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LMDA New and Noteworthy, May 2021

Anne G. Morgan

Jenna Rodgers

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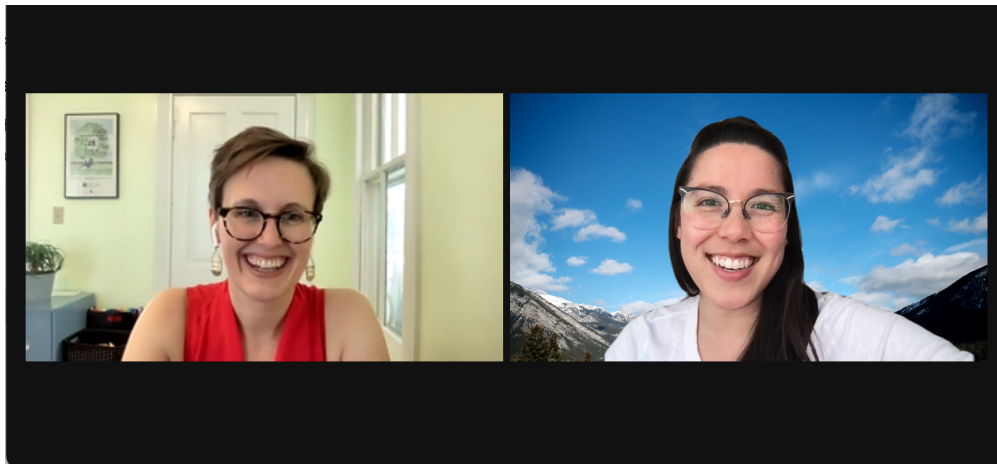


May 2021
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Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas

Q&A: Anne G. Morgan and Jenna Rodgers

Co-Chairs of the LMDA Board of Directors starting in July 2021



How were you introduced to LMDA? / How did you come to be involved with LMDA?

Jenna: I was introduced to LMDA via the extraordinary Brian Quirt. I've worked with him at the Playwrights Lab at the Banff Centre since 2014... and if you know Brian, you know that you don't spend time with him without learning about LMDA. He spoke so highly of the organization, and always subtly asked if I was coming to the conferences... until one day I wrote a grant and showed up in Portland. I ended up participating in an ECD forum, and then in Berkeley I think I spoke on a panel, and by Toronto I was moderating a panel session and signing up for the Executive Committee (at the same time as Anne)! LMDA has been an extraordinary connection to a community of dramaturgs... I've been able to meet folks from across borders, which wouldn't otherwise happen. Also, Canada is

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dramaturgs all across the country.

Anne: LMDA first came on my radar in a serious way when I was an apprentice at the Huntington Theatre Company; Charles Haugland led the company's Lessing Bake Sale efforts. He roped me and several others into baking and generated huge excitement from the rest of the staff. His enthusiasm was infectious, and I knew I had to learn more about the organization that we were raising funds for. I've been a member ever since. For many years, my work at the O'Neill Theater Center conflicted with the Annual Conference, so many of my formative LMDA encounters were through other programming - the bake sale, the mentor match, the listserv, and so forth. I've spent the bulk of my career in more remote geographic areas, so the LMDA community that I've found online and in person has been a tremendous resource in lieu of a local community of dramaturgs. I was thrilled to join the board in June of 2018 and so honored to move into this new position with Jenna.

What draws you to dramaturgy as a discipline? (talk about your practice?)

Anne: I love the challenge of asking myself how my skills and practice might morph or shift to meet the specific needs of each new play or project. I love the collaboration of dramaturgy (I hate working in a vacuum). I love having the freedom to ask "what if" and exploring the possibilities that emerge from that question.

As someone who is also a literary manager and arts administrator, I also think deeply about how the same questions I use when approaching dramaturgical work on a play with a playwright might be used to interrogate the contexts those plays exist within. (For example, if I take a question like "what contextual information does the audience need to know as they prepare to engage with the world of the play" and replace "audience" with "prospective playwrights" and "world of the play" with "the theater company," the result is a script application process with the potential for more transparency and less gatekeeping.)

Jenna: I love playwrights, and I love the act of storytelling. I love the liveness of theatre and how new plays can surprise me. I think dramaturgy encourages me to actively practice listening... because it is a practice! I find the skill of interpreting a series of feedback into concrete action that services a story to be beautifully challenging and fulfilling. I also practice as a Director and Artistic Director, and believe that the curation skills that one gleans from a dramaturgy are directly applicable to these practices. I frequently find that I'm curating feedback to offer performers, or thinking deeply about how new plays can be curated into a season. I'm deeply invested in a healthier, more dynamic theatre ecology that welcomes a wider variety of humans to make theatre... So how can those seeds be planted in the best way to bear future fruit?

What are your hopes for the future - both of LMDA, and the broader theatrical ecosystem?

Jenna: Anne and I recently had a good conversation about the hope we carry for more

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breeze over the need for a dramaturg or literary manager on staff, on retainer - or even a program to train freelancers - so that there are a plethora of excellent people available to support the unique needs of unique playwrights. As I've alluded to in the previous question, I want the broader theatrical ecosystem to be more reflective of the global majority - in the stories we tell, and the people who tell them. This requires an investment in many levels of our industry, but I feel that dramaturgs are particularly well positioned to steward this change, especially within institutions... because, after all, it is our job to ask difficult questions.

Anne: I would like to see a theatre ecosystem that is more just and more inclusive for all, and I would like that inclusivity to extend to all artists, arts administrators, and audiences. Systemic inequities run rampant through the field, but efforts like those of LMDA's Anti-Racism Task Force and the Compensation Task Force (as well as so many non-LMDA efforts) give me hope.

I also just want a theatre field that's kinder and more humane. In a recent Dramaturging the Phoenix forum, the playwright Karen Zacarís spoke about an understanding she and a collaborator had: "the play is not more important than treating one another with kindness and respect." And I want to ensure that I and my future collaborators abide by Karen's dictum.

With regards to LMDA specifically, I'm incredibly excited about the work that we've been doing, and I'm eager for us to see how programs like the aforementioned ones as well as Dramaturging the Phoenix, the International Dramaturgy Lab, and more continue, deepen, and evolve. I look forward to holding in person gatherings (both regionally and at the annual conference) and hope that we'll simultaneously continue using the new virtual tools we've gained over the last year.

Tell us three fun facts that you think members might want to know about you.

Anne:

My cat, who frequently joins LMDA zooms, is named Cordelia and can be found on instagram (@catgotyourplay)

I currently live in the town that was the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson, 28th president of the United States (honestly not America's finest president).

The most frivolous thing I miss from pre-pandemic life is the opportunity to wear fabulous heels.

Jenna:

I just gave birth to my first child in 2021 and am experiencing the wild rollercoaster of parenthood.

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I like to get to know a new city by getting just a little bit lost on a long walk or short run.

Without Borders: Dramaturgy in the New Decade Sin Fronteras: Dramaturgismo en la Nueva Década

June 17-18 (Virtual) & June 28-29 (Mexico City)

36th Annual LMDA Conference



Register here: [Conference 2021](#)

After crossing the digital threshold, and incorporating all the learned skills and tools, we are pleased to announce that LMDA has planned a two-part conference for 2021, including virtual and physical participation options.

- On June 17-18, LMDA will host a fully online Virtual Conference, with access to asynchronous content starting June 1.
- On June 28-29, LMDA will gather in Mexico City, with live streaming available to those unable to join in person.

[REGISTRATION](#)

This year, you'll register "a la carte" for the Virtual Conference and/or Mexico City Gathering (or Livestreaming), with individual rates for each part.

Although we have eliminated non-member rates to simplify registration for this unique two-part conference, we encourage all registrants to [join LMDA](#) for access to invaluable year-round, members-only programming and resources. Those who've lost work due to the pandemic can choose a pay-what-you-can option starting at \$5 USD. LMDA membership has never been so accessible!

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- Regular: \$75 USD
- LMDA Mexico and ECDs: \$50 USD

Mexico City Livestreaming (June 28-29, virtual)

- Regular: \$25 USD

Mexico City Gathering (June 28-29, in person)

- Regular: \$75 USD
- ECDs: \$50 USD

*Regular Full Conference (LMDA's standard conference rate includes all options above)

- Regular: \$275 USD

LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY

As with last year's Virtual Conference, simultaneous oral interpretation will be available in both English and Spanish for this year's Virtual Conference and Mexico City Gathering.

CONFERENCE VENUE

The second part of the 2021 conference will be held in Mexico City at Teatro Julio Castillo at the The Centro Cultural del Bosque (CCB), part of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). The wheelchair-accessible venue is located at Campo Marte y Av. Paseo de la Reforma s/n, Miguel Hidalgo, 11560 Ciudad de México, CDMX.

CONFERENCE HOTEL

[Suites Obelisk](#) (Calle Julio Verne 28-30, Polanco, Polanco III Secc, Miguel Hidalgo, C.P. 11550 Ciudad de México, CDMX) is a business-friendly boutique hotel within walking distance of Centro Cultural del Bosque. Free Wi-Fi, parking, heating, black-out blinds and American buffet breakfast included. All suites have a coffee maker, a safe for valuables, an iron, and a hair dryer. Reception available 24 hours a day. Please review the hotel's COVID-19 guidelines [here](#).

Book via e-mail: reservaciones@suitesobelisk.com with the code: LMDA2021

OTHER HOTELS

Online searches will turn up the best deals for the many other hotels near the conference venue. After Suites Obelisk, the closest hotel is: [Stayinn Barefoot Condesa](#) (Juan Escutia 125, C.P. 06140, Ciudad de México).

HOSTELS

If you are on a tight budget or enjoy communal living, check out [Any's Hostel](#) or the [Hostal Be Condesa](#). Both hostels offer free wi-fi and rates start as low as \$48 USD per night.

CONFERENCE HANDBOOKS

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are posted on the [conference webpage](#).

For further questions, please contact LMDA Administrative Director Lindsey R. Barr at imdanyc@gmail.com, the 2021 Conference Team at conferences@lmda.org, or LMDA President Bryan Moore at president@lmda.org.

#LMDA21 Call for Volunteers

June 17-18 (Virtual) & June 28-29 (Mexico City)

As we launch our 36th annual conference, "[Without Borders: Dramaturgy in the New Decade](#)", LMDA is looking for volunteers interested in supporting and attending part of the digital or in-person conference. Volunteer opportunities are available for both the virtual and in-person conference. Please see details about volunteering below:

1. Virtual Conference

In charge of hosting and recording panels, LMDA seeks volunteers who are comfortable with online video conferencing software, such as ZOOM and WEBEX.

Fluency in English and Spanish preferred, so you can support panelists, attendees, and moderate Q&A sessions. (This is not a requirement of volunteering!)

2. Mexico City Gathering

Join us for our in-person gathering that will take place at CENTRO CULTURAL DEL BOSQUE in Mexico City on June 28th and 29th.

Fluency in English and Spanish preferred, so you can support panelists, attendees, and moderate Q&A sessions. (This is not a requirement of volunteering!) Driver's license preferred.

All volunteers will receive complimentary conference registration to both the virtual and in-person gathering. If you are unable to join us in-person in Mexico City, you will receive complimentary live-streaming access to the panels that take place in Mexico City.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, send us an e-mail to Imdamexico@gmail.com so we can contact you.

Dramaturging the Phoenix 2.0: A Renewed Challenge for LMDA Members

EXTENDED DEADLINE

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Call: To amplify the collection of [Dramaturging the Phoenix essays](#) inaugurated at the beginning of the pandemic, LMDA seeks further dramaturgical responses – videos, creative works, and social media threads, other essays, among other formats – that boldly inspire, provoke, and explore theatre’s potential to transform through global crisis.

Eligibility: Current LMDA members (to renew or join, click [here](#))

Deadline: September 1, 2021

Prompt: One year after COVID-19 rapidly shuttered venues of all sizes, theatre and the millions of people who create and experience it in North America and many other parts of the world continue to be on hiatus in order to save lives, but the return is beginning to feel... soon(ish)? LMDA now invites its members to look back on their experiences of challenge and transformation in the past twelve months and to continue to imagine ways in which our art form will emerge from this crisis, changed for the better.

As we enter the second year of life with COVID and look to recovery and reopening, what will theatre look like this time? How can we center equity and be more inclusive? When we resume and reconnect, how might we do so more profoundly? What big ideas will transform theatre and its institutions for the next era? Which assumptions and habits will we be free to leave behind?

For DRAMATURGING THE PHOENIX 2.0, let’s continue to imagine the “radical dramaturgy” that will lead theatre and performance into the next year, decade, and century. How do we build the foundations to heal from this year and move our communities, nations, and the globe forward? How do theatre artists lead as essential workers? How can dramaturgical actions and practices seeded in imagination shape the theatrical phoenix that will rise?

Target: LMDA wants to put its members’ incomparable brains and innovative impulses to work for the benefit of our community and the many others we touch, to showcase dramaturgy’s vital capacity to contextualize and articulate the possibilities of where we go from here and what it might mean. Our goal is to get EVERY MEMBER OF LMDA to contribute a response, whether individually or in collaboration (cuz that’s what we do best!).

Email: Save your essay as [Name.Title.pdf](#) and email to phoenix@lmda.org by **September 1, 2021**.

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Renew Your Membership Today!

Our 2020 memberships expired on January 20th, so now is the time to renew! Please visit [our website](#) to select one of the following memberships, all of which include full [member benefits](#), voting rights, and eligibility for office:

- Institutional: \$200 – for theatres, universities, agencies, and other organizations; includes up to four individual memberships with individual member profiles
- Individual: \$80 – regular ol' professional membership!
- Early Career: \$40 – discounted individual membership for students, interns, and those within five years of graduation
- Introductory: \$25 – a first-year discount for new members (tell your friends and colleagues!)
- Pay What You Can: \$5-\$75 – a new option this year to lower the barrier for becoming a member of LMDA in light of the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic

Please log in to www.lmda.org to renew your membership and update your profile for 2021 now! Should you have questions or concerns about the renewal process or your membership, please contact LMDA Administrator Lindsey Barr at Imdanyc@gmail.com.

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](#)

[Mexico](#)

[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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- 2) Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings'
- 3) Tap 'AmazonSmile' and fo
- 4) Select 'Get Started' and click through the instructions
- 5) Add LMDA as your charity

Thanks for your continued support!

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

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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