



jack warner, sj  
director

apartado 70  
el progreso, yoro  
honduras, c.a.

tel.: (504) 2647-0974  
e-mail: [teatrolafragua@gmail.com](mailto:teatrolafragua@gmail.com)  
<http://www.teatrolafragua.org>

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Christmas, disrupted.

After almost 42 years of operations, *teatro la fragua* has caught up with Broadway and with the West End.

In New York City, you see, the authorities closed all Broadway stages because of COVID. In London, English authorities closed the West End theaters. And in El Progreso, national authorities have closed *teatro la fragua*.

Not how I expected to achieve parity with the global heavyweights, but at least we know that we have company in our struggles with “The Disruption.”

Of course, *teatro la fragua* has experience with disruption. It’s fair to say we have a visceral relationship with disruption, more so than does either Broadway or the West End. In fact, as people in board rooms to the north are speaking about “pivoting” in response to the pandemic, we’ve become aware of one primary capacity *teatro la fragua* has absorbed into our spiritual and artistic souls—a readiness to address new challenges.

Our latest new challenges were the hurricanes. Hurricanes Eta and Iota both made landfall in Honduras as Category 4 hurricanes, and struck less than two weeks apart.

In both cases, the flooding has been catastrophic: Eta flooded a broad expanse of northern Honduras, and then Iota raised the stakes by flooding all that expanse and then a good deal more. Apart from the human cost, the Sula valley where we live is the center of food production in Honduras, and a huge share of those crops (even apart from the banana crop) are under water. In the ragged shelters that do exist, violence has broken out: take the inhabitants of some of the most violent cities on earth, traumatize them, and then throw them together in miserable circumstances – and what do we expect to happen?

The hurricanes arrived in a country rocked by COVID, by a functional collapse of the hospital system, and by the government’s corrupt-and-hapless attempt to build emergency hospitals. All coming on the baseline of the existing violence, corruption, and poverty.

But the teatro has no choice but to persevere. The show, after all, must go on.

What won’t happen this year, for the first time in about forty years, is our annual live Christmas production of *Navidad Nuestra—Our Christmas*. That’s a tough pivot to have to make, because many Hondurans associate *teatro la fragua* with Christmas more than with any other cultural or religious event, and have watched as our Christmas activity evolved from a simple show, to a polished play, to a Christmas season and then into a Honduran tradition.

Alas; live theater won’t happen in El Progreso this Christmas season.

But the teatro refuses to give up hope. The troupe pivoted to produce new children's radio plays. We are recording another radio play, *Frontera Sin Fin*, by long-time collaborating playwright Carlos Morton. We are developing a video/musical exploration of the devastation of the hurricanes, based on the writing of Honduran poet Roberto Sosa. And we are working on a radio version of the Christmas classic *Navidad Nuestra*, which we hope will help people find some measure of joy and meaning in a disrupted Christmas season.

With those efforts, we continue on our path to building an effective, sustainable and resilient cultural community. Honduran hope drives those efforts, but we couldn't do it without the faith of our "other" audiences—the folks who believe in what we're doing without ever having seen one of our plays. And even in a year that has brought unprecedented disruption and heartache, that faith helps *teatro la fragua* to withstand pandemics and hurricanes, and to move a people.

I am forever grateful for your support.

Jack

P.S.: If, in this time of global uncertainty, you can make a gift to the teatro, you will join the teatro in building faith and hope—and love—in this most unsettled of times.

*teatro la fragua*  
c/o Jesuit Advancement Office  
4511 West Pine Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO. 63108  
U.S.A./EE.UU.

P.P.S. I'm including in this envelope our newsletter from September. Before there was a Hurricane Eta or Iota, there was COVID-19, which managed to close our airports, our pharmacies, our bus and taxi services, our banks, our grocery stores and markets. And it closed our post office. We dropped September's newsletter just a few weeks after the post office reopened, and it seems that "reopened" was not synonymous with "functioning." As far as we can tell, few if any of our September newsletters made it out of El Progreso. Since we anticipate future postal challenges, we encourage you to send us an email address for more reliable communication from *teatro la fragua*. You can submit it via our website at "[teatrolafragua.org/subscribe](http://teatrolafragua.org/subscribe)" or send your email address to: [teatrolafragua@gmail.com](mailto:teatrolafragua@gmail.com).

