

University of Puget Sound

## Sound Ideas

---

LMDA Newsletters: Canada and the United States

LMDA Archive

---

3-2019

### **New & Noteworthy, March 2019**

Mei Ann Teo

Morgan Grambo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/lmdanewsletter>

---

literary managers & dramaturgs  
of the americas

new & noteworthy

March 2019

Vol. 4, No. 6

---

## Q&A | Mei Ann Teo



In September 2018, Mei Ann Teo was announced as the new Producing Artistic Director of [Musical Theatre Factory](#). Teo is an educator, director, dramaturg, and filmmaker. I spoke to Mei Ann Teo after her first few months with MTF to check-in about the transition and share an update with our LMDA community.

**As a theatre-maker, your experiences prior to Musical Theatre Factory are impressive and quite varied. Would you mind telling me a little about your background?**

I'm a Singaporean nomad who has found herself living in the United States. Growing up in the conservative Christian community of Seventh Day Adventists, I was taught to seek the divine, and found it again and again in the impulse of theatre, of finding truth in the rehearsal room and serving my

community. I followed my heart and insatiable curiosity to folks living and making art in many places including Belgrade, China, the UK, and around the US, so became a global

artist-citizen. I trained with Theatre Of Yugen in Noh and Kyogen, with the SITl company in Viewpoints and Suzuki, the DAH Teatar, and by Anne Bogart and other incredible faculty at Columbia University. I was taught by the students and faculty who I've met as a resident artist at Pacific Union College and as a professor of directing and dramaturgy at Hampshire College. (Visit Teo's [website](#))

**What drew you toward the opportunity to lead MTF as the new Producing Artistic Director? What are your hopes for the future of the organization?**

I'm intrigued by the immense and full-bodied cultural power of the musical, as it is the most popular live performance art form. I remember watching [Deaf West](#)'s production of Spring Awakening and knowing that I was simultaneously going through a paradigm shift while witnessing our culture transform. Leading MTF was where I could practice the politics and ideals of moving our culture towards justice in actual policy and redistribution of resources. I see MTF is an oasis, offering the necessary nourishment, support, and community that is artist centered. By nurturing groundbreaking musical theatre makers, we play a unique and necessary role in the cultural infrastructure of our society. We get to gather and make work that seeks to dismantle oppressive ideologies, shift the culture towards collective liberation, and do it through powerful and joyful story in song.

**Is there a particular MTF initiative that strikes you as especially significant at the moment?**

We have rolled out a brand new initiative in our [MTF MAKERS](#) inaugural cohort. We are committing to 6 teams of innovative MAKERS for 18 months of development support, centering queer, trans, POC makers of excellence. This program was formed through deep conversations with musical theatre artists and MTF's artistic associates ([Beehive](#) Dramaturgs: Natasha Sinha, Jeremy Stoller, and Molly Marinik). It is significant that this program was dramaturged from its inception to serve the needs of artists - long term sustained development, scheduled opportunities, advocacy, stipends, and community.

**Do you approach your work with a dramaturgical sensibility, and if so, how?**

Everything is dramaturgy. Everything. Dramaturgy is the skill of excavating WHAT IS, in multifaceted and layered complexity. It is necessary to the process of understanding human behavior, whether it be as a director/dramaturg on a play, or as an artistic leader determining the mission, purpose, and structure of an organization. In order to take action, I must first understand context and the possible impact.



**Many members of LMDA are dedicated to the process of creating new work, including musicals. What advice would you give to dramaturgs that may be new to the process of collaborating on a musical in its developmental stages?**

To hold all you do with care; musicals take so much love and long periods of time to build. To be fearless about seeking the values that move us towards a more kind and just society. We are conditioned to a rubric of breaking down musicals by book, lyric and music. What if instead we led by asking what is it perpetuating? And what is it dismantling? And yes, please let it be a great story told with great music! And yes, let the storyline be clear! But hold dear always the potential to transform culture.

(Photo 1: Headshot by Michael Kushner. Photo 2: Teo (right) directing at the Kennedy Center, with Jenna Rodgers (left).)

*Interview by Morgan Grambo*

---

## **The Kennedy Center New Play Dramaturgy Intensive 2019**



The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas [LMDA], and The National New Play Network [NNPN] will host its 8th annual New Play Dramaturgy Intensive in Washington, D.C., July 27 - August 4, 2019.

This will be an eight-day intensive program at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts focusing on enriching the participants' experience as a key resource to the

playwright, dramaturg, and director of new work while expanding the participants' understanding about the value the practice of dramaturgy can have on a new play and ultimately society.

Eligible participants are current university students [undergraduate or graduate and recent graduates] entering the field. A limited number of places in the Intensive will be held for faculty. It is anticipated that up-to sixteen participants will be invited.

### Mentors

Program Director: Mark Bly

Recent Senior Mentors include: Adrien-Alice Hansel [Literary Director, Studio Theatre], Celise Kalke, [Synchronicity Theatre], Gavin Witt [Senior Dramaturg and Associate Artistic Director, Baltimore Center Stage], Martine Kei Green-Rogers [President LMDA], and others

### Description of Program:

- Daily meetings with Mark Bly with discussions of the plays and the participant's rehearsal work as a key resource and observer.
- Assignments with mentor dramaturgs on the eight new plays being developed and rehearsed during the MFA Playwrights' Workshop, produced in association with NNPN, at the Kennedy Center.
- Group sessions with each projects' dramaturg.
- Discussions on institutional new play development process and policy with the theatre companies represented on the creative teams of the MFA Playwrights' Workshop.

The creative teams are still being determined for summer 2019, but the theatres represented 2016-2018 included:

*Actors Theatre of Louisville, Artists Repertory Theater, City Theatre, Company One Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Studio Theatre, Kitchen Dog, Alliance Theatre, New Repertory Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, The Acting Company, Seattle Rep, and Unicorn Theatre.*



### Schedule:

Each day's schedule will be coordinated with the rehearsal blocks of the MFA Playwrights' Workshop [9:30am-1:30pm, 2:30-6:30pm], with lunch meetings and early evening sessions.

### Tuition and Housing:

\$600



**LMDA members will get a \$200 discount; total price will be \$400. Mention it at registration!**

*(Travel and meals are the responsibility of the participant. Shared lodging will be in the residence halls of the George Washington University, in the Kennedy Center neighborhood at a cost of \$40 -shared occupancy- per night.)*

To Apply: <https://thekennedycenter.smapply.io/prog/KCDramaturgy2019>

Application Due: May 3, 2019

Invited participants will be notified by May 24, 2019.

(Early submission and acceptance notification is possible if applicants' home institutions have earlier professional development funding deadlines. Please inquire.)

Mark Bly (Director of Dramaturgy Intensive) is currently on The Artists Advisory Board of and has dramaturged frequently for The Acting Company led by Artistic Director Ian Belknap and founded by John Houseman and Margot Harley. He was from 1992-2017 the Director for MFA Playwriting Programs at The Yale School of Drama, Hunter College and Fordham/Primary Stages. Bly is an active free-lance dramaturg in the New York, Washington, DC., San Diego areas for such writers as Ken Lin (*House of Cards*, *Kleptocracy*), Andrew Hinderaker (*Penny Dreadful*, *Colossal*), and Herbert Siguenza (*Birth Day*, *Grand Master Funk Isaac Asimov Project X*). Over the past 40 years he has worked as a Dramaturg, Director of New Play Development, and Associate Artistic Director at The Arena Stage, Alley Theatre, Guthrie Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Rep, San Diego Rep, The Acting Company, Yale Rep, and on Broadway dramaturging and producing over 250 plays. He has dramaturged on Broadway Emily Mann's *Execution of Justice* (1985) being credited by *Village Voice* critic Alisa Solomon as the first production dramaturg on Broadway; Moises Kaufman's *33 Variations* (2009); and Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (2012). Bly has served as Dramaturg for world and United States' premieres of plays by Rajiv Joseph, Suzan-Lori Parks, Howard Brenton, David Hare, Tim Blake Nelson, Sarah Ruhl, Ken Lin, James Magruder, Jeffrey Hatcher, Charles Randolph Wright, and Moises Kaufman. He has dramaturged new plays by Robert Schenkkan, Maria Irene Fornes, Marcus Gardley, Dorothy Fortenberry, David Henry Hwang, Daniel Beaty, Kevin Kling, Karen Zacarias, Matthew Maguire, and Amy Herzog. Bly has appeared in numerous publications: Yale *Theatre* as Contributing Editor and Advisory Editor, *Theatre Forum*, *American Theatre*, *The Dramaturgy Sourcebook*, *Critical Stages*, *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, *LMDA Review* and *Stage Directors and Choreographers Journal*, and *Diversity, Inclusion and Representation*. He is Editor of *Production Notebooks: Theatre in Process: Volumes I & II* (TCG, 1996, 2001), and Special Editor for Yale *Theatre*, "Return of the Dramaturgs," Summer, 1986. In 2019 his latest book *New Dramaturgies: Strategies and Exercises for 21st Century Playwriting* will be published. In 2010 Bly received the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas G.E. Lessing Career Achievement Award. In 2014 he established the LMDA Bly Creative Capacity Grants/Fellowships Fund supporting interdisciplinary projects that advance the

field of dramaturgy focusing on equality, diversity and inclusiveness. He has served as Director of the Kennedy Center New Play Dramaturgy Intensive for the past eight years and has conducted playwriting and dramaturgy workshops for the annual Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Bly is an Ambassador at Large for the National New Play Network and has served on its distinguished Board.

*For any questions or concerns, please contact Gregg Henry, Artistic Director of KCACTF, at [GHenry@kennedy-center.org](mailto:GHenry@kennedy-center.org)*

(Photos from the New Play Dramaturgy Intensive in 2015.)

---

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

Events organized alphabetically by region. Scroll down for details. Also, make sure to join the Facebook pages of the region(s) in which you live and work. That way, you will receive updated information: <https://lmda.org/map>.



#### **-CANADA**

LMDA Canada online Happy Hour with Special Guest Laurel Green, discussing the many hats she wears (Dramaturg/Director/Producer), date and time TBA. Stay tuned for details!

#### **-FLORIDA**

Florida dramaturgs will have a happy hour networking event organized around one performance of “The Cake” at Asolo in Sarasota in April. Stay tuned for details!

#### **-MID-ATLANTIC**

A panel conversation on civic dramaturgy in late-spring 2019. Stay tuned for details! Contact Hannah Ratner if you'd like to volunteer to assist with this event: [midatlantic@lmda.org](mailto:midatlantic@lmda.org)

#### **-NEW YORK**

Speed-networking event in NYC coming May 2019! Speed-networking applies the concept of speed-dating to your professional life, resulting in a rapid-fire networking session where you can meet some of the greatest dramaturgical minds in NYC! Participants will rotate through a room of dramaturgs from all backgrounds and levels of experiences. You will have 7 minutes per person to make a fast impression. Get your business cards and elevator pitch ready to make some speedy introductions! Stay tuned for details!

#### **-NORTHEAST**

A panel on socially conscious season planning in the late-spring 2019. Stay tuned for details! Contact Talya Kingston if you'd like to volunteer to assist with this event: [northeast@lmda.org](mailto:northeast@lmda.org)

#### -THIRD COAST

LMDA members are invited to attend the opening of WOLF AT THE DOOR at Kitchen Dog Theatre on April 11! We will be offering a 50% discount for LMDA members to our opening night show on April 11th (show starts at 8pm). LMDA members can use the code "LMDA" to reserve their \$15 ticket on the Kitchen Dog site (<http://www.kitchendogtheater.org>). Members are encouraged to stay after the show for our opening night party, which includes free drinks and light bites, to mingle and network.

\*Many of our events come from ideas suggested by members like you! Please send us your ideas: <https://lmda.org/map>\*

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



### ***Join us in Chicago for #LMDA19***

Put it on your calendar now!

June 20-22, 2019.

Keep an eye on [lmda.org/conference](http://lmda.org/conference) for information for next year's conference!

---

### ***CALL FOR TRANSLATORS***

As we look ahead to #LMDA20 (pssst...in Mexico City), we could use help with a few things - 1) LMDA members who can translate the call for the 2019 and 2020 conference



into Spanish/Portuguese, 2) Names/contact information for translators in Mexico City 3) Leads on potential artists to connect with in Mexico and the surrounding area.

Please send any leads to Martine ([president@lmda.org](mailto:president@lmda.org)).

---

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

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

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

LMDA · PO Box 586 · New York, NY 10108 · USA

