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### LMDA New & Noteworthy, May 2020

Martine Kei Green-Rogers

Lindsay R. Barr

Jess Applebaum

Dani Joseph

Jeremy Stoller

*See next page for additional authors*

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# LMDA NEW & NOTEWORTHY

May 2020  
Vol. 5, No. 9

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## **#LMDA2020 // Conference Countdown**

### [Crossing Borders Pt. 3:](#)

Dramaturgy Around the World

June 17-20, 2020

Happy May!

I hope this newsletter finds you all safe and healthy!

This month has been busy for the conference committee. There is nothing like re-envisioning and re-planning a conference in a few months! Our running joke is that we made the incoming President's (Bryan Moore) job so much easier for 2021 since we are shifting much of the content and conference plans previously in place to next year.

To keep you updated on conference plans, we are still discussing and experimenting with some last minute ideas about how to run the conferences sessions, the Regional Lunches, and the Conference Bar. We hope to curate a fun and thoughtful virtual conference experience for you all.

As such, there will be some great information coming out over the next few weeks that will culminate in the rolling release of the asynchronous material for the conference beginning June 1st. If you have not registered for the conference (or renewed your membership), please do so soon! Here is the link to the [conference website](#) and the link to the [conference handbook](#).

Information about the conference (as we have it) can be found there! The fun is about to

begin!

On another note, it has been such a pleasure serving as President for the past two years. I am so thankful for each of you. I have had so much love and support over my time as President and I feel our organization has grown because you all reached out to me with ideas on how we could serve you better. I am looking forward to continuing on as Past President and supporting our incoming Executive team for the next two years.

I would encourage all of you to attend the AGM on June 18th (the eve of the conference start). You do not have to register for the conference to attend and it will be a great way for you to find out what we have done over the past year and the new initiatives coming your way.

Stay safe and I look forward to seeing faces at the upcoming virtual conference!

Best,

Martine Kei Green-Rogers



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## Managing Life and Work in the Time of COVID-19: Thoughts from the LMDA Executive Committee



### **Martine Kei Green-Rogers – President**

Hello, from the Hudson Valley in New York! This month I spent half of the month finishing up the school year at SUNY New Paltz – administrative tasks such as working on the revision for the “Dramaturgy” section of our department’s Production Handbook and submitting final grades. I wrote for the [dramaturgs’ network blog](#) for a week. I also did a 2-day guest lecture/workshop on “Digiturgy” for Yale. I began prepping for the show I am working on for Seven Devils (which will be online this year) and did some script reading for OSF. I also spent quite a bit of time working with Brenda Munoz and the rest of the amazing conference committee planning the

2020 LMDA conference. I find that I am gardening more, spending time with my spouse, and petting my cute dog, which makes me happy.

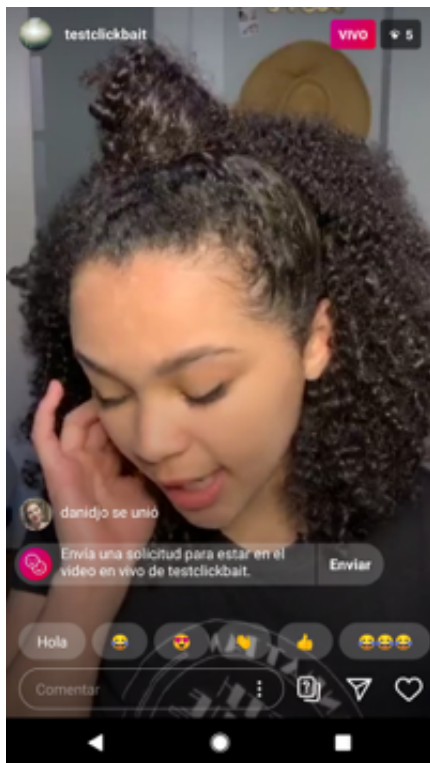
**Lindsey R. Barr – Administrator**

I thrive on organization and scheduling so to be thrust in to circumstances where that has all been upended is challenging. I've created a very rough schedule that seems to work for me: wake up, work out, drink a ice-cold glass of water, shower, attend to LMDA emails and needs, write for two hours (could be dramaturgy, school work, or anything else), take LMDA or school meetings in between, and end my "work" day by taking a walk around the neighborhood with my husband. I recently invested in a "productivity nook," and much of LMDA's administrative operations happen now from this corner of my room!



### **Jess Applebaum – VP Advocacy**

This is my first year back in school since 2012 (I'm getting my PhD in Theater and Performance at CUNY Grad Center) so intellectually I'm delving into the worlds of Romantic Theater, Theater Theories and NYC in the 1970s. Having the time to explore intermediality in theater and performance, and see how NYC survived one major fiscal crisis helps put our work and our world in perspective. Virtual town halls and Zoom dance parties have also been wonderful.



### **Dani Joseph – VP Membership**

As I languished in quarantine I felt my creative identity slowly slipping away from me. When 90% of your clients are too depressed/anxious to write, what's a dramaturg to do? Seeing that people couldn't write, I decided to put my producing hat on and ask my clients if they had anything small-scale they wanted to put up online. Luckily, my friend Isabella D'Esposito had already written a play that was specifically written with the medium of Instagram Live in mind. We hired an actress and a director, did eight hours of rehearsal, and put the play up for an audience of about 40 people. The playwright enjoyed it so much that we're working on another play right now set in a different online medium. (Photo: From our dress rehearsal for the play. The actress' name is Jordan Tyson.)

### **Jeremy Stoller – VP Communications**

I'm responding as a single adult, who currently has steady income.

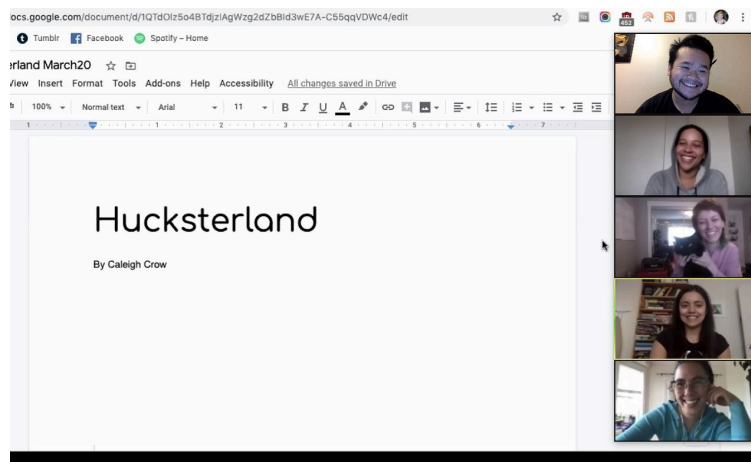
My motivation tends to be focused outward, on supporting my collaborators and their goals. Now, many projects have been put on hold, and those artists are struggling in the

wake of lost income and opportunities. I've had to reckon with the limits on what I offer them in this moment, and to reacquaint myself with who I am without those projects and teammates on whom to direct my focus.

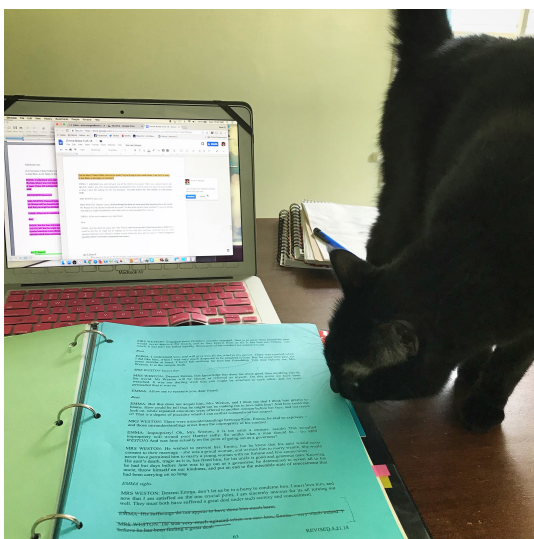
When not working or panicking, distractions include: walking; reading novels; cooking; listening to historians, philosophers, and social justice leaders contextualize this pandemic; checking in with colleagues; lights-off listening to an album or audiobook; film or game nights with friends.

### **Jenna K. Rodgers – VP Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Typically in April, I spend my month out at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, as the Dramaturg for the Playwrights Lab. This year, we stayed home, reflecting on the group of nearly 50 international artists that would have gathered in Banff to write and create on our theme of multiple languages. I met often with Brian Quirt, the Lab director



to brainstorm what the Lab might look like in the future, but also to process this new time we find ourselves in - engaging in deep thought about what kinds of stories will emerge, and how we might collaborate with writers (and audiences) in the future. My company, Chromatic Theatre, continues to host an IBPOC Playwrights Unit (now digitally). The transition to Zoom has been relatively easy, though we are looking forward to sharing space together when it is deemed safe to do so.



### **Anne Morgan – VP Institutional**

I have been untethered. The world is in chaos, and I am furloughed from my institutional gig. I mourn the lost work, miss audiences, and try to figure out what my place - and what theater's place - is in all this. Thankfully, there's still dramaturgy: I wrote for the Phoenix challenge, picked up some freelance work, and have been reading for a number of contests. The anticipation and delight I feel when I sit down to read a brand new play remains strong, even as everything else is shifting. I'm also running more, cooking more, and cuddling my cat more.

### **Phaedra Scott – VP Programs**

What has helped keep me sane is limiting my computer screen hours to certain times of the day, certain days of the week. I found that the line between personal and professional life was blurred as I brought work home with me full time, so I try to stay on my computer only during work hours, and I do not use my computer during the weekends. It has completely rejuvenated me by making boundaries of when I can be 'off'.

Creatively, I've been using this time as an opportunity to expand my artistic knowledge outside of theater. I've picked up new crafts of embroidery and painting, and I've been spending time reading books instead of plays. I've framed this as a chance to replenish my artistic soul so that in the Aftertimes I can approach creativity and dramaturgy with all of my new knowledge and skills.

### **Jacqueline Goldfinger – VP Regional Activity**

Reading. Reading. Reading. I'm taking this time to read all of the work that I wish I could read during the academic year, and freshen up my syllabi for upcoming classes. I'm also crafting a few new ideas for classes to pitch in the future. I'm also reading for a few local online projects and writing a few short pieces myself. This work is saving my sanity. It's short enough that I can do it bit by bit, day by day, but hearty enough that I feel like I am accomplishing something significant. In addition, dramaturgy Allison Horsely and I have created a new consulting service (<http://www.movingartsconsulting.com>) in order to make it easier for companies and theaters seeking dramaturgical services to find them.

### **Ken Cerniglia – Past President**

It's been two months since I arrived in my native California from NYC, where I hadn't been away for more than two weeks since 2003. I had just begun a new chapter of life and career when pandemic pushed both pause and overdrive. After a few WTF weeks, I've adopted new habits: daily neighborhood walks, long bike rides along the Bay Trail, hiking with my kids, botany (obsessed with Picture This), and... yes, cooking (the gourmet husband finds this endlessly amusing). I'm grateful for time and technology to stay productive and connected, with all of the above fueling my dramaturgy.

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## **The Kennedy Center Dramaturgy Intensive: Learn from the best. Work with the best.**

Join a growing international community of students, early career dramaturgs, and teacher mentors interested in expanding and enriching their understanding of the value that the practice of dramaturgy can have on a new plays and society. Now in its ninth year, this eight-day intensive program at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts focuses on deepening the participant's experience as a key resource to the playwright, dramaturg, and director on their new play assignment.



Responding to concerns in the field that more rigorous and practical mentorships were needed for young dramaturgs in the new play development process, the program was co-founded in 2011 by Mark Bly, Director of the Dramaturgy Intensive, and Gregg Henry, Artistic Director of Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, in partnership

with the Kennedy Center, the National New Play Network, and LMDA. At the core of this astonishing program are:

- Daily meetings with Mark Bly focusing on discussions of the plays and the participant's rehearsal work as a key resource and observer.
- Daily attendance with mentor dramaturgs on one of the eight new plays being developed and rehearsed during the MFA Playwright's Workshop produced in association with NNPN at the Kennedy Center.
- Group sessions with each project's dramaturg.
- Daily discussions on institutional new play development process and policy with creative team dramaturgs, conversations with local DC dramaturgs and NNPN leaders, discussions on major issues in contemporary theatre including "Decolonization" in our theatres and what it means to be a Citizen-Dramaturg in our culture.

Recent Senior Mentor Dramaturgs in addition to Mark Bly have included Adrien-Alice Hansel, Celise Kalke, Jacqueline E. Lawton, Kelly Miller, Janice Paran, Martine Kei Green-Rogers, and Gavin Witt. Last year in 2019 a diverse group of invited participating dramaturgs came from the United States, the British Isles, and France. Participating playwrights of note have included Martyna Majok, Susan Soon He Stanton, and Steve Yockey among many others.





After the 2019 Dramaturgy Intensive, Assistant Dramaturg Eli Bradley wrote Mark Bly and Gregg Henry about his experience on the HBO Series *Succession* writer/producer Susan Soon He Stanton's workshop play *The Thirty Meter Telescope Project*: "...my background has never put me in orbit with the community of theatre makers you connected me with. The chance to be an active part on such a powerful journey as the *TMTProject* reminded me why I feel such a strong socio-political tether to theatre. It is a means of asking a community to consider the road another person (or peoples) must walk on that person's terms, something we seem to be getting further and further from in today's polarized society...Going forward you've reinvigorated my confidence that there is a tangible good to the world that comes out of theatre. I felt it during the readings, but saw it even more clearly in the memories you've shared and the experiences you've lived."

View the *Kennedy Center New Play Dramaturgy Intensive 2020* [Website](#) for more details to join us in the future.

Mark Bly, May 2020

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### ***Regional Events***

The 2019-20 Season was a record breaking year for Regional Events! Over 376 dramaturgs and collaborators participated in regional events! That's 30% MORE individual artists participating in events than last season. Plus, we co-sponsored the ReOrient Festival in San Francisco, the Company One Boot Camp in Boston, the Women's Theatre Conference in Washington DC, and we Live Tweeted the Rural Arts and Culture Summit in Central Appalachia. Plus, Mountains West Live Streamed their February "For the Love of Dramaturgy Event" and it has over 2,500 views. Thank you so much for a wonderful run as V.P. of Regions! I can't wait to see you at the Conference.

## Region Facebook Groups:

[Canada](#)

[Mountain West](#) (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado)

[Greater Midwest](#) (IL, IN, IA, western KY, MI, MN, OH, WI)

[Metro Bay Area](#)

[Metro Chicago](#)

[Metro NYC](#)

[Metro Boston](#)

[Central Appalachia](#) (WV, VA, eastern KY, northern TN, and western NC)

[Florida](#)

[Metro Philadelphia](#)

[Mid-Atlantic](#) (DC/Maryland/DE)

[Northeast](#) (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York State, Rhode Island, Vermont, Pennsylvania)

[Northwest](#) (Idaho, Oregon, Washington)

[Southern California](#)

[Plains](#) (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)

[Southeast](#) (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, eastern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, southern Tennessee, western NC)

[Southwest](#) (Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, California)

[Third Coast](#) (Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas)

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### ***Your Dramaturgy Ad Here!***

We're reserving this high-value newsletter real estate for our Institutional Members. Do you have a job posting you want our readers to see, an M.F.A. program looking for a well-qualified applicant pool, or a festival you want to make sure smart dramaturgs have on their radar? This is the place for it! **Institutional Memberships are only \$200**, and they come with four individual member profiles for your organization to divvy out as you see fit.

Let your organizational leadership know that we'd love them to [join the LMDA party](#).



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### ***[Pandemic Response: Resources for Artist](#)***

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

E-mail [communications@lmda.org](mailto:communications@lmda.org).

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