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LMDA New & Noteworthy, October 2019

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LMDA NEW & NOTEWORTHY

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Welcome!

Letter from LMDA President: Martine Kei Green-Rogers

Happy Fall, Everyone!

It has been a busy and productive time with LMDA! We are deep into grants season, mentor matching, thinking through our organization's Values Statement, continuing with the Case Study & Conversation series, working on a new issue of REVIEW, and all of the Regional Activity that keeps us active in close proximity to you. There are countless other initiatives in the works as I type this and things that we have not begun to dream.

Thank you to all who participated in the membership survey. On behalf of the Board and the Executive Committee, we truly appreciate your responses and look forward to working to serve your needs as communicated in that survey.

We are especially excited to begin the process of transition from our current leadership into the next Presidential and Executive tenure that begins at the conclusion of our next annual conference. Bryan and I are working together to make sure we continue to move the organization forward while also keeping the services that you enjoy up and running.

We are also in full swing with conference planning. There will be more information that will begin to come out over the next few months, but if you have any questions or concerns, always feel free to reach out and ask at President@LMDA.org.

With all of the gains, there have been some losses. The loss of Michael Lupu and Robert Blacker in our community has stunned all who have worked with, been mentored by, and read/studied the scholarship they leave behind that serves their legacy. I hope you will all

take a look at our “In Tribute” page and read the tribute to them. <https://lmda.org/inmemoriam>. In addition, if you are interested in adding to those pages or contributing names of other members of our community who have passed on, we would love to make sure we celebrate them, their lives, and their impact on our field.

With Gratitude,

Martine Kei Green-Rogers



The Case for Good Practices

By Jenna Rodgers and Phaedra Michelle Scott

We are the VP of Equity Diversity and Inclusion and VP of Programs for LMDA, Jenna Rodgers and Phaedra Michelle Scott. As racialized people in a theatre sector that is rushing to embrace diversity, we are often asked to serve as part of adjudication teams or selection committees for playwriting competitions, or calls for applications. Having done this a number of times, and often as the only racialized person in the room, we came together in the spring of 2018 to brainstorm ideas of ‘best practices’ for script applications for organizations and institutions as an additional resource for dramaturgs. Our goal was to develop a document that looked at the nuts and bolts of script application policies to paint broad strokes of what we believed to be as the most equitable and inclusive version of receiving scripts. To create a document that could be used as a tool for organizations and institutions looking to reinvigorate their script application processes.



As our conversations progressed, ‘best practices’ evolved into ‘good practices’ as we realized that there is no ‘one size fits all’ practice for script application policies/procedures. The guide we developed can be found here: [Good Practices](#).

The guide hosts a wide range of ideas including how organizations and institutions can put out calls, solicit readers, run adjudication sessions and lead the script application process. This guide was developed by gathering policies from theaters and new play development organizations, and from our own individual experiences running and developing script application processes.

One sticky point for both of us was the notion of ‘blind’ applications. After much robust conversation, our recommendation is that application processes consider phasing out this practice. Part of what we grapple with as contemporary theater makers is the question: Who has the right to tell what story? Helping your adjudication team make informed decisions can help them be better equipped to answer this question.

Removing writers names from application processes can help eliminate bias, *but it also removes important identity markers* that may speak to cultural appropriation, putting the company in a potentially awkward situation of selecting scripts that may have negative implications in production. This could be mitigated in a number of ways: by having a diverse group of readers, by being very specific in your call for playwrights, or by removing ‘blind’ applications altogether. In both of our anecdotal experiences, we find that keeping the name of the writer helps more than hinders the application process.

While eliminating anonymous script applications may not be in the best interest of some organizations, we hope that by creating these guidelines we can give members an alternative view on what practices could look like. Ultimately, we hope that these good

practices inspire ideas to rejuvenate or rethink institutional processes.

Phaedra Michelle Scott is a dramaturg based in New York City. Her work primarily focuses on the intersection between story structure, race, class and myth. As a dramaturg, she has developed works at Playwrights Realm, MCC Theater, Huntington Theater Company, Cleveland Play House, Salt Lake Acting Company, Utah Shakespeare Festival among others. She is the resident dramaturg of the New Harmony Project and Black Theater Commons. Phaedra is VP of Programs with the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas, and is the recipient of the Bly Creative Capacity Grant, and the Frederick Douglass Fellowship through the CV Starr Center Study of the American Experience for her study on August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle. She is a fan of horror, sci-fi and folklore. www.phaedrascott.com

Jenna Rodgers is a mixed-race Dramaturg/Director based in Moh'kins'tis (Calgary), on Treaty 7 Territory. She is the founding Artistic Director of Chromatic Theatre – a company dedicated to producing and developing work by and for artists of colour. She is the Dramaturg for the Playwrights Lab at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, and is a passionate arts equity advocate, an active member of the Consent and Respect in Theatre (CART) collective; the Vice President of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for LMDA; and the Board Chair for Theatre Alberta. Jenna is a 2018/19 NTS Artistic Leadership Resident, and a graduate from the 2019 cohort of the Banff Centre's Cultural Leadership Program.

Upcoming Regional Events

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. (A list of links to regional Facebook pages is at the bottom of this article.)



For our online activities, we use Zoom. To learn more about Zoom, watch this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFhAEoCF7jg>

All Region Online Conversation *Members Only*

Saturday, November 2 @ 2pm EST (ONLINE)

Getting Into Freelance Dramaturgy

Join us to learn from the best and brightest freelance dramaturges in the country how they began, and continue, their careers. Watch social media for details. You must be a member to participate. If you need to renew your membership for 2019, go here:

<https://lmda.org/join> To RSVP for the event, email: regional@lmda.org

Northwest

Wednesday, November 6 @ 7:30pm PST (ONLINE)

Happy Hour Networking Meetup

This online Happy Hour Networking Meetup will enable dramaturgs across the large territory in the Pacific Northwest to connect, converse, and share concerns. The Happy Hour will serve as a means to brainstorm and collect ideas on specific topics or areas of focus that would best serve our region's dramaturgs. Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/571822703> or call in: 1-646-558-8656, Password: 571822703#

All Region Online Conversation *Members Only*

Thursday, November 14 @ 8pm EST (ONLINE)

Socially Conscious Season Planning and Community Engagement

Join us to learn about how to structure a socially conscious season planning process and how to connect more deeply with your community. Watch social media for details. You must be a member to participate. If you need to renew your membership for 2019, go here:

<https://lmda.org/join> To RSVP for the event, email: regional@lmda.org

Northeast

Talya Kingston will be the moderator for our November 14 online all region conversation. Check out the online conversation information above to join in!

Metro NYC

Sunday, November 17 @ Paramount Theater in Peekskill, NY

Metro-NYC LMDA is collaborating with the Hudson Valley Region of the Dramatists Guild for a roundtable discussion about dramaturg/playwright working relationships. Come spend a Sunday in the Peekskills with us! Watch social media and the listserv for details.

Canada

Thursday, November 28 @ 8pm ET / 5pm PT

Happy Hour Conversation

Join us for a LMDA Canada online Happy Hour conversation where host Regional Rep Marie Barlizo welcomes, Pedro Chamale, co-founder of rice & beans theatre, who is also a playwright, performer and theatre jack-of-all-trades. He is also on the Canadian Latinx committee for the LMDA's 2020 Mexico Conference. He will be giving us insights on his process as a theatre creator; talk about his play Made in Canada, which will be produced in 2020; and give us some highlights on the Mexico Conference. To RSVP, email:

canada@lmda.org

Third Coast

Monday, January 6 @ 5:30pm CST

Connect with other dramaturgs from across Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas to share about the challenges and successes occurring in our region. We'll also use this time to collect ideas for discussions that would best serve our region's dramaturgs at future events. All LMDA members living and/or working in the Third Coast region are welcome to attend. This Happy Hour will be hosted on Zoom - RSVP to Regional VP Haley Nelson for the access link: Thirdcoast@lmda.org

Metro Philly

During Philadelphia Theater Week in February 2020, LMDA will hold an event with the Dramatists Guild and Page By Page. More info to come!

Southeast

Friday, February 28 @ 6pm, SETC Conference

LMDA will be holding a networking happy hour at the 2020 SETC Conference. More details to come!

Three More All Regional Conversations TBA This Spring

The topics of these conversations will be Musical Theatre Dramaturgy, Director-Dramaturg Hyphenates, and Dramaturgy: The Real World.

More events to be announced. We hope to see you at Regional activities this 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).

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](#)



MENTOR MATCH

The [Mentor Match](#) program matches dramaturgs with professionals (and each other!) for a one-time chat of about an hour. The "chat" could be by email, phone, or in person -- whatever works best. Although there is no guarantee, sometimes these conversations continue past the one-time chat and flower into more enduring mentorships.

For mentors: this is a great opportunity not only to talk about how you got your gig at a regional theater or university or wherever your cool job is, but also to get a sense of the amazing up-and-comers' thoughts and training.

For mentees: please know that your ability to articulate exactly what you're looking to explore right now will greatly enhance our ability to match the right mentor for you. Be as specific as you can be.



Mentors and Mentees should [sign up](#) between now and **October 31, 2019** to be matched with another dramaturg by January 2020.

Interested in contributing to the next newsletter? Have content ideas? Do you have quality LMDA photos?

E-mail communications@lmda.org.

Want to keep up with the conversation about the latest in dramaturgical activity?

- Follow us on Social Media (@LMDAmericas) by clicking on the logos below!



- Subscribe to our [listserv](#)
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