

Panel Proposal: AHCT 2012

Proposed Title

"The Doctor, in Surgery: Discovering the *Comedia* through a New Translation/Production of Tirso de Molina's *El amor médico*"

Participants

Harley Erdman, Associate Professor of Theater, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Sarah Brew, MFA Theater Student, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Gina Kaufmann, Assistant Professor of Theater, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Bruce Burningham, Professor of Hispanic Studies and Theatre, Illinois State University

One of Tirso de Molina's most outrageous and fascinating *comedias de enredo*, *El amor médico* had never been translated into English before—at least not until this past year, when Sarah Brew, a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, undertook the project in collaboration with another graduate student, Josephine Hardman. Workshopped at the Massachusetts Center for Renaissance Studies and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, *Love the Doctor* recently received its world premiere production at UMass' Curtain Theater in October of 2011.

Following the thread of *Love the Doctor's* growth and development over the past year, this panel takes up these questions: What does translating, adapting, rehearsing and producing a *comedia* reveal about a work and its genre? How does a text impact its performance, and how, in turn, does a performance influence the subsequent development of a text? What intellectual and scholarly feedback can be derived from participating in a performance? The concrete example of *Love the Doctor* sheds light on these questions.

The panel will consist of four 15-minute presentations, to be followed by approximately 30 minutes of discussion. The presentations will also include some live, performed examples from the play.

Harley Erdman: "Loving the Doctor, in Five Acts." In addition to introducing the session, I will provide an overview of the many stages of the project, with ample media support from the UMass production. As a translator, I am interested in the implicit codes and undocumented moments that, while not written down, make up a *comedia's* larger "performance text." My presentation will explore how producing a *comedia* leads to discoveries about this performance text.

Sarah Brew, "Adaptation in Translation." In the process of creating the first-ever English-language translation of *El amor médico*, I took several liberties and made extensive adaptive changes to Tirso's original play, including merging two characters into one in order to create a stronger obstacle for the play's *dama*, Jerónima. On this panel, I explore the evolution of Gonzalo's character at various stages in the process.

Gina Kaufmann, "Directing a New Adaptation: From Actor to text." Using the journey of *Love the Doctor*, I will examine the complex and often unexpected ways that collaborators affect one another. As a director, I am particularly interested in discoveries made by actors in rehearsal, which then influence and enlighten us about the function of individual characters and about ways the storytelling is embedded in the text. I will expand upon this point, also with reference to Gonzalo.

Bruce Burningham, "No Closer Reading: Performance Praxis, Critical Theory, and *Love the Doctor*".

Since the days of the New Critics, literary theorists have extolled the virtues of "close reading." I have argued in print, however, that there are no closer readings of a play than those generated by actors during rehearsal as they explore the real-time ramifications of the various impulses that are embedded within the (often competing) levels of text, subtext, and context of the play script. Through an exploration of my experience performing the role of Don Gonzalo for a recent staged reading of *Love the Doctor*, this paper will examine the intellectual and scholarly feedback that is necessarily derived from performance praxis. In other words, this paper will articulate what I learned about *El amor médico* while rehearsing *Love the Doctor*.

Please note, we are proposing this event in conjunction with a staged reading of the play. The two sessions need not be back-to-back. In fact, it may be preferable for the panel to precede the reading by a day, to avoid a lengthy double-session.

Equipment needs: Audio-visual projection from laptop.

Contact Person: Harley Erdman, <harley@theater.umass.edu>