

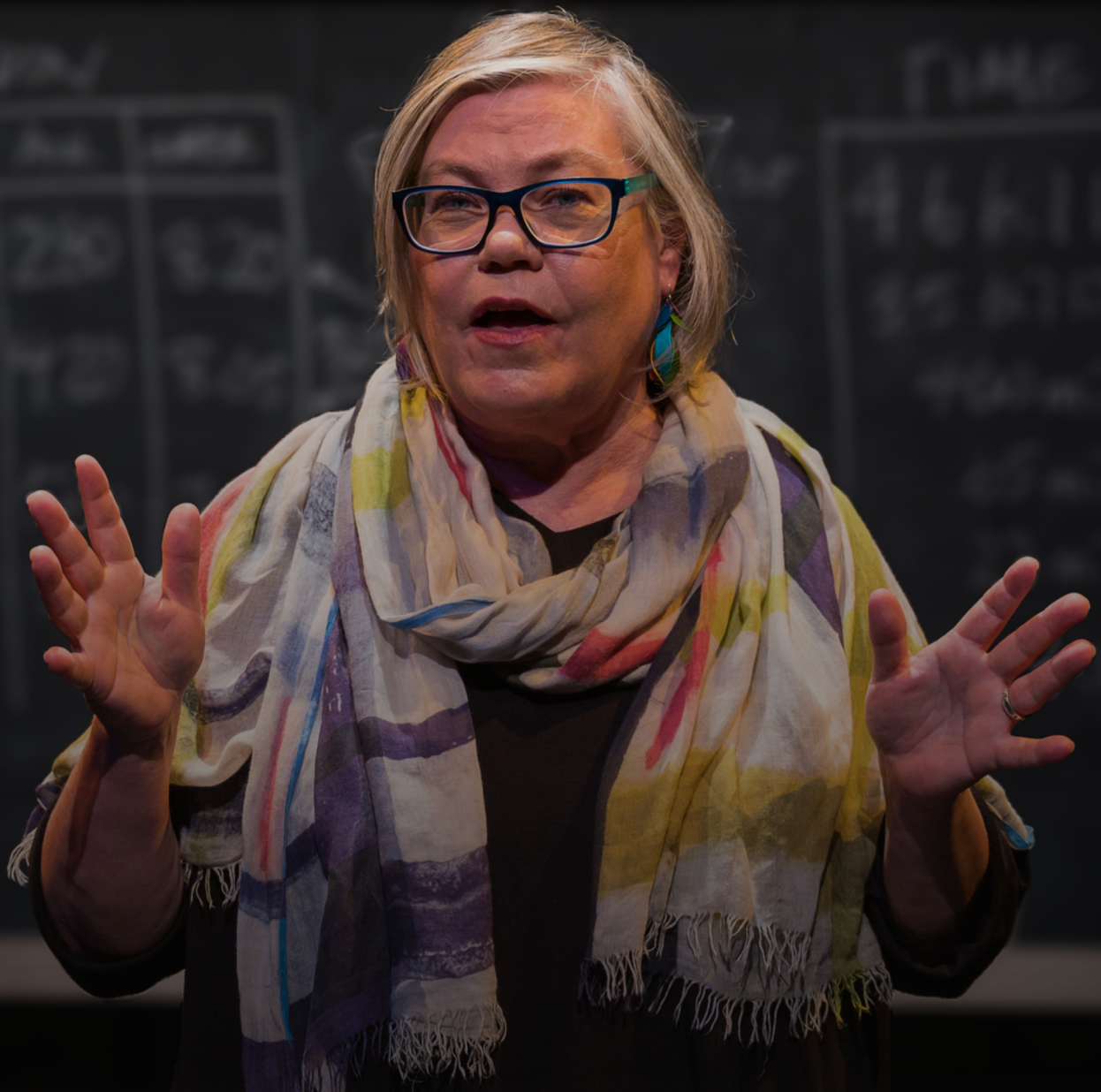
# SEA SICK



**OCTOBER 5-8, 2022**

*Written and performed by Alanna Mitchell*

**THE  
THEATRE  
CENTRE** 



***“The ocean contains the switch of life. Not land, not the atmosphere.  
The ocean. And that switch can be turned off.”***

The Theatre Centre’s *Sea Sick* by Alanna Mitchell is a critically acclaimed production about climate change, and the state of the global ocean, which has toured Canada and the world. Mitchell uses science and delicate wit to tell us about her journey to the bottom of the ocean, the demons she discovered there, and her hope for the future. *Sea Sick* is inspired by her international bestseller and award-winning book of the same name.



## PRODUCTION CREDITS

written and performed by **Alanna Mitchell**

directed by **Franco Boni** with **Ravi Jain**

set & costume designer: **Shawn Kerwin**

lighting designer: **Rebecca Picherack**

sound designer: **Tim Lindsay**

stage manager & touring lighting designer: **Melissa Joakim**

produced by **The Theatre Centre**

## ABOUT ALANNA MITCHELL

Alanna Mitchell is an award-winning journalist, author and playwright who grew up in the Canadian prairies and now lives in Toronto. She is a pattern-thinker who is fascinated with systems in society and with the intersection of science and art. She has written five books, two-and-a-half plays, some radio documentaries and a lot of magazine and newspaper articles. She has been on tour for much of the past 12 months performing *Sea Sick*, the play, across Canada the U.S., Europe and the U.K.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE FROM FRANCO BONI (2014)

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.

## TOUR HISTORY

*Sea Sick* premiered at The Theatre Centre in March 2014 touring nationally across Canada and internationally to Australia, India, and Luxembourg.

After touring this past year across the UK, Europe, and Canada, and its American premiere at The Kennedy Center, *Sea Sick* is back home at The Theatre Centre for the first time since 2018 for a one-week, limited engagement before Alanna and the team head to their next stop: Reykjavik, Iceland where they are participating in the Arctic Circle Assembly.



# REFLECTING ON EIGHT YEARS OF SEA SICK

by Alanna Mitchell

I'll never forget that first performance. It was a Wednesday evening in March, eight and a half years ago, the grand opening of The Theatre Centre's first permanent home after a \$6.2-million renovation.

The whole day had been a celebration – complete with speeches and raucous cheering – to launch this bold Canadian incubator for theatre. I remember the feeling of jubilation that something new was being born on that day.

None of it offset my fear. Here was I, a journalist, performing a non-fiction play that I had crafted with months of help from Franco Boni, who was then the theatre's artistic director, and Ravi Jain, who founded Why Not Theatre. The play, loosely based on my book *Sea Sick*, takes the audience on a journey around the world with scientists to see what carbon is doing to the ocean. And while I had years of experience reporting stories and telling them in print, I had no faith that I could pull off this theatre thing.

I remember standing backstage, quaking, as the audience flowed in and staff had to put out yet more seats to cope with the numbers. I considered making a break for it out the back door. And then the energy of the place captured me, the joy of being there with so many others who love the theatre, the privilege of having spent those months sculpting these stories for the stage, the immense emotional work we had poured into it.

Franco found me then – he had just had a haircut, I recall – to say that whatever happened on stage that night, he was proud of us and what we had done. It was permission, liberation. I walked on stage a few moments later and, well, all these years later, I keep doing it. One of the proudest moments in my life was realizing earlier this year that *Sea Sick* is included in the anthology *100 Plays to Save the World*, edited by Elizabeth Freestone and Jeanie O'Hare, published by Nick Hern Books in the U.K.

The play has changed a bit in all these years. I'm grateful to the Inuk singer Susan Aglukark, whose thoughts now inform part of the ending, and to Franco Boni and Aislinn Rose (The Theatre Centre's artistic director) who have unstintingly helped me shape and reshape the ending. We're on version five.

I've changed. That opening night the theatre's lobby was filled with my mother's paintings, specially made for the occasion. My father sent words of encouragement from his nursing home. Both are dead now. The planetary crisis has deepened. I keep updating the figures in the play, and none of them are going in the right direction. Audiences have changed, too. They are hungrier for a way to move through this awful time, more tentative about whether we can.

I remain hopeful. For one thing, a lot more of us know what's at stake in this huge, uncontrolled planetary experiment we are in. Governments know it, too. More than 100 of them have pledged to be carbon-neutral by 2040. That's not to say that they have plans to get there; they don't. But I like that they're talking about it en masse for the first time because without widespread policies to move us away from carbon, we cannot return the planet to health.

Meanwhile, scientists, ever practical, have been devising road maps to wean us off carbon. Most of the technology already exists. You start with stripping carbon from how we make electricity and then electrify as much of the economy as you can.

This is a moment in human history that calls for tenderness. For honouring the messiness our species has wrought. For fashioning a narrative that convinces us that survival is still possible. It's time.



# ABOUT THE THEATRE CENTRE

## what we do

The Theatre Centre is a nationally recognized live-arts incubator and community hub. Our mission is to offer a home for creative, cultural and social interactions to invent the future.

We make work that spans disciplines and genres; work that pushes the boundaries of what is considered “art”. Our programming and our role as a community space are inextricably linked. Art is not made in a silo: it is connected to the world around it. To learn more, visit [theatrecentre.org/about](http://theatrecentre.org/about).

## where we are

The Theatre Centre resides on stolen land in Tkaronto – a gathering place that has been home to the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit; the Haudenosaunee; and the Wendat since time immemorial. We offer our gratitude to all past, present, and future generations of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples that have cared, and continue to care, for Turtle Island.

By making our home in Tkaronto, we take on a role that comes with responsibilities to the land and its stewards. These responsibilities start with building long-term and meaningful relationships with local Indigenous communities and organizations. We are committed to using our voice and platform to support those already doing the work, but we know we still have a long way to go.

## accessibility

The Theatre Centre is physically accessible to audiences and artists alike. Each level has a barrier-free washroom and there’s a lift available for public use. If you have questions or need specific accommodations, please email or call the box office at (416) 538-0988 or email to [boxoffice@theatrecentre.org](mailto:boxoffice@theatrecentre.org).

## THE THEATRE CENTRE STAFF

### **Aislinn Rose**

General and Artistic Director

### **liza paul**

Associate Artistic Director

### **Mimi Mok**

Managing Director

### **Navid Amini**

Director of Facilities & Production

### **Alexis Eastman**

Producer (on leave)

### **Yoan Holder**

Technical Director

### **Tamara Jones**

Publicity & Promotions Manager

### **Audrey Kwan**

Associate Managing Director

### **Ciarán Myers**

Metcalf Intern - Artistic Direction

### **Gabby Noga**

Development & Administrative Coordinator

### **Angelo Pileggi**

Patron Experience Manager

### **Aidan Shepherd**

House Technician

### **Samantha Vu**

Associate Producer

### **Beth Wong**

Interim Producer

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