

The Birth of *LATR*

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The idea for a scholarly journal devoted to Latin American theatre activities surfaced in 1966 at a faculty party hosted by Cy DeCoster to welcome a new member of KU's Spanish & Portuguese Department, George Woodyard. At the time, I was an assistant professor of Speech and Drama, and my wife was an instructor of Portuguese. Prior to that, I was at Bowdoin College, where I produced and directed the Brazilian comedy *O Auto da Compadecida* in English translation. So it was an especially delightful initial encounter between George (from a literary standpoint) and myself (from a theatrical one). As we say, "conversa vai, e conversa vem," and the subject of a specialized publication arose in our chat.

It took very little time for us to work up a plan to present to George Waggoner, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, and John Augelli, Chair of the Latin American Studies program, both of whom enthusiastically supported the project financially and as "special fans." While George secured the first authors for our soon-to-be journal, I tackled the mailing list, dimensions, documentation, and cover design. That cover, originally created by a Library staff member, acknowledged in the first number, remains unchanged.

I spent three months in Brazil establishing personal contacts and inviting submissions to the journal from leading figures of the professional and academic theatre communities. As the manuscripts began arriving, George and I learned to work together to select the best of them, verify the documentation cited, edit the language when appropriate, commission book reviews, and so forth. Working with George was one of the most agreeable, easy-going, and harmonious experiences in my professional life. During that period, I again directed the *Auto da Compadecida* at the KU Experimental Theatre, as well as Dias Gomes's *O Pagador de Promessas*. In 1971, I joined the faculty at the University of São Paulo, where I remained for the following 35 years. I remain profoundly grateful to the KU administrators for their support of *LATR* and to George Woodyard, who was able to carry out fully our joint "scholarly dream."

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