



**For Immediate Release**

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**HOMEgrown: WOOLLY X SPIT DAT AT THEARC THEATER  
LIMITED LIVE ENGAGEMENT AT THEARC July 9-11, 2021**

(Washington, DC) **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** and Connectivity Core Partners **Spit Dat** and **THEARC Theater (a project of Building Bridges Across the River)** join together to produce, **HOMEgrown**, a collaborative theatrical piece that brings local legends of DC's spoken word scene together with Ward 7 and Ward 8 residents to celebrate the resiliency of DC, its people, and our communities. **HOMEgrown** will premiere outdoors this summer at THEARC Theatre **July 9 - 11, 2021**. Tickets are available now on Woolly Mammoth's website.

"We [THEARC Theater] are thrilled to have **HOMEgrown** come to THEARC campus staged in THEARC's Living Classroom next to THEARC Farm. This is a joyful coming together for the Connectivity Core partnerships between Woolly Mammoth, Spit Dat and THEARC Theater," says **Kimberly E. Douglas, Director of THEARC Theater**. "After a year of not being together, we are thrilled to see and experience emerging Ward 7 & 8 spoken word artists share their stories and celebrate their home East of the River."

**HOMEgrown** is the cumulative performance project of **Spit Dat Academy**, a dynamic program of workshops, led by Spit Dat hosts **Dwayne Lawson-Brown** and **Drew Anderson** and established members of the local poetry community to support the growth of the city's next great performance artists. This original piece is directed by **Alina Collins Maldonado** and features Spit Dat Academy members **Shay Izegwire, Shehariah Johnson, Christian Parks, Kiarra Patterson**, and **Yalan Sesay**, in addition to DC favorites **Charity Blackwell, Kenneth Carroll**, and **O-Slice** who weave together poetry, storytelling, hop hop, and verse to answer the question, "What is home to you?"

"**HOMEgrown** will be our first in-person production since March of 2020. I cannot believe it's been 15 months since Woolly has gathered people into a space to experience live theatre," says **Maria Manuela Goyanes, Woolly Mammoth Artistic Director**. "I'm deeply honored that our first foray back will be with our core partners and collaborators at THEARC and Spit Dat. It feels auspicious to have this momentous

occasion be focused on the talents of local artists and I hope it's a harbinger of many more exciting projects that will highlight DC's vibrant community."

Come find strength in community and experience home.

## PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

### HOMEGROWN runs July 9 - 11, 2021

Friday, July 9, 2021: Performance at 8:30 pm

Saturday, July 10, 2021: Performance at 8:30 pm

Sunday, July 11, 2021: Performances at 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm

## TICKETS

Tickets prices start at \$5 and can be reserved online at [woollymammoth.net](https://woollymammoth.net), by phone at (202) 393-3939 or via email at [tickets@woollymammoth.net](mailto:tickets@woollymammoth.net). Same day ticket purchases can be made in person starting 30 minutes before the performance at THEARC.

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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Twitter: @WoollyMammothTC

Instagram: @woollymammothtc

Facebook.com/SpitDatDC

Twitter: @SpitDatDC

Instagram: @spitdatdc

Facebook.com/THEARCDC

Twitter: @THEARC\_DC

Instagram: @thearc\_dc

## ABOUT WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

**Woolly Mammoth** is "the hottest theater company in town" (*Washington Post*); priding itself on developing, producing, and making theatre that disrupts conventional processes and stimulates transformative experiences. For almost four decades, Woolly has held a unique position at the leading edge of the American theater, earning a reputation for staying "uniquely plugged in to the mad temper of the times" (*New York*

*Times*). The co-leadership of María Manuela Goyanes (Artistic Director) and Emika Abe (Managing Director) is supported by a core company of artists that holds itself to a high standard of artistic excellence. Woolly is relentless in its desire to take risks, experiment, innovate, interrogate, and create a radically inclusive community. Located in Washington, DC, Woolly Mammoth stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples.

### ABOUT SPIT DAT

**Spit Dat** is the longest-running open mic in the nation's capital. A profoundly intimate artistic and spiritual experience which has fought to remain a safe space through nearly two decades of societal changes, Spit Dat combines world-class talent with a living room vibe. As much a "venue" as it is an "event", Spit Dat has won multiple awards for its contribution to the growth of generations of acclaimed international artists. But perhaps its most valued accolade lives in being renowned among its staunch community as no less than "Church".

### ABOUT THEARC THEATER

THEARC Theater, a program of Building Bridges Across the River, is a home for arts and culture East of the River providing state of the art performance venue spaces, programs for families, youth, and adults, and world class performances. Since 2005, THEARC Theater has served the Black & Brown community in Southeast D.C. providing opportunities and access to experience programming rooted in the Black diaspora. THEARC Theater has also served as a training hub for youth production designers through our largest workforce initiative, the ICAN Technical Theater Internship program. THEARC Theater is located within the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC), a 203,000 square-foot facility providing access to best-in-class education, arts, recreation, health and social service programs for families living east of the Anacostia River.

### ABOUT DREW ANDERSON



A science teacher turned teaching artist, poet turned parodist, and marathon runner turned motivational speaker, **Drew Anderson** is as hard to define as he is to ignore. Known lovingly throughout DC's performing arts world as "Droopy the Broke Baller", Drew is founder and co-host of Spit Dat, the longest-running open mic in DC. Recipient of the prestigious DC Arts and Humanities Fellowship presented by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Drew has recently merged his decade-plus of artistic acumen and educational expertise to develop Spoof

School, a dynamic arts education integration residency which teaches students of all ages how to make learning fun by "making fun" of their learning.

### ABOUT DWAYNE B!



**Dwayne B! aka the “Crochet Kingpin”** is a DC native poet, activist, breakdancer, and fashion designer. He is one of the hosts of DC’s longest running open mic series, Spit Dat, as well as Host-Captain for Busboys and Poets’ 450K location. In addition to featured readings at every Busboys and Poets location, SAGAfest Iceland 2015, Spirits and Lyrics NYC and Manassas, Woolly Mammoth Theater, and the C2EA “We Can End AIDS” march, Dwayne’s short form poetry prowess led him to win the Best Haiku Award at the 2011 National Underground Spoken-Word Poetry Awards (NUSPA). His work to increase HIV awareness through spoken-word garnered recognition from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, BBCAmerica, the Discovery Channel, and The Washington Post. Ultimately, his goal is to force his audience to feel. His recent collection of works, *One Color Kaleidoscope*, is a testament to self-definition and change. When not documenting his life through poetic meter, he can be found on the metro making scarves and hats, or singing karaoke.

### ABOUT ALINA COLLINS MALDONADO



**Alina Collins Maldonado** is an actor, director, theater educator, and playwright based in the Washington, DC area. As an actor, she has performed at The Lincoln Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Folger Theatre, 1st Stage, and GALA Hispanic Theatre among others.

As a director, and bilingual theater educator, Alina has worked with youth arts programs in the DC area, guiding students in the creation and production of their own work. Alina has had the pleasure of creating theatre with students from ESOL classes and backgrounds as well.

As a playwright, Alina is invested in telling authentic stories from the hearts of underrepresented communities. With her journalistic approach to writing, she seeks out stories of memories and truths that spin unexpected threads of connection between us as humans. Alina holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, and in Gender, Sexuality and

Women's Studies, from Virginia Commonwealth University. Alina is a member of Actor's Equity Association.

## **SPIT DAT ACADEMY ARTISTS**

### **ABOUT SHAY IZEGWIRE**



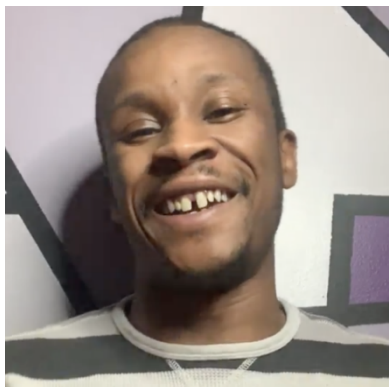
**Shay Izegwire** is a 30-year-old who people should look out for. She uses poetry as an art to express her own stories and stories that may help other people, if not her own. Shay has been writing poetry since the tender age of 9, but did her first open mic at the age of 13. Shay was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth, and with poetry, she is able to let some of those emotions out in a creative way. Shay performs at a host of open mics in the DMV area and just wants to use her poetry to help others.

### **ABOUT SHEHARIAH JOHNSON**



**Shehariah Johnson** is a 28-year-old graduate of American University, class of 2014, with a major in Psychology and minor in Spanish. She is a domestic violence survivor and activist, merging art with her journey. She is a proud boy mom to a little being who has changed her Life for the better. She is also the new CEO/Founder of her 501(c)3 nonprofit organization called Silence Kills, which is dedicated to supporting survivors on their journeys of healing. She is on a journey of healing and recovery as she fulfills her role as a Wounded Healer. Since being reborn in 2015 due to Domestic Violence, it is her life's mission to empower, educate, and encourage speaking on the unspoken. She wants her Life to represent Hope, Resiliency & relying on Faith when it seems all else fails. She is that Phoenix that crashed and burned, now fluttering her magnificent wings out of the fire. She uses spoken word as a therapy tool and way to help manage her survivor-hood.

### **ABOUT CHRISTIAN PARKS**



**Christian Parks**, B.A. in Theater and M.A. in Teaching, hails from Philadelphia. DC transplant living in the Great Ward 8. God is the giver of all things beautiful—even good art. Artistry is the talent that breathes new life. Christian is a poet, a novelist, a teacher, and a friend. Christian seeks to use those talents to bring healing and hope to a world full of



pain and sorrow. The art will speak for itself as the audience encounters a story unlike any they have heard before. Solidarity is the process and liberation is the goal.

### ABOUT KIARRA PATTERSON



**Kiarra Patterson**, affectionately known as Ki, was bred and cornbread fed in Southeast DC. She is a graduate of the first HBCU, Lincoln University, and completed her dual masters in Social Work and Sex Therapy at Widener University in May of 2021. She is a poet, self published author, and certified teaching artist, but she knows there is no limit to further developing her craft. Ki believes poetry is a healing power and continues to create the space for expression and release in inclusive spaces.

### ABOUT YALAN SESAY



Hailing from New Jersey, **Yalan Sesay** is a 27-year-old vocal percussionist and poet who resides in the Ward 8 District of Washington, DC. From a young age, Yalan has been practicing and honing his craft of beatboxing in various street performances and open mics. He recently started poetry under the tutelage of the legendary DC Spit Dat founders Dwayne Lawson-Brown and Drew Anderson. When he isn't working on his crafts, Yalan can be found working on his Martial Arts skills, practicing Muay Thai and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Most of the time, he can be found working hard for his community by positively influencing the lives of youth that are in transition from the streets as a Career Pathways Specialist for the Covenant House of Greater Washington. Through his artforms, Yalan wishes to positively inspire and expose others to different ideas.

### FEATURED ARTISTS

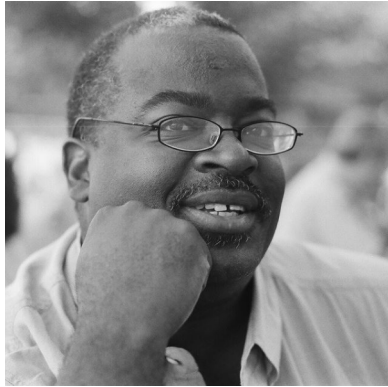
#### ABOUT CHARITY BLACKWELL



**Charity Blackwell** is a spoken word artist, poet, emcee, motivational speaker, activist, and teacher who hails from South Carolina and now calls Washington, DC home. As a queer woman of color and daughter of a former NAACP president, Charity has always used her talents to uplift the LGBTQ and African American communities, as well as

advocating for social justice, youth development, domestic violence awareness, and women's rights. She's performed on stages and media outlets near and far, including Lincoln Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Hirshhorn Museum, BBC News, Major League Soccer Network, TedxTysons, and more. Charity is a graduate of Trinity University in Washington, DC, where she earned a bachelor's and master's in communications.

### ABOUT KENNETH CARROLL



**Kenneth Carroll** is a native Washingtonian whose poetry and prose has appeared in numerous publications including, *Bum Rush The Page*, *In Search Of Color Everywhere*, *Potomac Review*, *Worcester Review*, *Obsidian*, *the Washington Post*, *Indiana Review*, *Beyond the Frontier* and *Gargoyle*.

His book of poetry is entitled *So What: For The White Dude Who Said This Ain't Poetry*." He has had 3 of his plays produced including, *Make My Funk The P-Funk*, published

by Ishmael Reed in *Konch*.

He is former director of DC WritersCorps and the African American Writers Guild He is the 2021 Blood Orange Review winner in fiction. He was a writer for BET's Story Porch program featuring Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis. He has performed at the Kennedy Center, Nuyorican Café, Library of Congress, Beyond Baroque, Gala Hispanic Theater, and at universities and cultural institutions around the country

He is married and the proud father of a daughter and two sons.

### ABOUT O-SLICE



PG county, Maryland. Ibadan, Nigeria. The color blue. 90s television and cartoons. A lot of really good raps. A lot of songs that make you feel something. Uses words as a canvas. The show stealing bandit. O-Slice.