



**For Immediate Release**

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**WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS BENEFIT READING OF SARAH RUHL'S  
*DEAR ELIZABETH* ON APRIL 29 AT 8:00 PM**

**READING RAISES FUNDS FOR WOOLLY MAMMOTH, DIRECTED BY HOLLY  
TWYFORD AND FEATURING NANCY ROBINETTE AND RICK FOUCHEUX**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company will present a live benefit reading of Sarah Ruhl's *Dear Elizabeth: A Play in Letters from Elizabeth Bishop to Robert Lowell and Back Again*. The reading is directed by Holly Twyford, recently seen in Woolly Mammoth's *My Mama and the Full-Scale Invasion*, and performed by nationally-celebrated DC-based actors and alumni of Woolly's Company of Artists Nancy Robinette and Rick Foucheux. The reading honors Woolly Mammoth's long history with Ruhl, one of the most produced playwrights in Woolly's 44-year history, including productions of *In the Next Room (or the Vibrator Play)*, *The Clean House*, and the world premiere of the Helen Hayes award-winning *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. Ruhl was also awarded a MacArthur "Genius" grant, is a Tony Award nominee, and is a Pulitzer Prize finalist.

*Dear Elizabeth* intimately reimagines a correspondence between two of the greatest poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, shedding light on the vulnerability of artistic creation and the enduring power of friendship. The reading will take place at Woolly Mammoth Theatre on April 29 at 8pm. Tickets start at \$100 and [available here](#).

“Sarah Ruhl was one of the first artists to inspire me to go into the theatre. I remember vividly seeing her work in the Brown New Plays Festival over twenty years ago. She is still one of the hardest working artists in the field, and I love that *Dear Elizabeth* is about deep artistic collaboration and community over a long period of time,” says **Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes**, “And I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge the talent and generosity of Nancy Robinette, who came to us with the idea of reading this play as a benefit to Woolly. I’m thrilled to have an opportunity to work with Holly again, this time as a director, and reunite her with Nancy and Rick, all powerhouses and foundational forces of the DC theatre landscape as we know it. Just like in the letters between Bishop and Lowell, this event is meant to celebrate the artists who inspire us to keep collaborating, to keep dreaming up new ideas, and to keep sharing them with the world.”

**Managing Director Kimberly Douglas** adds, “For over forty-four years, Woolly Mammoth continues to build and uplift artistry in the creative community, pushing the boundaries of artistic ambition and exploring innovative ways to connect with community. Woolly Mammoth is a creative guidepost for New Work and Connectivity and we will continue to deepen our commitment to collaboration, innovation, and artistry that makes such new and exciting work possible. With fundraising events like this, we get to share that commitment on a much more intimate level and ask that you support this exuberant community as it continues to grow.”

The evening will begin with a VIP event: a live virtual conversation with playwright Sarah Ruhl (currently in production with *Orlando* at Signature Theatre in NY), pre-show wine reception, and a curated selection of props and costumes from Woolly’s history in the rehearsal hall. The reading will take place in the theatre, followed by a post-reading conversation and wine & dessert reception.

The event will take place at **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** on Monday April 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. For more information, please visit the [Woolly Mammoth website](#).

## TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets start at \$100 for access to the reading and post-show reception. All tickets include access to the performance, post-reading discussion, and wine & dessert reception. VIP tickets are available for \$175 and include a pre-show virtual discussion with playwright Sarah Ruhl and access to a pre-show wine reception. Tickets are available here:

<https://event.woollymammoth.net/dearelizabeth>

## EVENT DETAILS AND SCHEDULE

*A benefit reading of*

DEAR ELIZABETH: A Play in Letters from Elizabeth Bishop to Robert Lowell and Back Again  
by Sarah Ruhl

Featuring Nancy Robinette and Rick Foucheux

Directed by Holly Twyford

April 29 at 8:00 PM at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

*Dear Elizabeth* intimately reimagines a correspondence between two of the greatest poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell, shedding light on the vulnerability of artistic creation and the enduring power of friendship.

6:30PM – VIP Guests arrive

6:45PM – VIP Experience with Sarah Ruhl in Woolly's Rehearsal Hall

7:00PM – Lobby open to all guests

7:30PM – Doors open to the theatre

8:00PM – Reading begins

Immediately following – post-reading discussion, followed by wine and dessert reception in the lower lobby

Tickets: <https://event.woollymammoth.net/dearelizabeth>

## ABOUT SARAH RUHL

Sarah Ruhl is an award-winning American playwright, author, essayist, and professor.

Originally from Chicago, Ms. Ruhl received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in English at Brown University, as well as her M.F.A. in playwriting, where she studied with Paula Vogel. She also spent a year of graduate work studying English literature at Pembroke College, Oxford. An alum of **13P** and of New Dramatists, she won a **MacArthur Fellowship** in 2006 and the **Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award** in 2016. She was the recipient of the **PEN Center Award** for a mid-career playwright, the **Whiting Writers award**, a Helen Merrill Award for Playwriting, the Feminist Press' Forty under Forty award, and a **Lilly Award**. She proudly served on the executive council of the Dramatist's Guild for three years, and she is currently on the faculty at Yale School of Drama.

Her plays include **Stage Kiss**, **In the Next Room, or the vibrator play** (Pulitzer Prize finalist, Tony Award nominee for best new play), **The Clean House** (Pulitzer Prize Finalist, 2005; The Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, 2004); **Passion Play**, (Pen American award, The Fourth Freedom Forum Playwriting Award from The Kennedy Center); **Dead Man's Cell Phone** (Helen Hayes award); **Melancholy Play (a musical with Todd Almond)**; **Eurydice**; **Orlando**, **Demeter in the City** (NAACP nomination), **Late: a cowboy song**, **Three Sisters**, **Dear Elizabeth**, **The Oldest Boy** and most recently, and **For Peter Pan on her 70th Birthday** and **How To Transcend a Happy Marriage**. Her plays have been produced on Broadway at the Lyceum by Lincoln Center Theater, Off-Broadway at Playwrights' Horizons, Second Stage, and at Lincoln Center's Mitzi Newhouse Theater. Her plays have been produced regionally all over the country, with premieres at Yale Repertory Theater, the Goodman Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and the Piven Theatre Workshop in Chicago. Her plays have also been produced internationally and have been translated into over twelve languages, including Polish, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian, Korean, German and Arabic. She is also the author of four books: **Smile: The Story of a Face**, **Letters from Max: A Book of Friendship**, **44 Poems for You**, and **100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write**, which was a Times Notable Book of the Year.

Of her work, Sarah has said that she tries to "interpret how people subjectively experience life..." "Everyone has a great, horrible opera inside him. I feel that my plays, in a way, are very old-fashioned. They're pre-Freudian in the sense that the Greeks and Shakespeare worked with similar assumptions. Catharsis isn't a wound being excavated from childhood." She writes about fish that walk, dogs that witness family tragedy, a dead man whose cellphone won't stop ringing, and a woman who turns into an almond.

She lives in Brooklyn with her husband, and their three wonderful children: Anne, William, and Hope.

## 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.

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