

ESB-MACC LATINO ARTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM

BRIEFING BY **PAST**
PARTICIPANTS ON THEIR
EXPERIENCE WITH THE
MACC'S RESIDENCY
PROGRAM FROM **2008-2021**

ADVISORY BOARD SPONSORS: Navarro, Zamarripa-Saenz

PRESENTERS:

Dr. Róen Salinas | Aztlan Dance Company

Luis Ordaz Gutiérrez | ProyectoTEATRO

Hector Ordaz Gutiérrez | ProyectoTEATRO

Javier Jara | Los Bohemios Perdidos

Juan Oyervides | Past MACC Advisory Board Chair

2008 GRAND OPENING & THE FIRST YEARS

A PHASE OF **TRIAL AND ERROR** DRIVEN BY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- **Difficulty for artists and arts organizations to access the MACC** for rehearsals, performances, and classes. Rental rates too expensive for community artists. High rates comparable to private event spaces for *quinces* and *galas* .
- **Operating hours** were the same as city recreation centers; closing at 5PM during the week and 6PM on Saturdays. Closed on Sundays.
- **Staff aggressions** towards community artists.

The community spoke out and these issues catalyzed the creation of the **LARP program**.

LATINO ARTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM LARP

THE FOLLOWING 4 ARTS ORGANIZATIONS LED THE INAUGURAL 2013 LARP COHORT



AZTLAN DANCE COMPANY



PROYECTOTEATRO



TEATRO VIVO



AUSTIN LATINO THEATER ALLIANCE

LARP FEEDBACK & RECOMMENDATIONS

Inaugural cohort shared these recommendations to improve LARP:

MACC Facility:

Most spaces at the MACC were not appropriate for artists' creative process nor performances.

It was evident that artists' were not part of the design and build-out of any of the rooms throughout the cultural center. **Remodeling recommendations were made to 5 spaces.**

Policies and

Procedures: Operation procedures hindered the standard creative process of arts organizations.

LARP programs clashed with ESB-MACC programs. **Calendar process was implemented by LARPer.**

Hours of Operation did not align with a cultural center. **Rehearsal hours** were granted till **10PM** and **Performance nights** were granted till **11PM.**

Staff:

PARD Staff did not have the experience to support and maintain the MACC's technical inventory nor the LARP program itself.

- **Tech Coordinator** was created
- **LARP** coordinator was created
- **PT assisted** in tech trainings for MACC staff
- **Tech equipment inventory** was created

MULTIPURPOSE AUDITORIUM → PERFORMANCE AUDITORIUM

- Install risers to correct audience sightlines
- Paint curved wall black in lieu of wall removal
- Install raised Tech booth
- Install lighting grid + dimmer controls
- Install choir mics
- Install acoustic panels (*shells*)
- Install speakers for front of house sound

BEFORE



AFTER



MULTI-USE “BLACK BOX” → PERFORMANCE BLACK BOX

- Paint all silver aluminum walls black
- Shift lighting grid & performance orientation
- Repurpose platform staging as seating risers
- Replace purple curtains with black drape system
- Install tv monitors inside tech booth for visibility

BEFORE



AFTER



MULTI-USE ROOM → DANCE STUDIO

- Install wall-length mirrors on north wall
- Install raised wood flooring
- Paint walls
- Install ballet bars
- Install sound system and TV
- Remove flammable drapery from circular corner

BEFORE



AFTER



2ND LARP COHORT

THE FOLLOWING 6 ARTS ORGANIZATIONS LED THE 2ND 2016-2019 LARP COHORT



AZTLAN DANCE
COMPANY



PROYECTOTEATRO



TEATRO VIVO



BOHEMIOS PERDIDOS



APRIL GARCIA



CARLOS MIRANDA

2017 PROYECTO TEATRO BREACH OF CONTRACT

PARD STAFF BREACHES CONTACT ARBITRARILY AND WITH NO CITY OVERSIGHT

Agreement Term: “Residents are responsible for returning the room to the condition in which it was provided. No trash, lost items, materials, etc. are to be left immediately following use of a room.”
“Load-in and tech dates should also observe this standard as well, with some exceptions. The room must still be left in a safe condition with no items left on the floor, exits not blocked and in an overall presentable condition.”

Violation: 11/15/16: A tarp was left in the Black Box and items left in the dressing room.

Violation: 1/12/17: Ladder left in Auditorium from previous night’s performance

It is important that a commitment in writing be provided by both ESB-MACC staff and Proyecto Teatro staff that there will be no further public discussion or public dissemination by either group in any form or fashion of the events or communications that have taken place before, during, or after the reinstatement discussions and procedures.

PARD & CITY OF AUSTIN INVESTIGATION

INVESTIGATION UNCOVERS CITY NEGLIGENCE AND UNETHICAL STAFF BEHAVIOR

PARD Investigation Findings

- NDA not needed
- LARP contracts not reviewed or approved by City legal
- Previous staff aggressions not properly handled by MACC staff
- MACC staff coerced to find violations to initiate contract termination for PT

Mediation was agreed upon by both parties

- Certain city staff blocked from interacting with community and/or having physical presence at the MACC. One staff member was fired.
- MACC staff directed to communicate all changes to LARP with PT; work with all LARPer to work through any procedural or programmatic changes.

The matter of Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) and Proyecto Teatro was mediated on May 3, 2017 and the parties agreed to the following:

1. Proyecto Teatro agrees that any and all concerns should be submitted via email to Herlinda Zamora. Herlinda agrees to respond to such emails within 24 hours and to schedule an appointment to discuss the concerns. Herlinda agrees that she may be contacted regarding concerns after hours via cell phone within reason. Luis Ordaz agrees that he will be the point of contact for voicing concerns between MACC staff and Proyecto Teatro.
2. Proyecto Teatro and MACC agree that communication between members of each organization will be civil and respectful, with no cursing, personal insults, or aggressive behavior.
3. No unauthorized press conferences are allowed in city facilities. Approval can be obtained through PARD's public information office.
4. MACC agrees to give written notice of any violations of procedures and rules, outline the consequences of such violations, and allow time to remedy such violations if applicable. All procedures and rules will be provided in writing to Proyecto Teatro.

MEDIATION RESULTS

- **Certain city staff blocked from interacting with community and/or having physical presence at the MACC.**
- **One MACC staff member was fired.**
- **MACC staff directed to communicate all changes to LARP with PT; work with all LARPer to work through any procedural or programmatic changes.**

5. MACC will work with Proyecto Teatro to call a monthly meeting with LARP representatives to obtain input on operational procedures and open up lines of communication.

2018-2019 ARTIST ACCESS PROGRAM ATTEMPT

PARD ATTEMPTED TO ELIMINATE LARP AND IMPLEMENT NEW RESIDENCY PROGRAM

October 4, 2017

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board,

We, the undersigned, resident artists of the Latino Arts Residency Program at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, have reviewed the addendum to the City of Austin facility lease agreement, and have unanimously come to the conclusion that the document does not provide the mutual benefits that an artist residency should. The current LARP program must be revisited and reevaluated in order to fully capture the conceptual model of creating a supportive and progressive space that is conducive to Latino arts and cultural artistic production.

We, the artists of the Latino Arts Residency Program, hereby decline to sign the proposed addendum, as the document is not aligned with both the short-term and long-term interests of Austin's Latino artists and organizations. The proposed addendum is not in the best interests of the Latino artists we serve and represent, of the greater community we serve and represent, nor of the Austin arts community at large.

The Latino art community's decades-long idea of institutional capacity building for Latino arts development at the ESB-MACC differs radically from the city's views. We therefore request that the ESB-MACC Advisory Board establish a focus group to work in partnership with the LARP artists to redesign the residency program. We further request that an item be placed on the November agenda of the Advisory Board Meeting for the focus group to forward discoveries and possibilities for restructuring the LARP program.

In artistic and community solidarity,

2016-2019 LARP Resident Artists

Dr. Roén R. Salinas
Artistic Director
AZTLAN Dances Company

Mario Ramirez
Artistic Director
Teatro Vivo

Javier Jara

Javier Jara
Los Bohemios Perdidos

Hector Miranda
Visual Artist

Luis Ordaz Gutiérrez
Artistic Director
ProyectoTEATRO

April Garcia
Visual Artist

Carlos Ufret
Los Bohemios Perdidos



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board

Recommendation Number: (20180110-0E4) LARP and proposed new Residency Programs

BE IT RESOLVED that the Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board recommends to write a letter to the Mayor and Council, the acting City Manager, Parks and Recreation staff and Board, the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission and the Cultural Equity Advisory Board, African American Quality of Life Commission and the Asian Quality of Life Commission or the affected artists were fully informed or given ample opportunity to participate in the development of a program that potentially has far reaching negative effects for the community and Hispanic/Latino artists.

Further the letter must state that the advisory board insists that the original contract with existing LARP artists which established an end date of 2019 be honored. It is equally important that the correspondence include a statement indicating that neither the ESB-MACC Advisory Board, African American Quality of Life Commission and Asian Quality of Life Commission or the affected artists were fully informed or given ample opportunity to participate in the development of a program that potentially has far reaching negative effects for the community and Hispanic/Latino artists.

Date of Approval: January 10, 2018

Record of the vote: Unanimous on an 8-0 vote, Members Vale-Castillo and Cerda-Przask was off the dais.

Attest:

AUSTIN MONITOR
CITY HALL DEVELOPMENT TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT PUBLIC SAFETY ELECTIONS WHISPERS

CITY HALL
Parks department mired in drama over cultural center access program

BY CALEB PRITCHARD | JANUARY 12, 2018

Austin American Statesman e-Edition Account

NEWS

Proyecto Teatro busca nuevo contrato con el ESB-MACC

By Wires
APR 4, 2017

AUSTIN MONITOR
CITY HALL DEVELOPMENT TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT PUBLIC SAFETY ELECTIONS WHISPERS

PARKS
Dispute continues over program to expand artists' access to cultural centers

BY CHAD SWATECKI | JANUARY 17, 2018



Emma S Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

January 21, 2018

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo and Council Members,

The Emma S Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) Advisory Board unanimously chose at its January 10, 2018 board meeting, not to participate in the Artist Access Program (also known as the Artist in Residency Program) and requests intervention by Austin City Council to suspend any further implementation of the program at the MACC, the George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center and the Asian Resource Center by Parks and Recreation, and preserve the Latino Arts Residency Program as is. Furthermore, we recommend against breach of contracts by Parks and Recreation originally agreed with Artists in the Latino Arts Residency Program (LARP) with an ending date of September 2019 remain in force.

While we would normally welcome the potential upsides of a new program such as the AAP with extended hours, more staff to support events, assistance with marketing and grant-writing for artists, we have concerns about the following:

Council approved funding for extending cultural center operating hours

On December 14, 2017, council voted to approve \$240,000 to extend the cultural center’s hours at the four-city owned cultural centers, not specifically for the creation of a city-wide artist residency program.

The Current Contract with PARD and LARP

- 1. In March 2017, PARD, LARP artists, and the MACC working group agreed that they’d draft a new LARP contract together. The unilateral imposition of the new AAP program and contract on the board and the LARP artists does not honor this agreement.
2. Artists feel that the AAP contract is one-sided in heavy favor of the city, since it includes many impractical responsibilities for the arts groups with scarce rights or benefits. The current LARP artists were informed by PARD that they would be “grandfathered” into the new Artist Access program. Yet, they were pressured into signing the new AAP contract with less than a week during the holidays to review and sign the 17-page AAP contract or lose access to the facility unless they paid full rental rates charged under the MACC fee schedule. It was the desire of the working group to achieve contracts that should benefit and protect both parties.
3. It’s still unclear to what extent the city’s legal department was involved in the creation and review of the AAP contract.

Negative repercussions of AAP contract

- 4. There aren’t enough safeguards in place that prevent the gentrification of the cultural center artists. For example, at the November meeting we were told that the artist selection committee would consist of members nominated by each cultural center, but the Recommendation for Council Action states that the committee will be recommended by the Economic Development Department.

- 5. Some LARP artists and parents of the children they serve are concerned of the safety of their children over some of the clauses in the AAP contract.

The design and imposition of the AAP

- 6. Even though the MACC board requested the official AAP guidelines at the November meeting, we have yet to receive them even though the program has allegedly started.
7. No proper timeline of the development and implementation of the program was presented.
8. LARP artists were given the ultimatum of signing the AAP contract or resigning their existing residency (which was supposed to extend until September 2019).
o The artists at the Dougherty were not given this ultimatum.
9. PARD’s “grandfathering” statement mentioned at the November 1st, 2017 MACC Advisory Board meeting is of concern since the original LARP contract is still pending.

For these reasons, we ask the following:

- 1. That you intervene to suspend the AAP implementation, at least until the program is redesigned with input from the cultural centers, existing artists, and community as an integral part of the process and not an afterthought.
2. That the original ongoing contracts, which were set to expire September of 2019, be honored without the ultimatums.
3. That a formal inquiry be conducted into the many discrepancies throughout this process.
a. Why the cultural centers, artists, and community were not involved in the development of the program as PARD stated at the City Council meeting on December 14th, 2017?
• Why was the city council told that this was the case?

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2. That the original ongoing contracts, which were set to expire September of 2019, be honored without the ultimatums.
3. That a formal inquiry be conducted into the many discrepancies throughout this process.
a. Why the cultural centers, artists, and community were not involved in the development of the program as PARD stated at the City Council meeting on December 14th, 2017?
• Why was the city council told that this was the case?
b. Why the MACC board was told that they, and the other centers, would be nominating people to selection committee, and why those nominees will instead be coming from the Economic Development Department?
c. Why the MACC board hasn’t been sent the official guidelines of the program?
d. Why LARP artists were sent ultimatum letters, but the Dougherty artists were not?
e. Why is PARD breaching its own contract with LARP artists for the third time?
f. Why was the existing LARP contract never resolved and swept aside by PARD leaving the LARP residents in limbo since Spring of 2017?

2025 ARTIST ACCESS PROGRAM ATTEMPT #2

2ND ATTEMPT TO IMPLEMENT RESIDENCY PROGRAM

2020: ESB-MACC Closes due to COVID + Phase 2

2025: AACME attempts to roll out AAP again during the fall of 2025, without community feedback or agreed stakeholder input. Additionally, many discrepancies are found in the guidelines and shared at community info meeting.

PT meets with AACME leadership and successfully pauses program.

COMMUNITY ASK

MOVING FORWARD

- Collaborate to redesign LARP program; including contracts, policies and procedures, equipment and inventory.
- Collaborate to advise on technical matters; training staff on proper use of equipment
- Collaborate in room / space buildouts
- For continuity, ESB MACC Advisory Board communication with past Board Members and past LARPer: Working Group.

