

Sea Sick

Written and performed
by Alanna Mitchell



“Mesmerizing”
The Guardian



JULY 31 - AUGUST 25, 2019

**THE
THEATRE
CENTRE** 

CanadaHub

SUMMERHALL
Open Minds Open Doors

PRODUCTION

Written and Performed by **Alanna Mitchell**

Directed by **Franco Boni**

Co-directed by **Ravi Jain**

Set and Costume Designer: **Shawn Kerwin**

Sound Designer: **Tim Lindsay**

Lighting Designer: **Rebecca Picherack**

Associate Producer: **Sascha Cole**

Stage Manager & Touring Lighting Designer:
Melissa Joakim

Presented by **The Theatre Centre**
in association with **SummerHall**

Sea Sick

at Edinburgh Festival Fringe

July 31-August 25, 2019

#SeaSickTC

#CanadaHubFringe

 [@TheatreCentre](https://twitter.com/TheatreCentre)

 [@TheTheatreCentre](https://www.facebook.com/TheTheatreCentre)

 [@TheTheatreCentre](https://www.instagram.com/TheTheatreCentre)

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2012, I was invited to attend Cape Farewell Canada's Carbon 14 Workshop. Scientists, journalists, business people, politicians, religious leaders and artists assembled at a waterfront location in Toronto to learn how we could collectively respond to the climate crisis. How could we work together to communicate the truth about climate change.

One of the most profound moments that weekend was listening to a talk by science journalist Alanna Mitchell. Her words hit me like a 'thunderbolt'. I remember leaving her talk feeling anxious and helpless. What could I do?

A year later, The Cape Farewell Canada Foundation and The Theatre Centre partnered to present a multi-arts festival that featured work by artists responding to issues of Climate Change. Together with Ravi Jain, we began working on a theatre piece that weaved Alanna's personal story with her journeys to learn what was happening to the global ocean. *Sea Sick* had its first public workshop at that Festival.

Sea Sick is an example of the critical role our cultural community and artists can play in communicating truth. That is what makes what we do so dangerous, because we have the ability to communicate a new cosmology.

- Franco Boni, Director

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Alanna Mitchell (Writer and Performer) is an award-winning Canadian journalist and author who writes about science and social trends. Her international best-selling book *Sea Sick: The Global Ocean in Crisis* won the prestigious Grantham Prize for excellence in environmental journalism in 2010. With the help of The Theatre Centre's artistic director Franco Boni and Why Not Theatre's founding artistic director Ravi Jain, Mitchell turned *Sea Sick* into a one-woman non-fiction play that she has performed across Canada and internationally, her first foray into theatre. She has written for the New York Times science section, National Geographic, Canadian Geographic, GQ Magazine India, Maclean's Magazine, Broadview Magazine, the Globe and Mail Newspaper, the Toronto Star Newspaper and is an award-winning radio documentary-maker for CBC Radio's Quirks & Quarks. Her fifth non-fiction book, *The Spinning Magnet*, about the Earth's magnetic field, came out last year. She is working on a play with Boni and Jain based on her fourth book, *Malignant Metaphor: Confronting Cancer Myths*. Its working title: *Soothsayer*.

Franco Boni (Director) is the newly appointed Artistic and Executive Director of the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival in Vancouver, Canada. Prior to this, he served as Artistic Director of The Theatre Centre in Toronto for sixteen years. Franco has also served as Festival Director of the Rhubarb Festival at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and Artistic Producer of the SummerWorks Theatre Festival. He is a recognized cultural innovator,

facilitator and community builder with a demonstrated track record of restoring financial stability and artistic credibility to local arts organizations and festivals for over two decades. In 2019, he directed *Prophecy Fog* by Jani Lauzon at The Theatre Centre. He is the inaugural recipient of the Ken McDougall Award for emerging directors, was awarded the Rita Davies Cultural Leadership Award, for outstanding leadership in the development of arts and culture in the City of Toronto, and in 2013 he received the George Luscombe Award for Mentorship in Professional Theatre.

Ravi Jain (Co-Director) is a multi-award-winning artist known for making politically bold and accessible theatrical experiences in both small indie productions and large theatres. As the founding artistic director of Why Not Theatre, Ravi has established himself as an artistic leader for his inventive productions, international producing/collaborations and innovative producing models which are aimed to better support emerging artists to make money from their art. Currently he is working on a new adaptation of *The Mahabharata* with the Shaw Festival and a new project with Canadian writer Nicolas Billon on a new play titled *CODE*, which will have a development workshop in October 2019 at the Barbican Theatre in London, UK. Ravi was shortlisted for the 2016 Siminovitch Prize and won the 2012 Pauline McGibbon Award for Emerging Director and the 2016 Canada Council John Hirsch Prize for direction. He is a graduate of the two-year program at École Jacques Lecoq.

Shawn Kerwin (Set and Costume Designer) Set and Costume Designs include: *The Bakkhai* (Stratford Festival), *A Tender Thing*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Town*, (Soulpepper), *The Soldiers Tale* (Signal Theatre), *Dead Metaphor* (Canadian Rep/Mirvish Productions), *The Monument* (Obsidian), *Heaven*, *The Tempest*, *Habitat* (Canadian Stage), *A Killing Snow*, *Salt Water Moon*, *Leaving Home*, *Harvest*, *Spirit of the Narrows*, *Drawer Boy*, *Another Season's Harvest* (Blyth Festival), *Brothel #9*, *And So It Goes*, *Suburban Motel*, *Better Living*, *Escape From Happiness*, *Beyond Mozambique*, *Home Is My Road* (Factory Theatre). Set designs include: *Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, *After Image*, *Oil & Water* (Artistic Fraud); *Colours in the Storm*, *Pride and Prejudice* (Grand Theatre). Costume designs include: *If Truth Be Told* (Blyth Festival), *Alls Well That Ends Well* (Canadian Stage Dream in High Park), *Communion*, *How It Works* (Tarragon Theatre), *Moonlight and Magnolias*, *Miracle on 34th St.* (Grand Theatre). Set & Costume Design/Co-Creator: *float* (Choral Canada), *Between Breaths* (Artistic Fraud). Shawn is an Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre, York University, where she served as Chair from 2003-2009.

Tim Lindsay (Sound Designer) Tim is a Toronto-born sound designer & full-time technical director at The Theatre Centre, where he designed their touring production of the award-winning play *This Is the Point*. Most recently, he designed the world premieres of *Clitoria: A Sex-Positive Superhero!* and *Emotional Labour* at Toronto Fringe 2019, and *C'mon, Angie!* and *The Chance* for Leroy Street Theatre. His other favourite designs include: six plays for Kat Sandler/Theatre Brouhaha, most

recently *Bright Lights* at Toronto Fringe 2016; four shows for Cue6 Theatre including award-winner *pool (no water)*; back-to-back international *Redheaded Coffeeshop Girl* Fringe runs and tours for Rebecca Perry Productions; *Titus Andronicus* for Hart House Theatre; *Othello* for Driftwood Theatre; *Red Light Winter* for Unit 102; and *After Miss Julie* for Red One Theatre Company. He also co-produced and designed BFL Theatre's acclaimed productions of *Hedwig & The Angry Inch*, and *Hard Core Logo: Live* in its 2017 Toronto debut.

Rebecca Picherack (Lighting Designer) designs lights for theatre and dance. Recent companies include: adelheid, The Blyth Theatre, Tarragon Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Volcano, HUM, National Arts Centre, Buddies in Bad Times, Young People's Theatre, Obsidian Theatre, The Theatre Centre & Kitchenband. Rebecca has received three Dora Awards for outstanding lighting design.

Melissa Joakim (Stage Manager & Touring Lighting Designer) is a lighting and projection designer and stage manager in Toronto, Canada. She holds a BFA Spec. Hon.s from York University. She has been nominated for Dora Awards in Lighting Design and Scenic Design and for the Pauline McGibbon Award. Recent credits include: Environmental Design: *Prophecy Fog* (Theatre Centre and Paper Canoe Projects) *Space Cats Invade the Earth* (Nuit Blanche North). Lighting and Projection Design: *This is the Point* (Ahuri Theatre with Theatre Centre); *A Side of Dreams* (Paper Canoe Projects), *Heathers the Musical* (Hart House Theatre). Lighting Design: *Isitwendam* (Native Earth Performing Arts and Theatre Northwest); *Balaklava Blues* (Self Conscious Productions at Luminato and Latitude

Festivals). Projection Design: *Dissidents* (ARC Stage Company), *Flashing Lights* (Bad New Days and Ahuri Theatre); *Alien Creature* (Theatre Passe Muraille). She is grateful to be part of this poignant and deeply relevant show.

Sascha Cole (Associate Producer) A Toronto-based theatre artist, Sascha approaches producing from a creative practice and seeks out bold collaborators and adventurous projects. Most recently, she produced *Obeah Opera* a twenty-person, all-female, a cappella, gospel musical as part of Luminato and *Other Jesus*, a site-specific work for Public Recordings Performance Projects at Festival TransAmérique in Montreal. Other producing credits include: Associate Producer for Soulpepper on *42nd Street*, 12 works over a month-long festival at The Signature Theatre Off-Broadway; Karen Hines' *Crawl/Space* (Soulpepper); and The Winter Waves Family Festival (Soulpepper), *Extremophiles* at SummerWorks; *At Your Service* by performance artist Aharona Israel; the 2012 Canadian Jewish Books Awards; and the 2011-2012 season of the Koffler Chamber Orchestra. Sascha is also an Associate Artist with It Could Still Happen, producing Jill Connell's *The Supine Cobbler* and *Hroses: Outrage à la raison*. She also serves on the board of Obsidian Theatre. Sascha is also a Dora nominated actor, and graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada's acting program. In 2018 she was part of the inaugural cohort of the Cultural Leadership program at the Banff Centre.

TURNING SCIENCE INTO ART

By Alanna Mitchell, 2014

So, how do you turn a science book about the ocean into a play? And, more to the point, why?

Well, that part of the story starts three years ago with the first expedition of the North American branch of Cape Farewell, a group inspired by the British visual artist David Buckland. David decided more than a decade ago that scientists knew about climate and ocean change, but that artists didn't, so he began putting them together. Often in the Arctic. Often on ships. Often stuck in the ice. It was hard to get away. So people talked.

And astonishing stuff started emerging. Music, avant-garde visual art, theatre, literature. After I met David for the first time, I read the British novelist Ian McEwan's book *Solar*, the first part of which is based on McEwan's own ice-fast Arctic adventures with David and others on one of the Cape Farewell journeys. It was hilarious. It was searing. It was all about climate change, slyly inserted into a rollicking good tale about a shady physicist.

So when David invited me to take part in a small North American version of the Arctic expedition - which took place, wryly, at the Palais Royal in Toronto overlooking Lake Ontario with a few dozen artists and scientists from all over the continent - I just said yes. Again, a raft of fascinating art has come out of that, culminating last fall with the Carbon 14 show at the Royal Ontario Museum. But for myself, I wasn't expecting much. I was at the meeting simply as a source of information for the artists and, on the final morning of the meeting, as the final speaker, I tossed off a short talk about

my adventures writing my book *Sea Sick*.

Unbeknownst to me, however, Franco Boni, artistic director of The Theatre Centre, was in the audience.

That's when it really started to get interesting.

Franco got in touch with me a few months later and asked me to give a talk to a bunch of theatre people who were gathering in Toronto for a conference. I remember it was a Sunday morning and I had a couple of other talks to give that afternoon but I really wanted to say yes to Franco and so I did. It turned out it was on a stage in the café in the basement of the Drake Hotel - lights and everything - and I confess perhaps I hammed it up a bit more than I do sometimes.

Well, a few months after that, I hear through Claire Sykes, who runs Cape Farewell in North America, that Franco wants me to turn my book into a one-woman show, with me as the performer. I thought he was crazy, but I met with them at a café on the Danforth. They were convincing. It would all be oral, they said. I would only have to tell my stories the way I usually do, shape it a little bit, maybe fashion a new start and end, and voila! There would be our play.

I said yes. And then began the most difficult journey of my life. For months, Franco and Ravi Jain, the artistic director in residence and I met to talk about why. Why had I written about the ocean? Why had I gone on all those journeys? Why had I become a journalist? Why did the story mean so much to me? Why had I agreed to make a play? I talked and talked and, because there was a blackboard in the makeshift office we were in, I would leap up from time to time to write stuff on the

board, to show Franco and Ravi what I meant. And every time I would explain something, either Franco or Ravi would say: "There's more." And I would try again. It was like being enveloped in a world of tough intellect and tougher love. There was no hiding.

Eventually, it all came down to this: Why does art matter?

My hope is that you'll find some answers in our play. It's what we grappled with for all those months.

And I came out of it convinced that we won't find the solutions we need for this high-carbon world we've created until we rewrite the story about how it all ends, and rewrite how we feel about that. So ultimately, the answer lies in culture. In emotion and psychology and all the other things that make us uniquely human. In art, that is to say, which has the potential to take us on journeys we could never take any other way.

The play didn't turn out the way Franco promised, by the way. It is not just oral. At a fateful point in the process, I transcribed the tapes we were making of the play and then, we had a script - all 10,000 words of it - and we starting honing it, making it leaner and clearer. And then - worst thing of all - I had to remember all those words, all in order. Pure hell for a journalist, who's trained never to tell the story the same way twice!

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Sea Sick: The Global Ocean in Crisis, McClelland & Stewart, 2009

Dancing at the Dead Sea: Tracking the World's Environmental Hotspots, Alanna Mitchell, Key Porter Books, 2004

The Weather Makers: how we are changing the weather and what it means for life on Earth, Tim Flannery, HarperCollins, 2006

Here on Earth: A Natural History of the Planet, Tim Flannery, HarperCollins, 2010

Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and our Last Chance to Save Humanity, James Hansen, Bloomsbury, 2009

Citizens of the Sea: Wondrous Creatures from the Census of Marine Life, Nancy Knowlton, National Geographic, 2010

Blue Hope: Exploring and Caring for Earth's Magnificent Ocean, Sylvia Earle, National Geographic, 2014

The World Without Us, Alan Weisman, HarperCollins, 2008

The Geography of Hope: A tour of the world we need, Chris Turner, Vintage, 2008

Charles Darwin's Beagle Diary, ed. R.D. Keynes, Cambridge University Press, 1988

SOME OF THE SCIENTIST YOU'LL MEET IN *SEA SICK*

Charles Darwin: <https://www.bbc.com/timelines/zq8gcdm>

George Mitchell: <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/love-pronghorns>

Sylvia Earle: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/expeditions/experts/sylvia-earle/>

Nancy Knowlton: <https://ocean.si.edu/contributors/nancy-knowlton>

Stu Ludsin: <https://ael.osu.edu/people/ludsin.1>

Joanie Kleypas: <http://www.cgd.ucar.edu/staff/kleypas/>

Carol Turley: http://www.pml.ac.uk/People/Science_Staff/Dr_Carol_Turley

Tim Flannery: <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/author/tim-flannery/>

Amy Wright: <https://sea-technology.com/amy-wright-inventor>

ABOUT THE THEATRE CENTRE

What We Do

The Theatre Centre is a nationally recognized live arts incubator that serves as a research and development hub for the cultural sector. We provide artists with infrastructure and resources to make their art—from idea to production.

The Theatre Centre is committed to new work and new ways of working. We are a public space, open and accessible to the people of our community, where citizens can imagine, debate, celebrate, protest, unite, and be responsible for inventing the future.

Where We Are

The Theatre Centre would like to acknowledge the sacred land on which we operate, which has been a site of human activity for thousands of years.

Toronto comes from the Kanien'kéha word Tkaronto, which can be translated as “where the trees stand in water”. It is part of the traditional territory of many nations: the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

This land was the subject of the *Dish with One Spoon* wampum belt covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and a confederacy of Anishinabek and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

The Theatre Centre strives to honour the history of this land by sharing our space with all people—those Indigenous to Turtle Island, and those from all over the world.

MAJOR PROGRAMMING SUPPORTERS



FUNDED BY
THE CITY OF
TORONTO



Canada Council
for the Arts Conseil des arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



**METCALF
FOUNDATION**

冉 the
wuchien michael than
foundation



DRAKE | THE DRAKE HOTEL | DRAKE GENERAL STORE
DRAKE DEVONSHIRE | DRAKE ONE FIFTY

Use your ticket on the same night as the performance to get a 15% discount on food at The Drake.

Lindy Cowan & Chris Hatley
Jenny Ginder & John Todd
Rick Matthews & Ann Marie
Stasiuk
Robert Sirman
Anonymous (2)

THE THEATRE CENTRE STAFF

Aislinn Rose

Artistic Director

Navid Amini

House Technician

Vanessa Bosomworth

Assistant Café/Bar Manager

Alexis Eastman

Producer

Natalie Gisele

Director of Facilities & Production

Andrea Healy

Box Office & Front of House Manager

Tim Lindsay

Technical Director

Mimi Mok

Business & Development Director

Kyle Purcell

Marketing & Communications Manager
& Graphic Designer

Liza Paul

Café/Bar Curator & Manager

Catherine Rainville

Assistant Box Office &
Front of House Manager

Elizabeth Whitbread

Marketing Assistant

SUPPORT THE THEATRE CENTRE

The Theatre Centre is a registered charitable organization committed to supporting artists and the creation of new work. At The Theatre Centre, we believe resources go further when they are shared. That's why, when you give us money, we give it away to artists of all kinds; to create, to experiment, to perform, to write, and to pay rent!

To support The Theatre Centre's on-going programming and initiatives, you can make a donation [online](#) or via [Canada Helps](#).

Thank you for your support!

Connect With Us

1115 Queen St. West
P.O. Box 232, Stn.C
Toronto ON M6J 3P4
Ph: 416-534-9261
Fax: 416-534-9405
Box Office: 416-538-0988
www.theatrecentre.org

Publicity/Media Enquiries

StorytellingPR
Harry Harris
harry@storytellingpr.com
07449348314
www.storytellingpr.com