

Dear supporter of Bucharest Inside the Beltway (BiB),

First of all, we hope you had a blessed holiday season with your loved ones and that you are having a fabulous New Year! Rucsandra Pop (Artistic Director) and I, Cristina Bejan (Executive Director), and our entire administrative team from DC to Bucharest (Andra Belknap, Roxana Nicolaescu and Renu Ahluwalia) thank you ever so much for your support this past year, BiB's first year on the DC arts-scene. It was a year of so much excitement and adventure and it would not have been possible without you! So here is the moment to fill you in a bit and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

So what has happened in a year? First, my play, DISTRICTLAND, a satire of young Washington DC, was accepted by Open Stage, a showcase for new scripts with performances in the Fridge art gallery in Eastern Market. There we developed DISTRICTLAND and I submitted it to the Capital Fringe Festival. Following our acceptance, I conducted interviews for the perfect director and luckily found John Dellaporta. We are so grateful to Ambassador Buga who hosted our preview performance at the Romanian Embassy on July 2. At the Redrum theatre, we sold out every performance well in advance, and thus we were given an additional show in an enormous venue (Mountain) where we also sold-out.

We were reviewed both favorably (e.g. *The Washington Post*) and negatively, which revealed that DISTRICTLAND indeed struck a cord with young Washington, a cord of familiarity, offense and ultimately and most importantly (yes, in the tradition of Caragiale and Ionesco) humor. DISTRICTLAND broke even and we were able to pay our artists the maximum amount standard for Fringe. I learned that this is basically unheard of for Fringe and independent theatre in DC as normally a show will suffer a substantial loss. All of your donations to DISTRICTLAND went to the cost of production and paying our artists (a total budget of \$9,515). Another unforeseen success was local independent filmmaker Russell Max Simon (who played the role of Afghani Cabbie in the show) asking me the final week of Fringe to option the rights to DISTRICTLAND for development into a TV series. Of course, I said yes.

Following the success of DISTRICTLAND, BiB had two successful and again, sold-out, events in Romania in a historic house turned hip performance art space, Carol 53. (By sold-out, we mean there was not an open seat, as these events were free.) First we produced a poetry slam inspired directly by the poetry scene in DC, called "In Poetry We Trust" (August 1, 2014). Pop and Bejan delivered their poetry and then the audience wrote the community poem. The next event at Carol 53 was the official launch of BiB entitled "*Lansarea platformei de teatru român-american*" (the launch of the platform of the Romanian-American theatre) with performances of dramatic excerpts of Pop's LA NIMFOMANE and Bejan's DISTRICTLAND by actors Gabriel Sandu and Gratiela Badescu) on October 17, 2014.

In DC with the support of BiB I had the great pleasure and honor of directing a portion of "For a Barbarian Woman" by Saviana Stanescu as part of the inaugural Alianta formal gala held at the National Museum for Women in the Arts on October 2, 2014. According to *The Huffington Post*, our production "was living proof, if we ever needed it, that art and aesthetics are transcultural, for emotion is what makes us all human." BiB is extremely grateful to Alianta for this remarkable opportunity. Another creative platform in DC for BiB is the slam poetry scene: our artists regular perform at slam poetry nights held at Busboys and Poets and Pure Lounge.

Our proposed projects for 2015 include 1) the premiere production of LA NIMFOMANE by Rucsandra Pop in May in Bucharest; 2) a creative event in DC to commemorate 25 years since the Fall of Communism; 3) "I want an old-school poem____" YOU fill in the blank- Poetry Slam at Carol 53, Bucharest, June; 4) the premiere production of my next play LADY GODIVA in Fall 2015, directed by Star Johnson, starring Courtney Abbott and Miles Folley, the play is a tribute to trauma (including the crimes of communist Romania) and healing; and 5) ongoing BiB presence at poetry nights in DC.

BiB is honored to have an exceptional Board of distinguished artists and patrons of the arts across the world. These board members include: Richard Byrne (DC), Adity Chakravarti (Lucknow), Michelle Chatman (DC), Leslie Hawke (Bucharest), Ambassador Mark Gitenstein (DC), Virgil Nemoianu (DC), Banuta Rubess (Toronto) and Blair Ruble (DC). We are so grateful for their service and support!

We have had much to celebrate from 2014 including four successful creative projects in DC and Bucharest, excellent mentions in both the Washington Post and Huffington Post, and finally the fact that BiB did not lose any money this year. Our short-term goal is to have the equivalent success in 2015 and further establish ourselves as a creative space of collaboration and exploration for artists, currently bridging the gap between Bucharest and DC and looking to expand both within DC and beyond Romania. We will also apply for financial sponsorship with Fractured Atlas so donations can be tax-deductible. Once we celebrate our two year anniversary, we will think about the logistics of setting BiB up for first a five-year, then hopefully much longer, lifespan, including hiring a Managing Director and becoming a 501c3.

BiB is passionate about and dedicated to being a platform for minority voices and a space for advocacy for underrepresented causes. In 2014 BiB featured African-American, LGBT, East Asian, South Asian, Latina, Middle Eastern and Jewish creative voices, among others. DISTRICTLAND advocated for Literacy Lab DC, indigenous rights (from the Americas to the Pacific) and more awareness of the delicate issues surrounding the ongoing rapid gentrification of Washington DC. LADY GODIVA will promote RAINN and NAMI, by inviting speakers from those organizations for post-show talk-backs sessions.

Thank you so much for your support in 2014. We look forward to seeing you at a show, event or poetry slam in 2015! Please let us know if you have any constructive ideas and/or hopes for BiB. As we grow, we want to answer to our community, of which we are so honored to have you as a member. Very soon you can also visit our newly updated website, as designed by our US Marketing Manager Andra Belnap. There you can find photos documenting this past year, details for future projects, a donation page and more about the history and purpose of Bucharest Inside the Beltway.

All good things in 2015! And thank you.

Cristina Bejan
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Cristina Bejan (Exec. Dir.), Miles Folley (BiB artist) and Blair Ruble (BiB Board Member) at the Romanian Embassy to the United States, Romanian National Day Celebration, December 4, 2014, Washington DC