

ROUNDTABLE PROPOSAL

On the current state of applied theatre practice, training and research in Canada

What is the state of training and research in applied theatre in Canada? While there have been forums in journals and at international conferences in recent years taking stock of the evolution of the various traditions gathered under the banner of applied theatre, no comparable exercise has taken place in Canada.¹ This despite the participation of many Canadian researchers in the field, a few undergraduate theatre programs that focus on it at least in part, and a growing number also of graduate students exploring applied theatre seeking conceptual, methodological and practical guidance.

Applied theatre practices are rooted in an ethic of community exploration and participation, and they may for this reason find support in post-secondary institutions interested in making its research impactful to the wider public. But however rewarding such relationships can be, they are also fraught with ethical challenges, are administratively onerous, and the benefits of the work do not always flow in both directions. How are evolving notions of “community” in the 21st-century reshaping practices in the field?

Questions that may be addressed during the roundtable:

- How might we promote further rigorous applied theatre research in Canada?
- What is the current status of the concept of ‘community’ in applied theatre?
- How might applied theatre provoke further conversation about the relationship between theory and practice?
- How does applied theatre speak to current interests in interdisciplinarity within the academy?
- Conversely, how is the field of applied theatre evolving because of the interest and contributions of diverse disciplines?
- What are the institutional and pedagogical challenges and opportunities for faculty members to teach undergraduates and graduates in applied theatre?

¹ See Helen Nicholson, “Taking Time,” *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 20.2: 135-38; Hannah Grainger Clemson and Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou, “New practices, new methods, new voices,” *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 19.3: 231-42; and Barry Freeman, “Applied Theatre and Performance Research in Canada?” *Theatre Research in Canada* 35.2: 252-255.

ROUNDTABLE CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

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We invite proposals that consider the achievements and obstacles to future training and research in the field of applied theatre in Canada. We welcome contributions from both scholars and artists, both teachers and students. While contributions may draw on participants' practice or ongoing projects, these should be used to illustrate some argument about the state of the field. The aim of the roundtable will be to find some common ground among the diverse perspectives on offer to think on the strengths and opportunities for enriching training and research in applied theatre.

Please submit a proposal of 250 words by January 15, 2016 to Barry Freeman, Kathleen Gallagher and Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta (barry.freeman@utoronto.ca, kathleen.gallagher@utoronto.ca, and ksadeghi@uvic.ca).

Three weeks prior to the conference, successful proposals will be shared with all participants, and participants will also be asked to propose three questions they feel should animate the dialogue. During the roundtable, participants will be given five minutes to briefly elaborate on how their experience led them to these questions. These presentations and questions will then be opened up to a general discussion among attendees about the current strengths and challenges of the field of applied theatre in Canada.

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