LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB

2019-20 Annual Report
**58TH SEASON HIGHLIGHTS**

**SOMEWHERE AT THE BEGINNING**
Choreographed and performed by Germaine Acogny
Directed by Mikaël Serre
(9/26-28/20, 3 perfs, 11 artists, 562 attendees)

The US premiere of a powerhouse solo starring "Mother of Contemporary African Dance." Co-presented with FIAF as part of Crossing the Line Festival.

“An elegantly intense autobiographical solo…with more cumulative power than its simplicity might suggest.”
– *The New York Times*

**FANDANGO FOR BUTTERFLIES (AND COYOTES)**
Written by Andrea Thome,
Music by Sinuhé Padilla
Directed by José Zayas
(2/6-15/20, 8 performances, 28 artists, 1272 attendees)

A community celebration where stories from undocumented immigrants were brought to life through music and dance. An En Garde Arts production.

“A sensitive portrait of the in-between: characters balancing the small joys of everyday life with the fear of uncertainty.” – *The New York Times*

**WHERE ARE WE NOW**
Conceived and performed by Sven Ratzke
Directed by Dick Groeneveld
(12/11-21/19, American premiere, 8 perfs, 7 artists, 626 attendees)

A poetic storytelling cabaret that brought the history of David Bowie’s masterful music to life.

“Expressive lyricism and wistful introspection… extraordinarily conceived and performed entertainment.” – *Broadway World*
MISSION STATEMENT

La MaMa is dedicated to the artist and all aspects of the theatre. We are a creative home to artists and audiences from around the world, a dynamic hub for risk-taking new performance, and a vital part of New York City’s cultural fabric. La MaMa believes in the power of art to reveal our shared humanity, and supports artists of all identities in the creation of new work.

58TH SEASON SUMMARY
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 (FY20)

La MaMa’s 58th Season celebrated the birth centennial of our late founder, Ellen Stewart, who changed American theatre with her profound vision. This season featured the work of 908 emerging, mid-, and late-career artists who stand as testaments to Ellen’s enduring legacy in the performing arts. La MaMa engaged a total of 16,620 in-person and remote audience members throughout the season, who represented a wide range of ages, gender identities, income levels, and races.

Our 58th Season encompasses six months of onsite artistic programming (September 19, 2019 – March 12, 2020) and three months of virtual programming (March 13, 2020 – June 30, 2020) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following statistics refer to our onsite season, which audience members attended in-person. Information about our virtual programming is available on Pages 7-8.

Onsite season productions included:

10 World Premieres
6 American Premieres
21 Plays
5 Family Shows
3 Dance Productions
4 Puppetry Productions

La MaMa’s 58th Season of onsite programming featured 25 theatrical productions (excluding annual programs) created and performed by 908 artists. A total of 16,620 in-person audience members attended the performances. Tickets to productions averaged $14 before discounts, with ten $10 tickets made available for each performance. We also distributed 2,935 free tickets to local organizations and community members. Audiences came from all five boroughs, representing 73 percent of NYC zip codes, as well as 49 U.S. states and territories, and 36 countries from five continents. Overall attendance was 73 percent of total house capacity.

The season also included two performance festivals that reflected on the history of our country and envisioned a more unified future for our world:

400 Years of Inequity and Protest (10/12-16/2019, 4 events, 58 artists, 334 attendees): an examination of the 400 years that have passed since the British founding of Jamestown, featuring dance, music, poetry, and historical text.

The Trojan Women Project Festival (12/5-15/2019, 9 events, 74 artists, 2,931 in-person and virtual attendees): a series of performances, panels, and workshops that celebrated the 45th anniversary of La MaMa’s groundbreaking production, The Trojan Women. Original director Andrei Serban returned to lead 52 artists from Cambodia, Guatemala, Kosovo, and New York City in a new staging of The Trojan Women. The production was hailed as “a work of cosmic proportions” (Reviews from Underground).
58TH SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

ONE GREEN BOTTLE
Written and directed by Hideki Noda
(2/29-3/7/20, American premiere, 8 perfs, 34 artists, 1119 attendees)

An absurdist, gender-bending farce of modern times.

“Nothing is sacred and every single delectable dig at both Japanese and Western society is served with relish, extraordinarily clever dialogue, audacious antics and astounding comedic physicality.”
– Broadway World

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF BENJAMIN BANNEKER
Directed by Theodora Skipitares
(1/23-2/2/20, 8 performances, 43 artists, 1184 attendees)

A multi-disciplinary spectacle with a marching band, dancers, 12-foot puppets, and moving projection screens, celebrating the life of Benjamin Banneker, a free black man living in Maryland from 1731 to 1806.

“Appealing DIY inventivity…[Skipitares’s work is] ambitious, concerned with political engagement and community-building.” – The New York Times

THE DARK STAR FROM HARLEM
Book by Glynn Borders
Music and lyrics by Mario E. Sprouse
(11/21-12/1/19, 7 performances, 20 artists, 771 attendees)

A musical history of Josephine Baker’s rise to sudden fame as a young woman in a foreign land.

“Delightful – well-written, -sung, -danced and -staged…a brilliant production.”
– New York Amsterdam News
Annual Programs

In addition to La MaMa’s theatrical productions, we also maintain a wide range of annual programs for our local community. This year, we offered 30 community events, including:

- 5 Art-Making Workshops (3 onsite, 2 online)
- 4 Art Exhibitions
- 9 Play and Poetry Readings (6 onsite, 3 online)
- 3 Oral History/Performance Events

Our annual programs engage diverse curators who pursue emerging artists from all backgrounds, identities, and disciplines. At La MaMa’s biannual Meet-Ups, any emerging artist can sign up to meet with programming staff to talk about their work, either online or in person. Curators work with Artistic Director Mia Yoo to integrate our annual programs into the season.

Coffeehouse Chronicles

Coffeehouse Chronicles is an oral history performance series that uses archived materials to introduce audience members to the history and legacy of La MaMa’s groundbreaking, seminal artists. Our 58th Season featured three events, curated by Michal Gamily, involving 51 artists and 307 attendees. Artists presented in this season’s Coffeehouse Chronicles included Ellen Stewart, Barbara Maier Gustern, and the original female cast of The Trojan Women (1974).

Experiments

The 20th annual Experiments play reading series provided a forum for playwrights to develop their creative process by presenting works-in-progress and never-before-seen plays. Having their work read in public by professional actors is a valuable way to receive audience feedback. Experiments has an open submission policy, and guidelines for each season are posted on our website. Curator Matt Nasser also connects with playwrights through La MaMa Meet-Ups, in which artists can pitch scripts. In our 58th Season, Experiments was themed “House of Ellen,” presenting new works inspired by the spirit of Ellen Stewart. This season featured three in-person readings and one virtual reading, involving a total of 41 artists and engaging 374 online/onsite audience members. Admission was free with a suggested donation.

Indigenous Initiative

La MaMa’s Indigenous Initiative provides a platform for Indigenous arts and culture, both nationally and worldwide. The Initiative curates original Indigenous programming, including workshops, markets, and theatrical productions, to elevate the voices and artistic works of Native communities both nationally and internationally. This season, in partnership with the Safe Harbors Indigenous Collective, the Indigenous Initiative presented Reflections of Native Voices (1/7-12/2020). This series of performances and events featured four artists and engaged 473 attendees. This year, Safe Harbors Indigenous Collective founder, Murielle Borst-Tarrant (Muri Kuna/ Rappahannock Nations) joins our staff for the next three years as the Mellon Foundation Playwright-in-Residence.
Coffeehouse Chronicles #155: Ellen Stewart

November 2, 2019

Coffeehouse Chronicles celebrated MaMa herself with a series of dance, music, and puppet performances by longtime La MaMa artists. A total of 202 audience members attended the event, and 199 viewers from nine countries tuned in to the livestream.

AMAL
Combat Hippies
(1/9-10/20, 3 perfs, 12 artists, 241 attendees)

Presented by La MaMa’s Indigenous Initiative as part of Reflections on Native Voices, the Combat Hippies’ AMAL was an innovative spoken-word theatre piece about the impact of war on combatants and non-combatants of color.
La MaMa Kids

La MaMa Kids continued to offer a wide range of performances and art-making workshops for children and their families. During our 58th Season, 62 artists led four onsite family productions (and one in-person workshop for children and caregivers (16 performances total). A total number of 549 children and caregivers participated in La MaMa Kids in 2019-20. Tickets were $10 per person for performances and $10 per child for workshops (adults free). Workshops were 45 minutes long and limited to 25 children. Performances were 45 minutes long and limited to 99 audience members.

![Image](image.png)

Tomte by Tom Lee

This shadow puppet performance delighted young audiences with the story of a benevolent Swedish garden gnome.

Poetry Electric

The 18th annual Poetry Electric, curated by Emmy Award-winning poet William Electric Black, presented artists working in a wide range of spoken word styles. Black curates artists at La MaMa Meet-Ups, through his work as a professor at NYU, and by reaching out to artists who work in media beyond poetry. The 2019-20 Season, “The Classics Unplugged,” presents poets who re-imagine the past into new literary forms. This season had a total of three in-person Poetry Electric events and two virtual readings, featuring 27 artists and engaging 2,085 online/onsite audience members. Tickets were $10.
Virtual Programming  
March 13 - June 30, 2020

On March 13, 2020, La MaMa closed its theatres due to government mandates regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. La MaMa’s staff immediately stepped up to host, curate, technical-direct, and promote a full schedule of live virtual programming. Only one week after the shutdown, though, La MaMa introduced Online Happenings: a series of weekly performances, discussions, and workshops held entirely online. Our programming expanded to include play readings, workshops, family shows, and panel discussions.

Between March 20 – June 30, 2020, La MaMa presented 58 virtual events featuring 382 artists. Our Online Happenings received a total of 36,784 unique views (average of 634 views per show) from audiences across the country and around the world.

Online Happenings

Café La MaMa Live (Tues. at 7PM), live performances that bring La MaMa’s 1960s café aesthetic to a virtual platform. Each week, guest curators select artists to share new work online from their homes. Guest curators include Theo Cote, Nicky Paraiso, and Kate Siahaan-Rigg. Featured artists were Yoshiko Chuma, Zui Gomez, Amy Lawless, Tammy Faye Starlite, Sugar Vendil, and others. Café La MaMa Live had 9 performances featuring 60 artists, with a total audience of 8,492.

Live Talks (Wed. at 6:30PM), weekly discussions with artists, activists, and thought leaders from around the world about art and life in times of crisis. Panelists have included Diane de Boer-Phelan (Broadway Diversity Project), Nadia Tykulsker (NYC Low-Income Artist/Freelancer Relief Fund), Adela Wagner (Crown Heights Mutual Aid), and Moe Yousuf (Target Margin Theater). Live Talks had 11 events with a total audience of 1,380.

La MaMa Kids Online (Thurs. at 4PM), “after school” workshops and family performances to lift spirits and spark creativity at home. Workshops and shows have been performed by Z. Briggs, The Gottabees, Maiko Kikuchi, Sandglass Theater, Jane Catherine Shaw, and WonderSpark Puppets. La MaMa Kids Online had 3 workshops and 8 family shows, with a total audience of 2,195.
Virtual Programming  
(continued)

**Downtown Variety** (Fri. at 7PM), in partnership with CultureHub, a weekly live performance series that features short acts of dance, music, theatre, video art, and comedy. Featured artists include Starr Busby, John Maria Gutierrez, Baba Israel, John Kelly, Heather Litteer, Dan Safer, Bobbi Jene Smith, and many more. **Downtown Variety** had 11 performances featuring 102 artists, with a total audience of 13,418.

**LiveLab**

La MaMa and CultureHub have been working at the forefront of artistic exchange through telepresence technology for years. This season’s **Online Happenings** provided artists with the opportunity to use **LiveLab**: the first-ever free livestreaming platform designed specifically for performance. CultureHub has been developing this open-source software since 2015, having recognized the fertile creative intersection of arts and technology. **LiveLab** is currently in Beta, and is available to the public free of charge.

**Puppetry Workshops for Seniors**

From April 24 – June 30, 2020, Federico Restrepo and Denise Greber of Loco7 Dance Puppet Theatre led their annual puppetry workshop for seniors. In partnership with the Sirovich Center, Restrepo and Greber hosted weekly classes over Zoom that allowed senior citizens to create their own puppets from home. Culminating in a presentation of original performances, the series provided seniors with a community gathering space during isolation.
The La MaMa Archives

The La MaMa Archives, directed by Ozzie Rodriguez, were visited this year by approximately 1,500 students, scholars, and artists from New York City and around the world. An integral part of the La MaMa Archives mission is the maintenance of a digital collections database that serves as a catalog and digital archive. In 2019-20, the Archives staff made crucial advancements in expanding access to and preserving La MaMa’s collection of 50,000 unique archival items.

With support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), we were able to save and digitize 150 analog ½-inch open reel video objects. These highly vulnerable video reels captured seminal works of the 1970s, which will now be available to artists and historians for years to come. La MaMa also completed the digitization of 150 VHS tapes documenting performances from the 1980s and 90s. Archives staff presented on the NHPRC project at the American Association for Theatre and Education Conference in August 2019.

To further our preservation efforts, La MaMa signed a contact with Digital Bedrock, a digital preservation company, to ensure our digitized and born digital material is held in a proper preservation environment. To date, we have sent them approximately 20 terabytes of digital material. We also completed an Archives Assessment with the Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services of New York (DHPSNY) to help us with our strategic planning and long term goals.

Throughout FY20, staff members from the Archives assisted researchers from NYU, Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum, Barnard, University of Verona, the Seoul Arts Institute, the House Foundation for the Arts, and many others. Materials from the Archives were loaned to Artists Space for their exhibit on Adrienne Kennedy: “She Who Is: Adrienne Kennedy and the Drama of Difference” (March 2020), curated by Hilton Als. Materials from the Archives will also be included in an upcoming book from Simon & Schuster on the history of Native Americans in comedy.

The La MaMa Archives hold immense educational potential for professors and students working in a wide range of disciplines. Our Archives staff is currently in the process of developing new educational resources for theatre professors and artists teaching remotely. By working collaboratively with educators, we will design packages and programming that will serve the unique needs of this moment.
Methods of Marketing and Assessment

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram remain the most popular and useful social media tools to engage audiences, drive traffic to our website, and market performances. Our social media presence is constantly growing.

- **Facebook** (@LaMaMaNYC) increased by 10% for a total of 22,746 followers
- **Instagram** (@LaMaMaETC) increased by 21% for a total of 8,767 followers
- **Twitter** (@LaMaMaETC) remained consistent at approximately 25,100 followers

La MaMa’s membership program continued, with 86 members in our 58th Season. This year, we continued to send post-show email surveys to audience members to gather data about our attendees and assess audience satisfaction. From those who responded, 50 percent identified as artists, and 74 percent were repeat La MaMa patrons. A total of 96 percent of responders reported having a good experience at La MaMa in our 58th Season.

To further our mission of supporting creators, we conduct exit interviews with every artist who produces work in our season. These conversations gauge whether or not their needs were met, and inform how La MaMa can better serve artists in the future.

Sam Rudy, La MaMa’s longtime publicist and 2019 gala honoree, retired this year after 40 years serving the New York theatre community. Matt Ross Public Relations now handles La MaMa’s online, television, and print media outreach.

Our 58th Season received substantial press coverage in a variety of major print and online publications. These articles include reviews, previews, listings, and features. Media entities that reported on La MaMa and our activities in this period include *American Theatre, Broadway World, The Brooklyn Rail, Theatre Development Fund, The New York Times, Time Out New York, Playbill,* and *The Villager.* FANDANGO FOR BUTTERFLIES (AND COYOTES), by Andrea Thome and Sinuhé Padilla, received a *New York Times Critic’s Pick.*

**Quotes from our Audience Members**

“Thank you for being a guiding light during these difficult times, keeping art vibrant and alive. La MaMa is a treasure.” – *Michael M.*

“Wonderful to see a thriving community of humans performers artists, revolutionaries, and poets. Thrilled to call La MaMa my home!” – *Heather L.*

“I moved to New York because of the what I read about off-broadway and the wonderful Ellen Stewart. I wanted so much to be part of it. I'm now senior citizen. I still want to be part of it. I know it will come back even stronger.” – *Kevin O.*
Capital Campaign

La MaMa has made significant progress on our ambitious capital masterplan to renovate and restore our East Village campus. We broke ground on the gut-renovation of our flagship building at 74 East 4th Street in 2018 and are now preparing to reopen our space. In November 2019, La MaMa’s capital campaign received a $270,000 grant from the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation, and a matching pledge for every dollar La MaMa raises up to $500,000. This match will attract additional private dollars to the project.

In July 2020, we received an additional $1.5 million capital allocation from the City of New York. To date, we have secured $19.9 million of our $22.5 million goal. Construction on our building was paused during the pandemic and is now back on track. We expect to have a grand opening as part of our 60th Anniversary Season in fall 2021.

We recognize the importance of accessible community gathering spaces that connect us in new ways. Our capital renovation will make our building ADA-compliant and will have a data network that enables multiple levels of remote and in-person programming. We are also installing a new HVAC system, equipped with ionization technology. The high-tech filtration system neutralizes 99.9% of airborne microbes (COVID-19 included) to maintain health and safety for all patrons and staff. With these upgrades, we ensure that La MaMa remains an artistic home for our local and global communities for generations to come.
FY20 Financial Data  
FY20: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Operating Income:

With the final months of our season cancelled and our buildings closed, we had a significant loss of earned income from box office sales, rental income, workshop/symposium fees, gallery sales, and royalties. The total earned income loss in FY20 was $429,229, which is 33 percent less than expected. Although not enough to make up for the loss of box office income, the online performances and programs were consistently rewarded with donations with positive feedback.

We were fortunate to receive COVID-19 related emergency loans and grants that have allowed us to manage cash-flow and end FY20 with a surplus which will help our seasons going forward. This relief money includes the Payroll Protection Program Forgivable Loan (PPP, $276,537), Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL, $10,000), and the NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund in the New York City Community Trust grant ($100,000).

Net Assets as of 6/30/20, including capital funds, are $9,138,790.

Next season, La MaMa will continue to provide free online programming. We will also build out a virtual membership program with special benefits and create new educational enrichment opportunities that will provide earned income for our organization.

Please note that the below figures are actuals and not audited figures. Our audited financial statement for FY20 will be available by December 1. We do not expect our figures to change much on the audit.
FY20 Financial Data
(continued)

Operating Expenses:

In November, La MaMa hired a full-time Development Director. Filling this position was critical to La MaMa’s survival during the pandemic, as our receipt of COVID-19 emergency grants and additional foundation support were directly related to this hire. A total of 26 full-time employees who are essential to our operations have been retained through the crisis. When our theatres and rehearsal spaces closed in March, 27 part-time employees were unfortunately furloughed. We hope to bring some part-time staff members back in spring 2021, when our spaces are expected to reopen.

La MaMa manages all facility costs associated with owning and maintaining its campus: three buildings and two condominium units in the East Village. Although rental revenue has dropped significantly with the theatre, gallery and rehearsal spaces closed, long-term leases have held fairly steady. Utility costs for the theatres dropped due to the closure. Production expenses decreased with the cancellation of shows. Though the final third of our regular season was cancelled, we were able to launch our virtual Online Happenings series, which allowed us to remain alive in the hearts and minds of our community.

As of 8/28/20
Institutional Funders

In FY20, La MaMa received support from the following:

- 4 Government Sources
- 42 Corporations and Foundations
- 682 Individuals

**Government:**
National Endowment for the Arts
The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
New York State Council on the Arts
National Historical Publications and Records Commission

**Corporations and Foundations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporation Name</th>
<th>Foundation Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1848 Foundation</td>
<td>Marta Heflin Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Achelis and Bodman Foundation</td>
<td>The Jane Henson Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Anchor Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation</td>
<td>The Jim Henson Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arete Foundation</td>
<td>The DuBose &amp; Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asen Foundation</td>
<td>JKW Foundation/Distracted Globe Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily Auchincloss Foundation</td>
<td>The Lambs Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe-Houghton Foundation</td>
<td>Lucille Lortel Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The William C. Bullitt Foundation</td>
<td>The Curtis W. McGraw Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl and Rene Cohen Foundation</td>
<td>The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con Edison</td>
<td>New England Foundation for the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation</td>
<td>The Jerome Robbins Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booth Ferris Foundation</td>
<td>The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation</td>
<td>The Sequoia Foundation for Achievement in the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford Foundation</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The William and Eva Fox Foundation/TCG</td>
<td>The Shubert Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Gilman Foundation</td>
<td>The Spingold Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP Fund</td>
<td>The Pat Steir Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mertz Gilmore Foundation</td>
<td>The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The John Golden Fund</td>
<td>Trust for Mutual Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Harkness Foundation for Dance</td>
<td>van Itallie Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck Henry Charitable Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

La MaMa FY20 Annual Report – 14
## FY20 Board of Directors

**Frank Carucci, President**  
Retired Vice President  
United Federation of Teachers  
Elected 1992

**Joan Rose, Vice President**  
Retired President  
Carlisle Collection Ltd.  
Elected 2004

**Donald Capoccia, Treasurer**  
Principal  
BFC Partners  
Elected 2004

**Richard Pinner, Secretary**  
Associate General Counsel  
Local Initiatives Support Corp.  
Elected 2017

**Byung Koo Ahn**  
Professor  
Seoul Institute of the Arts  
Elected 2002

**Eugene Chai**  
Artist  
Elected 2011

**Jane Friedman**  
Founder and Artistic Director  
HOWL! Arts  
Elected 2017

**Mary Fulham**  
Managing Director  
La MaMa  
Elected 2008

**Timothy W. Fulham**  
General Partner  
Stonebridge Partners  
Elected 2018

**Jeff Haley**  
Vice Chair  
Marketron  
Elected 2015

**Jill Hanekamp**  
Staff Attorney, United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York  
Elected 2019

**Matt Hall**  
Partner  
Goldstein Hall PLLC  
Elected 2019

**Sarah Lederman**  
Educator  
Elected 2013

**Steve Malkenson**  
President  
Malkenson Foundation  
Elected 2015

**Wynn J. Salisch**  
Chair & CEO  
Casablanca Ventures LLC  
Elected 2013

**Luis A. Ubiñas**  
President of the Board of Trustees Pan American Development Foundation  
Elected 2018

**Scott Wittman**  
Lyricist & Director  
Elected 2014

**Mia Yoo**  
Artistic Director  
La MaMa  
Elected 2004

**Joel Zwick**  
Director  
Elected 2014