

Grantee Name

Emerson College Dept Of Finance

Project Title

To support a national convening of Latina/o theater artists to establish a Latina/o Theater Commons

Project Progress and Successes

In October 2013, the LTC, in partnership with HowlRound, hosted the largest national gathering of Latina/o theatre makers since 1986 at Emerson College in Boston. Over seventy-five practitioners from all over the country gathered for three days to discuss the state of Latina/o theatre in this country, and to discuss the current challenges and opportunities facing the community. This event captured an irrepressible energy and ambition, and the LTC is growing stronger by the day. What's more, the LTC is committed to continuing their work using a commons-based approach that emphasizes access, transparency, peer-based collaboration, and minimal infrastructure demands.

The national convening was made possible through the hard work of a fiercely committed Steering and Advisory Committee. Since the convening, a Restructuring Committee composed of Steering Committee members has been working diligently to create the second iteration of the Steering and Advisory Committees that will help create and produce the upcoming LTC initiatives--a Fall 2014 Encuentro: A National Latina/o Theatre Festival at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, and a Summer 2015 Carnavál of New Latina/o Work at The Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago. In addition, the new Steering Committee will be charged with prioritizing action on the key issue areas identified by the convening participants (Advocacy, Artmaking, Networking/Convening, and Scholarship) and expanding and strengthening Café Onda, the online journal of the LTC.

Challenges / Obstacles / Failures Encountered in the Project

As a new entity using HowlRound's infrastructure and fiscal sponsorship, it was sometimes difficult to explain the LTC to the field--people were confused about its relationship to HowlRound, it's organizational status, etc. However, this challenge, in many ways, helped the LTC prioritize self-articulation: The Latina/o Theatre Commons (LTC) is a movement comprised of self-organized passionate, articulate, driven Latina/o theatre artists, producers, and scholars from across the country. The LTC advocates for Latina/o theatre as a vital, significant presence in the not-for-profit theatre sector through producing nationally recognized events and publishing regular content online.

Another challenge was the hard limit we had to maintain on who got invited to the convening because of physical space and financial resources. We all wanted everyone who wanted to come, to come but that just wasn't possible. This reality forced us to be exacting in our methodology around developing the invitation list, and in our language framing the invitations. Those who were invited, were invited to come as delegates of their community--representative of more than their own interests and experience.

What was learned from these that might be of benefit to others?

We found one answer to the limitations of who could physically be in the room was to make sure that the whole convening was as accessible as possible to those not there. We livestreamed the whole gathering, live tweeted, and encouraged people to join the conversation on Twitter. We designed one session around the conceptual arc of uniting the regions--we organized five satellite sites in cities across the country (Chicago, LA, NYC, Dallas, and Miami) who each hosted watch parties during the convening, and then all Skyped in at the same time to talk to the Boston contingent, and each other. While the

technology was had its limitations, I cannot describe the overwhelming feeling of connection this created for all involved.

Links to relevant website(s) and/or project publications, reports, etc.

Latina/o Theatre Commons Page: <http://howlround.com/latina/o-theatre-commons>

Full Convening Program:

http://howlround.com/sites/default/files/LTC%20Final%20Program_Light.pdf

Blogs about the convening with including livestreamed video archive:

<http://howlround.com/tags/ltc-national-convening>

In addition, we will be publishing a formal convening report this spring, authored by Brian Herrera.

If someone wishes to speak with your organization further about your project, would there be a willing contact? Y/N

If yes, please provide contact name and information for preferred method of contact (email, phone, etc).

Yes of course! Contact Jamie Gahlon, Associate Director of HowlRound at jamie@howlround.com or via phone at 617-824-3018.