



ANNEX THEATRE

Producing bold new work in an environment of improbability, resourcefulness, and risk.

Request for Proposals for 2017 30th Anniversary Season

SOME IMPORTANT DATES

- Friday May 6, 2016 – Proposals are due by 5 p.m.
- May 23 through June 10 – Pitch sessions and readings will be scheduled during this time.
- Sunday June 12 – Annex Company will gather to decide our season.
You will be notified one way or the other by July 1.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

FOUR MAINSTAGE PROJECTS for the following production slots in 2017:

- Winter: Four weekends on Thursdays-Saturdays, late January through February
- Spring: Four weekends on Thursdays-Saturdays, mid-April through May
- Summer: Four weekends on Thursdays-Saturdays, late July through August
- Fall: Four weekends on Thursdays-Saturdays, mid-October through November

Projects can be a production of an existing script, an ensemble-generated work that starts from an idea, or whatever else you can persuade us to accept. (If you have a different performance schedule in mind, make that part of your proposal.) Each mainstage production will have a mid-run Monday Industry Night performance included.

FOUR OFF-NIGHT or LATE NIGHT PROJECTS that open the second week—or weekend—of the mainstage run and close during the week—or night—before the mainstage closes. Off-night and late night projects must be simple to produce: they must be able to take place on the set and use the lighting design of the mainstage production. Off-night shows run on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. during the mainstage run. Late night shows run Friday and Saturday nights at 11 p.m., with one 7:30 p.m. Industry Night show on a Monday, mid-run.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- 1) **Annex Theatre is Big Cheap Theater.** We value imagination over money. We aim to express big ideas through wild spectacle, dynamic staging, experimental storytelling and language, and vigorous, exuberant performances. The solutions that poverty demands are all the more vital for it. If a problem can only be solved by throwing money at it, you're trying to solve the wrong problem.
- 2) **Annex Theatre is a democratic collective.** The Artistic Director does not choose the season; the season is chosen by the Company – a body of affiliated artists and technicians, the same people who will produce the projects. At your pitch session, you'll be speaking to a portion of the Company. These people will speak for or against your

proposal when the time comes to choose. Persuade them to be on your side.

- 3) **We have a small production budget, but that's not all.** The production budget (set, costumes, lights, sound, props) for a mainstage show is \$750. The production budget for an off-night or late night show is \$200. (This does not include space rent, marketing, or personnel stipends.) While that may not sound like much, keep in mind that we also provide a wealth of production support in the form of skilled people, high-quality equipment, and the rehearsal and performance space itself – the value of which would be many thousands of dollars.
- 4) **Everyone receives a small stipend.** Every artist involved in the show – from the director to the light board operator – will receive a stipend of \$50. Playwright royalties are \$250. This is not a realistic reimbursement of anyone's time, but a symbolic gesture of our appreciation. It is not feasible to pay a higher stipend at this time. Fringe theatre, unfortunately, is not a money-making proposition.
- 5) **Anyone can pitch a proposal.** Proposals may be submitted by a director, a playwright, an actor, a designer, a technician – pretty much anyone – but someone based in Seattle must be responsible for overseeing a project from start to finish. We will not accept a project without a person assuming this responsibility. That person is usually the director, but we encourage playwrights to submit a proposal if they think it would be a good fit for Annex, as we know several directors interested in working with Annex who are unattached to projects. While we don't guarantee we can find a match for you, and your proposal is stronger if a director who loves the script is already onboard, please do not be discouraged from submitting as a playwright.

YOUR PROPOSAL

Please answer these questions. Please keep your proposal to no more than four pages, not including resumes, a script, or other supplementary materials.

1) About your project:

- a. What is it called?
- b. Is this a mainstage or off-night/late night proposal?
- c. Describe your project. If this is a new play, is it finished? If not, what's your schedule for finishing it? If it's a generative project (i.e. the substance of it will be developed in rehearsal), what are its goals? If it's an older play, what's your particular take on it?
- d. Has your project been done before in Seattle?
- e. How large is the cast? How many women, how many men? How large do you anticipate the crew (stage manager, designers, technicians, operators, etc.) will be?
- f. Do you anticipate any special needs (musicians, unusual prop pieces, a nine-month rehearsal process, helicopters, immunization, moon lasers, etc.)? It's

much better to discuss these up front than spring them on us later. We're very open-minded when we know what we're getting into.

- g. How would you describe this project to a non-theater person? to your mother? to your best friend? to a funder? to your mirror?

2) About you:

- h. What's your involvement with the piece (director, actor, writer, etc.)? Are other artists committed to the project? Who are they? Do you plan to hold auditions?
- i. What do you love about this project? Why do you think this project must be done now?
- j. What have you done before? Tell us a bit about your artistic history.
- k. How do you like to work in rehearsals? in pre-production? with designers? in tech? Feel free to give us a little anecdote. If this is a generative project, lay out a development calendar with deadlines for achieving different aspects of the project.

3) About your timeline and availability:

- l. When would you prefer to do this show?
- m. What conflicts do you have in the coming year that would prohibit scheduling this show at certain times?

4) About your experience with big, cheap theatre:

- n. What is your experience working with limited budgets?
- o. In the past, what have been your creative solutions when your original idea was met with a "no"? How have you told other artists "no" or "no, but" or "yes, if"?

5) About you and Annex:

- p. Why are you talking to Annex? What makes us right for this project? (You can flatter us, but we really want to know why you think our skills and sensibilities are uniquely suited to this project.)
- q. What's your past experience with Annex? Have you worked on a previous Annex show? Have you seen previous Annex productions?

6) Pitch sessions – in which you'll be able to discuss your project with the Annex company – will be scheduled during late-May to early-June.

- r. What are your conflicts during that time period? (We will contact you to schedule your pitch, but any advance notice you can give us will simplify the process.)

7) Anything else you'd like to tell us? about yourself or your project?

Again: **Please keep your proposal to no more than four pages.**

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

E-mail your proposal – including resumes, script (if there is one), and any other supplemental materials that you think would support your proposal – as a PDF to **rfp@annextheatre.org**. (To create a PDF for free/easy, use <http://www.freepdfconvert.com>) We will reply to confirm receipt. If you do not receive a response within 72 hours, please inquire with a follow-up email.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT

In the week after May 6, we will read all the proposals. Proposals that we consider unsuitable for Annex will be eliminated. (Please read the Tips for Success that follow, we hope this will reduce the number of unsuitable proposals.) An Annex staff member will contact you during that week, either to tell you we won't be considering your proposal or to schedule a pitch session in May. Pitch sessions are generally 20-25 minutes long.

At this pitch session, you will give us a quick summary of your proposal and then field questions from the Annex Company. We strongly encourage you to keep your summary short and allow time for questions and answers. If questions arise that can't be answered immediately, we'll either arrange for you to come back or you can send an e-mail reply.

In June, the Annex Company will assemble to debate, negotiate, and bicker until we've selected a slate of projects that truly excite us and we can support 100%. Some years, agreement can't be found in a single session and we have to meet again; if that happens, we will endeavor to do this as swiftly as possible. If your project is one of those in contention, we may ask you to meet with us again. An Annex staff member will notify you either way by July 1.

THANK YOU

...for reading through all of this. Your proposal will be the stronger for it. If you still have questions, please email **rfp@annextheatre.org** or talk to any Annex Company member, most of who have been through this before and know the ropes.

BONUS PAGE: 9 TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- 1) Learn about Annex before proposing. See a show, look over our production history (available on our website), talk to some Company members. Consider why Annex is the right place for your proposal. Be prepared to discuss this.
- 2) We are looking for projects the proposer is passionate about. We're not interested in directors who just want to direct something and picked this script because they think it might appeal to us. Propose something that inspires you; it will make it easier for you to inspire us.
- 3) Annex's core mission is to produce bold, new work. If you're proposing an older play, particularly one that's been produced previously in Seattle or has been produced several times around the U.S., you must be prepared to argue why your production will be materially different, and why it needs to be done now.
- 4) We do consider proposals without a completed script, but you will generate more interest in your idea if you can present a writing sample (ideally of the project under consideration; if that's not feasible, then from a previous script). If this is a generative project, please submit a *detailed* description of your development process and timeline.
- 5) While having some roles precast or some designers attached is not a problem, Annex is looking for projects that have creative opportunities for our company members. If you come to us with a project that already has a complete cast and design team – if you essentially have a full production and you're just looking for a venue – we'd be happy to discuss our rental rates with you, but it's not a project we'd consider producing.
- 6) If the playwright is not directly involved in the proposal, you must have word from the playwright that he or she will accept a royalty of \$250.
- 7) Annex cannot afford to pay Equity wages. Proposals with Equity actors attached will not be considered.
- 8) We have experimented with late night shows that didn't fit the usual late night mode (boisterous, comic, sexy, possibly with music), and though we felt they were excellent productions, it was difficult to draw audiences. So we're seeking late night projects that are boisterous, comic, sexy, possibly with music. If you're proposing a late night project that doesn't fit that mold, be prepared to discuss why you think it would bring in a late night audience.
- 9) While we accept a play from anywhere, we definitely need a person responsible for the project to be locally based in Seattle.