

CALL FOR SCRIPTS

Earth Matters On Stage New Play Festival & Symposium 2018

Hosted by the Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Alaska Anchorage
Symposium Dates: April 20-22, 2018

First-place Award: \$1000 and production at UAA (April 20-29, 2018)

Second-place Award: \$500 and concert reading during the symposium at UAA

Honorable mentions: concert reading during the symposium at UAA

Deadline for Submissions is May 15, 2017. (*see submission guidelines, below*)

The Earth Matters on Stage (EMOS) Ecodrama Playwrights Festival was founded in 2004 by Theresa May and Larry Fried in order to call forth and foster new dramatic works that respond to the ecological crisis, and, as part of that response, to explore new possibilities of being in relationship with the more-than-human world. EMOS calls for new plays that not only focus on current and historic environmental issues, but also looks for plays that enliven and transform our experience of the world around us, that inspire us to listen better, and instill a deeper or more complex sense of our ecological communities.¹ If your play does any of these things, send it to us!

The EMOS Festival includes workshop performance(s) of the winning script(s), play readings, talkbacks and discussions of the scripts that are finalists in the Ecodrama Playwrights' Contest. The concurrent symposium will include speakers, panels, practice-based workshops, and discussions that advance scholarship in the area of arts, ecology and climate change, and help foster development of new works.

Since 2009, EMOS has rotated among host producing institutions.

Past EMOS Winners

2015 – *Thirst* by MEH Lewis & Anita Chandwaney

In an “untouchable” Indian village crippled by drought, an intrepid young reporter investigates the corrupt water delivery system. But when her sister suddenly disappears, the investigation becomes personal.

Produced by Jonathon Taylor at University of Nevada Reno, EMOS 2015.

2012 – *Sila, the first play of The Arctic Cycle*, by Chantal Bilodeau

A climate scientist, an Inuit activist and her daughter, two Canadian Coast Guard Officers, an Inuit Elder, and a polar bear—see their values challenged as their lives become intricately intertwined. *Sila* received its premiere in a joint production of the Underground Railway Theatre and Center Square Theatre, Boston, in 2015, and was recently published by Talon Books.

Produced by Wendy Arons at Carnegie Mellon University, EMOS 2012.

2009 – *Song of Extinction*, by EM Lewis

A musically talented teen and his father whose mother/wife is dying come to understand the deeper meanings of extinction from a Cambodian science teacher.

¹ Theresa May, 2004 EMOS Festival position paper.

Song of Extinction premiered at the Moving Arts Theatre in Los Angeles and was recently published by Samuel French.

Produced by Theresa May at University of Oregon, EMOS 2009.

2004 – *Odin’s Horse*, by Chicago playwright Rob Koon

A writer learns something about integrity from a tree sitter and a lumber company executive, went on to premier in Chicago in 2006.

Produced by Theresa May and Larry Fried at Humboldt State University, EMOS 2004.

Guidelines for Playwrights

Scripts must be original works which have not been published and have not had an Equity or full professional premiere production. (Readings or informal workshop productions are okay.)

In general, we are looking for plays that do one or more of the following:

- Engage the personal, local, regional and/or global implications of man-made climate change.
- Put an ecological issue or environmental event/crisis at the center of the dramatic action or theme of the play.
- Expose and illuminate issues of environmental justice.
- Explore the relationship between sustainability, community and cultural diversity.
- Interpret community to include our ecological community, and/or give voice or character to the land, or elements of the land.
- Theatrically explore the connection between people and place, human and non-human, and/or between culture and nature.
- Grow out of the playwright’s personal relationship to the land and the ecology of a specific place.
- Theatrically examine the reciprocal relationship between human, animal and plant communities.
- Celebrate the joy of the ecological world in which humans participate.
- Offer an imagined world view that illuminates our ecological condition or reflects on the ecological crisis from a unique cultural or philosophical perspective.
- Critique or satirize patterns of exploitation, consumption, or other ingrained values that are ecologically unsustainable.
- Are written specifically to be performed in an unorthodox venue such as a natural or environmental setting, and for which that setting is a not merely a backdrop, but an integral part of the intention of the play.

In addition, for this Alaska EMOS Festival, we encourage submissions which **also**:

- Engage with cultural impacts of man-made climate change.
- Are written from an Alaska Native perspective.
- Explore or depict the circumpolar North, the Arctic, or the Antarctic.
- Are set in or are about Alaska.
- Are written by Alaskans AND which engage with the general themes (above).

Submission Process

We are looking for full-length plays that are written primarily (though not necessarily exclusively) in English. Submitted plays should address the thematic guidelines as listed above. **Deadline: May 15, 2017.** *Early submission is highly encouraged.*

Please note: we will NOT consider:

- ten-minute plays
- one-act plays (unless they are longer than 30 minutes in length)
- musicals (though we love them, we cannot financially accommodate their production for this festival)

We are only accepting electronic submissions in PDF format. Please do not submit paper manuscripts, as they will **not** be considered.

Please follow these submission guidelines:

1. Send an email to uaa_emosfestival@alaska.edu with the following in the body of the email:
 - a. Play Title
 - b. Name of Author(s)
 - c. Author contact information (email and phone)
 - d. A synopsis of the play and cast requirements.
2. Attach a PDF copy of your script with NO IDENTIFYING MARKS (beyond the play's title) to the email.
 - a. If you have an especially large file, you may send a link to a Dropbox, Google Drive, or other filesharing site so that we can download the file.

Email all submissions by May 15, 2017 to:

uaa_emosfestival@alaska.edu

Evaluation Process

All submissions will be screened by a panel of readers for appropriateness of topic (see guidelines above), theatricality, and overall quality. Each play will receive scores from a minimum of 2 readers. Highly-scored plays from the first round will be read by additional readers and scored until a short list of 5 plays is determined.

A panel of distinguished theatre artists from the USA and Canada will choose the winning plays from five final scripts. Our 2018 judges will be announced soon.

Past judges have included: Robert Schenkkan, playwright; Martha Lavey, Artistic Director, Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago, IL; José Cruz González, playwright; Ellen McLaughlin, playwright; Timothy Bond, Artistic Director, Syracuse Stage, NY; Olga Sanchez, Artistic Director, Teatro Milagro, Portland, OR; Diane Glancy, playwright; Marie Clements, playwright, British Columbia.

Questions?

Contact Dr. Brian Cook, 2018 EMOS Chair, at bcook25@alaska.edu