

TEENAGE DICK



**A MODERN, DARKLY COMIC RE-TELLING OF SHAKESPEARE'S
RICHARD III SET IN THE MOST TREACHEROUS OF PLACES –
HIGH SCHOOL.**

Bullied because of his cerebral palsy, Richard is willing to crush his enemies in order to become senior class president. But all the scheming, manipulation, and revenge plots force him to ask the age-old question: is it better to be loved or feared?

TEENAGE DICK

Sept 20 - Oct 17, 2021

By Mike Lew

Directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel

Produced in Association with Huntington Theatre
Company and Pasadena Playhouse

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Richard Gloucester Gregg Mozgala*

Elizabeth York Emily Townley*+

Barbara "Buck" Buckingham Shannon DeVido*

Clarissa Duke Portland Thomas*

Eddie Ivy Louis Reyes McWilliams*

Anne Margaret Zurin Villanueva*

Understudy for Anne Margaret Maya Loren Jackson*

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Moritz von Stuelpnagel ^

Choreographer Jennifer Weber ^

Scenic Designer Wilson Chin †

Costume Designer Kelsey Hunt †

Lighting Designer Amith Chandrashaker †

Sound Designer Palmer Hefferan †

Fight Choreographer Robb Hunter ^

Assistant Director and Movement Coordinator
Ashleigh King

Stage Manager Lauren Pikel*

Casting Director Judy Bowman, CSA

Associate Set Designer Riw Rakkulchon

Associate Lighting Designer K. A. Rudolph

CREW

Acting Production Manager Colin K. Bills+

Assistant Stage Manager Genevieve Dornemann

Assistant Stage Manager Andie Burns

COVID Compliance Officers Ian Claar, Rebecca
Talisman, & Joy Johnson

Production Electrician Doug Del Pizzo

Production Electrician Elliot Peterson

Lighting Programmer Kristen Roth

Light Board Operator Zavar Blackledge

Sound Board Operator & Sound Programmer Nora
Simonson

Audio and Visual Supervisor Alec Sparks

Scenic Charge Carolyn Hampton

Carpentry Overhire Chris McDonald

Properties Artisan Pamela Weiner

Electricians Rachel Prell, Elizabeth Roth, Hailey LaRue

** Member, AEA // ^ Member, SDC // + Woolly Company Member // †
USA Union Designers*

Actor's Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote, and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is associated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. For more information, visit www.actorsequity.org.

The scenic, lighting, sound, and projection designers for this production are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

The Director of this production is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

CONTENT TRANSPARENCY: Depictions of suicide, violence, and ableism (including negative stereotypes and slurs) and discussions of abortion and its stigmatization.

TEENAGE DICK received its world premiere by Ma-Yi Theater Company (Ralph B. Peña, Producing Artistic Director), June 20, 2018, at the Public Theater, New York, NY.

TEENAGE DICK was developed during a residency at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's (Preston Whiteway, Executive Director; Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director) National Playwrights Conference in 2016.

TEENAGE DICK was developed by the Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director).

TEENAGE DICK was commissioned and developed by The Apothetae (Gregg Mozgala, Artistic Director).

Developed at The Lark Play Development Center, New York City.

TEENAGE DICK was developed with the support of Playwrights Foundation, San Francisco (Amy Mueller, Artistic Director).

TEENAGE DICK is presented by special arrangement with Dramatist Play Service Inc., New York.



WMTC would like to highlight our friends at Open Circle Theatre; the DMV area's **first** professional theatre committed to fostering careers in the arts for people with disabilities and promoting an accessible and equitable community for all. Led by Artistic Director, Suzanne Richard, OCT is dedicated to full access for all persons and is a place where artists with and without disabilities can be mentored, receive training, and have the opportunity to reach their professional potential. Additionally, OCT serves as a source of inclusive arts integration in schools, casting opportunities for artists and arts producers, consulting on accessibility equity, and leadership representation. For more information about the work OCT does and the resources they provide, please visit www.opencircletheatre.org or to make a gift to this outstanding organization please [click here](#).

Woolly Mammoth acknowledges that our theatre stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples. Furthermore, the foundation of this city, and most of the original buildings in Washington, DC, were funded by the sale of enslaved people of African descent and built by their hands.

Language developed in consultation with Dr. Gabrielle Tayac



Mike Lew



Gregg Mozgala



Emily Townley



Shannon DeVido



Portland Thomas



Louis Reyes McWilliams



Zurin Villanueva



Maya Loren Jackson



Moritz von Stuelpnagel

+ BIOS

CAST (in order of appearance)

Gregg Mozgala (*Richard Gloucester, he/him*) is thrilled to be making his Woolly Mammoth premier. He worked with M. Night Shyamalan and Golden Globe Winner Andra Day on the video for her Emmy nominated Single "Rise Up" He has been in various productions with The Public Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop, La Mama ETC, Theater Breaking Through Barriers, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival and The Kennedy Center. He received a Lucille Lortel Award (Best Featured Actor) for his work in the Pulitzer Prize winning play, **Cost Of Living** by Martyna Majok. He was nominated for a Drama League Distinguished Performance Award for the role of Richard in **Teenage**

Dick by Mike Lew. Mr. Mozgala was honored as a "Champion Of Change" by The New York City Mayor's Office For People With Disabilities in 2017, and named a Kennedy Citizen Artist Fellow by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2016. Gregg is the founder and Artistic Director of The Apothetae, a theatre company dedicated to the production of works that explore and illuminate the, "Disabled Experience." He is currently the Director of Inclusion at Queens Theatre.

Emily Townley (*Elizabeth York, she/her*) is a proud Woolly Company Member, and has appeared here previously in **HIR, The Arsonists, The Totalitarians** [Helen Hayes Award nomination, Outstanding Lead Actress], **Detroit, Bright New Boise, Maria/Stuart, The House of Gold, Spain, Fuddy Meers, Wonder of the World** and **Watbanaland**. Select DC credits include: **The Amateurs, Comedy of Tenors** and **Bad Dog** for Olney Theatre Center; **How I Learned To Drive, The Sisterhood** for Round House Theatre; **Twelfth Night** [Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding Play] and **Romeo and Juliet** for the Shakespeare Theatre Company; **The Mystery of Love and Sex**, Signature Theatre; **Between Riverside and Crazy, Laugh, Skin Tight, Rock N' Roll, The Bright and Bold Design** for Studio Theatre; Select Regional credits include, for Gulfshore Playhouse, **The Game's Afoot** and **All My Sons**.

Shannon DeVido (*Buck, she/her*) is a BAFTA Breakthrough actress and comedian who is best known for her roles in Hulu's **Difficult People**, Netflix's **Insatiable**, Comedy Central's **Delco Proper**, and **Law and Order: SVU**, as well as appearances on **The Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore** and **Sesame Street**. Shannon starred in the

world premiere of **Teenage Dick** at the Public Theater and Samuel D. Hunter's **The Healing**. She also leads the cast of the feature film **Best Summer Ever**, an award-winning musical comedy which screened at SXSW in 2021. @shannondevido

Portland Thomas (*Clarissa, she/her*) is a NYC based actress and is thrilled to be working with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company! Off-Broadway: **Seize the King, Fit for a Queen** (Classical Theatre of Harlem). Regional: **Hamlet & St. Joan** (BEDLAM with The McCarter Theatre), **The Wolves** (Marin Theatre Company), **The Syringa Tree** (Creede Repertory Theatre) Film: *Fernanda* (Sundance Institute). BFA: NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Matthew 7:7 portlandthomas.com

Louis Reyes McWilliams (*Eddie Ivy, he/him*) is an actor and writer based in Brooklyn, NY. He has appeared Off-Broadway in **Coriolanus** (The Public Theater), **Anna Karenina: a riff** (The Flea/Notch Theatre Company), and **The War Boys** (Columbia Stages). His regional credits include **Little Women** (Dallas Theater Center, The Old Globe), **No Cure** (Playwrights' Center), **A Christmas Carol** and **An Iliad** (Trinity Rep), **Prowess** (Pyramid Theatre Company, Cloris Leachman Award), **Unknown Soldier** (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and **Macbeth** (Berkeley Rep). He received his B.A. from Stanford University and his M.F.A. from Brown University/Trinity Rep where he was a recipient of the Richard Kavanaugh Fellowship. louismcwilliams.com

Zurin Villanueva (*Anne Margaret, she/her*) is originally from Brooklyn, NY. Broadway credits: **The Lion King, Mean Girls, Shuffle Along** and **The Book of Mormon**. Regional credits include: **Ruined** (Everyman), **Ragtime** (Barrington Stage) **Ain't Misbehavin**

(Crossroads) and **Million Dollar Quartet** (PCLO). TV/FILM: **The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Insatiable**, and **Detroit**. She is a proud graduate of Howard University BFA and the Laguardia High School for the Performing Arts Drama program. "The art of acceptance is making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one." - MLK JR. IG: @zurinspeed

Maya Loren Jackson (*Anne Margaret, Understudy*) is an Actor, Teaching Artist, and Photographer based in the DC area. Recent credits include: **10x10 2021** (Barrington Stage Company), **The Fleecing** (Almanac Dance Circus Theatre); **The Adrienne Kennedy Play Festival** (McCarter Theatre/Roundhouse Theatre); **Kid Prince and Pablo** (Kennedy Center); **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time** (Actors Theatre of Louisville); **Shipwrecked, Comedy of Errors** (Great River Shakespeare Festival); **Jar the Floor** (Arkansas Repertory Theatre). She most recently shot her debut Television role on the upcoming series **Suspicion**, which will air on Apple+. Maya holds a BA in Theatre from The University of Maryland, CP and an MFA in Acting from UMKC.

CREATIVE TEAM

Mike Lew's (*Playwright, he/him*) plays include **tiny father** (Audible; Cape Cod Theater Project and Ojai Playwrights Conference workshops); **Teenage Dick** (Woolly Mammoth, Huntington, Pasadena Playhouse, Seattle Rep, Donmar Warehouse, Ma-Yi; O'Neill ws); **Tiger Style!** (SCR, Olney, Huntington, La Jolla Playhouse, Alliance; O'Neill ws); Bike America (Ma-Yi, Alliance); and **microcrisis** (Ma-Yi, InterAct). He and Rehana Lew Mirza are Mellon Foundation Playwrights in Residence at Ma-Yi where they cowrote *The*

Colonialism Trilogy and the book to **Bhangin' It** with composer/lyricist Sam Willmott (La Jolla Playhouse; Richard Rodgers Award; Project Springboard and Rhinebeck Writers Retreat workshops). Mike is a Dramatists Guild Council member, Tony voter, and New Dramatists resident. Honors: Guggenheim, Lark Venturous and NYFA fellowships; Kleban, PEN, Lanford Wilson, Helen Merrill, Heideman, and Kendeda awards. Education: Juilliard, Yale.

Moritz von Stuelpnagel (*Director, he/him*) Broadway:

Bernhardt/Hamlet (Roundabout), **Present Laughter** (three Tony nominations including Best Revival), **Hand to God** (five Tony nominations including Best Play and Best Director). West End: **Hand to God** (Olivier nomination). Off-Broadway: **Seared** (MCC Theatre), **The Thanksgiving Play** (Playwrights Horizons), **Teenage Dick** (Ma-Yi/Public Theater), **Important Hats of the Twentieth Century** (Manhattan Theatre Club), **Verité** (Lincoln Center Theatre/LCT3), **Bike America** (Ma-Yi), **Trevor** (Lesser America), **Love Song of the Albanian Sous Chef** (Ensemble Studio Theatre), **Mel & El** (Ars Nova), Spacebar (Studio 42), and My Base and Scurvy Heart (Studio 42). Regional: Williamstown, Huntington, Alliance, Hudson Valley Shakes, and more. AudioPlays: Audible Originals, Playing on Air, and Huntington. Moritz is the former artistic director of Studio 42, NYC's producer of "unproducible" plays. moritzvs.com

Jennifer Weber (*Choreographer, she/her*) is an Olivier and Emmy Award nominated artist. She made her West End debut with **& Juliet** (Olivier Award Nomination). Weber is the co-creator, director, and choreographer of **The Hip Hop Nutcracker** (Annual Tour/Emmy Nominated PBS Special). She was recently commissioned by Mikhail

Baryshnikov to create **Stravinsky Re-Imagined**, premiering in 2022. Weber made her film debut as Choreographer for the Disney Channel Original Movie, **Zombies 2**. Off-Broadway credits include **KPOP** (Upcoming: Broadway Transfer/Lortel Nomination), **Teenage Dick** (The Public/Ma-Yi Theater Company), **Cruel Intentions** (LPR/US National Tour), **Stockholm** (U.S. premiere). Her concert dance work has been performed at Jacob's Pillow, New York City Center, The Apollo, The Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Southbank Center, and The Stanislavsky Music Theatre, Moscow.

www.jenniferwebernyc.com

Wilson Chin (*Scenic Design, he/him*) is excited to be reunited with Mike Lew and Moritz von Stuelpnagel after their collaborations on **Tiger Style!** (Alliance Theatre/Huntington Theatre), **Teenage Dick** (Ma-Yi Theatre/Public Theater) and **Tiny Father** (Ojai Playwrights Conference). Broadway: **Pass Over** (Lortel Award nomination), **Next Fall**. Off Broadway: **Cost of Living** (Manhattan Theatre Club), **Wild Goose Dreams** (The Public Theater, La Jolla Playhouse), **The Thanksgiving Play** (Playwrights Horizons), **My Mañana Comes** (The Playwrights Realm). Opera: **Lucia di Lammermoor** (Lyric Opera of Chicago), **Eine Florentinische Tragödie/Gianni Schicchi** (Canadian Opera Company; Dora Mavor Moore Award). Film/television: **Pass Over** (dir. Spike Lee), "Blindspot" (NBC). @wilsonchindesign

Kelsey Hunt (*Costume Designer, she/her*) is returning to Woolly Mammoth having previously designed **Gloria**, **Collective Rage**, **The Nether**, and **Cherokee**. Other DC area designs include **The Winter's Tale** (Folger Theater), **Born Yesterday** and **Whose Afraid of**

Virginia Woolf (Ford's Theater), **Stage Kiss** (Roundhouse Theater), **Bad Jews**, **Carrie: The Musical**, **Edgar & Annabel**, and **Skintight** (Studio Theater), **Love Sick**, **Trayf**, **Last Night of Ballyhoo**, **Last Schwartz**, **Copenhagen**, **Sisters Rosensweig**, **Life Sucks**, and **Body Awareness** (Theater J). Kelsey is co-author of Elizabethan Costume: Design and Construction and former Resident Designer for Triad Stage in NC. www.Kelseyhuntdesign.com

Amith Chandrashaker (*Lighting Designer, he/him*); **The Underlying Chris** (Second Stage), **Gnit** (TFANA), **Wives** (Playwrights Horizons), **A Human Being**, **Of A Sort** (Williamstown), **The Lucky Ones** (Ars Nova), **Boesman and Lena** (DD & Hewes Award, The Signature), **A Hard Time** (Pig Iron Theater Co.), **Blue Ridge** (The Atlantic), **Cardinal** (2ST), **Twelfth Night** (The Public), **Fairview** (Soho Rep, Berkeley Rep, TFANA), **Fire in Dreamland** (The Public), **Her Requiem** (LCT3), **Seven Spots on the Sun** (HH Nom., Rattlestick). Opera: **The Flying Dutchman** (Houston Grand Opera), **Falstaff** (Opera Omaha) **The Scarlet Letter** (Opera Colorado), **Abduction from the Seraglio** (Atlanta Opera). Dance: Premieres by Alexander Ekman, Aszure Barton, Kate Weare, Liz Gerring, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Rennie Harris, Aalto Ballett Theatre Essen, Staatstheater Nürnberg, The National Dance Company of Wales, and The Royal New Zealand Ballet. Designed The UNTITLED DANCEPARTYSHOWTHING on the inaugural Virgin Voyages cruise ship. Recipient of the Drama Desk and Henry Hewes awards.

Palmer Hefferan (*Sound Designer, she/her*) is excited to be back at Woolly after previously designing **Shipwreck**, **Baby Screams**, **Miracle**, **Cherokee**, **Women Laughing Alone with Salad**, and

Guards at the Taj. Select credits include: BROADWAY: **The Lifespan of a Fact** (Studio 54); **Grand Horizons** (Second Stage). OFF-BROADWAY: **Merry Wives**, **shadow/land**, **Shipwreck**, and **Wild Goose Dreams** (The Public Theater); **Marys Seacole** (Lincoln Center); **Fabulation**, **Death of the Last Black Man...** (Signature Theatre); **BLKS**, **Collective Rage**, **School Girls**, **Charm** (MCC Theater); **Something Clean**, **Bobbie Clearly** (Roundabout Theatre); **Samara** and **Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.** (Soho Rep); **The New Englanders**, **Sugar In Our Wounds**, **Important Hats of the Twentieth Century** (Manhattan Theatre Club), **Eddie and Dave** (Atlantic Theater); **Do You Feel Anger?** (Vineyard Theatre). In 2019 she received an Obie Award for "Sustained Excellence in Sound Design." She has her MFA from Yale School of Drama.

Robb Hunter (*Fight Choreographer, he/him*) has choreographed many shows at Woolly including **Gloria**, **Botticelli in the Fire**, **HIR** (which won the Helen Hayes award for choreography), **An Octoroon** and **Zombie; The American**. He has directed movement for most of the theaters in the DC area including The Shakespeare Theatre, Washington National Opera, Arena Stage, The Studio Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Olney Theatre and Constellation Theatre amongst others. Robb is a proud member of SDC, AEA, and SAG/AFTRA, and is one of 20 Fight Masters recognized by the Society of American Fight Directors. He is Choreographer in Residence at American University, combat instructor for TST's Academy for Classical Acting and teaching artist for The Studio Theatre. Robb holds an MFA in Theatre Pedagogy from VCU.

Lauren Pekel (*Stage Manager, she/her*) returns to Woolly Mammoth

after stage managing ***She the People: The Resistance Continues!***. Additional Woolly stage management team credits include ***Shipwreck A History Play About 2017, Blks***, and ***Nothing to Lose (But Our Chains)***. Her DC theatre credits include productions with Studio Theatre, Theater Alliance, Imagination Stage, and Arts on the Horizon. Regionally, she has worked with the San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program, the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, and Skylight Music Theater in Milwaukee, among others. Lauren is an alumna of the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's Theatre Program, with a BFA in Stage Management, and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

Judy Bowman, CSA (*Casting Director she/her*) **At Woolly:**

Shipwreck, Fairview, Familiar, An Octoroon, Guards at the Taj, The Convert, Lights Rise on Grace. Recent NY: Nothing Gold Can Stay, Molly Sweeney (Keen Co), Greg Keller's *Dutch Masters* (Dir. Andre Holland), *The Net Will Appear* with Richard Masur. **Regional:** Dorset Theatre Festival (10 seasons), *Antigone* and *The Invisible Hand* (Cleveland Play House); *Tiny Beautiful Things* (MRT), *The Royale* (ATC), *The Corpse Washer* (Humana), *Smart People* (DCPA/Nataki Garrett), *Bina's Six Apples* (CTC Minneapolis/Lloyd Suh), *Cry It Out* (Studio Theatre), *A Boy And His Soul* (Kitchen Th. Co). **Film/TV:** *Redemption In Cherry Springs* (Hallmark), *One Moment* with Danny Aiello, *Separation, Big Dogs, Hurricane Bianca, Trick, Lost Cat Corona, Gold Star*. Artios Award nominee for Best Webseries Casting, PT Barnum Award recipient. www.judybowmancasting.com

Ashleigh King (*Assistant Director and Movement Coordinator, she/her*) A DC area performer, choreographer, and teaching artist.

She received a Helen Hayes Award for her choreography in ***Legally Blonde*** at Keegan Theatre. Most recently her work has been seen in ***Working the Musical*** with the Labor Heritage Foundation at Black Lives Matter Plaza, ***Emma: the pop musical*** at Nextstop Theatre Company, ***Fairview*** at Woolly Mammoth, ***Second City's 'Love Actually'*** at the Kennedy Center, and at Artscentric, Adventure Theatre MTC, and Toby's Dinner Theater. Her performance credits include multiple productions at The Kennedy Center, Olney Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Studio Theatre, and Signature Theatre.

A NOTE FROM MARIA

"You already decided who I was before it was mine to choose it..."

On the eve of the first in-person production in our building in over 18 months, I am beset by so many emotions. The world is still battling with the coronavirus pandemic and its variants, the refugee crisis has intensified due to the instability in the Middle East, and the abortion ban in Texas is a devastating blow to women's rights in this country. Amidst all this, on a more personal note for Woolly Mammoth, the future for the performing arts is far from certain.

And yet, after spending time at the first rehearsal with the glorious company of artists working on *TEENAGE DICK*, I was overcome with joy. Even just writing the title of this play in a program note brings a smile to my face.

I believe the theatre as an art form is uniquely suited to knit our fractured and isolated communities together. Without the in-person communal experience of the performing arts over the last year and a half, I have felt the lack of an important space to reflect on and grapple with the joys, pain, and tremendous complexity of what it means to be human in this world. As culture creators in the heart of Washington DC, our work at Woolly strives to ignite dialogue and inspire social change on both a collective level and a personal level. And I know this play has the power to do just that.

The dramatic anguish of youth coupled with the shared trauma of high school has provided a fervent setting for many adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, particularly on film. Mike Lew's is the first play to do so with *Richard III*, arguably the most famous disabled character in the history of Western drama. It was common during Shakespeare's time to see disability as a stand in for moral deficiency. Our culture has not moved past harmful ideas about people

with disabilities; it is still common to see disabled folks as objects of pity, saintly or vulnerable. Mike Lew brilliantly wrestles with these themes, and many more, to create a character full of internal conflict. Like Shakespeare's Richard, our Richard has spent years being excluded from social and professional spheres. His desire to escape the near constant bullying that defines his life fuels an intense need for revenge, which does not end well. But this play starts out as a comedy, I promise!

I had the honor of working on the world premiere of *TEENAGE DICK*, co-produced at The Public Theater with Ma-Yi Theatre Company, a wonderful organization that focuses on new plays by Asian American writers (ma-yitheatre.org). But even BEFORE the Ma-Yi / Public production, this play was commissioned by The Apothetae, a theatre company dedicated to the "production of works that explore and illuminate the Disabled Experience" (theapothetae.org). The role of Richard was explicitly written for Gregg Mozgala, Artistic Director of The Apothetae, and he is the Richard you will be seeing tonight. I am so excited to share his immense talent with our audiences! He is also joined by Shannon DeVido, who played Barbara Buckingham in the original production. The foremost interpreter of Mike Lew's work, Tony-nominated

director Moritz von Steupnagel, helms a tremendous cast and creative team, including Woolly's very own Company Member, Emily Townley.

Do not worry if you are not familiar with Shakespeare's original play. This is a play for our time—witty, muscular, and unsettling, reminding us how frequently the able-bodied world underestimates people with disabilities....or ignores them. The wonderful cultural writer/ producer Penny Pun pointed out to me recently that I am one of the first artistic directors at a major regional theatre to ever program two plays in one season that feature disabled lead actors and characters (*TEENAGE DICK* and our forthcoming *HI, ARE YOU SINGLE?*). She also told me that the usual number in most regional theatres is zero.

Artists with disabilities are not waiting for theatres to dismantle their ableism; many are thriving in spaces of their own creation. Our community in the DMV has Open Circle Theatre Company, Washington DC's first professional theatre dedicated to creating productions that integrate the considerable talents of artists with disabilities (opencircletheatre.org). Woolly had the honor of hosting a benefit reading of *TEENAGE DICK* for Open Circle during the pandemic, and we look forward to building on that

relationship in the future.

Hasta la próxima,
Maria

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria Manuela Goyanes". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

MARIA MANUELA GOYANES

Artistic Director,
Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

“THERE’S SPEECH OF OUR BODIES”: RETURNING TO THE THEATRE WITH TEENAGE DICK

Samuel Yates, PhD

*Assistant Professor of Theatre History and Directing,
School of Theatre and Dance, Millikin University*

When we left the theatre in March 2020 we waited at home, eager and expectant that our lockdowns would end swiftly. We anticipated that we'd soon be back amongst friends, coworkers, fellow artists, and audiences. It's been a long 2020. And 2021. At Woolly, we listened to dramas unfold on our phones and through our screens and, now, here we are: together again. Though not quite the same.

We're all performers now. Under quarantine, each of us shifted through choreographies of isolated movements, spoke scripts in response to vaccination, took up props in occasional hygiene theatre (remember when we were scrubbing our grocery items?), and adopted masks as a semi-permanent costume for personal protection and community health welfare. We've performed mini-dramas for an audience of one, two, or a few throughout this time.

We have all experienced something of disability culture, too. For the first time in recent memory, large swaths of the global population experienced forced quarantine, medical crises, lingering debilitation, having to function as medical or daily caregivers, and the insecurities that come with leveraging basic self-care needs like going to the dentist or the grocery against health risks. Over 37 Million people have contracted Covid-19 in the United States. Our death toll is

surging towards 700K—nearly the entire population of D.C., and more than the entire states of Wyoming or Vermont—gone. Some of the people sitting in the theatre beside you have recovered from Covid-19. Many of us are navigating the grief that comes with the loss of close friends and family. Some of us are anxiously moving into a future where we carry Long Covid symptoms that remake our sense of wellness, health, and selves.

Yet, for many disabled people in this country, the pandemic presented the first time society met our access needs. Accommodations that disabled people have long advocated for and been denied—live-streaming events, work-from-home options, open captioning, administrative grace for illness—suddenly became the cultural norm because most of the population needed them. Our rapid adoption and acceptance of these modalities prove that it was never about society's *ability* to adapt; our accommodations were seen as unpopular, extra work, or as a financial burden.

Now, as we reenter the theatre with this performance of Mike Lew's *Teenage Dick*, we cannot leave our disabled peers behind. One in four persons in the United States lives with a disability, and approximately 15% of the global

population is disabled, so theater artists and educators should reasonably anticipate regularly working with disabled performers, directors, and designers—or at least creating art for disabled patrons. [1] Despite the statistical probability of disability inclusion, disabilities are conspicuously absent in many theatrical spaces. Many disabilities, such as limb difference and paraplegia, or sensory disabilities like blindness and deafness, are commonly played by nondisabled actors simulating a disability onstage—a theatrical practice that's sometimes called "cripping up" and "disability drag." But such performance practices are based on experiential ability loss, not disability gain. These performances tend to cultivate sympathy *for* a character rather than empathy *with* the character.

Such charity models of disability inclusion are common in many professional theaters, which routinely treat disabled artists and patrons as a special interest group for one-off interpreted performances, sensory-friendly relaxed performances, or an odd bit of "nontraditional" casting. We are the Tiny Tims at Christmastime, Christophers in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, and your Lauras in productions of *The Glass Menagerie*—but only if we perform and conform to the normative labor

expectations built around nondisabled actors. Disability performance artist and activist Patty Berne calls us elsewhere, to imagine a "vision and practice of a *yet-to-be*" that honors the diversity of the bodies and minds we inherit in society and on our stages. [2]

Teenage Dick models one version of this yet-to-be: work explicitly written for disabled performers that challenge normative perceptions about disability because disabled actors perform it. When *Teenage Dick*'s Richard moves through the halls of Roseland High School, we see theatrical iterations of other notorious theatrical hunchbacks like palimpsests on stage. Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Hertzog in *The Black Crook*. *The Secret Garden*'s conflicted Dr. Craven. Richard, for his part, may be less a villain than Shakespeare's "crookback'd king," though Lew's play is still guided by "a politicized disability critique of representation and stereotype." [3] In a moment of self-reflection, Richard tells us: "I'm thinking of how there's the speech of our words and how my words can be made to dissemble, but then there's speech of our bodies, and in that I am stilted, deformed ... and all of my words fall short." Richard, moving before a mirrored dance studio wall, challenges us to listen to what our bodies tell us and he understands how nondisabled listeners twist his body language into

something stilted, deformed, and unfixable until it is ultimately quieted. The speech of Richard's body tells a story of ostracization, revenge, and social valuation that pivots along the fulcrum of disability.

Teenage Dick invites everyone in the theater to practice what disability activist Mia Mingus calls “access intimacy”—a way of holding space with someone's access needs without a person needing to articulate this need explicitly.

Following Mingus, Lew's work “reorients our approach from one where disabled people are expected to squeeze into able bodied people's world, and instead *calls upon able bodied people to inhabit our world.*” [4] This should be less of a leap for all of us now. Our shared experiences throughout the pandemic reveal just how contingent our bodies—and normative senses of health and wellness—really are. Moreover, Covid-19 has laid bare social inequities surrounding access to healthcare, barriers to economic and social participation in public life, and access to the performing arts. As we move forward together, this performance of *Teenage Dick* challenges us to listen to the speech of our bodies—and build a more empathetic, accessible, caring world in response.

[1] These estimates use capacious framings of disability, including physical, sensory, cognitive, and learning disabilities. If the number seems high, we might reflect on cultural biases towards visible (i.e., apparent) disabilities rather than “invisible” disabilities. For more regarding U.S. and global disability statistics, see: Disability and Health Data System CDC, “Disability Impacts All of Us,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 16, 2020).

[2] *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement Is Our People, A Disability Justice Primer*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: Sins Invalid, 2019), 29. Emphasis Original.

[3] David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 104.

[4] Mia Mingus, “Access Intimacy, Interdependence, and Disability Justice,” 11 April 2019, <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2017/04/12/access-intimacy-interdependence-and-disability-justice/>.

IN THE LOBBY

IN THE BALANCE: PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT



ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My name is Jessica Danielle Skintges Wallach. I am a photographer, teacher, mother, artist, wife and accessibility queen. I have been the lead character in *Teenage Dick*, a teenager who finds life to be hard, seemingly wildly unfair, and I blamed it on the way my body appeared to the world around me, as if it had wronged me. At the same time, I loved my body: my voice that sounded so different to others kept me sane, my legs that had that odd gait carried me places. I could see myself, whether or not others could.

This body of work comes out of a series of classes that I taught from January 2020 through June 2021 on photographing the climate crises, COVID-19, and white privilege. The goal of these classes was to create images that address the complex nature of intersectional oppressions, and represent how these things impact us personally. I hope this collection prompts you to consider your own body and the various environments you move through.



I am a White woman with Cerebral Palsy. Some of these photos allowed me to lean into my disability; allowing me to use my shaky hands. These photos are all informed by my whiteness, it dictates my every choice from lighting to depth of field to the space I photograph in. Glen Echo and the Bull Run Battlefield, the flowers in the springs of COVID. Let's just say it is limiting at best and presents a bit of a warped perspective -- neat, crisp, and in search of perfection.

These photos are dedicated to the newest members of my tribe, those with long haul COVID. To you I say, "Welcome. I believe you! I hear you. You have become a part of a group

of crafty, smart, tenacious, loving and lovable people. I am sorry that you are met with disbelief time and again, not finding the help you need in the ways you need it. We have come far in the rights for disabled folk, but we have not dismantled ableism and you are bearing the brunt of that."



JESSICA WALLACH, GREATER DEPTH MEDIA

Jessica Wallach is a seasoned photographer, videographer, educator, community activist, and the owner and operator of Greater Depth Media. Since 1998, Jessica has worked with clients throughout the DMV that are actively engaged in making the world a better place. Jessica's work behind the camera honors the aspirations of her clients by creating imagery that reflects their work and community building. For more information, please visit www.greaterdepthmedia.com.

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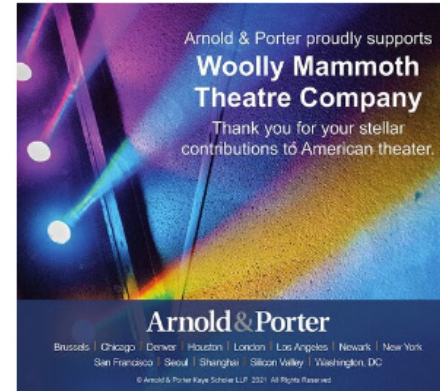
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Unlike the Woolly Mammoth, which went extinct more than 10,000 years ago, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company isn't going anywhere anytime soon. The reason? People like you! Over our 40+ year history, contributions from patrons continue to provide the bedrock of support that makes everything we do possible. Call and speak with a member of our development staff at 202-312-5267 or email us at development@woollymammoth.net.

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To learn more about making a gift to Woolly Mammoth or to take advantage of the new benefits, please contact our Development Department by calling 202-312-5276 or email us at development@woollymammoth.net. Thank you for making our work possible! 📌 Contributors and Funders

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We would also like to give special acknowledgement to the Bold Builders – the winning team of our 2021 Soapbox Challenge raising the most money for Woolly Mammoth.

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+ WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

Woolly Mammoth creates badass theatre that highlights the stunning, challenging, and tremendous complexity of our world. For over 40 years, Woolly has maintained a high standard of artistic rigor while simultaneously daring to take risks, innovate, and push beyond perceived boundaries. Co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Emika Abe, Woolly is located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol Building and the White House. This unique location influences Woolly's investment in actively working towards an equitable, participatory, and creative democracy.

One of the few remaining theatres in the country to maintain a company of artists, Woolly serves as an essential research and development role within the American theatre. Plays premiered here have gone on to productions at hundreds of theatres all over the world and have had lasting impacts on the field. These include the world premiere productions of Danai Gurira's *Eclipsed* in 2009 that later went on to be the first Broadway play with a cast & creative team of all Black women; Bruce Norris' Pulitzer-Prize Winner *Clybourne Park* in 2010; and Anne Washburn's *Mr. Burns: a post-electric play* in 2012. Woolly produces theatre beyond our building by sending productions like Aaron Posner's *Stupid Fucking Bird* across the nation and bringing Aleshea Harris's *What to Send Up When It Goes Down* to neighborhoods throughout DC. A national tour of

Madeline's Sayet's *Where We Belong* will launch in 2021. In addition, Woolly was the first to pioneer Pay-What-You-Will tickets in the DMV, which are now available at every single performance.

Woolly Mammoth acknowledges that the theatre stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples. Furthermore, the foundation of this city, and most of the original buildings in Washington, DC, were funded by the sale of enslaved people of African descent and built by their hands. Understanding that history and context, Woolly values building relationships with neighbors and resident artists in the DMV area. Our nationally-acclaimed Connectivity Department is one of the ways we accomplish this by linking Woolly to like-minded community organizations in order to generate mutually beneficial, impact and power-aware partnerships.

"Uniquely plugged in to the mad temper of the times" (*New York Times*)

"The hottest theater company in town" (*Washington Post*)

"A place where Washingtonians can find clever, unusual, often over-the-top theatrical experiences they can't find anywhere else" (*Washington Life Magazine*)

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+ PASADENA PLAYHOUSE

The Pasadena Playhouse is a place where people have gathered for 100 years to experience bold and important theater. It is one of the most prolific theaters in American history with a legacy of profound theatrical impact and courageous new work. In 1937, the Playhouse was officially recognized as the State Theater of California for its contribution and commitment to the dramatic arts. Today it continues that tradition of excellence under the helm of producing artistic director Danny Feldman. Dedicated to enriching lives through theater, community programs and learning initiatives, Pasadena Playhouse is a living force in the community.