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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 28, 2018  
Press release #1748

For more information contact:  
Marita Meinerts Albinson,  
612.225.6142  
(Guthrie Theater)  
maritaa@guthrietheater.org

Elena Giannetti, 612.819.3199  
(PRIME Productions)  
eagiannetti@gmail.com

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THE GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENTS  
PRIME PRODUCTIONS' *TWO DEGREES* IN THE DOWLING STUDIO  
Playing October 5–21, 2018

**PRIME Productions' second season debut raises women's voices in science and politics**

(Minneapolis/St. Paul) — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) announces the presentation of PRIME Productions' *Two Degrees*, the first play in the 2018–2019 Dowling Studio Season. This Midwest premiere, written by Tira Palmquist and directed by Shelli Place, launches PRIME's second season.

As part of the Guthrie Theater's Level Nine Initiative to present theater that is brave, immediate and deeply engaging, all seats are general admission, every ticket is \$9 and each performance includes an audience engagement component. Tickets are now on sale through the Box Office at 612.377.2224 or 1.877.44.STAGE (toll-free) and online at guthrietheater.org.

"Being smart and being sexist are not mutually exclusive."

– Dr. Emma Phelps in *Two Degrees*

*Two Degrees* takes a revealing look at how the inability to change can have critical repercussions on everyone (and everything) around us. When paleoclimatologist Emma Phelps heads to Washington, D.C. — which some consider a hostile place for scientists — the stakes are higher than ever. She arrives on a mission to challenge some troubling shifts in environmental policy but finds herself at an intersection of the personal and political, which raises difficult questions around sex, power and doing things for profit versus public good. As she fights for change and searches for answers, Emma realizes she must thaw from her own anguish before she can save the planet and herself.

"Around here, there are still dinosaurs who think it's somehow a scandal that women wear pants."

– Senator Louise Allen in *Two Degrees*

*Two Degrees* is written by **Tira Palmquist** and directed by **Shelli Place**. The cast features **Joel Liestman\*** (Jeffrey Phelps/Eric Wilson/Malik Peterson), **Norah Long\*** (Emma Phelps), **Toussaint Morrison** (Clay Simpson) and **Jennifer Whitlock** (Louise Allen).

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association

**Playwright Tira Palmquist** has written plays including *Overburden*, *Ten Mile Lake*, *Age of Bees*, *And Then They Fell* and others. *Two Degrees* had its world premiere in the 2016–2017 Season at Denver Center for the Performing Arts and made the Honorable Mention list for the 2016 Kilroys. Palmquist's work has been developed by Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, The Inkwell Theater, 9Thirty Theatre Company, The Road Theatre Company, Ensemble Studio Theatre Los Angeles and Theatricum Botanicum's Seedlings program. She teaches creative writing at Orange County School of the Arts and is a member of the Playwrights Union, Antaeus Theatre Company's Playwrights Lab and Dramatists Guild. Her work as a director and dramaturg includes several seasons at the Seven Devils Playwrights Conference and the New Territories Playwriting Residency, a program she developed with Brian Clowdus at Serenbe Playhouse in Georgia.

**PRIME Productions**, founded in 2016, is one of the newest professional equity theaters established in the Twin Cities region. With a focus on celebrating women in their second act, their mission is to explore, illuminate and support women over 50 and their stories through the creative voice of performance. The company co-founders are Alison Edwards, Elena Giannetti and Shelli Place.

PRIME Productions launched their first production in May 2017 with a three-week run of *Little Wars* by Steven Carl McCasland at Mixed Blood Theatre. As a follow up to their successful debut, they started PRIME Voices: A Series of Staged Readings in September of 2017. PRIME Voices offered free, publicly staged readings of three different plays by female playwrights, all presented at local venues (Jungle Theater, History Theatre and Park Square Theatre). The reading series allowed PRIME Productions to continue to bring more women's stories and voices to the stage while providing more acting opportunities for the mature female actors of the Twin Cities. To date, 19 female actors over the age of 50 have been cast in roles with PRIME Productions.

PRIME Productions grew out of the realization that there was a scarcity of opportunities within theater for women in their prime; older female characters are often stereotyped, marginalized or altogether eliminated from the narrative. “The Twin Cities is rich in experienced female talent,” says co-founder and director Shelli Place, “but there’s a gap in the plays and roles to fully utilize that resource.” PRIME Productions fills this gap by producing plays that employ more female theater artists and address issues relevant to an aging population. The plays are selected to encourage and include the participation of all genders, races, sexual orientations, abilities and ages — snapshots of real lives in our times, with mature women center stage addressing issues relevant to a vibrant aging population.

**The Guthrie Theater** (Joseph Haj, artistic director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj’s leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)

Programming in the Dowling Studio is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Guthrie Theater’s 2018–2019 Season sponsors include Bell Bank, The Minnesota State Arts Board, The Shubert Foundation, Target and U.S. Bank.

EVENT: *TWO DEGREES*

Written by: Tira Palmquist

Directed by: Shelli Place

Dates: October 5–21, 2018  
Media Night/Opening Night: Saturday, October 6, 2018  
Thursday – Sunday performances (see schedule below)

Venue: Guthrie Theater, Dowling Studio (Level Nine)  
818 South 2nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415

Tickets: \$9 (general admission)  
All tickets available through the Box Office.  
612.377.2224 || 1.877.44.STAGE (toll-free)  
[guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)

Website: [www.primeprods.org](http://www.primeprods.org)

Facebook: @PrimeProds

Twitter: @PRIMEbroads

Summary: Emma Phelps is a paleoclimatologist focusing on ice in Greenland. In drilling and studying ice core samples, she sees firsthand the symptoms of our changing planet,

which makes the need to act all the more crucial and urgent. In addition to her growing sense of urgency for the planet, Emma, a recent widow, experiences grief that compounds itself with each passing month. Now she's been asked to come to Washington, D.C. to testify in a Senate Committee regarding climate change legislation. At this intersection of science and politics, Emma finds that many things are breaking under the strain of change.

Performance Schedule:

Friday, October 5	7:30 p.m.	Preview
Saturday, October 6	7:30 p.m.	Media Night    Opening Night with Reception
Sunday, October 7	1 p.m.	Matinee
Thursday, October 11	7:30 p.m.	
Friday, October 12	7:30 p.m.	
Saturday, October 13	1 p.m.	Matinee
Saturday, October 13	7:30 p.m.	
Thursday, October 18	7:30 p.m.	
Friday, October 19	7:30 p.m.	Post-Show Discussion A post-show discussion with paleoclimatologist Dr. Louisa Bradtmiller from Macalester College will take place immediately following the performance. Professor Bradtmiller is a paleoclimatologist/paleoceanographer interested in the ocean's role in climate change over glacial-interglacial timescales. Her ongoing research uses ocean sediments to reconstruct past changes in ocean biogeochemistry and nutrient cycling, with a focus on the transfer of carbon between the ocean and atmosphere during periods of past climate change. Her recent research also includes investigations into changes in major monsoon systems on glacial-interglacial timescales as well as during abrupt climate transitions.
Saturday, October 20	1 p.m.	Matinee Access services will be available, including audio description, open captioning and ASL interpretation. A Sensory Tour will be offered prior to the matinee at 10:30 a.m. No reservation is required for the tour, and any interested patrons should meet in the Dowling Studio lobby on Level Nine. Assistive listening devices are available for all performances at the Patron Services Desk in the Level Four lobby.
Saturday, October 20	7:30 p.m.	
Sunday, October 21	1 p.m.	Closing Matinee

Editors: High-resolution images are available for download at [primeprods.org/media](http://primeprods.org/media).

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