



Call for Plays/New Work

Madison New Works Lab

August 14-23, 2025

Seeking:

Two full-length plays to be workshopped with a community of artists at James Madison University (JMU) in Harrisonburg, VA 8/14/25 – 8/23/25. Submissions should respond to contemporary questions/issues in our world. Diverse perspectives and/or theatrical approaches welcome.

What is Madison New Works Laboratory?

Madison New Works Laboratory (MNWL) is an incubator for the development of new plays and musicals. Each selected artist is provided an opportunity to develop their work with a community of artists through conversations, rehearsals, and a festival of public readings. MNWL aspires to the following goals:

- Develop new works by and for various ages, cultures, and populations
- Foster theatrical innovation in the development process in an artist-friendly environment
- Identify new work for eventual production in the JMU Mainstage and Studio Season
- Support professional playwrights in the development of their work
- Provide opportunities for JMU student-artists to work with professional artists on new work

What to Submit?

Preference will be given to plays/works that accomplish the following:

- Address contemporary issues, stories and questions
- Include characters that are suitable for college-age actors for both the development process and potential production in our mainstage season
- Include no more than 6 characters (If your work has more than 6 characters and can be accomplished with character doubling, the character doubling must be articulated in the script.)

Description of Residency:

- \$1000 honorarium for each playwright selected (two plays will be selected)
- Round-trip transportation and housing for the playwright
- Access to student performers selected through an audition process. (Maximum of 6 actors, may include double casting.)
- Available resources include director, stage manager, and supportive artistic staff.
- Development and rehearsals will be held 8/14 – 8/20 (Arrive 8/13 and depart 8/24)
- Public readings will be held for the JMU and Harrisonburg community on 8/21-8/23

- Madison New Works Laboratory (MNWL) is housed in JMU's Forbes Center for the Performing Arts in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The Forbes Center has multiple venues for presentation of works including a Concert Hall, Recital Hall, Studio Theatre, and Mainstage Theatre. Harrisonburg is situated in the Shenandoah Valley region of VA between Charlottesville, Richmond, and Washington DC.

Submission Format

Please submit your materials here: <https://form.jotform.com/222694817588170>

First 200 submissions will be accepted and remain open until 2/2/25. Selected plays will be announced by 4/15/25. Criteria for submission include:

Please do not submit more than one play

- The following documents are required for submission:
 1. Introduction of yourself and your work and three specific objectives you have for a development process (250 word max)
 2. Artist Bio
 3. Play synopsis (250 word max)
 4. 10-page sample (no author info)
 5. Reflection on working with students in a development process (250)
 6. A blind copy of a working draft of your play
 7. Proof of rights (required for any material that is not your own)

Our Commitment

The School of Theatre and Dance at James Madison University believes that equity, access, and inclusion are moral imperatives and artistic obligations. Diversity—in the stories we represent, the students we serve, and the audiences we engage—is vital for the health and relevance of contemporary performing arts practice. The School of Theatre and Dance, therefore, welcomes diversity of perspective, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability.