

THE ROLE OF THE DRAMATURG

Published by Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas

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Over the past three decades, the role of the dramaturg and literary manager has expanded in the United States and Canada alongside the increasing importance of contemporary playwriting. Working in theatres and playwrights' organizations, in colleges and universities, and on a project-by-project basis, dramaturgs contextualize the world of a play; establish connections among the text, actors, and audience; offer opportunities for playwrights; generate projects and programs; and create conversations about plays in their communities.

In the ecology of theatre-making, dramaturgs and literary managers forge a critical link between artists and institutions, and institutions and their communities. They work with their other artistic collaborators to hone their vision, focus their goals and find outlets for their creative work on new and classical plays and dance pieces.

Dramaturgs and literary managers serve the field as experts on our dramatic past and as advocates for writers of today and the important work of the future.

WHAT IS DRAMATURGY (A FEW POSSIBILITIES)

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Help develop the mission
- Help plan the season
- Help look for scripts

NEW PLAYS

- Solicit scripts from writers and agents
- Read and evaluate new scripts
- Track and file those scripts
- Write kindly letters to writers whose script we won't be producing
- Negotiate with agents
- Prepare adaptations and translations
- Commission new work
- Organize the in-house play reading program
- Organize the new play reading program for subscribers
- Help bring new plays into full production
- Support those writers whose vision captures our minds and hearts

PRODUCTION DRAMATURGY

- Locate drafts and versions
- Collate, cut, track, edit, rewrite, construct, and arrange
- Secure permissions to use copyrighted material
- Find songs, pictures, stories, videos
- Help the designer do the research
- Help the director do casting
- Help the marketeers and developers
- Seek and present pathways into the world of the play
- Gather and arrange images, sounds, and ideas for rehearsal
- Explore and present:
 - the world of the play
 - the author of the play,
 - the script's production history,
 - the relevant criticism
- Conceive the forms of the script as a script

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- Conceive the forms of the play as it grows
- Stay on course when all goes well
- Maintain the calm when all goes ill (as it will)
- Create the lobby display
- Love the work

ARTS IN EDUCATION

- Establish relationships with local educators
- Help them use theatre to support their curricula
- Prepare study guides
- Develop production web sites
- Write and edit program materials
- Organize and lead pre- and post-show discussions
- Plan and lead seminars and symposia

ADVOCACY

- Affirm the function, Explore the practice, and Promote the profession of dramaturgy and literary management.
- Nourish the arts wherever we find them: in schools, in communities, and around the world.