

The Larking House Playwright's Intensive Handbook



An Introduction

Dear Playwrights, Directors, Actors, and Facilitators,

Welcome to the Larking House Playwright's Intensive!

We are so excited for you to join the unique network of artists that have gone through our workshop program since our company's founding.

This handbook contains important information on this program and our intended *modus operandi*. We ask that you read through it carefully and keep it more or less on hand for the duration of the intensive.

If you need clarity about anything found in this handbook, please reach out to us at [*larkinghousetheatre@gmail.com*](mailto:larkinghousetheatre@gmail.com) and we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Our goals for The Larking House Playwright's Intensive are as follows:

- To provide the opportunity for playwrights, directors, and actors to collaborate on the development of a brand new work.
- To give emerging artists a chance to familiarize themselves with an evolving process.
- To connect emerging artists as they work to build a piece of art in a collaborative and supportive environment.

Thank you so much for your trust and involvement in this process. Our company is deeply passionate about the development of new works, and the support of artists like you is absolutely key in the continued success of this program.

Cheers,

The Larking House

Scheduling & Overview

The weeklong intensive will consist of **FIVE rehearsal sessions OR a minimum of at least 10 HOURS of rehearsals**. How time is spent during each session will be up to the discretion of the playwright and director. Facilitators will ensure that there are at least 5 minutes of break for every hour of rehearsal, and California State Regulations for breaks (10 min every 2 hours). Session scheduling will be based on the availability of participants involved in the project.

Please take note of the following in regards to scheduling:

- IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL ARTISTS KEEP THEMSELVES AS AVAILABLE AS POSSIBLE FOR THE WEEK'S DURATION.
- All artists **MUST** send their projected availability for the intended week of the intensive no less than 7 DAYS prior to the starting Sunday date.
- In-Person attendance is required for all In-Person Intensives. You will be required to provide your own transportation to and from the rehearsal location and housing/travel accommodations will not be provided.
- If your availability changes please notify your director and/or facilitator as soon as possible to ensure a smooth process for everyone involved.
- The Final reading of every week's intensive will take place on the corresponding Saturday of that week.

**Schedules are subject to change based on individual intensive needs. There is NO PAY for participation in this program on any level. All involvement is on a volunteer basis*

Roles & Responsibilities

Facilitator

The main role of the facilitator is to ensure that all parties are following the agreed upon code of conduct. The facilitator will be present for each Zoom session and will be there to help steer discussion. Acting as the company liaison, the facilitator will help provide a collaborative environment. The Facilitator should also act as the main advocate for the playwright and their script, ensuring that no one else's creative process take precedence over that of the playwright. They will work with the director to help schedule and cast shows. The facilitator is expected to be present for the full duration of every session.

Director

The main role of the director is to lead rehearsals, and communicate their insight & ideas to the playwright. This may include possible directorial visions or questions that they might have. They will work with the facilitator to schedule and cast shows. It is our hope to foster a relationship between director, playwright, and actors; they have the most direct role in overview and rehearsal structure. The director is expected to be present for the full duration of every session. One meeting with the playwright prior to first rehearsal must be scheduled, along with debrief sessions following each rehearsal period. The length, time, and subject matter discussed will be at the discretion of the Director, Playwright, and Facilitator.

Playwright

This main role of the playwright is to work collaboratively with other artists and to communicate their ideas. Playwrights are expected to be open to feedback or suggestions. However, rewrites are solely up to the playwright's discretion. Playwright attendance is up to the discretion of the playwright and director. We ask that you attend all rehearsals where you are available; this is an opportunity for writers to hear their work aloud and decide how to develop your work after every rehearsal.

Roles & Responsibilities

Actor

The main role of the actor is to bring their experience and knowledge to the table. It is expected that actors are open to ideas and honest about their impressions. By taking on the characters, their perspective is invaluable to the process. They are expected to do any homework requested by the director. It is not expected for actors to memorize the play in such a short period of time. However, actors should work to familiarize themselves as much as possible so they can give as honest a reading as possible.

Respondents

The role of the respondents in this process is to give honest structured feedback to the playwright directly following the final read of their piece. The Respondents will be provided a PDF of the script (the original submission with no edits & the final reading version) as well as the handbook for reference no less than 24 hours prior to the final reading. The Respondents will be informed of the Liz Lerman Method and all responses will be relayed to the playwright in this fashion.

A Note On Casting...

It is to be understood by all parties, that casting will be done with the playwright's intentions in mind. However, it is also to be understood that all specific casting requirements may not be fully met and is subject to actor availability. That being said, The Larking House is committed to authentically casting racially and gender specific roles and will make incredibly limited (if any) concessions in this specific area of our casting process (i.e. casting white actors in non-white roles, casting cis gendered actors in non-binary or trans roles will not be allowed)

Feedback Sessions

We will be using the “Liz Lerman: Critical Response Process” to help organize feedback sessions.

Our goal is to ensure that these sessions provide each artist the opportunity to be heard. However, it is also our goal to ensure artists are allowed to receive feedback at their discretion.

The Liz Lerman Method is not meant to restrict discussion, but to help focus discussion and use time as efficiently as possible.

Overview of the Liz Lerman Method:

The Three Roles

1. The Creator (Artists: Writer, Actor, Director, etc.)
2. The Responders (Reader, Listener, etc.)
3. The Facilitator

The Four Stages of Response

1. What works?

This is the time for initial feedback or impressions. Though this is opinionated, this should be phrased as “I found this effective” or “This moment stuck out to me.”

2. Artist asks questions

This is the moment to address questions the creator has about their own work; this will start with the playwright, then the director, and finally the actors. Specificity is important here, and it is up to the artist to phrase questions that help direct their respondents. Question examples are “Who was your main focus in this scene?” or “Was this clear?” or “What are your thoughts on this choice?”

3. Respondents ask neutral questions

This stage serves to provoke thought. It is not about giving an opinion. It should be phrased as “What was your intention with this?” or “What are you trying to say at this moment?” or “Can you explain this?” This section is about contextualizing your observations based on the creators’ intentions, rather than jumping to any assumptions.

4 . Respondents offer their permissioned opinions

Now is the time for opinions. Respondents will ask a creator for their permission to give an opinion about a specific topic. “I have an opinion about the relationship between these two characters; would you like to hear it?” The creator then may say “yes” or “no.” If the response is “yes” then the respondent may continue with their opinion.

A Note on Responses...

The Liz Lerman Method is to be used during the intensive week amongst the playwright/actors/director/facilitator to enrich the workshop experience and allow the writer to get as much feedback as possible during the short amount of time provided.

That being said, the Playwright is not under any obligation to take and or apply any of the given feedback to their script during this process. It is, however, HIGHLY encouraged that all feedback at least be noted and considered by the writer during and after the intensive.

If there are any comments, questions, or concerns about the contents of this handbook or the program as a whole, please contact our Executive Artistic Director Lizzy McCabe at larkinghousetheatre@gmail.com

This program was created and continues to be developed by Matthew M Hayashi for the exclusive use of The Larking House.

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