

Get interactive at “Mad Improv” theater workshops and shows!

Madrid’s theater scene is brimming with activity. You’ll find live micro-theater being performed in bathrooms and lingerie stores, as well as acting classes and alternative shows scheduled daily throughout the city.

But there isn’t much available in English, which is why I want to introduce you to **Mad Improv**, an English-speaking improv group that’s been shaking things up in Madrid’s interactive theater scene since 2014.



Mad Improv hosts shows and workshops on a regular basis, all

run by its cast members in English. **Free improv workshops – called “gyms” – are held on Sundays from 5pm-7pm.** Gyms are purely donation-based and absolutely everyone is welcome so you never know who might show up. People have even come in on flight layovers!



They also hold **monthly open shows – called “jams”** – where anyone can get up on stage and play improv games. Jams cost €3 with a drink (which probably comes in handy).



Locations for gyms and jams vary from [Fundación First Team](#) in Sol to Retiro when the weather allows. And right now they have a new set of [upcoming shows](#) at La Escalera de Jacob!

So check out their [Meetup](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages to stay up to date. Once you attend an event you can also ask one of the organizers to add you to the whatsapp group.

My experience – great way to step out of your comfort zone

I had secretly always wanted to drop in on an acting class, but never got around to it until this summer when two friends, Riju (India) and Laura (Spain), enthusiastically agreed to join me at one of the Sunday gyms. This was in August so the workshop was held in Retiro behind the Palacio de Cristal.



An international group of about 15 people showed up – the different backgrounds and languages definitely added an element of fun and spontaneity to the mix. And our organizer, Summer Banks (in the photo below), did a great job at including everyone and making sure the exercises were easy to follow.



What started out with simple warm-up games quickly gave way to more challenging improv activities that admittedly made me feel ridiculous. But it's a wonderful way to get out of your comfort zone, connect with people and laugh a lot. My friends and I left with the feeling that we wanted to try our hands at improv again (and hopefully do it better next time), which meant **the fun far outweighed the awkwardness!**

Chat with the founder, Ben



Just before going to the workshop, I had met up with Mad Improv's founder Ben Nathan-Serio at the newly opened [Plántate Café](#). After studying drama in NYC and working in the field, Ben moved to Barcelona where he first started working in children's theater. Four years in he launched his own interactive theater production, *The Barcelona Time Detectives*, and was also a founding member of [BIG, The Barcelona Improv Group](#).

When Ben came to Madrid, he quickly became involved in Madrid's English-speaking theater scene and founded Mad Improv in 2014. Ben says, "The reason I started Mad Improv was because there was no improv community here; I wanted to reach out to the community in a bigger way, to get people involved."

What makes improv and interactive theater so special is that it's empowering, says Ben, as it allows for genuine human interaction and connection. Not to mention, getting out of your comfort zone is both invigorating and fun.

LOMBARDI CASE

ASESINATO EN LA MOVIDA



**LIVE
IN
THEATER**

INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES
NYC

24 y 29 de Junio - 19:00h

La industrial - C/ San Vicente Ferrer 33

Tickets: Oficinas de La Industrial c/ San Andrés 8 Local

Tickets Online: www.liveintheater.com/madrid

CAN YOU SOLVE THE CASE?
AN INTERACTIVE MURDER MYSTERY

SPANISH & ENGLISH

In addition to Mad Improv, Ben also recently co-founded [Live in Theater Madrid](#), a NYC-based group whose hit interactive show, *The Lombardi Case*, debuted here in summer. It's a truly unique and entertaining two-hour event where the audience tries to solve a murder mystery – [read our previous article about *The Lombardi Case* on Naked Madrid!](#)

More to come

While Mad Improv and Live in Theater are alive and kicking in Madrid, Ben just relocated to Austin, Texas, where he's taking part in a 9-month research lab called [The Interactive Deep Dive](#). And he can't wait to "come back with some very fresh, invigorating ideas for Live In Theater, Mad Improv and just the city in general."

So stayed tuned, because we'll make sure to fill you in on what's in store.

Mad Improv Info:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Meetup](#)

Live In Theater's "The Lombardi Case" comes to Madrid from NYC!

It's not everyday that you get to help solve a murder case, interview a drag queen, or be transported to another era. But

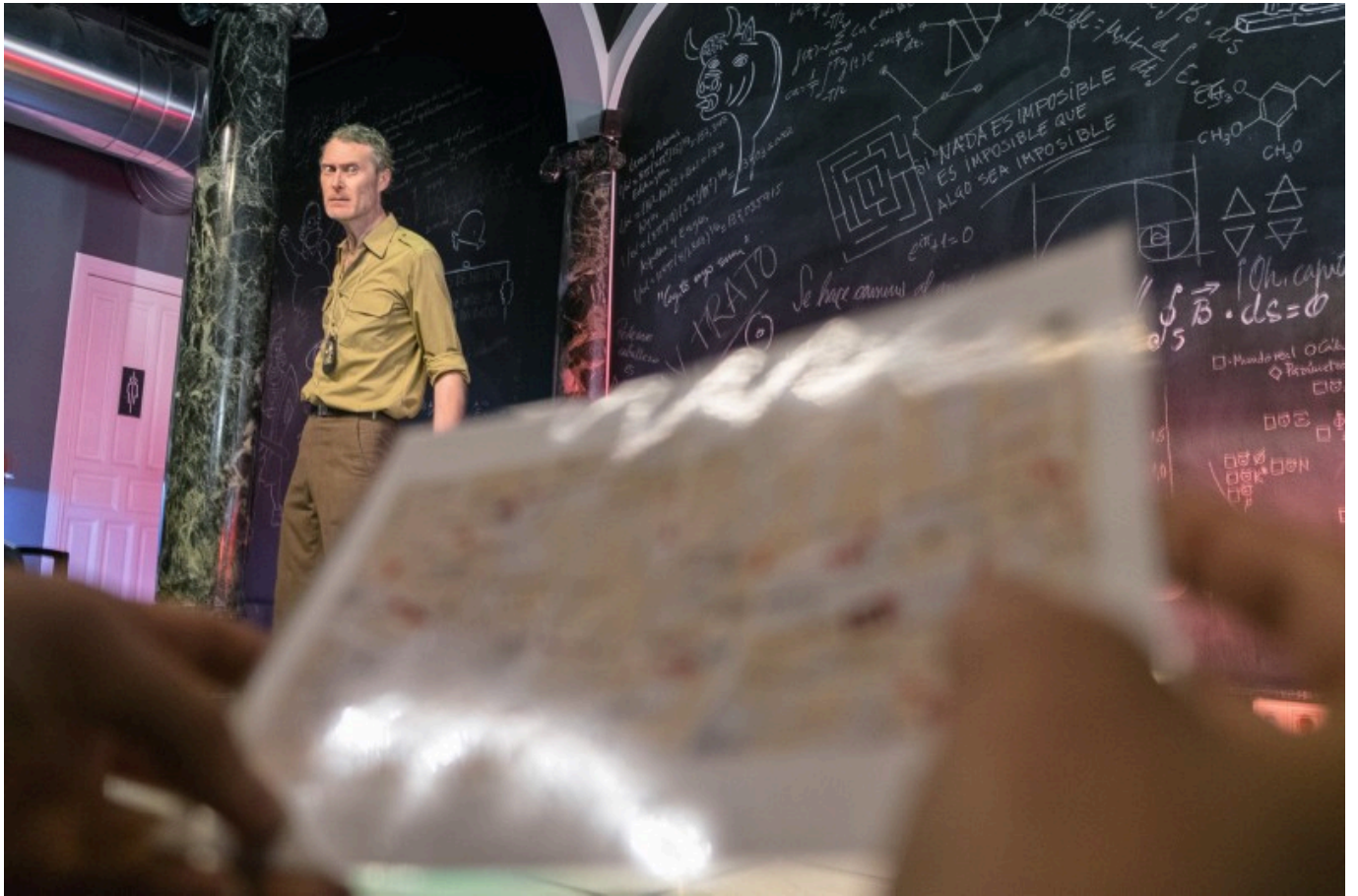
that's what you're in for with the interactive show *The Lombardi Case*, brought to us by the NY-based **Live in Theater** group. I had the chance to go the premiere in May and here's what it was like.



When I stepped into the theater, I was first greeted by a cop with a Brooklyn accent, played by a Scotsman; and then grabbed a seat among the 60-person international audience. We got split into small teams and an officer presented us with the case details in effortless Spanglish.



It's suddenly the early 1980's and we're in the midst of Madrid's sex- and drug-ridden *La Movida* movement. The daughter of the US ambassador has just been murdered. And it's on us to find out who did it.



Readily equipped with clues, a map and a list of suspects – from a doorman to a junky – we headed out onto the streets to conduct our interviews at nearby locations like a jazz bar, public plaza and street corner; and then came back and tried to solve the case with our findings.



The 7-member bilingual cast relied heavily on improv to communicate with us as we interrogated them, and they impressively stayed in character the whole time.



Although none of us ended up solving the tricky case, it was a really fun and unique experience, with lots of laughter and participation between the actors and audience. I loved being able to play an active role in the show, get out there on the street, interact with new team members and in Spanglish, no less. All in all, it's a guaranteed great time and as a benefit you'll get to learn about the history of Madrid.



Since the debut, **Live in Theater** has put on two more productions of the *The Lombardi Case* in the heart of Malasaña at [La Industrial](#). While the format is identical to the NYC show, the storyline has been adapted to Madrid's history. For example, the original takes place in 1975 which works in a time of drugs, disco and gentrification in NYC, while the Madrid show takes place in the early '80s during the time of *La Movida*, the experimental movement that broke out after the fall of the Franco regime. This is especially pertinent as audience members get to actually interview suspects in the neighborhood that was the epicenter of the movement, Malasaña. Another key difference is that here, the show is put on in Spanish and English.

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The Lombardi Case has been brought to Madrid by three partners: [Carlo D'Amore](#), the founder (and guru) of the NYC-based theater group, **Live in Theater**; [Leslie Freschet](#), who's been living in Madrid for 25 years; and [Benjamin Nathan-Serio](#), who's been an active member of Barcelona and Madrid's English-speaking theater circuit for nearly a decade. He's also one of the Madrid organizers and co-founders of [Mad Improv](#).

A few weeks ago I had the chance to sit down with Ben and talk about the *Lombardi Case* and what makes interactive theater so special. He said:

The show offers a truly unique experience for the audience because interactive is empowering. It's a real niche for actual human, genuine interaction. There's something magical about this show. It's not just conversation in a bar or speed dating, or meet-ups; it's super empowering because you become a cop. You have a mission. You become a detective. There's a murder, and you need to solve it! And there's a time limit... urgency.

See a show!

Stay tuned for upcoming productions by following their [Facebook page](#) or put in a request by emailing them at liveintheaterproduction@gmail.com.

You can also book them for private events such as company team-building exercises. The show has a very versatile format – you can hire them to go into your apartment as long as it has 2 rooms, with 3 actors playing 6 characters; and it can also be presented to up to 200 people.

And if you feel like getting more involved in Madrid's interactive theater scene, definitely check out [Mad Improv](#) which holds free improv workshops on Sundays and monthly performances.

'El Secreto de las Mujeres' at Teatro Galileo

One of Madrid's most popular theaters, [Teatro Galileo](#), is putting on a fabulous musical/play full of fantasy that intertwines monologues, dance and music with typical scenes from both sitcoms and musicals.

Enjoy [El Secreto de las Mujeres](#) every Wednesday at 8.30 p.m. until April 1st!

'Como si pasara un tren' in the Small Hall of Teatro Español

In March, you can see the play '[Como si pasara un tren](#)' at the [Small Hall of the Teatro Español](#).

The play is about a mother and son, Susana and Juan, who live in a small town. Susana struggles to raise Juan on her own since his father left. Things start to change following the arrival of Valeria, an adolescent and Susana's niece. The young girl was sent to her aunt's house after her mother found a joint in her stuff.

When can you enjoy this comedy drama?

Tuesdays to Saturdays – 8:30 p.m.

Sundays – 7:30 p.m.

Get a **25% discount** on Thursdays.