



For Immediate Release

January 4 2024

Press Contacts:

Amy Killion, amy@bucklesweetmedia.com

Rebecca Calkin,
rebecca.calkin@woollymammoth.net

**WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
THE SENSATIONAL SEA MINK-ETTES**

**Written by Weissberg Commissioned Playwright Vivian J.O. Barnes
Directed by Taylor Reynolds
February 4 – March 3, 2024**

WASHINGTON– Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company presents the **world premiere** of [THE SENSATIONAL SEA MINK-ETTES](#) from February 4 – March 3, 2024. Written by Virginia-born playwright **Vivian J.O. Barnes** and directed by **Taylor Reynolds**, the play follows an HBCU dance team as they prepare for their homecoming performance. Tickets and further information can be found on the new Woolly Mammoth website [here](#).

The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes are days away from their homecoming performance and the pressure is on. The student body, the administration, the alumni, and their families are all expecting perfection. As the big day creeps closer, the women must contend with flaring tempers and bodies pushed to their limits. Together, they explore what it takes to be a successful and supportive team — all while dealing with some unusual circumstances.

“THE SENSATIONAL SEA MINK-ETTES is our second world premiere this season, and I’m so thrilled to put Vivian’s inventive work on the Woolly stage as part of the Weissberg Commissions,” says **Maria Manuela Goyanes, Woolly Mammoth Artistic Director**. “I know our audiences have been looking forward to something big, flashy, and fun — but with the kind of off-kilter eye that Woolly is known for — and this is it! *Sea Mink-ettes* is about female friendship, HBCU culture, dance, and even Beyonce. But, it also dives in to the pressure for excellence facing young Black women — and the ways in which our society fails them. The way the play showcases that pressure is surprising, innovative, and wholly unexpected.”

The Sensational Sea-Minkettes is the playwright's commissioning piece that secured her a place in Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company’s first dedicated commissioning program, which

launched last season. The Weissberg Commissions provides generative artists with the opportunity to innovate and take artistic risks in the creation of new theatrical works. The program allows Woolly Mammoth to support DC-based or born artists and non-local artists writing about topics that directly relate to life in the DMV.


As part of Woolly Mammoth's Connectivity program, students from Howard University will shadow members of the production team and two students will understudy roles.

Developmental support is provided through the Weissberg Commissions funded by the Weissberg Foundation. Vivian J.O. Barnes is a recipient of a Venturous Playwright Fellowship supported by Venturous Theater Fund. The Fellowship was created with the Lark Theatre and is now in partnership with the Playwrights' Center.

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Kimberly Dodson as Maya
Lauren Fraites as Aleyse
Billie Krishawn as Shantee
Khalia Muhammad as Gabby
Kalen Robinson as Racquel
Sabrina Lynne Sawyer as Kiera
Wynter Cook as U/S Aleyse, Kiera
Mahlet Gebreyesus; U/S Gabby, Racquel

Fatima Dyfan, Assistant Director
Ashleigh King, Choreographer
Danielle Preston, Costume Designer
Paige Hathaway, Scenic Designer
Tosin Olufolabi (Woolly Mammoth Company of Artists), Sound Designer
Minjoo Kim; Lighting Designer
Scott Monnin, Associate Lighting Designer
Mars Pyles, Associate Costume Designer
Megan Holden, Associate Scenic Designer
LaShawn Melton, Hair & Makeup Designer
Di Carey, Associate Sound Designer
Julia Singer, Stage Manager

Jazzy Davis, Assistant Stage Manager
Trevion Walker, Production Assistant
Alex Rojas, Light Board Op
Matthew Cheney, Lighting Programmer
Preston Heard, Sound Board Op
Stephen Lyons, Crew Swing
Yaritza Pacheco, Scenic Charge
Caitlin Bousein, Props Supervisor
Breanna Dunbar, Wardrobe Supervisor
Shirley (Sherri) Curtis, Hair & Make Up Crew
Danica Rodriguez, Casting Director
The Experience Band & Show 

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes runs from **February 4-March 3, 2024**. The typical performance week includes Wednesday-Sunday performances, with weeknights at 8:00 PM, Saturdays at 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM, and Sundays at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM.

Review the full performance schedule at woollymammoth.net.

TALKBACKS (IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PERFORMANCE)

- Friday, February 16, 8pm (Black Out Performance)
- Sunday, February 25, 2pm

ACCESS PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

- ASL Interpreted performances on Friday, February 16 at 8pm, Saturday, February 17 at 8 pm, and Sunday, February 25 at 2 pm which feature interpreters placed inside the theatre who translate what the actors are saying and expressing to the audience.
- Audio Described performances on Saturday, February 17 at 3 pm and Saturday, February 24 at 3 pm which feature live narration interspersed with the actors' dialogue used to provide information surrounding key visual elements.
- Open Captioned performances on Wednesday, February 21 at 8 pm and Thursday, February 22 at 8 pm which feature permanently visible, on-screen text description that displays dialogue, identifies speakers, and describes other relevant sounds
- Mask-required performances on Tuesday, February 27 at 8 pm and Saturday, March 2 at 3 pm which require all audience members and staff to wear face masks covering the nose and mouth when not actively eating or drinking.

Assistive listening devices are available for all performances. Transmitters and accompanying headsets and ear speakers are available at the Box Office. For more information on Access Performances please visit [the play's website page](#).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets start at \$34 and are available at woollymammoth.net, by phone at (202) 393-3939, and via email at tickets@woollymammoth.net.

Preview Pay-What-You-Will performances on Sunday, February 4 and Tuesday, February 6 through Woolly Mammoth and TodayTix. There are also Pay-What-You-Will tickets available for every remaining performance by selecting the PWYW seats and adjusting the ticket price at woollymammoth.net. PWYW tickets are open for sale 2 weeks before the first preview.

Patrons who are 30 years old and younger may purchase tickets starting at \$25 for any performance. There are also discounts available for educators, first responders, and active U.S. military personnel, spouses, and veterans. More information is available at woollymammoth.net.

CONTENT TRANSPARENCY

THE SENSATIONAL SEA MINK-ETTES involves discussion and depiction of mental health struggles as experienced by Black women including anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and disordered eating. This play also includes profanity, discussion of masturbation, and sexually explicit references.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Vivian J. O. Barnes (Finishing Commission) is a writer from Virginia. Her short plays have been produced at Ensemble Studio Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Steppenwolf Theatre. She has developed plays at Geffen Playhouse, The Playwrights Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, Second Stage Theater, Clubbed Thumb, Montana Repertory Theatre, and Ojai Playwrights Conference. In the TV world, she's been staffed on shows at Amazon, Peacock, and Apple TV. She lives in Los Angeles.

ABOUT WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

The Tony Award®-winning Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company 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. One of the few remaining theatres in the country to maintain a company of artists, Woolly serves 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. Currently co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Kimberly E. Douglas, Woolly is located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol and the White House. This unique location influences Woolly's investment in actively working towards an equitable, participatory, and creative democracy.

Woolly Mammoth 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.

ABOUT WEISSBERG COMMISSIONS

In April 2022, the Weissberg Foundation chose Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company for a grant to honor the late Marvin Weissberg, a tremendous philanthropist and theatre lover. The resulting Weissberg Commissions Project is the theatre's first dedicated commissioning program.

Commissions under this new program range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per project and fund completely new full-length plays, the testing of new ideas, or allowing artists to finish incomplete works. The Weissberg Commissions are given to writers, directors, designers, choreographers, or other generative artists who represent artistic innovation in our field and share Woolly's vision for a socially just world.

In the 2022–2023 season, we have selected and collaborated with Gethsemane Herron, Justin Weaks, Vivian Barnes, and Jenn Kidwell as artists for the Weissberg Commissions.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Facebook: [Facebook.com/WoollyMammothTC](https://www.facebook.com/WoollyMammothTC)

Instagram, X, Threads, & Tiktok: @woollymammothtc