



NEWS RELEASE

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"SONG OF EXTINCTION"

***A World Premiere play about the science of life and loss,
the relationships between fathers and sons,
Cambodian fields, Bolivian rainforests - and redemption.***

LOS ANGELES - A boy's struggle with grief turns into a magical, musical journey for him, his family, and the teacher who tries to save him. **Moving Arts** presents the **World Premiere** production of ***Song of Extinction***, written by multiple award-winning playwright **E.M. Lewis**, directed by **Heidi Helen Davis** and with original music by **Geoffrey Pope**. Featured in the cast are **Aileen Cho, Will Faught, Darrell Kunitomi, Trey Nichols, Michael Shutt, Tristan Wright** and **Lori Yeghiayan**. *Song of Extinction* runs **November 7 through December 14** at the 87-seat **[Inside] the Ford**, the first production in an adventurous season of new plays that is part of the Ford Theatres partnership program with L.A. County-based producers and performing arts organizations.

Winner of the 2008 Ashland New Plays Festival, *Song of Extinction* is the story of Max Forrester, a musically gifted high school student who is going to fail biology if he doesn't complete a 20-page paper on extinction by Tuesday. But Max's mother is dying of cancer, and school is the last thing on his mind. His biologist father, obsessed with saving a rare, threatened Bolivian insect, is incapable of dealing with his wife's impending death, or his son's distress. Max's teacher wants to offer him guidance; but helping his student pushes Khim Phan into a magical journey of his own - from the Cambodian fields of his youth into the undiscovered country beyond.

"*Song of Extinction* is one of the most beautifully written plays I have read in a long time," says director Heidi Helen Davis. "E.M. Lewis has the courage to explore difficult subjects like grief and the ancient needs of the human soul. This play captivates."

A meditation on the science of life and loss, the relationships between fathers and sons, Cambodian fields, Bolivian rainforests and redemption, the play integrates music and elements of magical realism to weave its spell. Ms. Lewis, who does extensive research for her plays, immersed herself in books about endangered species and the environment, and interviewed survivors of the Cambodian killing fields now living in Long Beach. Emerging composer Geoffrey Pope was commissioned to write the title piece of music - the "song of extinction."

"Early on in the process of writing, I knew that music would be an important part of my play," explained playwright E. M. Lewis. "Fifteen-year-old Max clings to his music when everything else in his life is becoming unfathomably dark."

In addition to winning the Ashland New Plays Festival, *Song of Extinction* was a finalist at both the 2008 Sundance Theater Lab and HotCity Theater's Greenhouse Festival. It received readings in NYU's hotINK International Festival of New Plays and Atlantic Theater's Next Page reading series.

MORE-MORE-MORE

E.M. Lewis has seen her plays produced across the country. She is the recipient of the American Theatre Critics Association's 2008 Francesca Primus Prize for an emerging woman theater artist. In 2007, *LA Stage* magazine selected Lewis as one of twelve Los Angeles "theater artists to watch" when two of her full-length plays received their world premieres locally: *Heads*, a hostage drama set against the war in Iraq that Edward Albee called "provocative and wonderfully threatening," received its world premiere at the Blank Theater and was named one of the top ten productions of 2007 by the *Los Angeles Times*; *Infinite Black Suitcase*, a large ensemble play about grief and survival in rural Oregon, was given its world premiere by TheSpyAnts at the Lillian Theater.

Composer Geoffrey Pope has been recognized through numerous commissions and awards in the orchestral, chamber music and jazz realms. He founded the Starving Composers' Ensemble, devoted to encouraging the composition and performance of new works for chamber orchestra and was the inaugural composer in residence of the Chamber Opera of USC. In 2007, his music was performed in Prague, Budapest and Leipzig by the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra. Pope recently completed *Srebrenica Fields*, a commission for the Bay Brass in recognition of the thirteenth anniversary of the massacre, and ongoing projects include a second opera, *Sarajevo Vespers* in collaboration with visionary tenor and concept artist Timur Bekbosunov.

Heidi Helen Davis is a resident director at The Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum, where each season she directs a classic play by a great writer including Williams, O'Neill, Chekhov, Hellman, Coward, Miller, Brecht and Euripides. Her recently closed production of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* was Critic's Choice in the *Los Angeles Times* and Critic's Pick in *Back Stage West*.

Founded fifteen years ago, Moving Arts produces only original work or Los Angeles premieres. The Resident Artist Program at Moving Arts, where E.M. Lewis is a long-time member, consists of actors, playwrights, directors and producers working together in unity.

Song of Extinction is produced by **Kimberly Glann**; co-producers are **Steve Lozier** and **Cece Tio**; set design is by **Stephanie Kerley Schwartz**; lighting design is by **Ian Garrett**; sound design is by **Jason Duplissee**; and costume design is by **Laura Buckles**.

The 2008-09 season at [Inside] the Ford is supported by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Ford Theatre Foundation, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Song of Extinction runs **Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm** and **Sundays at 3 pm and 7pm, November 7 through December 14**. Two low-priced previews take place on November 5 and 6. Single tickets are priced at **\$20** with a special price of **\$12** for full-time students with ID; previews are **\$5**; and every Sunday at 7 pm is **Pay-What-You-Can**. Audiences are invited to stay after the 3 pm matinee, or to arrive early prior to the evening performance at 7 pm, for a **Talk Back Series** on **Sundays at 5 pm**. Each week, a different aspect of the play will be discussed.

[Inside] the Ford is located in the Ford Theatres complex at **2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, CA 90068**, just off the 101 Hollywood Freeway across from the Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal Studios. **On-site, non-stacked parking is free**. For reservations and information, call the **Ford Theatres Box Office** at **323.461.3673** (323.GO1.FORD) or go to www.FordTheatres.org.

MORE-MORE-MORE

DETAILS FOR CALENDAR LISTINGS "SONG OF EXTINCTION"

WHAT:

Song of Extinction - A World Premiere play (winner, 2008 Ashland New Plays Festival) about the science of life and loss, the relationships between fathers and sons, Cambodian fields, Bolivian rainforests - and redemption. Max Forrestal, a musically gifted high school student, is falling off the edge of the world and his biology teacher, Khim Phan, is the only one who's noticed. Trying to help Max pushes Khim into a magical journey of his own - from the Cambodian fields of his youth into the undiscovered country beyond.

WHO:

Written by **E.M. Lewis**

Original Music by **Geoffrey Pope**

Directed by **Heidi Helen Davis**

Featuring **Aileen Cho, Will Faught, Darrell Kunitomi, Trey Nichols, Michael Shutt, Tristan Wright, Lori Yeghiayan**

Presented by **Moving Arts**

WHEN:

Previews: November 5 and 6

Performances: **November 7** through **December 14**

Performance Schedule:

Wednesday at 8 pm: November 5 (preview)

Thursdays at 8 pm: November 6 (preview), 13, 20; December 4, 11 (dark Thanksgiving)

Fridays at 8 pm: November 7 (Opening Night), 14, 21, 28; December 5, 12

Saturdays at 8 pm : November 8, 15, 22, 29; December 6, 13

Sundays at 3 pm & 7 pm*: November 9, 16, 23, 30; December 7, 14

** Audiences are invited to stay after the 3 pm matinee, or to arrive early prior to the evening performance at 7 pm, for a **Talk Back Series** on **Sundays at 5 pm.***

WHERE:

[Inside] the Ford (the 87-seat indoor theater in the Ford Theatres complex)

2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East

Hollywood, CA 90068

(just off the 101, across the freeway from the Hollywood Bowl and south of Universal Studios)

HOW:

(323) 461-3673 (GO 1-FORD) or www.FordTheatres.org

TICKETS:

General admission: \$20

Students: \$12

Previews: \$5

Every Sunday evening at 7 pm is Pay-What-You-Can

PARKING:

FREE on-site (non-stacked)

Song of Extinction is part of the **[Inside] the Ford 2008-09 Season**, a program of the **Los Angeles County Arts Commission** and the **Ford Theatre Foundation** in cooperation with Los Angeles County-based arts organizations, with funding from the **National Endowment for the Arts**.