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AHCT Newsletter

January 2007

Dear AHCT Colleagues:

Best wishes for 2007 from the officers and board of AHCT. This issue of the newsletter brings information on the upcoming conference in March, the joint AHCT-AEEA conference held at Georgetown University in October 2006, and the status of the Siglo de Oro Drama Festival at the Cuamizal Memorial. Also in this issue, AHCT President, Barbara Mujica, thanks members for the opportunity to serve the Association and announces she will step down as President.

Annual Dues: Please remember to check the mailing label on this newsletter for your dues status. Forms for annual dues and membership renewal and conference registration may be found at: <http://www.comedias.org/>. Simply print and mail the forms according to the instructions. You may also send payment directly to AHCT First Vice President, Anita Stoll (detailed information appears in the section on the annual conference below).

The AHCT, Spanish Golden Age Theater Symposium, El Paso, TX, March 1-3, 2007. Highlights at this year's conference will include a plenary session with Teresa Soufas, Fred De Armas and Dawn Smith, and a keynote address by Karen Berman, Artistic Director for Washington Women in Theatre and Professor at Georgetown University. Karen Berman directed the production of *Friendship Betrayed* seen by AHCT members at the joint AHCT-AEEA conference in October. There will also be informal readings of the short plays, *El juez de los divorcios* and *La elección de los alcaldes de Daganzo*, the first organized by Paco Ramírez and the second by Ben Gunter. In addition, David Pasto will host a panel discussion on his production of *Valor, Agravio y Mujer*. This year's program also features research papers by AHCT members on a range of topics related to Spanish Classical theater.

Hotel Reservations: The 2007 conference will be held at the Camino Real Hotel in El Paso, Texas. Sessions begin Thursday morning, March 1, and end Saturday afternoon, March 3. Hotel reservations may be made by phone at 1-800-769-4300 or 1-915-534-3099, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (MST). Reservations may still be made, although the deadline for the special conference rate was January 28.

Conference Registration: The registration fee includes conference attendance, the AHCT Annual Banquet, transportation to and from the Chamizal National Memorial each evening for the Siglo de Oro Spanish Drama Festival, coffee and refreshments during the conference, and refreshments in the Hospitality Room after the theater performances. You must be a member of AHCT to register for the conference. If you are not currently a member, please send membership dues of \$30 (or \$20 for retired members & students), along with your conference registration fee. Members also receive the Association's journal, *Comedia Performance*, issued annually.

To register for the conference, send your name, affiliation, address, telephone, and e-mail address, with a check for \$90 or the appropriate credit card information to: Professor Anita K. Stoll, First Vice-President, AHCT, 2081 Lamberton Road, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118 (e-mail: <a.stoll@csuohio.edu>). Please note: there is a special registration fee of \$30 for graduate students who attend the conference as auditors. This fee includes all the events and services mentioned above, except the AHCT banquet. Student auditors may also attend the banquet by paying an additional \$15 at the time of registration. Please send registration and membership dues by February 9, 2007; there will be a late fee of an additional \$10 for registration after that date.

To pay by credit card, please provide your name, address in full (this must be the address to which your credit card statements are sent), with zip or postal code and country if not USA, phone number, credit card name (Visa or Master Card), credit card number plus the last three digits on the back side of the card (a CVV number), expiration date, and your signature. For security purposes, it is advisable to send this information by standard mail rather than E-mail.

Forms to facilitate payment of dues and registration may be found at the AHCT website (www.comedias.org) Please note that these must be printed and mailed via US mail, payment cannot be submitted electronically.

Calls for Volunteers: AHCT provides transportation to Chamizal's Siglo de Oro Festival for conference participants. Volunteers are needed to drive vans from the hotel to the Chamizal National Memorial beginning Wednesday, February 28, 2007. The conference registration fee will be waived for van drivers. Please contact Conference Director, Angel Sánchez (see below) for further information and to volunteer.

Volunteers are also invited to serve as moderators for discussions between the audience, actors, and directors following performances at the Siglo de Oro Drama Festival. For details please see the up-date on the status of the Festival below.

Officers & Board Meetings, Wednesday, February 28: Officers will meet at 9:00 a.m., and the Board will meet at 1:00 p.m., in the Camino Real Hotel.

Conference Up-Dates: The Symposium program will be available in February. For this and other conference information and up-dates, please check the AHCT web page at: www.comedias.org. For additional questions about the conference, please contact the AHCT Conference Director, Professor Angel Sánchez, Arizona State University, Department of Languages and Literatures, PO Box 870202, Tempe, AZ 85287-0202. Tel. (480) 965-4576, Hm. (480) 786-4633. E-mail: <angel.sanchez@asu.edu>.

The Chamizal National Memorial's 2007 Siglo de Oro Drama Festival: This year's program includes the following performances:

Wednesday, February 28: *El Narciso en su opinión*, by Guillén de Castro y Belvis. Performed by Brigham Young University, and directed by Anna-Lisa Halling.

Thursday, March 1: *La villana de Vallecas*, by Tirso de Molina. Performed by Universidad de Puerto Rico, and directed by Dean Zayas.

Friday, March 2: *No hay burlas con el amor*, by Calderón de la Barca. Performed by Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático, Murcia, Spain.

Saturday, March 3: *Risas Aquí y después ¡Ganancia!* Adaptation by Norberto Vázquez Freijo. Performed by Grupo La Hormiga, and directed by Norberto Vázquez Freijo.

Sunday, March 4th: *La Cueva de Salamanca*, by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. Performed by Universidad de Veracruz, and directed by Ramiro Sotelo.

Up-date on the Status of the Siglo de Oro Drama Festival. AHCT members will recall the concern raised at last year's conference that severe reductions of the National Park Service's budget would bring an end to the Siglo de Oro Drama Festival. The budget cuts have occurred, but loss of the Festival been avoided, thanks to the involvement of the local El Paso community, support and encouragement from groups such as AHCT, and an extraordinary effort on the part of the Chamizal staff. We owe sincere thanks to Rick Harris, Superintendent, Cristina Olague-Rosales, Paul Roney, Michael Groomer and others at the Chamizal Memorial, and to AHCT President, Barbara Mujica, for their efforts to preserve the Festival. The creation of a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of local government and community organizations has helped formalize the base of support for the Festival and opened avenues for communication and fund-raising. Results include, for example, the creation of a web page specifically for the Siglo de Oro Festival (URL forthcoming), with performance schedules, information about performing groups, and links to supporting organizations (including AHCT). This initiative has been carried out by Steering Committee member, Ms. Angela Mora, from the Cultural Heritage and Tourism office of the City of El Paso. Similar contributions from other individuals and local constituencies and a creative approach to gathering and managing the resources available by the Chamizal Memorial's staff hopefully will ensure continuation of the Festival in future years.

Call for Volunteers to Moderate Post-Performance Discussions: A significant consequence of the budget cuts to the National Park Service is that the Chamizal no longer has funds to invite discussants or to hold extended "round-table discussions" after the plays as in past years. They have recognized, however, the value of such dialogues, especially for the Festival's local audience. As a partial solution, they have invited AHCT members to volunteer to serve as moderators to facilitate question and answer sessions between the audience and actors and directors after each play. These sessions will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes. Moderators should have comments of their own to offer, but their principal role will be that of facilitating the exchange between the members of the audience and the performers. If you are interested, please respond to AHCT Secretary, Bob Johnston (<robert.johnston@nau.edu>), as soon as possible, and please mention for which performance(s) you would prefer to moderate discussion.

Joint AHCT-AEEA Conference in October 5-7, 2006: In collaboration with the Asociación de Escritoras de España y de las Américas, AHCT helped sponsor a joint conference at Georgetown

University, in Washington, D. C. The program featured a keynote address on Carmelite Iconography by Christopher Wilson, professorial lecturer of Art History at George Washington University, along with performances of María de Zayas's *Friendship Betrayed* (*La traición en la amistad*) at Georgetown University, and Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer* by Gala Theater. A stimulating interpretation of Zayas's play, in English translation by Catherine Larson and Valerie Hegstrom, was given by Washington Women in Theater, and directed by Karen Berman (keynote speaker at the upcoming AHCT conference in March). As a sequel to their excellent production of *Valor, agravio y mujer*, Gala Theater director Hugo Medrano and his actors held a two-hour workshop for conference participants with commentary and discussion about the performance. The joint, AHCT-AEEA conference also featured some 35 sessions with scholarly papers by members of both associations.

A Letter to Members from AHCT President, Barbara Mujica:

Dear AHCT Members:

It is with sadness, but also with a sense of accomplishment that I write this note. After three years as President of AHCT, I have decided to step down. On the one hand, my many publishing activities, including a new anthology of early modern theater and a new novel, make it impossible for me to continue with my administrative duties. On the other, I honestly think a frequent change in leadership is healthy for a professional organization. This year's conference will therefore be the last one at which I preside as President.

During my tenure as President I have realized certain goals that I have long cherished. First, I hosted a joint conference of the AHCT and the AEEA (Asociación de Escritoras de España y las Américas) at Georgetown University last October. In addition to 130 papers by an international assembly of scholars, the conference included premier professional performances of two plays by early modern women dramatists: *Valor, agravio y mujer*, by Ana Caro, directed by Hugo Medrano of GALA Hispanic Theater, and *Friendship Betrayed* (*La traición en la amistad*), by María de Zayas, directed in English by Karen Berman of Washington Women in the Theater. Other highlights of the conference were an outstanding keynote address by art historian Christopher Wilson on Teresian iconography and a reception hosted by the Spanish Embassy.

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of Susan Fischer, Susan Paun de García, and Isaac Benabu, during my tenure AHCT also hosted another important symposium, held in summer, 2004 in Stratford-upon-Avon, in conjunction with the Royal Shakespeare Company's festival of Spanish plays. Although I cannot take credit for organizing this very successful event, I hope it will set a precedent for many other international AHCT symposia.

When we met in 2006, there was much talk of the possibility that the Golden Age Theater Festival at the Chamizal might not continue. I am happy to announce that not only will it continue, but it will expand until it returns to its original two-week format. Last summer I met in Washington, D.C. with Richard Harris, Superintendent of the National Park Service and with representatives of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce and of the El Camino Real Hotel. All of them assured me of their continued support for the theater festival. Richard Harris suggested that we have a representative of AHCT meet with his group on a regular basis in order to offer suggestions and guidance on issues involving the theater festival. With the support of the other officers, I named Robert Johnston to that position.

One issue that has concerned me over the years is the diminished participation in our annual conference of some of the profession's most highly respected members. To ameliorate this situation I

initiated the Panel of Experts, a plenary session that features papers by senior scholars. Last year's panel included stimulating presentations by James Parr and Catherine Connor-Swietlicki. This year we are able to count on three highly prestigious scholars for our panel: Frederick de Armas, Dawn Smith, and Teresa Soufas.

Another concern has been the lack of recognition of *comedia* studies outside of Hispanism. In August 2006, I attended the annual conference of the Association for Theater in Higher Education (ATHE) in Chicago for the purpose of giving our group more exposure among academics in the field of theater studies. The conference was attended by over 1000 scholars and professional theater people. In addition to giving a paper on Calderón, I spoke at the plenary session and attended the Summit of theater organizations as President of AHCT. I am now taking steps toward obtaining affiliated status for AHCT in ATHE.

Finally, I am delighted to inform you of the extraordinary success of our journal, *Comedia Performance*, now in its fourth issue. There were so many excellent submissions this year that we were able to accept less than one third. Many first-rate research institutions, including the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California, and Ohio State University, are now subscribing. I am grateful to all of you for your support of *Comedia Performance*. I am particularly indebted to our Editorial Advisory Board, and I look forward to continuing to serve as Editor.

I would like to thank my fellow AHCT officers, the board, and the membership for an extremely gratifying three years. Donald Dietz, our President Emeritus, deserves special thanks for his continued support. I know the Association will grow and prosper under new leadership.

Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

Barbara Mujica
President, AHCT

On behalf of the officers, board, and members of AHCT, thank you Barbara for your generous service and many contributions to the Association.

Donations to AHCT: Donations in support of any of AHCT's projects and activities are deeply appreciated. To contribute, simply send a check or credit card information to: AHCT, Department of Spanish & Portuguese, Georgetown University, Box 571039, Washington, DC 20057.

Back issues of BCom: AHCT member Robert Morrison would like to donate his collection of issues of *Bulletin of the Comediantes* (1974 to present) to a fellow member of AHCT or to a library or graduate student willing to pay shipping costs. Contact him at: Robert Morrison, PO Box 246, Hawthorne, FL 32640.

Cordially and with very best wishes to all for the New Year,



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