

The Collaborating Scientists' Responses:

“Karen called me a year ago last summer because I had published a paper that basically said what they said in the play. The facts in the play are true. And I just want to compliment her on wrapping so much complexity and portraying this complexity of the climate system and weaving it in with so much human complexity of human nature that we are dealing with and the way she is talking about what is happening with the science *and the scientists* and trying to get the message out about what is really happening in our climate system, I think she has done it masterfully in a way that I was completely enraptured and I truly hope that this play is produced. I just think she’s done a wonderful job.” **Dr. Jennifer Francis, Arctic Ice scientist, speaking to the audience after the Sept. 8, 2013 reading of *Extreme Whether***

"I hope we can get this to a broader audience because it makes a lot of valid points and it does it in a more entertaining way than usually with this subject—The documentaries are just not very interesting and so its hard to reach the public. Maybe this play could take off and reach a bigger audience. The most important part of the play is its love of nature. It’s a combination of all these different characters and bringing in...there is quite a bit of realism in the way that the science is brought in and on the other hand what it is competing against and you have to have a love of nature or its hard to be concerned about the problem in the short run. You know, I’d come to a reading of this, early, but this is so much better. I was blown away by the great performances. What a great cast, all of them perfect for the parts. It was really good."--**Dr. James Hansen, speaking on opening night, Oct. 9**

“It’s just a very impressive play and I just wish the audience were 50 times bigger. This is a very important message that Karen is bringing to the public in a way that I think will reach many people. This is a venue and a way of communication that I think is extremely important because this message is extremely important. I came down about a year ago for a reading and it was great then but it’s even better now.” **Dr. Jennifer Francis, speaking after the Oct. 4 performance**

Extreme Whether audience responses:

"This is such a powerful play. If the climate justice movement is going to gain traction, it's going to have to appear in literature, in the culture. Thank you for taking this step," **Dr. Dale Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time***

"The play is wonderful. It made my hair stand on end."—**Massimo LoBuglio, climate activist & green entrepreneur**

"The play is wonderful and should be seen by many more people." **Dr. Jannette Barth, economist, NYS anti-fracking activist**

"This play is a Must: it hits you in the gut, over and over, about our relationship to nature, to science, to our deeper values, to money and social status, ultimately, to life itself." **Mitchell Jay Rabin, A Better World, radio host**

"It's all here in this complex, magical play, where the personal is indeed political." **Pam McAllister, author**

"Students from several program courses attended the play, which gave them access to information and an understanding of the contentious debates surrounding climate change in ways the classroom alone could not have provided. It is particularly vital for our program that our students understand that the issues about which they learn have direct bearing on their daily lives and their various communities. Seeing climate justice issues covered in class come to life on a New York City stage was a powerful way to create that understanding. "Eye-opening" is the characterization the students in my Environmental Justice course used most frequently in their written responses to the play, which was for quite a few of them not only the first time they saw contemporary scientific and political issues the subject of a theatrical performance, but also the first time attending a play had been a pleasurable experience. They were not only impressed with the play itself and the actors' performances, but also regularly commented on having been inspired by the post-performance talks.

I could not have asked for a better way to reinforce our in-class discussions of climate justice and to demonstrate to the students that they were becoming part of a larger community working towards a more just and sustainable way of inhabiting our planet, one that extends beyond the academic community of the classroom and the College. In this way, Theatre Three Collaborative has played an important part in giving our program a vibrant start this Fall semester. I strongly support their application for funding through your foundation and hope they will be able to bring *Extreme Whether* and the vital exchange and discussion it promotes to additional audiences in New York City and across the country." **Professor Alexander Schlutz, John Jay College**

Letter from a high school student:

"What an honor to have seen such a wonderful performance! I'm very glad my mother invited me to see it with her. It held my attention from beginning to end, and pulled at my heart strings. Such *colorful* detail in every sentence; the words painted such an interesting picture. Some moments had me crying—thank Goodness it was dark in the audience, and some had me laughing, but most of all I enjoyed how much you made me think. Facts were delivered in an un-boring way, in a memorable way. The play was packed with such important ideas. It was interesting to hear the melody of your soul through the words and actions of the characters. Sniffley lives in our hearts." Thank you & Blessed Be! **–Yana Kirsanova, Ukrainian immigrant**

"Karen Malpede play brilliantly lays out the reasons why Climate Change is not being dealt with, the issues in trying to fight for a sustainable planet and the human nature behind the failure. PLEASE HELP THIS IMPORTANT PLAY GET PRODUCED. THIS PLAY DESERVES A PULITZER PRIZE. Excellent acting and direction too. An

engaging piece of political and social Theatre which is THEATRE not preaching!!!” –
Penny Arcade, performance artist

“I love the staging. I loved the whole experience.” **Judith Malina, The Living Theatre**

“The recent production of “Extreme Whether” was very important in relation to the work of our Climate Action Committee. Coming as it did just following the People’s Climate March, this beautiful production of the highest artistic quality, coupled with the Festival of Conscience post-talk shows featuring experts as well as activists in the field combined a really unique educational experience with a powerful emotional impact. This has been true for their previous shows as well. Because of this, we have promoted their work on our website and e-mail list. Our members have attended their plays and participated in Festival of Conscience talk-back; we’ve gotten enthusiastic feedback from everybody! The Festival of Conscience talks are made available on video for us to post following the too-short theater run.” **Charlotte Phillips, Chair, Brooklyn for Peace**

‘Just caught the closing show of Karen Malpede’s important, strong and powerful play “Extreme Whether”. Karen is one of the theater’s most politically engaged dramatists and she does a great job bringing this terribly frustrating climate debate to the stage in a very engaging story that had me tied up in knots as it unraveled the insidious means people use to get their way at all costs while they destroy the planet. A great highlight was to see George Bartenieff on stage (wow!!) as well as the entire talented ensemble. I really do hope there can be another run for this piece cause this conversation needs to stay out front and center and this piece really draws you in!’—**Jackie Rudin, downtown artist**

“Your play was just terrific. Presented the issues without getting bogged down in them, and with such interesting plot and believable characters. The conversations were always true to life. Congratulations! George was a delight as Uncle. Marge and Hallie liked it very much too. I wish I knew someone who knew someone who might hook you up with a producer, but I don’t.”—**Lucia McCreery, audience member**

I’ve thought often about your play. It’s the sign of a good one that scenes come to mind weeks later. There are many such, but for me the most resonant were Uncle’s getting to his feet from the wheelchair and then dancing! Very well done, George!! Also the frog funeral. As a child I raised a frog from a tadpole in a bowl under my bed. “Wooing” was the only survivor of the tadpoles I caught. He kept hopping out of the bowl only to be found again in a dust bunny, having no place to escape to. My mother finally convinced me to take him over to a local pond and let him go. I didn’t want to, of course. I hope he survived. There was no funeral involved; none of our deceased pets got a funeral that I remember. The one in your play was very affecting. So was the whole play, as I said before. **Lucia McCreery, but several weeks later**

“GREAT play!” –**Garrick Beck, The Living Theater**

“My wife, Claudie, and I were gripped by your powerful play.”—**Peter Wortsman, novelist**

“Karen...I'm so happy I was able to be with you tonight and to see Extreme Whether...It's such an important piece and I'm so hopeful that you'll find a producer who can carry it forward...” **Maxine Klein, scenic artist**

From **Prof Gerald Markowitz**, John Jay College: “Hi Karen – Just wanted to share with you some representative reactions from the students about the play. In short, they loved it!! Thanks for providing such a meaningful experience to our students.”:

Some of Prof. Markowitz’s John Jay Student responses:

“The actors did a great job in getting the intended message across – I was intrigued the entire time and recognized a connection to the storyline’s drama. “

“I greatly enjoyed the production. I thought the drama between the actors was the perfect touch – as this made it relatable to everyday folks. Putting a face to this topic as opposed to simply reading about it made the storyline stand out and stick. I don’t think reading about this would be so thrilling. “

“Environmentalists are like outcasts, the public doesn’t show much support and the big corporations take down environmentalists any way they can. The world that environmentalists live in must be a very difficult one.”

“Viewing this play helped me to better understand the effects of climate change and extreme weather patterns in a non-threatening way and as a form of entertainment. This play can be used a vehicle to teach other students and younger generations about these important issues. “

“I must admit that at first I was a bit skeptical about seeing a play on climate change. I figured that it would consist of dancing clouds, a sad sun, and deteriorating flower beds. I am not exactly sure where these thoughts originated from, but that is what I envisioned when I found out that we were going to see an environmental play. However, I was pleasantly surprised at its content. Instead, Karen Malpede brilliantly portrayed her fears of our ever changing climate through a masterpiece filled with lots of politics, quirkiness, and very disturbing events. “

“What I learned from the play that was different from reading an essay on the same topic were the alternatives that John spoke about such as the Carbon taxes. I believe Carbon taxes would help eliminate its major influence on earth’s climate change eventually not being used at all. It’s the best way to start making people understand how serious the effects of fossil fuels have on the environment and hopefully reduces the amount that’s being used today.”

“This play transforms an idea of vast complexity and intimidation into something more simple and relatable by displaying not only the scientific findings, the agreed upon

disasters and the companies with stakes in same, but by displaying an esteemed climate scientist, John, as a person with a passion, and family, a home, a child and a life. Malpede's play places the terrifying astronomical question three feet from us and holds our hand along the way as we, along with the characters in the play, figure out the answer."

"I've been thinking about the play all weekend. For several years now, I've been trying to understand how the writing that matters can help us come to grips with what it means to *go on* under the present and coming circumstances--I mean to "go on" consciously, not in a numbed state or at least not completely numbed--i.e. if humanity cannot "bear" very much "reality," then somehow to extend the margins of the reality we can bear by even a little bit. I love how your play has that issue at its core. My favorite characters in the play were Uncle and Annie, perhaps because they, given their stages of life and physical vulnerabilities, have comparatively little cushioning from reality in the form of careers, agendas, property to manage. (Not that I'm knocking those things, you understand.) I'll repeat what I said at intermission, that I thought George's performance as Uncle was really transcendent. (Winston felt the same.) I also loved how you showed the roller coaster of hope and despair that Rebecca and John exhibit; their switches in position feel very familiar to me. I felt the whole work, and certainly the combination of projected images and action, succeeded to an amazing degree in evoking the beauty, vastness, and interconnectedness of the Unbuilt within the built environment of the stage.

"It was so interesting, and on some level moving--an experience I wouldn't have missed--to hear James Hansen. I respect him so much and at the same time think he's so totally mistaken about nuclear power, but the instructive thing was to get a close-up sense of what seems to me his shattering naïveté about how political power works. The very idea that "the government" is over here in one corner and "business leaders" are over there in another, and the second are going to say thank you very much when the first make moves at effective regulation! Why does he think that no such effective moves are ever made?? Ah, well. Thank you for arranging the evening so that we could hear him.
--**Jan Clausen, Goddard College, poet, writer**

"Wow. All of the actors are fantastic and funny and full. I loved the humor and delight that you all bring to some very serious subject matter. Annie is such a lovely character and so funny, the fatalism of John at the beginning of Act 2 is so true and such a surprise to the audience, Uncle's reverse aging is a delight, Rebecca's struggles ring true and Jeanne and Frank are so evil and so blasé. (Shudder.) I especially loved Jeff's strength on stage, and Sniffley's funeral was so moving and George should wear that animal skin all the time!

In the middle of my laughs and sighs I was hearing echoes of *The Cherry Orchard* and Rebecca West and Margaret Atwood and Antony and our Anthropocene Era and what we all can try to do to grapple with these times. Having our thoughts onstage in the mouths of our fellow homo sapien sapiens in a dark room is a balm and wakeup call at

once.

Thank you for your hard work and activism and I wish you all a wonderful journey with this play.”

Christen Clifford, performance artist, writer

"This play is a MUST SEE...Karen has written a masterpiece for the century. Great work to the entire cast and crew! Bravo!!" —**Deaon Griffen-Pressley, playwright**

"Abe and I saw this incredibly important play last night. It's political theater at its best: smart, quirky, funny, disturbing, informative and contemplative (all in good measure)."—**Prof. Susan Nakley, St. Joseph's College**

"I've just seen Extreme Whether - It was a wonderful evening. The characters were engrossing and richly portrayed. The acting blew me away." —**Dr. Martha Bragin**

"This was a life-changing event."

—**Kenggie Malik, John Jay College student**

"Want good theater? With a masterful portrayal of "Uncle" by George Bartenieff who speaks eloquent truth about Mother Earth."

—**Matt Weinstein, peace & environmental activist**

"Do you enjoy great theater on an intimate scale? Are you concerned about our climate? I recommend seeing Extreme Weather."

—**Marla Dekker, Townhouse.Biz**

“Jess and I enjoyed the play greatly. Real and bravely drawn characters. Fine writing. The pacing was fun. Some challenging new thoughts on the pressures against making a difference and the results.”—**Jed Marcus, Esq**

“This was a thoughtfully planned, captivating play about one of the most pressing issues of our times. I felt it wonderfully kept the balance between personal stories and political mission of enlightening the audience not only about how pressing the issue of climate change is but also how the government is trying to silence scientists from presenting their research. The personal relationships were depicted in a way that made the plot even more convincing by not taking anything away from the main narrative.

George in the role of the uncle, fantastic as always, held the plot together by being the mediator between the family as a whole on one hand and individual family members driven by their ecological or economical motives to convince politicians and their voters of their individual points of view on the other. But the other members of the cast earn recognition, too. They were very well chosen for their roles. I liked your play, Karen, and I wish it many more performances for a wider audience.” **Elke Nicola, Chair, German Dept., Hunter College**

"And this is what theater is meant to be -- a tool for gathering and disseminating ideas, even activating new ones."

<http://www.theasy.com/Reviews/2014/E/extremeweather.php> **Keith Paul Medelis,**
Theater Is Easy

"What a Terrific play. Such Great characters," **Robert Roth, poet**