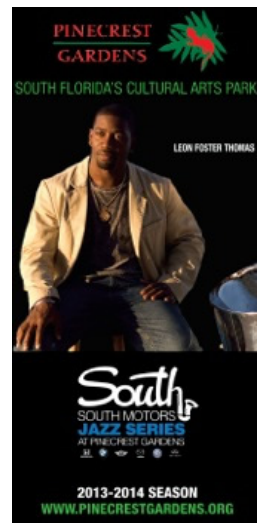


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# As The Globe Warms

A One-Woman Comic Epic at FIU

BY: MICHELLE F. SOLOMON ATCA FFCC ON JULY 03, 2012.

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Heather Woodbury

Truth be told, I can barely drag myself away from the serial drama *As The Globe Warms* on vimeo.com

(<http://vimeo.com/22374033#at=0>) to write this story. It all started out innocently enough. I was to write a preview of Heather Woodbury's new American soap opera before its opening Friday at FIU in Miami. And so I began my research. That was when I discovered the 45 minute snippet of *As The Globe Warms*. I'm hooked.

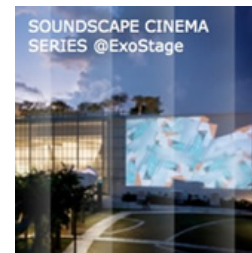
When last I checked in on the inhabitants of Vane Springs, Nevada, there was trouble brewing in the small Southwest town. The eco-activists, who have been fighting to save the Butterscotch frog from extinction, had set up an Occupy Wall Street type camp on the site of what was to become a Mega Church, at a site where the frog was threatened. The Bible verse spouting Christians were being held back by police barricades that were set up just a stone's throw from tents at Camp Butterscotch. Herpetologist Reed Ferris, an expert on the amphibian, had just arrived on the scene and TV news reporter Gia Pinkis, was hoping to get her exclusive with Reed for her Democracy When segment.

Woodbury plays all of the characters — almost 50 in the novel-length play.

"On one hand, it can seem like a stunt," says Michael Yawney, who is directing the production, "this woman of 1,000 voices, but audiences who have seen her perform know that this is something different."

Woodbury explains that her story surrounds the theme of How Small Town America meets the World Wide Web of Life. "There are ways in which the outside world converges on this small town, and the efforts to save this frog or not save it." There are larger messages, too, including political dividing lines of Red State, Blue State, and moral, ethical and social debates. "Plus, it's just plain humorous," says the playwright.

She wrote *As the Globe Warms* in 33 weekly installments in 2010 and 2011, performing for a live audience in Los Angeles, while simultaneously posting the installments online for video subscribers. For FIU's Alternative Theatre





Festival, *As the Globe Warms* will be presented in six, evening length presentations at about two hours each with an intermission.

Audience members are encouraged to attend all six performances to get the full scope of the continuing saga, but the show can be enjoyed in single installments.

"I do encourage people to see all six," advises Yawney. "It is like watching episodic television. You can come in to a show like 'Mad Men' in the middle of the story, but by watching it unfold episode by episode, you understand it in a different way — a more complete way."

Woodbury's medium is so uniquely different that it's hard to pigeon-hole her as a one-woman show, stand-up theater comedian, or any specific type of performance artist. The playwright/performer says she actually relates more to ensemble casts than she does solo performers.

And while the play creates an onstage community, audiences who become engrossed in the story become a community unto themselves, the creator and her director have discovered.



"It becomes a kind of event," says Yawney. "Audience members start discussing where they think the story might go the next night. And then for those who come in maybe for one part, but haven't seen the one before, the 'community' will bring them in, fill in the gaps. 'That's really

a big part of the appeal and why this is more addictive than other types of theater; it isn't just her story, it isn't just her play, it becomes yours," he says.

"This is theater that has its foundation in an older art form. It reminds you of when you were a kid and you'd have a story read to you at night. You get to imagine the characters around you. It has that quality. You become involved through your imagination," says Woodbury.

Her first eight-part solo play *What Ever*, began in the back of a New York City bar in the East Village, then toured widely from Chicago's Steppenwolf to London's Royal Festival Hall. It was also broadcast as a radio play on NPR, hosted by Ira Glass.

*As the Globe Warms* will, no doubt, take a similar trajectory. Following its workshop in Miami, it will have its premiere at The Vortex Repertory in Austin, Texas in October. A segment of the play will appear in the new anthology *Animal Acts* to be published by University of Michigan Press.

*As The Globe Warms* is presented in six parts every Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., from July 6 to July 21, at Florida International University's Wertheim Performing Arts Center, Blackbox Theatre, 11200 S.W. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Miami. Admission is free, although donations are accepted.

<http://www.heatherwoodbury.com>

