

Call for proposals to host a future EMOS Festival

The steering committee of Earth Matters on Stage invites proposals from organizations interested in hosting the sixth EMOS New Play Festival and Symposium.

EMOS was founded in 2004 by Theresa May and Larry Fried to stimulate and support the development of theatrical work through a nationally adjudicated New Play Contest, which recognizes new plays focused on ecological issues and emerging from an ecological sensibility. Since then, EMOS has grown to include both the playwright's contest and a concurrent symposium on theatre and ecology, and has been hosted by five different institutions. If you have attended an EMOS Festival, you know that each location gives a unique flavor and feeling to the festival. If your institution would like to host a future EMOS Festival, we would love to hear from you!

The EMOS steering committee will select a host and location for EMOS 2020-21 and beyond from the proposals that are received in response to this CFP. Future conferences will also be set up through this proposal process. Throughout the process of planning and implementing the festival and symposium, the artistic director, managing director, and a small steering committee will offer support.

The guidelines below will help you think about and shape your Proposal to Host EMOS. Please feel free to contact us with questions. We're happy to help you think about ways to make it work for your institution and community. We will read proposals on a rotating basis, so there's no deadline. Please also see the section on Timing below so that you allow enough time to plan your EMOS.

To enable us to make an informed choice and to help local organizers begin the process of planning, the conference committee has put together the following guidelines for preparing a proposal.

When you are ready to propose, please send a copy of the completed proposal with a signed cover letter from the local organizer(s) by via email to:

Dr. Brian Cook
Managing Director, EMOS
Assistant Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage
Main.office@earthmattersonstage.com

Dr. Theresa J. May
Co-Founder and Artistic Director, EMOS
Associate Professor, University of Oregon
tmay33@uoregon.edu

General Requirements for Hosting Institutions

- One primary point of contact at the institution who will serve as the EMOS Chairperson for that year.
- Institutional commitment to mounting a fully-staged production of the EMOS New Play Contest winner.
- A process to receive, track, read and evaluate approximately 150 scripts according to the guidelines.
- A plan for promotion, outreach, symposium organization, and the institutional support needed for success.
- A proposed budget (details below)

Proposal Guidelines

Cover Letter

A sense of place and civic engagement is central to the EMOS mission. Each EMOS Festival has been uniquely shaped by the region, community and locale of the host institution. Your proposal should be accompanied by a brief cover letter offering an overview summarizing the advantages of the proposed site and hosts for the conference, including benefits of the location, strengths of the hosting institution and organizers, and any special opportunities offered by the location or hosts.

As You Prepare Your Proposal

Think about these questions:

- How is your location, institution, community ideally situated to host a future EMOS Festival?
- What will make your EMOS unique?
- How do you envision involving local artists, communities, and concerns into the fabric of the EMOS Festival and Symposium?
- If you plan to partner with local or regional organizations, please include how you envision working with them.

Organization

1. An individual to serve as point of contact for correspondence (and his/her contact information)
2. A list of local organizers, their organizational affiliations, and their proposed roles, including (but not limited to) conference chair(s), program chair(s), production team, and campus and community partners (if known). The proposal should indicate if any of the organizers have previously attended EMOS and describe any previous experience organizing other conferences.
3. A plan indicating who will be responsible for: conference finances, including budget; pursuing sponsorship and external funding; conference logistics; and publicity.
4. A plan for administrative and clerical support for the organizers.

5. The endorsement of an institutional representative (Provost, Dean, and/or Department Chair). Provide a letter or other statement that your department, unit, college, or other groups are behind this proposal. Please make sure to share with them the full parameters of the institutional commitment, including the administration fee, need for student and staff labor, artistic support in producing the winning plays, space and time allocation, promotion and marketing, conference organization.

New Play Contest

1. Script submission and vetting: Detail your plan for how will you organize the double-blind script reading and evaluation process?
 - a. The host institution will be in charge of receiving, and reading approximately 150 new play scripts, evaluating them through a double-blind reading according to the EMOS Playwrights Guidelines, and narrowing the pool of Finalists, which then go to EMOS and the National Panel of judges for selection of the winners.
 - b. This vetting process has been done in a variety of ways, including a dedicated course in which dramaturgy students read, discuss and evaluate the scripts; another EMOS festival included local artists as readers, along with students, faculty and staff.
 - c. We will help you with organizing and tracking the process and have paperwork (tracking, evaluation questions) which has been created for past contests, but you will need readers.

Program

1. Proposed theme(s)
2. Proposed special sessions

Logistics

1. TIMING: What year and what time of year are you hoping to host?
 - a. The Call for Scripts typically goes out two years prior to the scheduled EMOS.
 - b. The script submission deadline is typically 18 months from the date of your EMOS.
 - c. The play-evaluation process then takes place often over a school term, with the finalists selected at least 5 months prior.
 - d. The panel of national judges then has one month to choose the winner and runner up. This process is managed by the EMOS artistic director and managing director, who then notify you which of the finalists has won.
 - e. After the winner is announced, work on the production can begin.
 - i. Note: remember that designers and directors can have a chance to read all five finalists, and so can do preliminary pre-production thinking. Simple sets and rep plot lighting are best!
2. Proposed dates. The dates of previous EMOS Festivals have been:
 - a. Humboldt State, Arcata, CA – Sept. 24-Oct. 2, 2004
 - b. University of Oregon, Eugene, OR – May 21-31, 2009

- c. Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA – May 31-June 3, 2012
 - d. University of Nevada-Reno, Reno, NV – May 20-23, 2015
 - e. University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK – April 20-22, 2018
3. A description of the facilities that will be used for the production and for the symposium.
 4. Possible site(s) and format(s) for a banquet or special social events
 5. Symposium Speakers and Sessions: who might you want to invite as the EMOS Keynote artist and/or scholar?
 6. What other key speakers, panels, and sessions are you thinking about?
 - a. EMOS has always encouraged hands-on artistic workshops, as well as academic papers and panels. What's your vision for organizing the Symposium aspect?

Financial

1. Preliminary budget. (Organizers may contact the managing director for samples of a recent budget)
2. Expenses:
 - a. Administrative fee of \$75 (due with your proposal; we'll send you a receipt)
 - b. Website maintenance fee of \$120 (we'll send you a receipt from Wix)
 - c. Ecodrama Playwright Awards (\$1000-2000 for First Place; \$500-1000 for Second Place)
 - d. Keynote Artist Honorarium (typically \$500-1000), and sometimes travel
 - e. Travel/accommodation for EMOS artistic or managing director to attend
 - f. Travel/accommodation for the winning playwright to attend
 - g. Production expenses for the theatrical stage production of the winner
 - i. Host institutions generally meet these expenses through a combination of institutional support, faculty project grants, local external sponsorship, and conference fees. We are happy to help you brainstorm how to support your EMOS.
3. Income:
 - a. Minimal conference fee (we try keep it low so practicing artists and community can attend) How would you structure conference fees and how would they be used?
 - b. Other funding sources – internal and external grants, department support, etc. (Note: you need not have secured the grants by the time of application).

NOTE: The conference committee recognizes that all elements of the proposal are tentative. Where there are several possibilities (e.g., for locations, funding requests or guest artists), the proposal should indicate that. Where concrete commitments have already been obtained, the proposal should indicate that as well.

Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

The EMOS selection committee will use the following criteria in evaluating proposals:

- Organization
 - Have they attended past EMOS events?
 - Do they have all the important roles covered? And enough people involved to make it manageable?
 - What experience do they have with conference organizing?
 - How strong does the support of the local institution appear to be?
 - Is there a plan for administrative support?
- New Play Contest
 - Is there a clear plan for submission and evaluation?
- Program
 - How well does the theme focus attention on important issues?
 - Will the theme and program elements attract broad and diverse (disciplinary, cultural, and geographic) participation?
- Logistics
 - Is the proposed location desirable for EMOS participants (e.g., is it a popular tourist destination or off the beaten track)?
 - How convenient and affordable is travel for both domestic and overseas participants?
 - Does it bring EMOS to a new location?
 - Are the dates within the acceptable range for conference?
 - Have the organizers checked for potential conflicts with other conferences?
 - Is there an interesting plan for keynote artist/scholar or sessions?
 - Are there opportunities for special conference events (banquets, social events) that have special appeal?
- Finances
 - Does it seem like there's an effort to keep conference fees affordable for different levels of participants?
 - Is the proposed budget realistic?
 - Do the organizers have a sound plan for pursuing internal and/or external funding, including someone identified with this responsibility?

Contacts and responsibilities after acceptance

EMOS managing director, Brian Cook, will work with you throughout the process, but the leadership, labor and organization lie with the hosting institution. Let us know how we can help you in this Proposal process.

We look forward to hearing from you!