Ritz at The Studio Arena Theatre in Buffalo; *Little Pitfalls* by Marketa Blahova at The Immigrant Theatre Project, and *The Last One Hundred Years/Joanna Baillie* at The Juggernaut Theater. She is presently on LMDA's Executive Committee, and a member of The League of Professional Women in Theatre.

### RESIDENCY GRANTS, PHASE ONE, 2001

#### The Dramaturgy Residency Project

The NYSCA-sponsored Dramaturgy Residency Project, which went into effect for periods of time between January 2001 and August 2001, targeted short-term residencies on two theatre projects, and one residency with a playwright's development center. All three venues were chosen because they could both accommodate a dramaturg and benefit from having a dramaturg on board.

Susan Jonas, Theater Officer at NYSCA, was very helpful in finding the resident companies. Once the companies were identified, and a liaison at the theater established, that liaison and I devised a job description and profile for the dramaturgy candidate. Many candidates sent in resumes, and each institution devised a selection procedure (some interviewed candidates, some surveyed their staff and playwright membership), and eventually selected a dramaturg.

Three residencies (New Dramatists, INTAR Hispanic American Arts Center, Voice & Vision Theatre) are documented in final reports filed by the three institutions, and by the three resident dramaturgs, in response to a brief form listing questions about their collaboration.

While this was only a pilot program, the reports speak of theaters and dramaturgs experiencing strong instances of near ideal dramaturgical relationships. At the Voice & Vision Retreat, Kristen Gandrow was able to interact with many artists and facilitate collaboration on projects that have been launched for further development. At INTAR, Brad Rothbart was instrumental in facilitating break-through writing for a new plays workshop. During my residency at New Dramatists, I was able to demonstrate a constructive dramaturgical presence.

#### Kristen Gandrow's reflections on her residency at Voice & Vision's Annual Summer Envision Retreat

"The residency grant was extremely helpful to me as a somewhat experienced dramaturg just entering the professional field because, as much as doing the work, I needed to meet the people with whom I can collaborate! Once connected to people and projects at the Voice & Vision Retreat, I've sustained several vital relationships with people who also attended. Not all of these were folks with whom I was "assigned" to work by the Voice & Vision artistic director, although those people are now friends and in two cases, ongoing collaborators of mine."

#### Brad Rothbart's reflections on his residency at INTAR Hispanic American Arts Center's New Works Lab

"For the first time in my life, I was treated with the respect due a consulting professional. I was shown every courtesy, and realized that the work I do is meaningful, and that I have a real contribution to make. I had the opportunity to discover the work of a marginalized community, while working with some outstanding playwrights. As the only non-Latino on the project, not only did I learn a tremendous amount about Latino/a culture, I also served the valuable function of allowing playwrights to see what sections of their work were culturally inculcated shorthand that would not be clear to an non-Latino/a audience. On the career development front, I developed relationships with a number of very talented artists. Most of these relationships continue to this day."

#### Maxine Kern's Reflections on Her Residency at New Dramatists

"This residency has been more than meaningful, it has shown me an ideal situation in which a dramaturg can function and grow. The closeness to the playwright's process and life has been eye-opening. In most situations, a dramaturg is in part a producer. Yet in a playwright's center, I was able to settle into the life of a play apart from the concerns of production. It made me think more deeply about the nature of writing and the need we have as a theater community to reward playwrights with a process not compromised by immediate producing needs.

At New Dramatists, I was invited to attend a series of playwright focus groups for pro-active writers addressing the theater community. I have always felt the importance of new works and the role of the playwright as social conscience, philosopher, and poet. But at New Dramatists, I could see that role in action, and more thoroughly contemplate my role as dramaturg/critic. As such, I'm even more encouraged to advocate for good writing and resonant plays structured to provide long-term pleasure and insight for audiences and theaters alike."

### RESIDENCY GRANTS, PHASE TWO, 2003

In its second phase we had completed the funding on the NYSCA grant which had launched our first residencies. The LMDA membership at the conference in Vancouver voted unanimously to continue the residency grant initiative and we discussed ways to pursue funding. In our midst an angel arose—Joe Coyne, a dramaturg from Boston with a trust that he administered for Haymarket Community Corporation (HCC), Joe Coyne and Maxine Kern, with the help and approval of then-President Michele Volansky, came up with a HCC/LMDA grant for dramaturgy residencies in New England. This model was then applied to the third phase of residency grants that LMDA has funded from its now expanded budget. The HCC/LMDA grant is still ongoing, supporting dramaturgy in New England.

Haymarket Community Corporation is a Massachusetts non-profit entity, and one of its missions is to assist theaters within the area (preferably within Massachusetts). In 2003, a connection was established with the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas to combine ease of application funding for dramaturg positions at dramaturg-lite theaters. Additional funding is also being offered for the dramaturg to attend the annual LMDA conference. Over the previous two year period approximately \$7,000 was distributed. Theaters receiving funding were: Double Edge Theater (MA), Shakespeare Now!, Williamstown Theater Festival (2), Boston Theatre Works, and Hampshire Shakespeare Festival.

The 2005 HCC/LMDA Grant of \$1,500 was given so that Becca Wolff can work with Perishable Theatre's 13th Annual International Women's Playwriting Festival, to be held in the fall of 2005. Perishable Theatre is located in Providence, Rhode Island, and has produced quality productions for a number of years.

### RESIDENCY GRANTS, PHASE THREE, 2005

#### Two Dramaturgs Receive Residency Grants and One is Awarded Regional Funding for Dramaturgy Workshop

Out of a record 15 applications submitted this year, two Dramaturgs were awarded \$1,000 each to support their relationships with theatres who do not at this time fund the staff position of a literary manager or dramaturg, but showed great respect and commitment to the role and function.

**Stage Left Theatre** sought LMDA support for the continued expansion of its Literary Department. They partnered with **LaRonika Thomas** in order to accomplish their goals to:

- provide dramaturgical support for the playwrights and artists mounting productions in Stage Left's mainstage subscription season;
- provide dramaturgical and logistical support for the playwrights developing scripts through the Downstage Left program;
- help ensure that all of LeapFest 2's plays receive their world premieres at theatres locally or nationally;
- handle an increasing number of submissions as a result of the success of Downstage Left and LeapFest.

Stage Left seeks to cultivate political and social theatre by:

- Producing plays that raise debate on political and social issues;
- Activating audiences to discuss and pursue the issues raised by our plays;
- Inspiring playwrights to address political and social themes through our Downstage Left new work development program.

**The Play Company** engaged **Linda Bartholomai** as dramaturg on their production of American premiere of *Terrorism* by Oleg and Vladmimir Presnyakov in the Spring of 2005 in a co-production with The New Group directed by James Lapine.

*Terrorism* is a thought-provoking play that lands us in the center of an unraveling world. An "apocalyptic farce" of sorts, the play offers six scenes from urban life in which terror springs not from headline-grabbing political action, but from everyday encounters and interactions. The play originally opened in 2002 at the Moscow Arts Theatre, a week after the Chechen rebel siege in another theatre there. It draws an arresting portrait of how we live with fear, whether in Putin's Moscow or New York.

For *Terrorism* Linda was engaged to prepare the script, compile production research, facilitate the immersion into the world of the play for actors and designers, and to research various aspects concerning the consequences of terrorism extending into the daily fabric of society and into the individual mind. Linda was to be an important liaison with the playwrights and the translator.



# Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas: A Living Chronology

Edited by  
**Mark Bly, Arena Stage**  
**Geoff Proehl, University of Puget Sound**

**Photo 1:** The closing session of the 1991 LMDA Annual Conference. The session was held at the First Bank of Philadelphia and was entitled "Town Meeting of the Minds."

*Photo: Mark Garvin*

Putting this chronology inside a book makes it look more finished and more comprehensive than it is. Nor is what follows meant as an outline of the history of dramaturgy in North America. LMDA's history and the history of the discipline generously overlap, but the former resides within the latter, not the other way around. The editors hope that this living chronology will remind us of the vigor of this membership-driven organization and its remarkable record of accomplishments.

We invite readers to consult future editions of this chronology on LMDA's web site, where we will record suggestions, corrections, and deletions to what is a work-in-progress. For additional information on LMDA's history, visit the LMDA Online Archive at [www.lmda.org](http://www.lmda.org).

Thanks to Haviva Avirom, Pannill Camp, Garrit Guadan, Gretchen Haley, Laurie May, Wynn Rankin, and Eboni Treco for archival and historical work, much of it at the University of Puget Sound, that has, along with the help of many others, made this chronology possible.

*Note: [Items in brackets in the Timeline column are noted as historical reference points for the field, even though they are not part of the organizational history.]*

<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p>1984-1985</p> <p>Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America incorporated on March 26, 1985.</p> <p>Initial directors: Thomas G. Dunn, Susan Gregg, Bonnie Marranta</p> <p>Board Chair: Thomas G. Dunn</p>	<p><b>Conference</b></p> <p>"The American Dramaturg: Stage Two" (national conference sponsored by Hunter College and LMDA) Hunter College, New York November 2, 1985</p>	<p><b>Conference Events</b></p> <p>Keynote by Des McAnuff published in <i>American Theatre</i> and in <i>LMDA Newsletter</i>; for keynote and report on the 1985 Hunter College national conference see <i>LMDA Newsletter</i> 1.1 (January 1986): "The object of this conference was to see if, for the first time during a conference of this sort that there could be a demonstration of what a dramaturg does, rather than unending panels during which panelists tried to define a term which—as this afternoon demonstrated—may be largely undefinable";</p> <p>over 150 people attend;</p> <p>panelists include: Barbara Field, Lyn Holst, Sheldon Rosen, and Alisa Solomon;</p> <p>conference supported in part by a \$1000 grant from the Arthur Foundation (funds went to playwright Sheldon Rosen to author a one act play which was then workshopped at the conference).</p>	<p><b>Timeline</b></p> <p>December 11, 1984: Letter to the Jerome Foundation from Cynthia Jenner, Alexis Greene, and Thomas Dunn lays framework for the organization that would be incorporated the next year. The program design includes the publication of a quarterly newsletter, the creation of a computerized information bank to include a dramaturgy bibliography and a list of courses and degree programs in dramaturgy, the establishment of an internship program, and the formation of a conference committee;</p> <p>New Dramatists generously donates office space and the use of its facilities; in an article for <i>Theater</i>, Alexis Greene notes that prior to the founding of LMDA "dramaturgs in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area had been meeting informally once a month, usually for lunch" for five years;</p> <p>David Copelin notes of those meetings, "We often spoke (sighed, actually) about creating a national formal organization of turgs. Names such as ALMA (American Literary Managers Association) were floated. . . . 'ALMA, the "soul" of the theatre.' Wiser heads prevailed."</p>
<p>1985-1986</p> <p>Executive Committee: Alexis Greene, founding President</p>	<p>First Annual Conference</p> <p>"Dramaturgy and Production" New Dramatists, New York August 21-23, 1986</p>	<p>At this conference, Cynthia (C. Lee) Jenner becomes LMDA's second president; see M. Elizabeth Osborn's report on the first annual conference of 1986 in the January 1987 <i>LMDA Newsletter</i> 2.1.</p>	<p>Vol. 1.1 of the <i>LMDA Newsletter</i> (later the <i>Review</i>) published.</p> <p>[Second issue of <i>Yale Theater</i> devoted to dramaturgy; edited by Mark Bly; the first issue of <i>Theater</i> devoted to dramaturgy was published in 1978 and edited by Joel Schechter.]</p>



Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>1986-1987</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Cynthia Jenner, President; Casey Childs, Richard E. Kramer, Eileen Cowel, Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p>“Historical and Classical Frontiers in Dramaturgy: Construction. Deconstruction. Reconstruction” (Sponsored by LMDA and Columbia University’s Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theater Studies—not an annual conference; LMDA’s Winter Symposium) Columbia University, New York February 7, 1987</p> <p><b>Second Annual Conference</b> “Dramaturgy and the New American Play” University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (Conference Coordinators: Mark Bly, Edward Cohen, Michael Lupu) August 13-16, 1987</p>	<p>For a report on the 1987 Columbia University conference see article by Felicia Londré in Vol. 2.2 of the LMDA <i>Review</i>, then called <i>Program Notes</i>.</p> <p>Keynote address by Robert Marx of the National Endowment for the second (August 1987) annual conference in Minneapolis; Arthur Ballet delivers closing speech.</p>	<p>Vol. 2.2 and 2.3 of the LMDA newsletter, entitled <i>Program Notes</i> (Richard E. Kramer, ed.), includes five responses to a Terrence McNally article in the <i>New York Times</i> that disparaged dramaturgs: respondents are Ben Cameron, David Copejin, Michael Bigelow Dixon, Mark Hofflund, Virginia Scott;</p> <p>LMDA receives grants of \$2500 from the Arthur Foundation, soon followed by \$6000 from the Dayton Hudson Foundation and \$5000 from an anonymous donor;</p> <p>LMDA holds first conference outside New York City.</p> <p>Arthur Ballet receives award from LMDA at its second annual conference.</p> <p>[TCG publishes <i>Dramatists Sourcebook</i> containing a PROLOGUE with six literary managers/dramaturgs offering their advice on script submissions.]</p> <p>Ed Wilson invites LMDA to set-up its office at the Center for Advanced Study of Theater Arts (CASTA)—City University of New York Graduate Center (1987 to 1999).</p> <p>James Leverett receives award for Excellence in Dramaturgy at annual conference.</p>
<p><b>1987-1988</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Alexis Greene and Mark Michaels, Co-Presidents; Rick Davis, Steven Hart, Jane House, Rod Marriott</p>	<p><b>Third Annual Conference</b> “Dramaturgy and the Creative Process” O’Neill Theater Center, Waterford, CT (Conference Committee: Alexis Greene, Steven Hart, Jane House, Mark Michaels, Rod Marriott) June 26-29, 1988</p>	<p>Joseph Chaikin gives a reading of <i>Struck Dumb</i>, a new play by Jean-Claude van Itallie and Joseph Chaikin commissioned by the Mark Taper Forum, dramaturged by Bill Coco; conference includes sessions on the psychology of creativity.</p>	

Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>1988-1989</b> Executive Committee: David Copelin, President; Edward Cohen, Roger Danchik, Rick Davis, Greg DeJarnett, Steven Hart, Morgan Jenness, Ruis Woertendyke</p>	<p><b>Fourth Annual Conference</b> "Our Theatre in the Nineties" San Francisco State University (Conference Coordinators include: Larry Eilenberg, Jan Lewis, Morgan Jenness, Susan Jonas) San Francisco, June 24-27, 1989</p>	<p>Keynote by Anne Bogart; connections between theatre, film, and television explored; first annual conference held on the West Coast.</p>	<p>LMDA's newsletter now titled the <i>LMDA Review</i> (Spring 1989), Rick Davis and Steven Hart, eds.; Michael Devine and DD Kugler are first Canadian members.</p>
<p><b>1989-1990</b> Executive Committee: Anne Cattaneo, President; Victoria Abrash, Mark Bly, Jim Lewis Administrator: Chiori Miyagawa</p>	<p><b>Fifth Annual Conference</b> DePaul University, Chicago (Conference Chair: Richard Pettengill) June 24-26, 1990</p>	<p>Picnic at the foot of Lessing's statue; members vote to change name to Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas; members pass resolution on the NEA calling for arts funding without "content-restrictive language."</p>	<p>LMDA establishes job line; LMDA hires Chiori Miyagawa as administrator to assist with memberships, conferences, and publications.</p>
<p><b>1990-1991</b> Executive Committee: Anne Cattaneo, President; Victoria Abrash, Mark Bly, Jim Lewis, Chiori Miyagawa Administrator: Susan Bougetz <i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p><b>Sixth Annual Conference</b> Philadelphia (Conference Committee: Lynn M. Thomson, Chair; Shelby Jiggetts, Sydne Mahone, Geoff Proehl) June 15-18, 1991</p>	<p>Keynote by Eric Bentley; Pew Charitable Trusts awards a grant of \$55,000 in support of 1991 conference; conference also supported by grant of \$15,000 from the Dietrich Foundation; report on conference appears in <i>American Theatre</i>; for a wrap-up of the 1991 conference see also the fall 1991 <i>LMDA Review</i> 3.2; conference leads to meeting of Susan Jonas, John Lutterbie, Geoff Proehl and Anne Cattaneo that results in a plan to further develop LMDA's ties with colleges and universities.</p>	<p>LMDA <i>Script Exchange</i> founded by Lynn M. Thomson and Anne Cattaneo to establish national networking about new plays and build a community of dramaturgs; Thomson ran <i>Exchange</i> for 8 years, publishing 35 issues with reviews of over 1000 plays; <i>LMDA Review</i> Vol. 3.1 (1991) published on what was to become a distinctive brown paper, <i>Review</i> includes for the first time the LMDA thumbprint; LMDA receives in 1991 first grants from the NYSCA (two year grant for \$5500) and NEA (\$2000); first edition of <i>LMDA Guide to Dramaturgy Training Programs and Guide to Internships</i>; Richard Finkelstein creates for the organization its first online tool: an electronic bulletin board system; (continued on next page)</p>

## Leadership

1990-1991 (continued)

1991-1992

Executive Committee: Anne Cattaneo, President; Victoria Abrash, Mark Bly, Jim Lewis, Chiori Miyagawa  
Administrator: Susan Bougetz, Emily Morse  
National Theatre Translation Fund:  
Kevin Duffy; New Dramaturgs: Susan Bougetz; *Script Exchange*: Lynn M. Thomson

## Conference

### Seventh Annual Conference

University of Washington, Seattle  
(Conference Committee includes Mark Bly, Betty Comtois, John Kazanjian)  
June 20-23, 1992

## Conference Events

Keynote by Arthur Ballet for the 1992 conference published in *LMDA Review* 4.2;  
first UCaucus Pre-Conference (organized by Susan Jonas, John Lutterbie, and Geoff Proehl).

## Timeline

LMDA develops system of regional vice presidents that leads to regional activities in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Chicago, Canada, et al.;  
sample letters of agreement and work survey appear in *LMDA Review* 3.3;  
under the leadership of Carey Perloff and Anne Cattaneo and with the support of the Pew Charitable Trusts the National Theatre Translation Fund (NTTF) is brought from Classic Stage Co. (CSC) to LMDA;  
LMDA revises by-laws to reflect name change.

Emily Morse becomes LMDA administrator, serving from 1991 to 1995;  
Susan Bougetz runs the New Dramaturg Program in New York: it meets four to five times a year and involves up to 100 members and non-members;  
National Theatre Translation Fund awards first round of grants to Royston Coppenger, Zara Houshmand, Joanne Pottlitzer, J.D. Ranellii, Caridad Svich;  
The *LMDA Source Book*, Vol. 1 (Susan Jonas, ed.) provides resources for dramaturgy teachers;  
Anne Cattaneo and Don Shewey secure Mellon and Ettinger Foundation awards to fund the Production Notebooks project under Mark Bly's editorship;  
Anne Cattaneo approaches SSDC about merger and explores plan for LMDA to house Center for Study of African Languages and Culture.

Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>1992-1993</b> Executive Committee: Victoria Abrash, President; Melissa Cooper, Shelby Jiggetts, DD Kugler, Richard Pettengill Administrator: Emily Morse National Theatre Translation Fund: Kevin Duffy; Royston Coppenger; New Dramaturgs: Susan Bougetz; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p><b>Eighth Annual Conference</b> "Toward a New Play Dramaturgy" Université Du Québec à Montréal and McGill University, Montreal (Conference Planners: Vicki Abrash, Shelley Tepperman, DD Kugler; UCaucus Chair: Susan Jonas) June 5-8, 1993</p>	<p>Keynote by Michael Springate for the 1993 conference published in the <i>LMDA Review</i> 5.2: first Canadian conference for LMDA; first bi-lingual conference.</p>	<p>National Theater Translation Fund with the support of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Rockefeller Foundation awards second round of grants to Royston Coppenger, Christopher Martin, Larry Reed, Laurence Senelick, Shelley Tepperman, Virlana Tkacz, Wanda Phipps; first edition of the <i>LMDA Bibliography</i> (1993); DD Kugler is first Canadian officer in the organization's history (VP Communications); LMDA continues series of colloquia with SSDC.</p>
<p><b>1993-1994</b> Executive Committee: Victoria Abrash, President; Walter Bilderback, Melissa Cooper, Shelby Jiggetts, DD Kugler, Richard Pettengill Administrator: Emily Morse National Theatre Translation Fund: Royston Coppenger; New Dramaturgs: Susan Bougetz, Emily Morse; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p><b>Ninth Annual Conference</b> Emory University, Atlanta (Conference Planners: Vicki Abrash, Walter Bilderback, Shelby Jiggetts; UCaucus Chair: Susan Jonas) June 4-7, 1994</p>	<p>"The Voice of the Dramaturg": a major panel discussion that took place at the 1994 conference published in <i>Theatre Symposium</i>; see <i>LMDA Review</i> 6.2 for minutes of the 1994 annual general meeting</p>	<p>National Theater Translation Fund awards third round of grants to Sandra Ben-Dor, Douglas Langworthy, Felipe Gorostiza, Jill MacDougall, Gary Hinesley, and Anthony Molino; UCaucus establishes Discussion List, predecessor of LMDA Listserv (1994); LMDA presidents begin to serve two year terms on a regular basis.</p>
<p><b>1994-1995</b> Executive Committee: Tim Sanford and Erin Sanders, Co-Presidents; Michael Bigelow Dixon, John Glore, Jayme Koszyn; Board Chair: Peggy Marks Admin.: Emily Morse, Lisa Timmel New Dramaturgs: Emily Morse, Julie Bleha; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p><b>Tenth Annual Conference</b> "Cross-Pollination in the Theater: Art, Enterprise, and Dramaturgy" Occidental College, Los Angeles (Conference Committee: John Glore, Frank Dwyer, Jan Lewis, Mead Hunter, Kate Baggott; UCaucus Chair: Jayme Koszyn) June 23-26, 1995</p>	<p>Keynote by Robert Whitehead; conference explores connections between theater, television, film; special screening of <i>The Heidi Chronicles</i>; see <i>LMDA Review</i> 7.1 for minutes, excerpts from keynote, and 1995 conference overview; Janice Paran also reviews the conference in <i>American Theatre</i></p>	<p>Peggy Marks agrees to become Chair of the LMDA Board and will serve the organization in this role for over three years. [Dramaturgy Focus Group established at ATHE: Elizabeth Ramirez and John Lutterbie, coordinate proposal.]</p>

<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p><b>1995-1996</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Tim Sanford and Erin Sanders, Co-Presidents; Allen Kennedy, John Gore, Jayme Koszyn  Board Chair: Peggy Marks  Administrator: Lisa Timmel  <i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p> <p><b>1996-1997</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Jayme Koszyn, President; John Dias, Norm Frisch, Allen Kennedy, Emily Morse, Michele Volansky  Board Chair: Peggy Marks  Administrator: Lisa Timmel  Advocacy: Lynn M. Thomson;  Canadian Caucus Chair: Brian Quirt;  <i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p><b>Conference</b></p> <p><b>Eleventh Annual Conference</b>  Ryerson University, Toronto  (Conference Chair: Candace Burley; Harriet Power, UCaucus Chair, and Judith Rudakoff plan UCaucus events) May 31 to June 3, 1996</p> <p><b>Twelfth Annual Conference</b>  "Head to Head: Dramaturgs and Their Friends Celebrate the End of Twentieth-CENTURY Theatre"  Yale University, New Haven  (Conference Chair: Mark Bly; UCaucus Chair: Harriet Power)  June 12-16, 1997</p>	<p><b>Conference Events</b></p> <p>Keynotes by David Mirvish and Tomson Highway; discussions of the role of theatre in contemporary society, development centers, and musical theatre development; dramaturgs dance on excursion boat;  report in fall 1996 <i>LMDA Review</i> 7.3;  Canadian Caucus holds first meeting;  Brian Quirt volunteers to organize Canadian members.</p> <p>Keynote panel on "Dramaturgy Past and Future," Lloyd Richards, Sydné Mahone, Morgan Jenness, Mark Bly; visit to rehearsal of <i>Geography</i>; conference banquet held on the water in Mystic, CT;  report on 1997 conference by Scott Cummings in the fall 1997 <i>LMDA Review</i> 8.1.</p>	<p><b>Timeline</b></p> <p>[Lynn M. Thomson files <i>Rent</i> suit; the case brings increased media attention to the field of dramaturgy.]</p> <p>Advocacy Caucus formed by Lynn M. Thomson (1996), beginning work that will, over the course of several years, lead to employment guidelines;  <i>The Production Notebooks</i>, Vol. 1 published, Mark Bly, ed., 1997; Christopher Baker, Shelby Jiggetts, Jim Lewis, and Paul Walsh, contributors;  The <i>LMDA Source Book</i>, Vol. 2 (Lee Devin and Susan Jonas, eds.);  LMDA statement of principle regarding <i>Rent</i> lawsuit in <i>LMDA Review</i>, 8.2 (Winter, 1997);  LMDA joins with the National Writers Union in filing an amicus brief in support of Lynn M. Thomson's action;  Canadian Caucus holds first annual meeting in Calgary at Alberta Theatre Projects during PlayRites Festival Blitz Weekend (February 1997);  Theatre Centre, in association with LMDA's Canadian Caucus, holds first annual Mini-Conference on Dramaturgy in Toronto (July 1997).  <i>(continued on next page)</i></p>
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Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p>1996-1997 (continued)</p>			<p>[<i>Dramaturgy in American Theatre</i> (Susan Jonas, Michael Lupu, Geoff Proehl, eds., 1997): many LMDA members participate in this project, which grew out of conversations that began at LMDA conferences in the early 90s; Dramaturg, literary manager, and former LMDA co-president Tim Sanford becomes Artistic Director of Playwrights Horizons; Tim is one of several dramaturgs and literary managers that have moved into artistic director positions. Others include Janet Allen, André Bishop, Oskar Eustis, Mame Hunt, and Jerry Patch.]</p>
<p>1997-1998</p> <p>Executive Committee: Jayme Koszyn, President; Victoria Abrash, John Dias, Emily Morse;</p> <p>Board Chair: Peggy Marks</p> <p>Administrator: Lisa Timmel; Theron Albis, Heidi Coleman</p> <p>Advocacy: Lynn M. Thomson;</p> <p>Canadian Caucus Chair: Brian Quirt;</p> <p>New Dramaturgs: Julie Bleha;</p> <p><i>Script Exchange</i>: Lynn M. Thomson</p>	<p><b>Thirteenth Annual Conference</b></p> <p>“Head to Head: Dramaturgs and Their Friends Look Towards the 21st Century”</p> <p>Columbia University, New York</p> <p>(Conference Committee: Victoria Abrash, Merv Antonio, Chris Burney, Anne Cattaneo, Shirley Fishman, James Leverett, Sonya Sobieski; UCaucus Chair: Lec Devin)</p> <p>June 18-22, 1998</p>	<p>Keynote by Ben Cameron, dramaturg and newly appointed president of Theatre Communications Group; sessions held throughout the city; report on the 1998 conference by Victoria Abrash in fall 1998 <i>LMDA Review</i> 9.1 along with minutes of annual meetings; Robert Brustein’s UCaucus keynote published in <i>LMDA Review</i> 9.2 in spring of 1999.</p>	<p><i>LMDA Review</i> 8.2 (Jan. 1998) responds to attacks on dramaturgs (edited by Literary Office, Actors Theatre of Louisville);</p> <p>LMDA budget brought into the black during Koszyn’s tenure with the aid of a two-year program grant from NYSCA.</p> <p>LMDA Canada established: Canadian memberships are registered in Canada; LMDA Canada publishes first bi-annual newsletter.</p> <p>Anne Cattaneo receives first Lessing Award for Lifetime Achievement in Dramaturgy at annual conference.</p> <p>[<i>Rent</i> settlement (Aug. 1998) followed by exchange of opinions in <i>American Theatre</i> including statements by members of New Dramatists and Lynn M. Thomson’s response, “. . . And an Artist is an Artist is an Artist,” <i>American Theatre</i>, September 1998.]</p>

Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>1998-1999</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Geoff Proehl, President; Jane Ann Crum, Liz Engelman, Allen Kennedy, Tricia Roche  Administrator: Heidi Coleman, Celise Kalke  Advocacy: Shirley Fishman, Lynn M. Thomson;  Canadian Caucus Chair: Brian Quirt;  Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg;  New Technologies: Winston Neutel;  <i>Script Exchange</i>: Sonya Sobieski</p>	<p><b>Fourteenth Annual Conference</b>  "Setting the Table: A Working Retreat"  University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington  (Conference Committee: Liz Engelman, DD Kugler, and Lee Devin; Louise Lytle, Conference Coordinator)  June 17-20, 1999</p>	<p>Keynote addresses by Morgan Jenness and George Thorn; Advocacy Caucus uses oral histories and survey results in report to conference on working conditions of dramaturgs and literary managers; report on the 1999 conference appears in the fall 1999 <i>LMDA Review</i> 10.1.</p>	<p>Michael Bigelow Dixon and Amy Wegener announce creation of the Elliott Hayes Award in the <i>LMDA Review</i> 9.1 (fall, 1998); administered by Dixon of Actors Theatre of Louisville; George Thorn, supported by a grant from NYSCA, works with LMDA to re-examine mission and goals leading to a statement of shared values and beliefs entitled, "A Note to Ourselves"; Sonya Sobieski assumes editorship of <i>Script Exchange</i>.  Michele Volansky and Lue Morgan Douthit receive first Elliott Hayes Award at annual conference.</p>
<p><b>1999-2000</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Geoff Proehl, President; Jane Ann Crum, Liz Engelman, Allen Kennedy, Tricia Roche  Administrator: Celise Kalke, Ginny Coates  Advocacy: Shirley Fishman, Lynn M. Thomson;  Canadian Caucus Chair: Brian Quirt;  Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg;  New Technologies: Winston Neutel;  <i>Script Exchange</i>: Sonya Sobieski</p>	<p><b>Fifteenth Annual Conference</b>  "Starting at '00: The Dramaturg as Creator"  George Mason Univ, Fairfax, Virginia  (Conference Chairs: Jane Ann Crum, DD Kugler, Brian Quirt; UCaucus Chair: Lee Devin; Louise Lytle, Conference Coordinator)  June 15-18, 2000</p>	<p>Advocacy Caucus presents resolutions relating to employment guidelines to conference;  attendees vote unanimously to send resolutions to membership for approval; keynote by Moises Kaufman;  report on the 2000 conference appears in the fall 2000 <i>LMDA Review</i> 11.1.</p>	<p>LMDA and New Dramatists sponsors conversation between writers and dramaturgs on new play development;  Bronwyn Eisenberg assumes editorship of <i>Guide to Internships in Dramaturgy</i>;  Mark Bly accepts position as chair of the LMDA Board of Directors (2000);  LMDA Canada begins series of Annual Mini-Conferences (July 1999).  Rebecca Rugg and Lynn M. Thomson receive second Elliott Hayes Award at annual conference.</p>

Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>2000-2001</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: DD Kugler, President; Merv Antonio, Liz Engelman, Maxine Kern, Winston Neutel, Geoff Proehl, Brian Quirt, Lynn M. Thomson, Michele Volansky            Board Chair: Mark Bly            Administrator: Ginny Coates            Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Sonya Sobieski</p>	<p><b>Sixteenth Annual Conference</b>            "Dramaturgy &amp; Community: Building and Maintaining a Healthy Theatre Ecology"            Denver Public Library, Denver            (Conference Chairs: Gretchen Haley and Carri Ratazzi; UCaucus Chair: Tom Shafer)            June 7-10, 2001</p>	<p>Keynote Ashara Ekundayo; banquet at Colorado History Museum; exploration of relationship between dramaturgy, community, and activism; report on 2001 conference appears in the fall 2001 LMDA Review 12.1.</p>	<p>Membership approves "Proposed Guidelines to Improve Working Conditions" written by Lynn M. Thomson, the Advocacy Caucus, and select committee of members: guidelines establish the first suggestions for employment terms in the US and Canada; NYSCA-sponsored Dramaturgy Residency Projects, January 2001 to August 2001 (Maxine Kern, Administrator); Kristen Gandrow, Voice &amp; Vision; Brad Rothbart, INTAR Hispanic American Arts Center; Maxine Kern, New Dramatists (report in the LMDA Review 12.2); <i>The Production Notebooks</i>, Vol. 2 published, Mark Bly, ed., 2001; John Dias, Lise Ann Johnson, Corey Madden, and Katherine Profeta contributors. Judith Rudakoff receives third Elliott Hayes Award at annual conference. [Baltimore Centre Stage awarded two million dollar matching grant from the Mellon Foundation to fund dramaturgical activities "in perpetuity" (2001).]</p>
<p><b>2001-2002</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: DD Kugler, President; Liz Engelman, Des Gallant, Maxine Kern, Winston Neutel, Geoff Proehl, Brian Quirt, Lynn M. Thomson, Michele Volansky            Board Chair: Mark Bly            Administrator: Cynthia Croot            Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Andrea Watson-Canning</p>	<p><b>Seventeenth Annual Conference</b>            "New Play Development: Challenging Assumptions"            Simon Fraser University            Vancouver, British Columbia            (Conference Coordinators: Rachel Ditor, Megan Monaghan; UCaucus Chair: Tom Shafer)            June 13-16, 2002</p>	<p>Keynote by Erik Ehn; conference begins with small groups responding on butcher paper to the following question, "What are radical propositions for play development?"; report on the 2002 conference in the fall 2002 LMDA Review 13.1.</p>	<p>Gretchen Haley assumes editorship of <i>The LMDA Review</i> with Vol. 12.1; Andrea Watson-Canning assumes editorship of the LMDA <i>Script Exchange</i>; LMDA Canada publishes its edition of the LMDA's Employment Guidelines. Megan Monaghan and Freddie Ashley receive fourth Elliott Hayes Award. Arthur Ballet receives the second Lessing Award for Lifetime Achievement. [<i>Between the Lines: The Process of Dramaturgy</i> (Judith Rudakoff &amp; Lynn M. Thomson, eds., 2002): many LMDA members participate in these interviews with dramaturgs from Canada &amp; U. S.]</p>



Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>2002-2003</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Michele Volansky, President; Liz Engelman, Des Gallant, Gretchen Haley, Maxine Kern, DD Kugler, Brian Quirt, Winston Neutel, Lynn M. Thomson</p> <p>Board Chair: Mark Bly</p> <p>Administrator: Cynthia Croot</p> <p>Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Andrea Watson-Canning</p>	<p><b>Eighteenth Annual Conference</b></p> <p>"TURGS in the 'HOOD"</p> <p>DePaul University, Chicago</p> <p>(Conference Chairs: Liz Engelman, Celise Kalke, Rachel Shteir, Ed Sobel; UCaucus Chair: Tom Shafer)</p> <p>June 26-29, 2003</p>	<p>Keynote by Chuck Smith; keynote and conference report in fall 2003 edition of <i>LMDA Review</i> 14.1 along with five "Telephone Monologues" written for the conference; conference includes narrated bus trip from one end of Chicago to the other to visit theatres and theatre makers.</p>	<p>D.J. Hopkins and Shelley Orr assume editorship of <i>The LMDA Review</i> with Vol. 13.1 (fall 2002);</p> <p>New Dramatists hosts first annual LMDA holiday party for LMDA members, playwrights, and agents (Emily Morse, Elizabeth Bennett, Christian Parker, and Liz Engelman, coordinators).</p> <p>Brian Quirt and Mallory Catlett receive fifth Elliott Hayes Award at annual conference.</p>
<p><b>2003-2004</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Michele Volansky, President; Liz Engelman, Des Gallant, Gretchen Haley, Maxine Kern, DD Kugler, Brian Quirt, Winston Neutel, Lynn M. Thomson</p> <p>Board Chair: Mark Bly</p> <p>Administrator: Louise Lytle</p> <p>Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Andrea Watson-Canning</p>	<p><b>Nineteenth Annual Conference</b></p> <p>"Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"</p> <p>Philadelphia at the Double Tree, The Wilma Theater, Union League, Fergie's Bar, et al.</p> <p>(Conference Co-Chairs: Michele Volansky, Nakissa Etemad)</p> <p>June 24-27, 2004</p>	<p>Keynote by Rick Stengel; by-law revisions proposed by DD Kugler discussed during the annual general meeting; LMDA members introduced to concept of speed dating by Michele Volansky; report on the 2004 conference in the fall 2004 <i>LMDA Review</i> 15.1.</p>	<p>LMDA joins others in sponsoring "Theatre Manifesto Competition" won by Ian Maxwell MacKinnon with honorable mention to Celise Kalke and Brian Bergstrom (Project Directors—Michael Bigelow Dixon and Polly Carl);</p> <p>Mixed Blood Theatre Company and LMDA initiate Dramaturg Driven Project;</p> <p>Mark Bly and Liz Engelman travel to Mexico to initiate discussion about having first ever LMDA conference outside of Canada and the United States;</p> <p>second annual New Dramatists/LMDA holiday event adding directors to the party (Emily Morse, Elizabeth Bennett, and Liz Engelman, coordinators).</p> <p>Scott Horstein receives sixth Elliott Hayes Award at annual conference.</p> <p>[OBIE award to Morgan Jenness for her work over many years with playwrights.]</p>

Leadership	Conference	Conference Events	Timeline
<p><b>2004-2005</b></p> <p>Executive Committee: Liz Engelman, President; Kristen Gandrow, D.J. Hopkins, Maxine Kern, Kelly Miller, Megan Monaghan, Madeleine Oldham, Shelley Orr;</p> <p>Board Chair: Mark Bly</p> <p>Administrator: Louise Lytle</p> <p>Early-Career: Bronwyn Eisenberg; <i>Script Exchange</i>: Elizabeth Bennett</p>	<p><b>Conference</b></p> <p>Twentieth Annual Conference "Austin Live"</p> <p>State Theater, University of Texas, Austin, Texas</p> <p>(Conference Coordinators: Colin Denby Swanson, Ann Ciccolella, Shelley Orr, Liz Engelman)</p> <p>June 10-12, 2005</p>	<p><b>Conference Events</b></p> <p>Keynote by Kirk Watson, former mayor of Austin;</p> <p>conference features a collaboration project with dramaturgs, musicians, and playwrights;</p> <p>conference taps Austin theatres and theatre makers as participants and workshop leaders.</p>	<p><b>Timeline</b></p> <p>Dramaturg Driven proposals awarded: Michael Bigelow Dixon, Matt diCintio, Amy Jensen; D.J. Hopkins, Erica Nagel, Matthew Shook.</p> <p>first Regional Funding grant given to Jeannie Borrage; Jen Shook also receives Regional Activity funding</p> <p>Residency Grants awarded to Laronika Thomas, Stage Left in Chicago and Linda Bartholomai, The Play Company;</p> <p>LMDA <i>Script Exchange</i> goes online;</p> <p>Elizabeth Bennett assumes editorship of the LMDA <i>Script Exchange</i>;</p> <p>Winston Neutel's re-design of LMDA web site makes it easier for members to post articles;</p> <p>planning stages of web site for "Contemporary Russian Drama Translation Project" initiated by Mark Bly and John Freedman;</p> <p>LMDA co-sponsors with National Critic's Association a Critic/Dramaturg panel at Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival.</p> <p>LMDA's <i>Twentieth Anniversary</i> published (Liz Engelman, Shelley Orr, eds.)</p>
<p><b>LMDA Board Members: Current and Past</b></p>			<p>Victoria Abrash, Arnold Aronson, Sabina Berman, Mark Bly (current Chair), Anne Cattaneo, Joan Channick, Liz Diamond, Jill Dolan, Marellan Johnson Dunn, Thomas G. Dunn (first Chair), Lewis Falb, Jeremy Gerard, Alexis Greene, Christopher (Kip) Gould, Greg Gunter, Susan Gregg, Ellen Herzog, Lynn Holst, David Henry Hwang, Allen Kennedy, Joyce Ketay, Cynthia Jenner, Morgan Jenness, Jayme Koszyn, Diane F. Krausz, DD Kugler, James Leverett, Peggy Marks (past Chair), Bonnie Marranta, Marci Miller, Tim Blake Nelson, Eric Overmyer, Jean Passanante, Geoff Proehl, Lloyd Richards, Vera M. Roberts, Kelly Robinson, Richard Rose (first Canadian board member), Erin Sanders, Timothy Sanford, Don Shewey, Harold Sogard, Tazewell Thompson, Iris Turcott, Edwin Wilson, Michele Volansky.</p>

# Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas: A Living Chronology

## Some Important Pre-Founding Events, Gatherings, and Later Conferences

**1908-1910:** John Corbin, New Theatre, New York, America's first literary manager.

**1920s and 1930s:** John Gassner and Francis Fergusson function as literary advisors to the Theatre Guild and the American Laboratory Theatre.

**1954:** *Theatre Arts*, June 1954, News in Brief: "A new service for playwrights, the 'Dramaturge,' has been initiated by the Claire Leonard Agency of New York City. Director James Light, who worked with the original Provincetown Players as well as on Broadway and beyond, gives, for a fee, a thorough analysis of plays together with recommendations for improvement" (85).

**1967:** Arthur Ballet founds Office of Advanced Drama Research in Minneapolis.

**1968:** One of the earliest known uses of the term dramaturg in connection with an American theater organization appears "in an annual report of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center" (from "American Dramaturgy: 1968-1987" by Cynthia Jenner).

**1971:** Michael Feingold becomes first Literary Director at the Yale Rep.

**late 1970s:** Informal monthly luncheon meetings of dramaturgs in the New York City area including André Bishop, Playwrights Horizons; Steve Carter, Negro Ensemble Company; Anne Cattaneo, Phoenix Theatre; David Copelin, New Dramatists; Alexis Greene, George St. Playhouse; Cynthia Jenner, American Place Theatre; Rod Marriott, Circle Rep, and others; dramaturgy departments founded at University of Massachusetts, Yale School of Drama, and the University of Iowa.

**1979:** Theatre Communications Group, "Literary Managers' Conference" (the first gathering of literary managers and dramaturgs from across North America): June 28-29, 1979; TCG Offices in New York; sixteen dramaturgs and literary managers attended this meeting; James Leverett reported in *Theatre Communications* that the entire field numbered less than 40.

**Participants:** André Bishop, Playwrights Horizons/Manhattan; Steve Carter, Negro Ensemble Company; Anne Cattaneo, Phoenix Theatre; Michael Feingold, Guthrie Theater;

Elinor Fuchs, Chelsea Theatre; Elizabeth King, Actors Theatre of Louisville; Jonathan Marks, Yale Rep; Bonnie Mar-ranca, American Place Theatre; Rod Marriott, Circle Rep; Gail Merrifield, New York Shakespeare Festival; Stephen Pascal, Manhattan Theatre Club; Joel Schechter, Yale Rep.; Cynthia Sherman, St. Nicholas Theater Co.; John Tillinger, Long Wharf Theatre; Russell Vandenbroucke, Mark Taper Forum; Douglas Wager, Arena Stage; Michael Earley, TCG; Peter Zeisler, TCG; Lindy Zesch, TCG.

**1981:** Theatre Communications Group, "A National Conference of Dramaturgs and Literary Managers" (billed as a "Landmark TCG Conference," 35 representatives from across North America attend): January 15-17, 1981; Yale School of Drama, New Haven, CT; James Leverett reported in *Theater Communications* 2.12 (March 1981) that there were nearly 100 positions in TCG theatres.

**1983:** "Dramaturgy: Literary Management and Dramatic Theory in the United States" (SUNY Stony Brook sponsors major gathering of dramaturgs from across North America); May 15-16, 1983; State University of New York at Stony Brook.

**1983:** Theatre Communications Group, "The Tradition of the New" (billed as "National Conference of Dramaturgs, Literary Managers and Artistic Directors"); June 19-21, 1983; Columbia University, New York; over 100 participants.

**1985:** "Chicago Dramaturgy Conference" (Not a LMDA event. Under the leadership of Linda Walsh Jenkins, it was organized by individuals from Northwestern University, Northlight Theatre, Wisdom Bridge, Chicago New Plays Festival, Victory Gardens, Goodman Theatre, and Court Theatre. Joel Schechter was the keynote speaker. Stuart Hecht and Richard Pettengill presented a panel entitled "The Dramaturg's Process: Pre-Production to Opening"); April 19-20, 1985; Northwestern University and Northlight Theatre, Evanston, Illinois.

# Images from Past LMDA Annual Conferences

guests

8/21/86 Cynthia White Orange Stage Company, Ashland  
 8/21/86 John Pappalardo New York Theatre Workshop  
 8/21/86 Thomas Mann White Student Union College  
 William New York University  
 Susan Marnoff Truax Stage  
 8/21/86 Carol Kline Princeton Rep Company  
 8/21/86 Tony Phadon LMDA  
 8/21/86 Victoria Liberman Princeton Rep Company  
 Richard Kramer LMDA  
 8/21/86 Ed Cohen J.R.T.  
 8/21/86 Robert Schneider don't matter  
 8/21/86 KATHLEEN DUMICK  
 8/21/86 Catherine Cloudt Show west

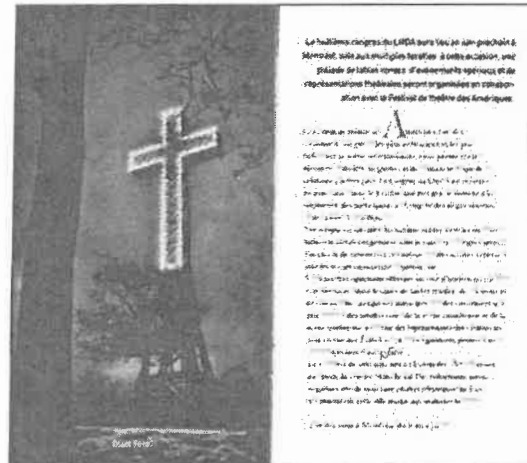
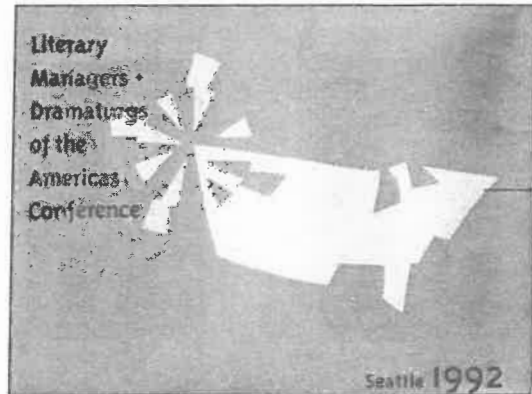
GUESTS

Jarvis Miles  
 Richard Attwell Indian Rep Theatre  
 Genevieve Barton 2007 S. Arlington Edge Rd. Myrtle Vt.  
 Shakespeare Theatre at 70 Rd  
 Peter Davis  
 John Cooney  
 ALLEN DAVIS JR.  
 Peter Spalding  
 Tom Schell  
 C Child  
 Center Stage  
 ART  
 ALBERT BICAN TRAVEL THEATRE  
 1001 11th St, 5th Floor, Director  
 Performance Company NYC  
 Terrence Simoes C.M.C.

guests

Muriel Philippa 10 W. 4th St  
 Judy Rosenthal LMDA NYC 10023  
 David Clark c. 25 W. 11th St  
 NYC 10011

**CHICAGO**  
 June 24, 25, 26 1990  
**LITERARY MANAGERS  
 & DRAMATURGS OF AMERICA**  
**CONFERENCE**



**Images 1, 2, 3 (above):** Attendees who signed in at the First Annual LMDA Conference at New Dramatists in New York in August of 1986.

**Image 4, 5, 6 (above, right):** Brochures for the Annual Conferences in Chicago in 1990, Seattle in 1992, and Montreal in 1993. The Montreal brochure is in French. See two other conference brochures on pages 12 and 21 of this book.

**Photo 7:** Mark Bly, Anne Cattaneo, and Michael Lupu at the conference in Seattle in 1992.

Images: courtesy of Geoff Proehl  
 Photo 7: Chris Bennion



# Looking Forward to Looking Ahead

by Liz Engelman  
LMDA President

**Liz Engelman** is a freelance dramaturg who lives in Minneapolis. Most recently she was the Literary Director of the McCarter Theatre, where she is now a Literary Affiliate. Liz has served as the Director of New Play Development at ACT Theatre in Seattle, Washington, Literary Manager/Dramaturg at Seattle's Intiman Theatre, and as Assistant Literary Manager at Actors Theatre of Louisville. She has worked on the development of new plays across the country, serves on the advisory board of NNPN, and has edited several collections of plays and monologues.

**W**e all know you can't have a future without having a past. LMDA's past has been incredible. Who would have thought, twenty years ago in 1985, sitting around those lunch tables in New York that skipping ahead to 2005 there would be an international organization made up of hundreds of members, and a wider community that doesn't always say "a drama what?" when you state what you are?

Who would have thought that, twenty years later in 2005, someone who was, or had been, a dramaturg would be running The Public Theater? Or that someone who trained as a dramaturg would be the Executive Director of TCG? Or that someone who has spent over three decades of his life as a dramaturg would become the Resident Artistic Director at The Old Globe? Who would have thought that an Obie Award would be given in recognition of the work of one who has dedicated her heart and soul to committing acts of dramaturgy?

I don't know anyone who could have seen or predicted this, though many perhaps might have dreamt about it. And it is the dream that is important. To borrow a phrase from my great partner-in-all-crimes, Michael Dixon, we are nothing if we are not "dream-a-turgs," dreaming our way into the future we want to have, into the opportunities we want to establish, into the world we want to live and work in. The accomplishments of the above theatre-makers and advocates Oskar Eustis, Ben Cameron, Jerry Patch and Morgan Jenness are major examples of such dreams: the giant strides that we as dramaturgs and literary managers have made in the last two decades through our commitment to writers and their voices. They—and we—have continued to create and grow the opportunities for exploration, exposure, exchange, and engagement between writers and our communities.

So, what about the future of our field? What will the next twenty years bring? It is very difficult to project into the vast unknown, but, standing on the shoulders of the many dramaturgical giants listed and acknowledged in this commemorative volume, the vision is a little clearer from up here.

**It is 2025. Dramaturgs are everywhere.**

**Here's how:**

In Chicago, they say you can spit and hit an actor. Now, in cities everywhere, people could walk down the street, spit and hit a dramaturg (though hopefully, they were not aiming for them!).

Dramaturgs will share their function with the corporate world, sit on boards of all sizes of organizations, and put to use their skills of analysis, communication, structural thinking, and process. (Talk to Lee Devin, he's already on this one.)

Dramaturgs will be the presidents of colleges and universities, putting their academic knowledge and professional experience into the broader curricula in ways that help build the next generation of dramaturgically minded thinkers. (Anyone interested should talk to Tori Haring-Smith, who is already doing this.)

Dramaturgs will be using their passion for communicating, for engaging with current events, and for framing the conversation by entering the political field, and be mayors, governors, senators and congressmen and women. The pundits never thought a Catholic could become President. What about a Dramaturg? What about a Catholic Dramaturg? (Michele Volansky is working on this.)

You will lie on the therapist's couch, and look up at the face of a dramaturg.

A dramaturg will be elected to lead the United Nations, and won't have nearly as much problem getting confirmed. (After all, so much of our job involves diplomacy, facilitation, and negotiation.)

Actors will be saying "I'm not a dramaturg, but I play one on TV." And there might even be a show about them. Dramaturgy 90210. (Hopefully reality shows will no longer be around.)

*Dramaturgy?!?: The Game* will be played in houses all across the United States and Canada, more popular than Taboo or Pictionary. (Want a sneak peak? Crime partner Michael Dixon and I have one ready for you to play!)

I change my position slightly on the giants' shoulders. My vision becomes broader in its range, and I see the global picture. I see the seeds of our international exploration bear fruit in countries all over the map, from Mexico and Latin America to Russia, to our German roots, to England, Israel, Cameroon, Korea. "Think globally, act dramaturgically" will be spread across chests on t-shirts, in all different languages. Cross-cultural collaborations and exchanges, discussions of theatre-making and cultural contexts will be the norm, not the exception.

My position shifts again. What of LMDA? The view is clear. Just as the regional theater movement challenged



**Photo:** Michael Bigelow Dixon, Liz Engelman, Michele Volansky, and Rachel Shteir at the 2003 LMDA Annual Conference in Chicago. *Photo: Cynthia SoRelle*

Broadway's hold on the American Theater, LMDA's regional activity will be strong and thriving, and LMDA's Local Chapters in each of The United States and Canada's regions will be self-functioning chapters, with funds for their regions, mini-conferences in their areas. Like the local firefighters chapter, we dramaturgs and literary managers will have our local foci, integral to—and integrated into—our neighborhoods.

And lastly, what do I see? I see that no one will ask what a dramaturg is. Everyone will know.

*In celebration of LMDA's 20th Anniversary,  
we would like to recognize the following  
individuals and institutions whose  
generous support for this book  
sustains our organization and  
enables us to grow.*

Rocco Landesman  
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Lee Devin  
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Dorian Hadley  
Anne Charlotte Harvey  
Doug Hughes  
DD Kugler  
Jennifer E. Leeson  
LMDA Canada  
McLennan Theatre  
New Dramatists  
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Playscripts, Inc.  
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Tarragon Theatre  
Lisa Timmel and David Markus  
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University of Puget Sound  
Michele Volansky  
Yale School of Drama Dramaturgy Program

**Imda**

literary managers and  
dramaturgs of the americas

***LMDA's 20th Anniversary: Celebrating the First Twenty Years***

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