



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2020

WE'RE STILL HERE EDITION

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UPCOMING EVENTS!

Friday, October 16
QLab Workshop | 12:00-1:00 pm

Thursday, October 22
Virtual Game Night | 7:00 pm

Friday, October 30
Meet Sophia's Twin + Learn Some Spicy Stretches! | 12:00-1:00 pm

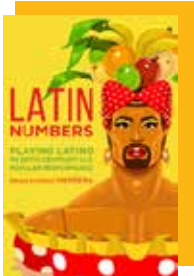
Check out our new website to see our full calender of events and tune into UP Stages' production of Miss You Like Hell!

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LATINX THEATRE RESOURCES

Check Out: American Latinx Theatre Companies
<https://50playwrights.org/resources/latin-theatre-companies/>

Read: A Book on the History of Latinx Casting "Latin Numbers"
by Brian Eugeno Herrera



Pair with:
An Interview with Herrera
<https://howlround.com/theatre-history-podcast-11>

Listen to: Token Theatre Friends
-Episode 4: "2666" and Going Beyond Latinx Stereotypes feat. Raúl Esparza
-Episode 14: Building a Latinx Legacy feat. John Leguizamo
-Episode 17: The Brujx of Theater feat. Luis Alfaro and Alexis Sheer

Challenge Yourself:
To continue learning about Latinx theatre outside of Hispanic Heritage Month!

“Systems of Oppression, Inequality, and Inequity are by design. Therefore, they can be redesigned.”
- Antionette Carrol

We're designers. We make deliberate decisions based on information we seek out and are given, by what we think and what we're told makes sense. The things we like inherently make our way into our work - it helps us create our distinct styles, and our different backgrounds allow us to bring different perspectives and ways of thinking into our work. We design guided by our own feelings and experiences.

The institutions that we're a part of are the result of designers. Designers that made deliberate decisions based on what they thought and were told, guided by their own feelings and experiences. Those designers made decisions based on a want to uphold whiteness as superior, as the default. On the want to uphold ableism, and the ability to get to assign value to what they feel is important based on their singular, privileged experiences.

Here I'm specifically talking about theatre as an institution. There shouldn't be any surprise that white, western aesthetics are the default and regarded as inherently great and acceptable. It's not an accident that the most widely produced and popular stories are seen through a white lens (there are wonderful new works outside of this lens, if you know where to find them within your community). And there shouldn't be any surprise in the role of capitalism in this all. The treatment of theatre workers as a machine to produce as much as possible and give up so much with little regard to health or family responsibilities, the need to only produce plays through a white lens that will sell and make money, the cost of a ticket, and the exploitation of labor - all circles back to our value being defined by how much we produce. All of this is by design.

So we need a complete redesign. We need to decentralize whiteness. It's gonna take time. I feel like the foundation of theatre being ritual and an accessible way of communication have been lost along the way. In the meantime, we can think about the way we design and practice as student and young theatre artists. As Riccardo (I believe) discussed, we design for an emotional response or to fulfill an emotional need - let's get back to our roots.

These are some of my thoughts after getting to watch the wonderful American Theatre Wing MasterClass about Decolonizing Theatre Design with Clint Ramos, Mimi Lien, Dede Ayite, and Riccardo Hernández - please watch it if you have the chance.

MORE INFO!



Photo taken from the American Theatre Wing

CLINT RAMOS

Scenic and Costume Designer
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As we all know, COVID-19 has brought live events to a screeching halt. In order to cope with this, innovation is absolutely crucial. Below is a list of some really cool ideas that I have seen from around the globe to host live events in pandemic times:

Drive In Events:

Drive In Events seem to be the new normal in the United States for the current future. These events are held in large parking lots with every third parking spot open to park in. This allows for event goers to either sit on top of their cars, or sit next to their cars while still being socially distant from everyone else. While a majority of the events occurring so far have been concerts, there have been a few instances of theatre, such as Six: The Musical performing a 12 stop drive in style tour across Europe. While this method of events is currently popular, I hope it is only temporary. The stages set for these events are very tiny and the social distancing needed for not only people, but also their vehicles mean that unless you are the first 20-30 cars into the lot, you are likely watching the show from a screen a few hundred feet away from the stage. The performers are also looking out at a field of cars rather than people. A much better substitute for this is happening in Europe as well where instead of cars in parking lots, concerts are held in huge fields and each pod of people is given their own personal gated off riser. This is the closest thing to concerts before COVID.



Drive in: Amy Woodyatt, CNN

Fireplay Virtual Crowd:

Creative Design and Production team Fireplay created a concept to fuse live performances with virtual audiences. LED video screens are set up in place of audiences. The screens allow for a large array of audience members to video call in, and be visible to the performers. While this technology was originally created for sporting events, it has been utilized by a few musicians and most definitely has potential in all live event areas. This method allows for performers to actually see and interact with an audience, even if it is only virtually. It makes the performer's job far less awkward and far more impactful than simply just performing to a camera.



Vertical Concert: Oli Zitch, O.Torvald, Facebook

Vertical Concerts:

Quite literally turning concerts on their side, Ukrainian rock group O.Torvald performed on a rooftop opposite the Bratislava Hotel in Kiev, Ukraine. The audience was situated on the various balconies of the hotel, allowing them to witness the concert, and not be a terribly far distance away from the stage while still being socially distant. This method also allows for the performers to see their entire audience in a vertical sense, but causes some trouble on the production side as you do not want to blind the audience with lights or lasers. This method of concert going has picked up some traction across Europe.



Drive Through Lights: @eamotion_live, Instagram

Drive Through Light Show:

In order to show off their creative skills, as well as to raise some money for their currently unemployed team, Cour Designs worked together to create a drive through show titled TEMPO by EAMOTION in Nashville. The event was held in a racetrack and featured 8000 lighting, video, and special effects elements that are perfectly in-sync with each other and music; including a 50-foot tall pyramid constructed from 2000+ video panels, and 400-foot wide projection-mapped surfaces. While there was no live performance of any sort, this event allowed for production individuals to shine.

ON BURN OUT

WHEN ONE TASK FEELS LIKE 20

Time feels fake, doesn't it? On any given day of the week you could tell me it's a Wednesday at 3 pm and I'd believe you. You get up in the morning, make some toast, and suddenly half your day is done. Then you have to find the energy to find some creativity to complete your projects after staring at your zoom screen for four hours. Getting up and sitting in front of my laptop already seems like enough for the day. But remember to be kind and patient with yourself. Rest when you need it. Your value is not tied to how much work you produce. And you aren't able to do any work or do anything if you've worked yourself into the ground and push past your limits. Congratulate yourself for where you are and be kind to yourself.



Written by Kami Beckford

COSTUME CLOSET!

This one is for all those theatre kids who miss dressing up. Chose a character and create a costume for them just from items in your closet! Feel free to send us submissions if you want your closet creation featured here!

Delivery Woman | Fun Home



Photo Courtesy of Sophia

STAGE MANAGEMENT WITH SHAMUS!

ON RECHARGING AND FACING THE DAY

To piggyback off what Kami said about taking time for yourself to rest, I felt like I could share some of the techniques I have been attempting to use to keep myself recharged for the day. First, take frequent breaks whenever you can! Some of my favorite ways to do this have been stretching (as long as my dogs don't tackle me), and walking around the block, free from my phone. It started as a joke by my mom, but it always makes me feel a whole lot better when I sit down for my next class. Even when you are in class, remember the 20-20-20 "rule" that for every 20 minutes, you should try to look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This will really help reduce the strain on your eyes after looking at a computer for so long. For when you do want some extra noise - try some relaxing music or podcasts instead of YouTube or Netflix. One thing that has really helped me is setting time limits on certain apps on my phone, reminding me when it's time to put it down! The last few things I want to emphasize more than anything is the importance of sleep and eating well. I know how easy it is to feel like you can just roll out of bed 5 minutes before class, and eat some cereal during your lecture, then stay up until 2AM because there's nothing else to do, but try to resist! And DRINK WATER! I'm a water fiend, and you will be too if you just keep a large cup or water bottle within arms reach at all times.

Now, please don't take all of this as "Things you have to do," I really do mean this as a complement to what Kami said. Hell, I struggle to follow my own advice a lot of the time. But it's important to be conscious of your physical wellbeing too. Hopefully these tips give you at least some ideas on what may work for you, and get you heading in the direction you want to be going.

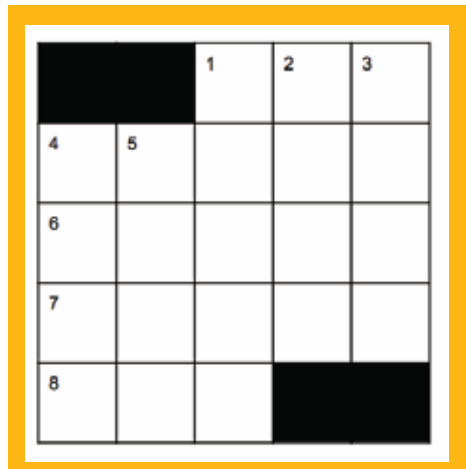
SOPHIA'S TECH TIPS!

When you're moving and storing flats remember these two rhymes! (I claim zero credit for these! I heard them first from Alex Farley during my time working at Berkshire Theatre Group.) When you move flats you want to make sure to keep one hand low down on the flat, and your other hand as high as you can comfortably reach. This spreads out the weight distribution and makes the flat less likely to tip over out of your grasp. For storing flats, It is important to stack them "face to face" and "back to back". This just means that painted or fabric covered sides (front) should be against each other, and the side where you can see the framing pieces (back) should be against each other. This prevents paint from getting scratched off or fabric from ripping.

Rhyme for moving flats:
One hand high,
One hand low,
Makes the scenery
Go go go!

Rhyme for storing flats:
Face to face
Back to back
That is how we
Stack stack stack!

CROSSWORD CORNER



by Sophia Kosowsky

Across

1. Part of a comedian's routine
4. What some costumes are made out of
6. Fancy sports car nickname
7. Dark brown color
8. Music recordings in between single and album

Down

1. Doesn't do well at the box office
2. "Let ____" Beatles' song (2 wds.)
3. Norse god of thunder
4. Popular board game set in a mansion
5. Genie's home

PLANTS OF THE MONTH!



Photo Courtesy of Kami

Introducing: ABBA, named because she has many children and doesn't know who the father is. And Basquiat, named for his graphic-like leaves!

Introducing: Kel, a wonderful sunflower who lives in a lovely water bottle home.



Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth