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### **New & Noteworthy, February 2020**

Lindsay R. Barr

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**literary managers & dramaturgs  
of the americas**

**new & noteworthy**

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**Toward and Intersectional Praxis of Arts  
Administration and Dramaturgy**

by Lindsey R. Barr



I've always considered myself a multi-hyphenate artist. A dramaturg-director, a dramaturg-producer, a dramaturg-insert-currently-needed-role-here. Rarely did I consider myself both a dramaturg and arts administrator in equal measure before I joined LMDA as the Administrator in 2018.

After earning a masters in nonprofit management, I worked through my fair share of administrative jobs: producing large-scale events at a university, running a small theatre company, and working in front of house throughout the Baltimore theatre scene. Though all challenging and rewarding in their own regard, I felt frustrated by the lack of communication between the delineated "administrative" staff and the "artistic" staff. How can so many people, whose end goals are so similar, be so siloed?

My training as an administrator only highlighted the importance of a dramaturgical mindset in my work, and vice versa. Regardless of my many attempts and appeals to executive leadership in these organizations (which often sounded like: "if you want to know what's happening in your organization talk to your front of house staff!"), my insistence on cross-collaboration between departments went unacknowledged.

I know, firsthand, the value of being a dramaturg and arts administrator in equal measure. I'm a better planner due to my administrative work and I'm a better dramaturg due to my experience in collaboration. Without dramaturgical training, I would not be able to ask critical questions of an administrative planning process with an interest in ensuring cohesion, clarity, and completion. Without my administrative training, I would not be able to think holistically about the work being produced on stage (how does the dramaturgy of the audience experience impact the show itself, I often wonder).

When planning for the 2018 LMDA conference, a light bulb went off: there's an intersection between dramaturgy and administration invaluable to the processes of both. Hesitant to not rock the boat in what was only my second year on the job, I inquired about the ethicality of presenting a Hot Topics paper. My concerns were varied. Should I, a public-facing representative of LMDA, be challenging the structures of dramaturgy and arts administration? Was that okay? Should I simply keep plugging forward, supporting the organization, keeping my thoughts to myself? I asked our conference team their thoughts, and they gave me the green light to submit a paper insisting they were interested in what I

had to share.

At the 2018 conference, I presented a paper titled, “The Intersectional Praxis of Dramaturgy and Arts Administration.” In it, I suggest the following three ways to encourage a stronger collaboration between the two:

1. Equip arts administrators with dramaturgical skill sets and vice versa. Knowing how to do financials and textual analysis in the same space may heighten the ways we talk about dramaturgy and arts administration throughout the profession.
2. Creating opportunities within the academy and apprentice programs to prepare students for dramaturgical and dramaturgy adjacent jobs. Are we encouraging the next generation of artists to highlight their dramaturgical training in interviews whereby staff may witness first-hand the importance of dramaturgy in an artistically administrative capacity? Are we taking the opportunity to acknowledge and utilize the artistic inclinations of our administrative staff beyond that which only seeks to help the bottom line?
3. Create pathways wherein dramaturgy is seen as crucial a function as directing, designing, or teaching throughout our academic institutions and professional theatre organizations. If we place value on the role of dramaturgs both inside the rehearsal room and out, the case may be made that they are as valuable (and potentially more so!) inside Artistic Directors’ offices than other career paths that often lead there.

I was thrilled so many attendees wanted to talk about the content of the speech, clearly pointing to an interest in bringing these two disciplines closer in practice.

*Lindsey is a 2nd year PhD student in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland. Her research focuses on representations of madness and trauma on stage as it intersects with race and gender. A professional dramaturg and director, her work has been seen throughout the Baltimore and Washington, DC region at Everyman Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Single Carrot Theatre, The Geothe Institut, and the Capital Fringe Festival, among others.*

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## **#LMDA20 // Conference Countdown**

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

Dramaturgy Around the World

June 17-20, 2020

Ciudad de México, México

Conference Venue: Centro Cultural del Bosque

Things are ramping up for the LMDA 2020 Conference! For example, the conference committee is in the final stages of evaluating proposals. If you offered a proposal, you will know by March 5th if your proposal has been accepted into the conference. As such, on

March 5th, registration for the conference will also open. As you begin your preparations to register, please let us know if you have any questions.

As we have worked to create this conference, we looked for opportunities to curate some activities, panels, experiences, etc. that would help us all understand the theatrical context of our host city. Starting now, look to each upcoming newsletter to “tease” some of these events for the conference. Here is one fun curated event:

### **Dramaturgy on the translation of four plays by four Mexican playwrights during The Lark Mexico - Us Exchange 2019**

Four Mexican playwrights share their povs about the dramaturgical process they went through during the program The Lark Mexico - US Exchange in New York 2019 (with a grant from FONCA and The Lark Play Development Center).

The playwrights will be presenting an excerpt of their work in Spanish and English, analyze the journey to earn their individual grants, and work with a dramaturg to translate each one of their plays for a dramatized reading of *Cósmica / Cosmic* by Gabriela Román, *La Prietty Guoman* by César Enríquez, *Autopsia a un copo de nieve / Autopsy of a Snowflake* by Luis Santillán, and *Jacinto y Nicolasa / Raramuri Dreams* by Camila Villegas.

Their exchange will reflect how dramaturgy is - or not - part of the process of creation for theatre and performing arts in Mexico and which strategies are worth to be implemented in our country's creative and production process.

### **Procesos de dramaturgismo durante la traducción de cuatro obras de autores mexicanos en el marco de THE LARK MEXICO\_US EXCHANGE 2019 en Nueva York.**

Cuatro dramaturgos mexicanos - Gabriela Román, César Enríquez, Luis Santillán y Camila Villegas- comparten y discuten de qué manera el proceso de dramaturgismo por el que atravesaron en Nueva York el marco del programa THE LARK MEXICO- US EXCHANGE (apoyado por el FONCA y The Lark Play Development Center) fue determinante durante la traducción de cada una de sus obras y para la presentación de las lecturas dramatizadas de "Cósmica", "La Prietty Gouman", "Autopsia de un copo de nieve" y "Jacinto y Nicolasa".

Tras la presentación de un extracto en inglés y en español de cada uno de los textos, se revisará el proceso mediante el cual llegaron a Nueva York y cómo fue la experiencia particular de traducción con la presencia de un dramaturgista. Finalmente, se reflexionará cómo se viven, o no, los procesos de dramaturgismo en México y qué formas o estrategias podrían implementarse para ampliar el alcance de experiencias como esta. -

### **In Banquet News:**

The banquet will occur at the Museo Nacional de Antropología on Saturday, June 20th at 7:00pm. There will be a guided tour of the museum included in your banquet ticket price.

The tour occurs one hour before the meal begins at 8:00pm. Here is a [link](#) to the museum if you want to read more about it.

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## LMDA Grants and Awards

### ***Elliot Hayes Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy***

Named in honor of Elliott Hayes, the former dramaturg and literary manager at The Stratford Festival and a dual citizen of Canada and the USA, this award recognizes excellence in dramaturgical work on a specific project over the past two years. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, production, season planning and implementation, educational programming, or advocacy for the profession.

The recipient of the 2020 Elliott Hayes Award, presented at the annual LMDA conference, will receive \$1000 US and a travel stipend to the following LMDA conference.

Applications will be accepted from February 15 through April 1st, 2020. Learn more and apply today on the [LMDA website!](#)

### ***The Field Grant***

What has annually been known as the Dramaturgy Driven Grant has grown into the new Field Grant. This grant is intended to support dramaturg-led projects towards an expansion of the field in geographic space throughout the Americas. This grant's purpose and goal is to further the applicant's intentions to promote dramaturgical activity particularly in México and/or Latin America, in indigenous spaces throughout the Americas, in rural areas, and in underserved communities.

Grant Amount: \$1,000 to support your time and expenses

Applications will be accepted from December 1st through February 29, 2020. Learn more [here!](#)

### ***ECD Conference Travel Grant***

This is an opportunity now for an artist or dramaturg, who self-identifies as being early in their career, to apply for funding and attend the 2020 Annual LMDA Conference in Mexico City (June 17-20).

Applications will be accepted from February 1st through March 15th, 2020. For detail, visit our [website](#).

Learn more about all the LMDA grants and awards [here!](#)

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### ***Upcoming Regional Events***

Thank you for making LMDA Regional Activities so successful. By the end of January

2020, more people participated in Regional Events in the first half of this season than all of last season! We'll have the full round-up of 2020-21 details at the Conference this summer, but I just wanted to give a SHOUT OUT to our amazing Regional VPs for organizing all of these events, and to everyone who has volunteered for and/or participated in an event so far this season. THANK YOU!

Times for all regional events are listed in the time zone of the actual event.

### **Southwest**

Sunday, March 15 at Noon

Dramaturgy Open Office Hours at the Road Theatre (on Lankershim). Come join us!

### **Canada**

March

Networking Mixer. More details to come!



### **All Region Online Conversation**

Tuesday, March 3 @ Noon-1:30pm (EST)

Musical Theatre Dramaturgy - Members Only

Spend your lunch chatting about the nuts and bolts of Musical Theatre Dramaturgy and getting your show to the stage. Email [regional@lmda.org](mailto:regional@lmda.org) who will verify your members and send you log-in information. For our online activities, we use Zoom. To learn more about Zoom, watch this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFhAEoCF7jg>

### **Metro NYC**

Tuesday, March 10 - Save the Date

We're bringing back our annual Speed Networking Night! Get to know local LMDA members, students, and artists from the community. Watch the Metro NYC Facebook page for details.

### **All Region Online Conversation**

Monday, May 4 @ 8-9pm (EST)

Dramaturg-Director Hyphenate Jam - Members Only

Calling all Dramaturg-Director Hyphenates! A number of members have shared interest in discussing the pros and cons of both dramaturging and directing - either doing it all on one show or switching hats for various shows. In May, we'll come together for a relaxed discussion about being a dramaturg-director, what that means to different people, and the challenges/rewards you face. Email [regional@lmda.org](mailto:regional@lmda.org) who will verify your members and send you log-in information. For our online activities, we use Zoom. To learn more about Zoom, watch this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFhAEoCF7jg>

## Great Plains

Late May

LMDA at Great Plains Theatre Conference - Event TBA!

If you are not sure which region you belong to, find out here: <https://lmda.org/map>. You are welcome to belong to multiple regions or, if you are traveling, attend events in multiple regions.

Make sure to join your regional Facebook page and watch the ListServ for details about the below events as well as new events added throughout the season.

### 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)

Regional questions? Reach out to the VP of Regional Activity Jacqueline Goldfinger ([regional@lmda.org](mailto:regional@lmda.org)).

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

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

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