

CALL FOR PAPERS/SESSION PROPOSALS

ATHE Annual Conference: Music Theatre/Dance Focus Group

Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando, FL

Conference Dates: August 7–11, 2019

Submission Deadline: November 1, 2018

The Music Theatre/Dance (MTD) Focus Group of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) invites session proposals for the 2019 ATHE conference in Orlando.

Not all change takes place overnight, in one fell, revolutionary swoop. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg has sagely advised, “Real change, enduring change happens one step at a time.” Accordingly, the theme of the 2019 ATHE conference will be “[Scene Changes: Performing, Teaching, and Working through the Transitions](#).” Since ATHE last convened in Orlando, in 2013, the city has changed. The country has changed. How have the fields of music theatre and dance changed, and what transitions remain ongoing?

All sessions that address **any** aspect of musical theatre, music theatre, or dance—and which may or may not intersect directly with the theme of the conference—are welcome, including:

- musicals on film and television,
- musical dramaturgy,
- musicology of theatre and dance music,
- both classical and non-traditional forms of music and dance theatre,
- expressions of identity and representation on the lyric stage,
- the politics of musical performance, and musical-performance-as-activism,
- the business of musical theatre and dance,
- musical theatre and dance pedagogy, and
- the work of particular musical theatre or dance professionals and practitioners.

2019 MTD sessions may wish to address the following kinds of questions:

- What considerations must be brought to the responsible revival of “classic” works that carry with them outdated, offensive, even, representations of race, ethnicity, gender, gender roles, and sexuality, in some cases rooted in misogyny and white supremacy? What from history is and isn’t salvageable? How might canonical works be approached today to maximize casting potential across a more inclusive array of performing bodies, identities, and types?
- How do spectacular, numerous, or otherwise complex scene changes inspire or tax a writer’s, director’s, or choreographer’s artistic imagination? How do scene changes affect the material realities of theatrical or musical labor? In music theatre and dance, what kinds of transformative effects can scene changes have on members of the audience?
- In what ways have the internet, social media, and other forms of computing technology changed the way music theatre and dance are created and consumed? How have these changes affected notions of artistry, craft, and process? How have they affected access? How have they affected the place of music theatre and dance in our contemporary culture?
- How have recent changes in the greater economic, political, or technological landscapes affected career-training in the performing arts? What new kinds of preparatory lessons, professional skills, and survival techniques should we be teaching to ensure the best chances for our students’ success once they graduate?

- Though the theatre at large may currently be in the middle of a “scene change,” what changes still need to be made, at each level of production: community, educational, professional? What is the path forward for addressing issues of equity on and off stage? What changes have the #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and other recent social movements brought to light that still need to be addressed? How might music theatre and/or dance be used to address them?

SUBMISSIONS

Completed session proposals should be submitted online via the ATHE website at www.athe.org beginning September 21. The deadline for submissions is November 1, 2018. Only complete session proposals—i.e., no individual papers—will be considered.

SESSION FORMAT

Although the traditional session format has consisted of oral presentation of three or four related papers, moderated by a session chair, sessions that take carefully considered alternative formats are encouraged. (If deviating from a traditional paper panel or roundtable, however, please be very specific about the structure and the form of participant contributions.) Sessions that do not require audio–visual support are also strongly encouraged.

Note that highest consideration will be given to session proposals that articulate clearly the purpose and site of inquiry, and how each participant will contribute to the session’s overall objective.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SESSIONS

Multi-disciplinary session proposals (sponsored by two or more ATHE focus groups) are also encouraged, as long as they reflect meaningful engagement with the interests of all sponsoring focus groups. Before submitting a multi-disciplinary proposal, you must first contact the conference planner of each pertinent focus group to secure provisional sponsorship. (Note that sponsorship does not mean acceptance to the conference.)

SESSION ACCEPTANCE

All session proposers *and* their associated potential presenters should receive e-mail notification of acceptance to the conference or regrets from ATHE in late winter/early spring. At this time, proposers of accepted sessions will be responsible for securing confirmation of attendance from all session participants.

ASSISTANCE & FOCUS GROUP CONTACT

If you have an idea for a session and would like help developing it, or if you are working on a paper or presentation and are looking for co-presenters, please make use of the MTD listserv (which you may join via the link at www.athe.org/group/MTD) and/or e-mail MTD Conference Planner Brian Valencia (brian.valencia@gmail.com).

Additionally, all proposers are strongly encouraged to check in with Brian Valencia and to keep him informed regarding panels in development, so that he can offer guidance and support throughout the preparation and submission processes.

BRUCE KIRLE MEMORIAL DEBUT PANEL

MTD sponsors the distinguished and competitive Bruce Kirle Memorial Debut Panel each year at the ATHE annual conference for emerging scholars who have never presented at a national conference on the subject of music theatre or dance. The details of this special panel will be circulated shortly, and submissions will be due in late winter/early spring 2019.

ABOUT MUSIC THEATRE/DANCE

The Music Theatre/Dance (MTD) Focus Group is an international community of over two hundred researchers, teachers, and practitioners dedicated to the study of musical theatre, opera and operetta, dance theatre, and performance art. Its members hail from across the United States, as well as Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, China, Singapore, and Taiwan. MTD members are dedicated to the advancement of music theatre and dance as art forms and as scholarly enterprises. To that end, the focus group counts historians, theorists, critics, musicologists, directors, choreographers, dramaturgs, performers, designers, playwrights, and composers among its ranks. MTD members are also interested in music theatre and dance as a site for investigating the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, religion, and other markers of identity as they connect to systems of power and privilege and discussions of social justice. ■