



FLOODLIGHT

FEATURED PRODUCTION

May/June 2020

Script Addicts *A Playreading Group*

Founded by
Natalie Fox
and Elizabeth Replogle

New script
every Sunday
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Room ID
543 213 2388

Nightly social hour
7:00 p.m.

LTA's playreading group, Script Addicts, was born one day in late December – that dull week between Christmas and New Year's Day – when **Natalie Fox** and I met for lunch at Lost Dog in Old Town. We were chatting about theater in general, upcoming auditions, and shows we had seen. During that conversation, the idea came up of getting a few of our friends together to read a script and really just to have fun with it, maybe acting it out on the fly and switching up parts as we went along. We had both seen *School for Lies* at the Shakespeare Theatre Company a few years back and really enjoyed it, so we thought we would try it!

Within a few days, we had started a Facebook group and reached out to all the theater folks we knew to gauge interest, and we were so excited at the response. The hardest thing seemed to be finding a space that would accommodate everyone, where we would have room to get up and act out the play rather than just read it. LTA Governor for Membership **Brendan Quinn** offered to take the idea to the Board, who kindly gave us their enthusiastic support, and we were given a home in the Academy building.

We had our first – and of course, what would end up being our only – in-person gathering on March 1st, reading *School for Lies*. The turnout was fantastic, and we were thrilled to see a few folks join us who had never acted before! From the very beginning, we wanted everyone to feel free to participate in the group, even those who didn't consider themselves actors. As we've said from the beginning, all that's required is a desire to read some plays and have some fun!

Of course, very shortly after that first meeting, our lives were turned upside down, but we decided to adapt and go virtual for as long as the need for social distancing lasts. Now we read scripts via Zoom every Sunday evening, and it's been a blast so far! We've read *An Ideal Husband*,
(continued on page 2)

The Little Theatre of Alexandria

Russell Wyland, President
Brendan Quinn, Governor for
Membership
Kirstin Apker, *Floodlight* Coordinator
Linda Wells, *Floodlight* Editor
Next Issue TBD

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President's Column



Russell Wyland

May 11, 2020

I hope this note finds you happy and healthy and missing your community theatre. I write to you with a sense of great sadness, sincere gratitude, and renewed momentum.

Sadness: On behalf of the Board of Governors, I have the unfortunate duty of announcing that our summer musical, *Sister Act*, has been cancelled; it was scheduled to open July 25th. With COVID-19 cases still at a robust level in the D.C. metro area and Governor Northam's (appropriately) slow re-opening plan taking shape, it has become clear that staging a large musical this summer has too many logistical and health-related challenges. The Board will consider plans for rescheduling *Sister Act* during its continuing discussion about re-opening the theatre.

Gratitude: The Board extends its gratitude to director **Michael J. Baker, Jr.**; co-producers **Charlotte Corneliusen**, **Jim Howard**, and **Robert Kraus**; assistant producer **Margaret Evans-Joyce**; vocal and music directors **Steve McBride** and **Colin Taylor**; co-choreographers **Cristina Cayere** and **Elizabeth Colandene**; and all the designers and volunteers who were ready to begin making *Sister Act* a reality. Their efforts have not been for naught. Through their amazing work, LTA learned how to conduct auditions by Zoom and demonstrated our commitment to sustaining great theater in Alexandria. It was a monumental undertaking, and it worked like a charm: 114 people auditioned over four nights. While we cancelled *Sister Act* on the eve of casting, the Board is grateful to those who auditioned, knowing that the production might not be able to move forward. Thank you to one and all.

Momentum: With this momentous decision behind us, the Board is eager to develop a more comprehensive reopening plan, a sort of vision for the fall. Stay tuned for the positive steps LTA can take together to ensure the health of the theatre and our theatre family.

In the meantime, know that future activities are still going forward. Will that change? That will depend on the future of the coronavirus in our community, the health risks posed to our patrons and volunteers, and the guidance of the City of Alexandria and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Thank you for remaining supportive of LTA. Your kindness, generosity, patience, and understanding have sustained LTA during this difficult time and will ensure that LTA returns stronger than ever when the pandemic passes.

May 26, 2020

In April 1943, The Little Theatre of Alexandria closed its doors for what would become a three-year hiatus. Although Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor sixteen months earlier, LTA's closure didn't happen immediately: it corresponded to the U.S. government issuing ration books for products like coffee, canned goods, meat, dairy products, cooking oil, and leather goods. While none of these items were vital to the operation of a theater (except, perhaps, coffee), rationing signaled a time when luxuries and public entertainment became inappropriate. LTA would not resume public performances until early 1946: its first show was Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*.

Seventy-four years later, LTA again finds itself closed. This time, the closure happened with little warning. The new enemy is the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis, which is unlikely to end completely until a vaccine is found and/or widespread testing becomes available, is arguably more serious than the closure experienced during World War II. Even after the "all clear" sounds, there will not be the equivalent of a V-J or V-E Day: patrons will need time before they are comfortable returning to the theater.

Since the pandemic started over ten weeks ago, I have written to you several times with bad news: first it was the midstream cancellation of *Moonlight and Magnolias*. Two weeks later it was the cancellation of *Blue Stockings* and *Rumors*. I am now writing with some additional bad news, but this time the bad is (continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2) tempered with glimmers of an exciting way forward.

Given the ongoing spread of coronavirus, the LTA Board of Governors has cancelled LTA's summer musical *Sister Act*, September production of August Wilson's *Fences*, and October/November production of *Wait Until Dark*.

The Board did not undertake these cancellations lightly. While the financial hit will be difficult, LTA has a more pressing responsibility to our community. Keeping our actors, volunteers, members, and subscribers safe is our priority, and that "rainy day" fund we created years ago will now be used to sustain us during a period of belt-tightening.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank the directors, producers, and production team members of *Sister Act*, *Fences*, and *Wait Until Dark*. They have invested time and energy in these shows, and we are grateful for that work. You have my word that we will try to bring these excellent shows to LTA audiences in the near future.

If you are a subscriber, we will be sending you a new early-bird subscription form for our four-show season. If you already purchased a subscription by either check or credit card, your payment will be returned to you. We hope that you will re-subscribe to our four-show season starting in early January, thereby locking in your preferred seating and your discounted subscription rate.

If you hold LTA gift certificates with expiration dates during our anticipated 2020 - 2021 season, those certificates have been extended through the 2021 - 2022 season.

And now for our exciting news. In mid-June, LTA will announce exciting fall programming designed especially for our core patrons: members, subscribers, and volunteers. We are calling it "Small Theatre for Unusual Times," and it includes streaming opportunities and, we hope, small, high-quality socially-distanced theatre events.

And what about LTA's traditional *A Christmas Carol* with its impressive set, large cast, and Victorian musical cheer? I am happy to announce that the traditional *A Christmas Carol* will return in December 2021 (directed by Carol Clark). In 2020, as a culmination of "Small Theatre for Unusual Times," the Board anticipates launching a reconceptualized production of *A Christmas Carol* that keeps alive the LTA tradition but looks and feels like nothing we've done before. Stay tuned!

In short, "Small Theatre for Unusual Times" will be feel-good theater designed to respond to our current circumstances using LTA's many strengths. Watch for an announcement in mid-June.

LTA is now rolling out a new education plan. June summer camps are now being shifted online. LTA is beginning its work with the City of Alexandria's [ALX Promise](#) project and watching the Governor's [Forward Virginia](#) plan to determine when and if students can return to LTA in small numbers in July. Our focus will be one of small classes (eight to ten), intensive cleaning and sanitizing, and outdoor learning. Watch our [education website](#) for developments.

A special note of thanks to our teachers who have weathered this difficult time. Through their creative thinking, determination, and high standards, they have continued to bring LTA's educational tradition to our community (and beyond!).

We look forward to exciting days ahead. Your patronage is important to us, and my fellow Board members and I look forward to seeing you again very soon. Until then, STAY HEALTHY!

Regards,

Russell M. Wyland, LTA President

(continued from page 1)

The Philadelphia Story, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Fish in the Dark*, *Almost, Maine*, *Humble Boy*, and *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*. We recently did our first Shakespearean work, *Twelfth Night*, and we plan to keep the Bard in regular rotation. We've also been proud to host two cast reunion performances of LTA productions: *The Odd Couple: The Female Version*, directed by Joanna Henry in 2015, and *Dracula*, directed by Jennifer Lyman in 2018.

We do plan to resume in-person meetings once we are able, but in the meantime, we will continue virtual readings every Sunday evening, and we encourage all LTA members to join us! Search for the Script Addicts group on Facebook, or email us at ltascriptaddicts@gmail.com.

Elizabeth Replogle, Co-Founder

Governor's Message

Membership

Quarantine Can't Stop Our Members

It's been a rough time for our members recently. Our building is closed, our productions are on pause and, like the rest of America's educational outlets, our classes have moved online.

But our members are still finding ways to bring out joy through theater. Through Zoom, we are able to keep live performance alive. Every Sunday, our Script Addicts group meets to read a different show (usually a comedy), giving actors a chance to flex their craft and audience members a chance to watch. A few veterans of past LTA productions have also reunited via Zoom to mount revivals of their shows for friends and family – and we're hoping to do more. (If you've been a part of a production that you think would be fun to revive, reach out to your producer and have them contact us.)

With optimism, LTA's summer plans are also moving forward with help from Zoom. Our summer camps are moving forward online, and both the Board of Governors and the production teams for our fall shows continue to meet and plan. In addition, our season selection team is laying the groundwork for an exciting 2021 - 2022 season.

In these trying times, it's easy to lose hope. However, our members are persisting and continuing to find ways to connect and create theater even though we can't share a stage. In the midst of difficult circumstances, we are setting ourselves up for a phenomenal 2020 - 2021 season.

LTA and its members will be back.

Brendan Quinn

Governor for Membership

Reminder: Annual Meeting

LTA's Annual Meeting and Election to the Board of Governors will be held on **Monday, June 22, 2020**, via Zoom. Under our bylaws and charter, you must be a paid Active or Past Active adult member age 18 or older to vote. This year due to COVID-19, voting will be conducted by mail rather than in person. As required by our bylaws, a letter announcing the candidates for office and the annual meeting agenda will be sent to each eligible voting member. This mailing will also include more information regarding the adapted voting process.

We will be electing the following positions to the LTA Board of Governors on June 22nd:

- President** (one-year term)
- Governor for Artistic Support** (two-year term)
- Governor for Building** (two-year term)
- Governor for Development** (two-year term)
- Governor for Education** (two-year term)
- Governor for Public Relations** (two-year term)
- Governor for Production** (two-year term)



Council Corner

Never in a million years would I have imagined myself writing my first Council Corner during a worldwide pandemic. And yet, here we are. First, let me just begin by saying that I hope that you and all the important people in your life are healthy and safe.

My name is Zell Murphy, and I am the newly elected Director of the LTA Council. I am a native of Alexandria and make my home in the Del Ray area. My involvement with LTA has spanned the past nine years, beginning when I first worked backstage as an assistant stage manager on *Rabbit Hole*. Since then, I've worked behind the scenes on numerous shows and have expanded my volunteer involvement to other areas of the theatre.

I am excited to take up the reins of LTA Council Director and look forward to working with a great group of officers – Vice Director **Mary Beth Smith-Toomey**, Financial Officer **Lloyd Bittinger**, and Secretary **Donna Hauprich** – and a fantastic membership.

In early April, the Council's Executive Committee met and unanimously decided to change the Council's membership year from a May 1st to a July 1st start. We made this change primarily to line up with the theatre's subscription and membership year (July 1st – June 30th). It also has the added benefit this year of giving members extra time to renew their memberships, which we recognize could be challenging as folks juggle finances during this time.

The stated purpose of the Council is "to support the LTA program [and] undertake projects to provide funds in support of the program." Now, more than ever, it will be important for the Council to lean in and do what it can to support LTA as the theatre launches its upcoming season and operates in a "new normal" – whatever that turns out to be.

So with that said, please take a moment and renew your Council membership between now and the end of June. To renew, you can (1) mail your \$75.00 annual payment as a check made out to LTA Council to 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, or (2) contact Finance Officer **Lloyd Bittinger** at (202) 253-7747 or at LTACouncil@aol.com and provide payment information. Council membership includes a complimentary ticket to each show of the 2020 - 2021 season (with the exception of *A Christmas Carol*).

I would be remiss if I didn't give a shout-out and thanks to **Carolyn Winters**, Council Director for the past four years. She has been tremendously helpful in providing me with guidance and advice as I've moved into this new role.

We have a lot of work to do and I'm looking forward to a great year!

Zell Murphy
LTA Council Director

New Members

Tegan Cohen

Celia Dowers

Jeffery Dowers

Haley Crittenden Gordon

Elizabeth LeBoo

Patrick Mahoney

The Little Theatre of Alexandria
600 Wolfe Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Box Office: 703-683-0496

Business Office: 703-683-5778 x2

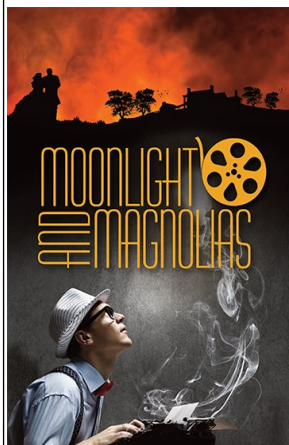
Fax: 703-683-1378

www.thelittletheatre.com

Mark Your Calendars

- 6/22 LTA Annual Meeting and Election (via Zoom)
- 6/30 Deadline to renew LTA Council membership

Moonlight and Magnolias named an Outstanding Community Theater Production for Spring 2020 by DC Metro Theatre Arts



“Under Juli Tarabek Blacker’s sure direction, the cast keeps up the snappy pace that makes the play work, and skillfully creates the potent atmosphere of blended idealism, cynicism, and insecurity that gives it its power. Stacey Becker and Ken Brown have designed an ideal set for all this madness to take place, a large and airy office (complete with gorgeous vintage movie posters on the walls) that gives the cast plenty of room for slap fights, chases, imaginary childbirth, and all the other exertions involved in a small cast’s acting out an epic melodrama. The comic antics may seem like an odd fit with the human drama simultaneously playing out, but Blacker and her talented cast make it all work beautifully and show the power of story to draw people together even when it can’t fully reconcile their differences or solve their problems.”

—Gina Dalfonzo

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors, under the direction of the President, is responsible for managing the affairs and operations of The Little Theatre of Alexandria.

The Governors for the 2019 – 2020 season are:

President.....	Russell Wyland
Governor for Artistic Support.....	Susan Boyd
Governor for Box Office.....	Ira Forstater
Governor for Building.....	Frank D. Shutts II
Governor for Development.....	Sarah Holt
Governor for Education.....	Michael J. Baker, Jr.
Governor for Front of House.....	Robert Kraus
Governor for Membership.....	Brendan Quinn
Governor for Production.....	Alan Wray
Governor for Public Relations.....	Rachel Alberts
Governor for Seasonal Planning.....	Ashley Amidon
Governor for Technical Support.....	Ken Crowley

Additional officers are:

President Pro-Tem.....	Ashley Amidon
Treasurer.....	David Hale
Board Secretary.....	Carolyn Winters
Executive Secretary.....	Jamie Blake
LTA Council Director.....	Carolyn Winters

Volunteer Info

Did you know that it takes the time and talent of nearly 150 volunteers to stage each production?

For more information on volunteering at LTA, please contact:

**Brendan Quinn,
Governor for Membership**

membershipgovlta@gmail.com

Thank you for your service!