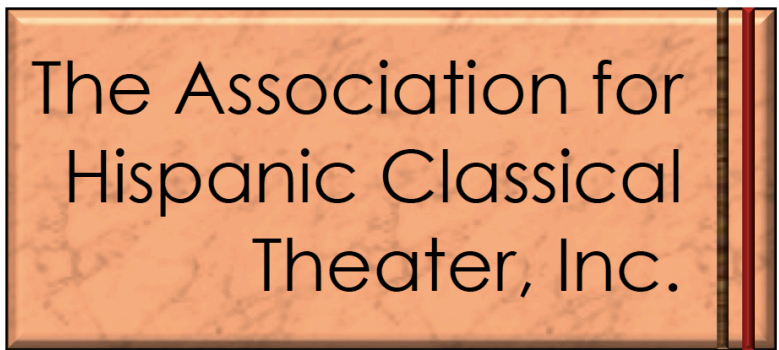


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Newsletter: July 2020

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Cordial greetings from the President and Board of Directors of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater. This issue of the newsletter includes highlights of the 2020 AHCT Virtual Symposium, news from the April Board meeting, and other information of interest to Golden Age drama enthusiasts.

Theater Pioneers in the Midst of a Pandemic: A Conference to Remember

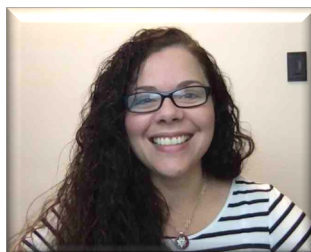
By Esther Fernández, Vice President for the Annual Conference

The AHCT Executive Committee and the AHCT Board wish to sincerely thank Dr. Erin Alice Cowling (Assistant Professor, McEwan University) and Dr. Glenda Y. Nieto-Cuebas (Associate Professor, Ohio Wesleyan University) for having organized this year's AHCT Virtual Symposium in coordination with the Almagro International Theater Festival in record time and through superhuman effort. Over the past two years, both Cowling and Nieto-Cuebas have been working very closely to create the conference with the Almagro Festival team: Director Ignacio García, Adjunct Director Manuel Lagos, Artistic Coordinator Lorenzo Pappagallo, and Coordinator Teresa Pérez-Prat. The original idea was to organize a special 2020 AHCT Summer Conference in Almagro, but this plan had to be cancelled in April due to the pandemic. Undaunted, Cowling and Nieto-Cuebas undertook the Herculean feat of building a digital conference from the ground up that would unite 100 attendees, between auditors and participants. Their impeccable work has not only strengthened



Erin Cowling.
Photo courtesy of
Esther Fernández.

Glenda Nieto-Cuebas.
Photo courtesy of Esther
Fernández.



international ties with the Almagro Festival but has also put the AHCT at the center of Hispanic early modern theater studies as an organization that provides a space for theater scholars and practitioners to share innovative ideas and inspiration even in the most challenging of circumstances. A very special thanks also goes to Susan Paun de García (Professor Emerita, Denison University) for encouraging this project from its inception.

The AHCT Virtual Symposium, July 15-17, 2020

By Erin A. Cowling and Glenda Nieto-Cuebas



This past July 15-17, the AHCT celebrated its first “virtual” symposium! When we had to cancel our annual symposium and the planned Almagro symposium due to Covid-19, the board approved a virtual symposium to be held in their place. Organized by Erin Cowling (secretary-elect) and Glenda Y. Nieto-Cuebas (board member), the symposium featured 39 presenters, 14 invited speakers, and four performances!



Auric: Paula Rodríguez and Arthur Astier.

There were also special events organized in conjunction with the Festival de Teatro Clásico de Almagro, posted on the dedicated website for this conference. Panels ranged in topic from pedagogy to translation, and from Cervantes's theatrical endeavours to canonically excluded dramaturgs and characters.

As always, the performances and subsequent interaction with artists were a highlight of the conference. During a coffee break on July 15, presenters and auditors were witness to the online debut of Auric, a musical adaptation of Golden Age texts by Paula Rodríguez and Arthur

Astier. Later that day, we were again treated to an online first: the new adaptation of *Los habladores* as part of the Merolico's repertoire by EFE TRES Teatro. This “fake-live” performance, as director Allan Flores called it in his talk the next day, used snap-chat filters in the place of costuming and props to distinguish between characters as portrayed by Fernando Villa-Prodl.



Fernando Villa of Efe Tres Teatro in *El Merolico: Los habladores*.



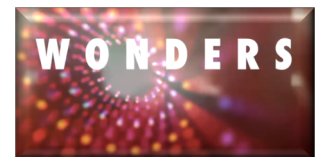
Carlos Herrera and Daniela Plaza in *Crónicas anacrónicas: El guajalote*.

On July 16 we again had two performances: during the break we were accompanied by the *Crónicas anacrónicas*, adapted from novo-Hispanic *entremeses*. Carlos Herrera and Daniela Plaza played multiple characters, using paper-puppets, to act out a court case over a dead chicken. At the end of the second day, we had what can only be

described as an otherworldly experience, in which Teatro Inverso (Paula Rodríguez and Sandra Arpa) created a portal—a *retablo*, if you will—through which we were able to communicate with none other than Miguel

de Cervantes! Spectators were invited to ask Cervantes questions... and he has answered us! Many of the questions, as one might expect, were about the circumstances in which we currently find ourselves. Perhaps some of his answers might be of comfort to you:

¿Cómo soportaste tanto tiempo encerrado? La necesidad, según se dice, es maestra en utilizar el ingenio. ¿Puede haber teatro a distancia? No hay ningún camino que no se acabe, como no se le oponga la pereza y la ociosidad. Why am I stuck at home with this pandemic? En las desventuras comunes se reconcilian los ánimos y se estrechan las amistades. ¿Cuándo va a terminar la pandemia? Confía en el tiempo, que suele dar dulces salidas a muchas amargas dificultades.



Wonders, by Sandra Arpa and Paula Rodríguez. Based on Cervantes's "El retablo de las maravillas."

Symposium participants “gather” for a final *brindis* to conclude the conference.



Although we might still be waiting for the “dulce salida a la amarga dificultad” that is Covid-19, this 3-day zoom conference provided us with the opportunity to experience many of the parts of our gatherings that we cherish: the sharing of our work with our peers, the comradery of a shared love of theater, and the chance to view new adaptations of golden age plays. Although we could not be together in person, it certainly felt like our community came together for those three days. For those of you who were able to attend these performances, don't forget that *Comedia Performance* will accept reviews of digital performances this year!

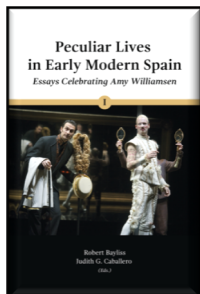
In Memoriam: Amy R. Williamsen, 1959-2019

By AHCT founder Donald T. Dietz

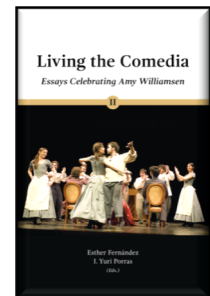
Our community of scholars was shocked at the sudden and unexpected death of Amy Williamsen. We all admired and loved her. I knew Amy when she was a little girl. Our two families first met, when Vern and I were graduate students at the University of Arizona in the early 1960s. My wife, Kathy, was carrying our first-born son, Joe, and Clara was pregnant with Amy's sister, Tura. Through our friendship with Vern and Clara, I was able to follow Amy's successful academic career. Early on, as a graduate student, Amy came to our AHCT conferences; not long afterwards, she was elected to the Board of Directors and quickly became one of the pillars of our Association. The last time I saw and spoke to Amy was at our AHCT conference in El Paso, Texas, two years ago. We met one morning, after breakfast, in the hotel lobby. She congratulated me for the *homenaje* volume, that you, my AHCT colleagues, had graciously presented to me during the conference. Our conversation quickly turned to past memories of our families. With tears in her eyes, Amy began speaking about Vern. She loved and respected her dad and revered him. She thanked me for my deep friendship with her Dad and for my having founded AHCT, which meant so much to her professional career. As we parted, we embraced each other. Little did I know it would be the last time I would hug Amy. As I reflect upon Amy's brief life, I recall the message that President Barack Obama, shortly after his first inauguration, gave to the graduating class at Arizona State University. The University had denied him an honorary degree for political reasons, stating that "he had not yet completed his body of work." The President, respectfully acknowledging the University's rationale, reminded the graduates that they have just begun their "body of work," and added that "one's body of work is never complete until his or her life has ended." Amy has completed the last chapter of her life. Her body of work remains with us and continues to enrich us all. Requiescat in pace.



AHCT founder Don Dietz, President Emerita Susan Paun de García, and board member Amy Williamsen.



In honor of our beloved Amy Williamsen, AHCT members and University Press of the South General Editor Dr. Alain Saint-Saëns came together to publish two volumes of essays dedicated to her scholarly and professional legacy. The volumes are: *The Peculiar Lives in Early Modern Spain. Essays Celebrating Amy Williamsen (Vol. I)*. Eds. Robert Bayliss and Judith G. Caballero. New Orleans: UP of the South, 2020, and *Living the Comedia. Essays Celebrating Amy Williamsen (Vol. II)*. Eds. Esther Fernández and J. Yuri Porrás. New Orleans: UP of the South, 2020. The AHCT would like to thank Dr. Saint-Saëns for his generosity,



the editors for curating two wonderful anthologies in very little time, and the contributors for their heartfelt and thought-provoking essays.

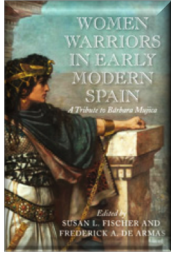
Save the Date:

**The AHCT Annual Spanish Golden Age Theater Symposium
July 6–8, 2021, Almagro, Spain.**

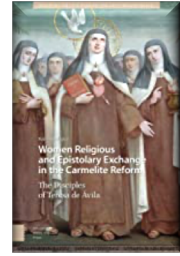


As the status of a 2021 Siglo de Oro festival at the Chamizal National Memorial remains unclear, the AHCT has decided to hold next year's symposium in Almagro, Spain. This year's virtual symposium organizers, Erin Cowling, Glenda Nieto-Cuebas, and Lorenzo Pappagallo, have already worked with our good friends at the Almagro Festival to secure meeting spaces, and will continue to arrange lodging options, presentation and panel themes and formats, speakers, and events. An official call for papers will be circulated soon.

Happenings



Women Warriors, Women Religious. In honor of AHCT's President Emerita Bárbara Mujica, Susan L. Fischer and Frederick A. de Armas have published a new book, *Women Warriors in Early Modern Spain: A Tribute to Bárbara Mujica*, Delaware University Press. The book contains several excellent theater articles by our colleagues, Susan Paun de García, Elizabeth Cruz Petersen, Frederick A. de Armas, and Isaac Benabu. Bárbara has also authored a new book which will be available in September: *Women Religious and Epistolary Exchange in the Carmelite Reform: The Disciples of Teresa de Ávila*, University of Amsterdam Press.



Social Justice in Spanish Golden Age Theatre, a collected volume edited by Tania de Miguel Magro, Mina García, Glenda Y. Nieto-Cuebas, and Erin Cowling is now available for pre-sale from the University of Toronto Press. This collection of original new essays focuses on the many ways in which early modern Spanish plays engaged their audiences in a dialogue about abuse, injustice, and inequality. Far from the traditional monolithic view of theatrical works as tools for expanding ideology, these essays each recognize the power of theatre in reflecting on issues related to social justice. The first section of the book focuses on textual analysis, taking into account legal, feminist, and collective bargaining theory. The second section explores issues surrounding theatricality, performativity, and intellectual property laws through an analysis of contemporary adaptations. The final section reflects on social justice from the practitioners' point of view, including actors and directors. Interested parties can order their copy now here: <https://utorontopress.com/ca/social-justice-in-spanish-golden-age-theatre-2>.



Are you interested in inviting a theatrical production from Spain to perform at your campus? Please contact Lorenzo Pappagallo, Curator and Producer of XperTeatro Performing Arts at xper teatro@gmail.com, and he will get in touch with the artists and help coordinate the tour.

Congreso Internacional «Burlas, burladores y burlados en Cervantes», 17-18 de diciembre de 2020, en modalidad virtual. Organizado por el Grupo de Investigación Siglo de Oro (GRISO) de la Universidad de Navarra con la colaboración del Instituto de Estudios Auriseculares (IDEA) y coordinado por el Dr. Carlos Mata Induráin. Las propuestas, incluyendo título, autor, filiación institucional, dirección electrónica y resumen de 200 palabras, habrán de remitirse a cmatain@unav.es. Cuota de inscripción: 100 €. El plazo de inscripción permanecerá abierto hasta el 15 de noviembre de 2020.

Notes from the April 2020 Board Meeting

Elections. President Bruce Burningham, Vice President for Membership and Registration Darci Strother, Vice President for the Annual Conference Esther Fernández, Secretary Erin Cowling, and Treasurer Rob Turner were elected to serve as officers from 1 January to 31 December 2021. Board members re-elected to another three-year term (2020-2022) were Rob Turner, Rob Bayliss, Mina García-Soormally, Glenda Nieto-Cuebas, and Jason Yancey.

Darci Strother has decided to step down from the position of Vice President for Membership and Registration at the conclusion of her next term on 31 December 2021. The AHCT will therefore hold nominations and an election for Vice President for Membership and Registration-elect this fall. The VP-elect will shadow Darci next year and take over the position beginning 1 January 2022. The Board also anticipates an election for a new board member this fall as Chris Gascón will be vacating his seat on the board at the end of his current term, 31 December 2020.

Congratulations to newly-elected board members Melissa Figueroa and Chad M. Gasta! Melissa Figueroa is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at Ohio University. She is interested in exploring dramatic representations of *moriscos* and how theater became a medium for the construction of minorities affected by the emergence of



Melissa Figueroa,
Ohio University.



Chad M. Gasta,
Iowa State
University.

Spanish imperialism during the early modern period. She has been a member of the AHCT since 2011. Chad M. Gasta is Professor of Spanish and Chair of the Department of World Languages and Cultures at Iowa State University where he also serves as Director of International Studies and Co-Director of the Languages and Cultures for Professions (LCP) program. His research focuses on early opera and musical culture in Spain and the New World, the *comedia*, Cervantes, and the picaresque. Additionally, he writes on global education and international engagement through study abroad. He is the author of several books: *Imperial Stagings: Empire and Ideology in Transatlantic Theater of Early Modern Spain and the New World* (University of North Carolina Press, 2013), *Transatlantic Arias: Early Opera in Spain and the New World* (Iberoamericana/ Vervuert, 2013), and an annotated critical edition of *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Waveland, 2013).

AHCT panels at RSA. The Board established that a standing committee of three members will organize the AHCT panels that will present at the Renaissance Society of America conference each year. Committee members will rotate off in staggered three-year terms. Bruce Burningham, Valerie Hegstrom, and Esther Fernández will serve on this committee for the spring 2021 RSA conference in Dublin, April 7-10, 2021.

Graduate Student Awards. The winner of the Everett W. Hessel Travel Award this year was Cayce Elder, for her essay “Érase una vez: Treatment of Gender in Manuel Iborra’s *La dama boba*.” The recipients of the two Everett W. Hesse Conference Awards were Lizette Arellano for “La écfrosis erótica en *El castigo sin venganza* de Lope de Vega” and Ana María Carvajal for “El teatro del engaño: *La bienaventurada madre Santa Teresa de Jesús* y sus posibles mentiras.”

The 2020 AHCT Founders’ Prizes. The Vern Williamsen *Comedia* Book Prize, awarded every three years to an outstanding monograph or edited volume, was awarded to Yolanda Gamboa and Bonnie Gasior, co-editors of *Making Sense of the Senses: Current Approaches in Spanish Comedia Criticism*, a volume published in honor of Charles Ganelin (Juan de la Cuesta, 2017). The Donald Dietz *Comedia* Prize in Service to the AHCT, awarded every three years to an individual who has made significant contributions to the furthering of AHCT’s mission, was awarded to Lynn Vidler for their dedication to the organization for more than two decades. Congratulations to Lynn, Bonnie and Yolanda!

Call for nominations: 2021 AHCT Founders’ Prizes. Nominations are now encouraged for two awards to be given next year: The Walker Reid *Comedia* Production Prize and the David Gitlitz *Comedia* Prize in Pedagogy and Mentorship. The deadline for submissions is 15 October 2020; see the AHCT website for details: <http://www.wordpress.comedias.org/ahct-prizes/>. Volunteers are also welcome to serve as readers/evaluators of the nominees. Please contact Rob Bayliss (rbayliss@ku.edu) if you’d be willing to help evaluate the nominations for either award.

The AHCT Executive Committee and the AHCT General Board would like to thank our dear colleague Dr. Chris Gascón (Professor, SUNY Cortland) for the impeccable and rigorous work that he has done over the past ten years as the Secretary of our Association. Dr. Gascón is not only a top researcher whose work has inspired many of us in the field of *comedia* studies, but he has also been an exemplary leader in his role as AHCT Secretary. His professionalism, rigor, and generosity have set high standards for the position he has occupied. We are all grateful for his work and



Chris Gascón

profoundly admire him as a leader, scholar, and colleague. While Dr. Gascón retires from his role as the AHCT Secretary, his position has been filled by another brilliant scholar, Dr. Erin Alice Cowling (Assistant Professor, McEwan University). Dr. Cowling has been an extremely active member of our Association since the very first year she participated in the Annual Conference in 2014. This year she has served as co-director with Dr. Glenda Y. Nieto-Cuebas of the Summer 2020 AHCT Virtual Symposium. We are honored to welcome her as the new Secretary of the Association, and we know that her ongoing energy, creativity, and competence will assure the intellectual vitality of the AHCT in the years to come.

Erin Cowling



AHCT Reminders

Graduate Student Award Opportunities. The AHCT Board has established two graduate student Everett W. Hesse Conference Awards per year to cover the cost of conference registration, in addition to the Everett W. Hesse Travel Award, which is awarded to help with travel expenses. Many graduate students find it difficult to secure funding to attend conferences. You can support them and this new initiative by making a donation via the AHCT website. Look for the “Donate” button and the “Support Graduate Student Attendance” message on the right side of every page of the site (<http://www.wordpress.comedias.org/>).

Comedia Performance, AHCT's annual journal, publishes articles on topics related to the performance of the Spanish Golden Age *comedia*. Articles are due by October 1. To submit material, please visit <http://editorialmanager.com/comedia>. The online system will guide you through the steps to upload your submission to the editorial office. The subscription price is included in the annual AHCT membership dues. Additional copies are \$20 each and may be purchased online by way of PayPal at <http://www.wordpress.comedias.org/comedia-performance/>. Institutional subscription pricing information is available at https://www.psupress.org/journals/jnls_CP.html. *Comedia Performance* also advertises recently published books, performances, study abroad programs, and conferences. Ads are \$100 for a full page; checks should be made out to AHCT and sent to the AHCT treasurer. Send camera-ready ads to Barbara Mujica at: mujica@georgetown.edu.

Benefits of AHCT Membership. You can renew your membership easily on the AHCT webpage at <http://www.wordpress.comedias.org/ahct-membership-inquiry/>. Members of AHCT whose dues are up-to-date may borrow or stream videos from the archive of performances of Golden Age plays, receive the Association's annual journal, *Comedia Performance*, and access the semiannual AHCT Newsletter. To update your member profile, please access your file via your username and password, and update your record at <http://ahct.echapters.com/>. If your email address has changed, re-subscribe to the listserv at: http://mail.comedias.org/mailman/listinfo/comedias_comedias.org.

AHCT on Social Media. Keep up with AHCT news year-round! Don't forget to follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AHCTheater> and Instagram: [@ahctheater](https://www.instagram.com/ahctheater). We will continue to post exclusive content from the world of Hispanic Classical Theater throughout the year!

Y como las cosas humanas no sean eternas...

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your secretary over the past ten years, as a board member for the past fifteen, and as a member of the AHCT for twenty-four years now, and counting. I have had the pleasure of working closely with all of the presidents of our unique organization, and I have found so many of our board members to be exemplary models of collegiality, collaboration, and productivity in promoting Spanish Golden Age theater. Chronicling the life of our community in these newsletters has been a labor of love, and I look back fondly on all that we have accomplished together over the years. I remain forever indebted to the AHCT for providing me this opportunity. I am happy that these responsibilities will be in the more-than-capable hands of Erin Cowling, a wonderfully talented scholar and organizer, and I look forward to watching the organization evolve in innovative and exciting ways in the years to come!

With best wishes for the summer,
deepest gratitude for our time together,
and the brightest of hopes for the future of the AHCT,

Chris Gascón, AHCT Recording Secretary
gasconc@cortland.edu

