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WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES ITS 2020-2021 SEASON INTRODUCING WOOLLY ON DEMAND AND THE GOLDEN TICKET

(Washington, DC) With transparency and cautious optimism as guiding pillars, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company is pleased to announce its 2020-2021 season. Season 41 features the return of a postponed production, new partnerships, a digital season, and an exciting evolution of Woolly's subscription plan. Anticipated to take place between Fall 2020 and Summer 2021, Woolly's timeline is designed to be flexible given the rolling nature of the re-opening process. Woolly will announce dates for shows on an ongoing basis, when the theatre is certain it can move forward responsibly and ensure the health and safety of staff, artists, and audiences. For more information about Woolly's plans to reopen, visit woollymammoth.net/about-us/safety.

"Although we do not know what the future holds, Woolly will lean into our long history of experimentation and adaptability to meet this moment. We are here to **celebrate joy, build resilience, and provide cultural nourishment**, and we will do so by expanding the definition of what our theatre can be," shared Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Emika Abe, in a joint statement. "This adaptation will align with the physical and emotional well-being of our community and include furthering our stated commitments to artistic innovation and radical inclusivity, onstage and off. Using the principles of anti-racism to guide us, we are eager to continue to dive into the full scope of this work. We see Woolly as an essential space to make art that is grappling with the tremendous complexity of what it means to be human in this world. This season, whenever and however you get to see it, exemplifies the transformative power of storytelling and the unique capability of theatre to mend a fractured spirit."

Since shelter-in-place began, many people have been craving human touch and connection. Woolly seeks to quench this thirst by beginning the season with two World Premiere shows exploring romance, relationships, and risqué rendezvous. Join Ryan J. Haddad (Netflix's *The Politician*) in **HI, ARE YOU SINGLE?**, as he navigates the complexities of love as a gay man with cerebral palsy, in this sensitive solo performance. Then, embark on an unforgettable odyssey with Kareem M. Lucas' **BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT IT AIN'T ALWAYS PRETTY**, an epic poem about one Black man's seemingly never-ending journey on the path to self-discovery.

The season continues with The Bushwick Starr's production of **ANIMAL WISDOM**, by Obie Award-winning composer and performer Heather Christian and co-directed by Emilyn Kowaleski and Mark Rosenblatt, a concert, cabaret requiem grounded in blues and inspired by real conversations between Heather and her deceased relatives. Next, **TEENAGE DICK** by Mike Lew and directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel, makes a reappearance after its postponement last season. A modern, darkly comic re-telling of Shakespeare's *Richard III* set in the most

treacherous of places – high school, *TEENAGE DICK* originated at Ma-Yi Theatre Company in association with The Public Theater and was commissioned and developed by The Apothetae, a company dedicated to the production of works that explore and illuminate the disabled experience.

The DC arts landscape offers many opportunities for institutions to come together and produce work that neither could do on their own; opening up spectacular artistic experiences to larger audiences. Among Woolly's collaborations this season are partnerships with **Folger Theatre** to present ***WHERE WE BELONG*** by Madeline Sayet and directed by Mei Ann Teo, an autobiographical account of an Indigenous theatre-maker who, through her study of Shakespeare, finds that the UK has yet to reckon with its colonial past; and a co-production with **Strathmore** of ***OCTAVIA E. BUTLER'S PARABLE OF THE SOWER***, a theatrical concert recreating Octavia Butler's sci-fi, Afrofuturist masterpiece live on stage, created by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon and directed by Eric Ting.

The 2020-2021 season concludes with the previously announced pre-Broadway engagement of Michael R. Jackson's Pulitzer Prize and Obie Award Winning hit musical, ***A STRANGE LOOP***, directed by Stephen Brackett, choreographed by Raja Feather Kelly, and music directed by Rona Siddiqui. *A STRANGE LOOP* had its World Premiere at Playwrights Horizons produced in association with Page 73. As one of the first musicals in Woolly history, this blistering, mind-blowing new show follows a young artist at war with a host of demons — including the punishing thoughts in his own head.

WOOLLY ON DEMAND

In addition to in-person offerings, this year, Woolly is embracing the moment by experimenting with new forms of theatre you can experience at home! Co-commissioned with **Play Co** is a theatrical experience from the incomparable playwright **Amir Nizar Zuabi** (*Oh My Sweet Land*) that pushes the boundaries of virtual theater as it engages viewers in unexpected ways. Then, digital programming steps off of Zoom and shifts to something a bit more “old school” with **Telephonic Literary Union's HUMAN RESOURCES**. Whether you need to file a claim or plan your escape, **Brittany K. Allen**, **Christopher Chen**, **Hansol Jung**, **Sarah Lunnie**, **Stowe Nelson**, **Zeniba Now**, and **Yuvika Tolani** are here to provide support as they invite audiences down the unlikely rabbit hole of an automated telephony menu. Finally, Woolly's collaborations with the creative DC collective **Makers Lab** continue with a streaming platform of Black LGBTQIA+ content that directly intersects with our fall of sex and intimacy. More information on each of these projects will be announced soon!

INTRODUCING THE GOLDEN TICKET

This season's innovations have brought about a trailblazing evolution to Woolly's subscription plans - a truly original, one of a kind program: THE GOLDEN TICKET! This is a one-time cost that grants Golden Ticket holders admission to any show, in any seat, as many times as a person wants! Dates and seats can be selected whenever the patron is ready to make plans to attend. Golden Ticket holders will also have access to any additional projects or events added during the 20/21 season.

As the world continues to adapt to the new realities of the industry, one thing remains consistent - Woolly's commitment to creating theatre that astonishes in its brilliance, its relevance, and its ability to overcome *and thrive* during a particularly difficult time.

TICKETS

Golden Tickets and Six-Packs for the 2020-2021 season can be purchased online at woollymammoth.net, by phone at (202) 393-3939 or via email at tickets@woollymammoth.net. In person purchases are not available. Single tickets will go on sale in September.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Facebook.com/WoollyMammothTC

Twitter: @WoollyMammothTC

Instagram: @woollymammothtc

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.

ABOUT AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

American Conservatory Theater is a Tony Award–winning nonprofit theater and educational institution in San Francisco dedicated to cultivating the art of live theater through our dynamic productions, intensive actor training in our Conservatory, and ongoing engagement with our community. Under the leadership of Tony and Obie award–winning Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, we embrace our responsibility to refresh, renew, and reinvent the rich theatrical traditions and literatures that are our collective legacy, while exploring new artistic forms and communities. Since opening our first San Francisco season in 1967, A.C.T. has presented more than 400 productions to a combined audience of more than seven million people. Today, our performance, education, and outreach programs reach almost 250,000 people in the Bay Area each year.

ABOUT THE BUSHWICK STARR

The Bushwick Starr is an Obie Award winning not-for-profit theater that presents an annual season of new performance works. We are an organization defined by both our artists and our community, and since 2007, we have grown into a thriving theatrical venue, a vital neighborhood arts center, and a destination for exciting and engaging performance. We provide a springboard for emerging artists to make career-defining leaps, and we are a sanctuary where established artists come to experiment and innovate. We are also a neighborhood playhouse, serving our Bushwick, Brooklyn community's diverse artistic needs and impulses.

ABOUT FOLGER THEATRE

Folger Theatre, the centerpiece for performance at the Folger Shakespeare Library, produces innovative, insightful theater that welcomes and challenges audiences and artists alike. On the stage of the first US Elizabethan-styled replica playhouse, Folger Theatre looks back through centuries of evolving understanding to shed new light on classical works and inspire anew stories that are ever relevant. With a peerless collection, the Folger is the authority on Shakespeare's works and his world, connecting diverse audiences to the living legacy of Shakespeare in contemporary life. Folger Theatre has produced nearly thirty seasons of dynamic, thought-provoking, and award-winning productions of Shakespeare, other plays from the period, and new works and has been honored with 158 Helen Hayes Award nominations and 30 awards for theatrical excellence.

ABOUT HUNTINGTON THEATRE COMPANY

The Huntington Theatre Company is Boston's leading professional theatre and one of the region's premier cultural assets. The Huntington cultivates, celebrates, and champions theatre as an art form and is committed to mentoring local playwrights, educating young people in theatre, and serving as a catalyst for the growth of dozens of Boston's emerging performing arts organizations. Under the direction of Artistic Director Peter DuBois and Managing Director Michael Maso, the Huntington brings world-class theatre artists from Boston, Broadway, and beyond together with the most promising new talent to create eclectic seasons of exciting new works and classics made current.

ABOUT MAKERS LAB

Makers Lab is a collective of creatives, artists, catalysts, storytellers, and curators, connected by Washington, DC, creating spaces of joy and celebration. Born out of DC Black Pride and the steamy depths of a dance party called Freak Out, Makers Lab has been curating joyous and innovative events for the DC LGBTQIA+ community since 2014. Makers Lab is coming off of a two and half year hiatus in order to continue our mission of building and supporting LGBTQIA+ communities. We have shifted to zero proof programming, which allows us to ensure our friends in recovery can safely access community spaces and to give greater options for socializing. We have expanded our creative reach into space, using the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to engage more people and curate larger online offerings, such as Black in Space: A Virtual Black Pride Experience and blknspace.tv: Futuristic TV for Black Qweirdos. We are also partnering with community initiatives to give back to the city that we have grown from and has nurtured us as creatives. To keep up with the Lab, sign up for emails here and follow us at @makerslabdc on all social media platforms.

ABOUT STRATHMORE

Strathmore presents and produces exemplary visual and performing arts programs for diverse audiences; creates dynamic arts education experiences; and nurtures creative ideas and conversations that advance the future of the arts. The organization's hallmark is the Music Center at Strathmore, with a 1,976-seat concert hall and education complex. Its core campus also includes the historic Mansion at Strathmore, which features an intimate Music Room and art galleries. More recently, Strathmore opened AMP, a 250-seat cabaret-style venue located just up Rockville Pike from the core campus in the burgeoning Pike District of Montgomery County. Strathmore is dedicated to creating a vibrant arts community that welcomes everyone.

Therefore, in 2016, the Bloom initiative was formalized to serve Montgomery County's schools, community centers, parks, retirement communities, and more.

ABOUT TELEPHONIC LITERARY UNION

The Telephonic Literary Union makes stories for very small audiences using phones, thoughtfully curated environments, and the theater of the mind. TLU is a collaboration of Sarah Lunnie, Stowe Nelson and Yuvika Tolani, in cahoots with a rotating band of co-conspirators.

ABOUT THE 2020-2021 SEASON

HI, ARE YOU SINGLE?

By Ryan J. Haddad

Ryan has a higher sex drive than you. He also has cerebral palsy. You can often find him on Grindr or at your local inaccessible gay bar. Join writer/performer Ryan J. Haddad on his search to find love. Or a date. Or at least a hookup. From encounters with drag queens to platonic lap dances, Ryan will guide you through the gay dating scene with his provocative take on intimacy, rejection, and judgment. His one request? Please bring an attractive male friend with you.

"I have wanted to introduce Ryan Haddad to the DMV ever since I got to Woolly. I want him to work all over this town! He is such a captivating storyteller that he charms anyone he meets within seconds. *HI, ARE YOU SINGLE?* asks us to examine sexuality through the lens of a queer man with a disability who is struggling to make meaning out of intimate interactions. That in itself is a radical shift in perspective. Oh, and if you'd like to take him on a date, I'd be happy to set you up!" - Maria Manuela Goyanes

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT IT AIN'T ALWAYS PRETTY

By Kareem M. Lucas

In the tradition of the Epic Poem, Kareem subverts the style and reanimates the memory of a never-ending NYC night filled with alcohol, drugs, sex, joy, loss, and self-discovery. He grapples with his past and present, weaving together narrative and poetry to interrogate his desperate need to find significance. Kareem takes the audience through a remarkable odyssey, as he hilariously and honestly reveals the private thoughts and unknown feelings of a modern Black man in America. *BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, BUT IT AIN'T ALWAYS PRETTY* is about healing and accepting what you can't change, because no matter how fast or how far you run away, you can never escape yourself.

"Kareem is a poet through and through. His unique twist on an epic poem evokes such vivid imagery you almost feel like you're there with him on this legendary night out, as he navigates the trappings of adulthood, and the crushing loneliness that lies beneath. Plus it's so unexpected and poignant to have his actual mother there as his witness, keeping him in line. I can't wait to share this marvelous show about a Black man's journey to self-discovery with you."
- Maria Manuela Goyanes

Bushwick Starr's production of ANIMAL WISDOM
In Association with American Conservatory Theater

Created by Heather Christian

Co-Directed by Mark Rosenblatt and Emilyn Kowaleski

Do you believe in ghosts? Heather Christian does because they talk to her. *ANIMAL WISDOM* is a Southern Gothic Ritual inspired by real conversations between Heather and her deceased relatives. Join her musical séance, grounded in blues and bayou gospel, as she conjures a constellation of souls in an effort to confront her family's mythologies. This concert-cabaret is written as a requiem for all the people we've loved and lost.

"The month that I officially began as Artistic Director at Woolly almost two years ago, I called my colleagues at the Bushwick Starr about remounting this piece. Seeing this show changed me, and the music still haunts me in the most beautiful ways. Heather and her band are able to create a space that feels sacred and vulnerable at the same time. Woolly is leaning into musicals this year, especially those breaking the boundaries of the form, like this one. I know *ANIMAL WISDOM* will leave you full of joy, hope, and wonder." - Maria Manuela Goyanes

TEENAGE DICK
In Association with Huntington Theatre Company

By Mike Lew

Directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel

Welcome to 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?

"Initially planned for June of 2020, we were well into final designs and only a little over a month away from rehearsals starting when we had to postpone this show last season because of the coronavirus. This hysterical and riveting reimagining of *RICHARD III* showcases the self-loathing that comes from social rejection, especially for disabled youth. It feels so important to have this show back in our season, especially given the contemporary resonance of conversations about bullying on social media, and the toxic masculinity we are witnessing all over our country. This show also demands that all of us, including our current president, reevaluate our rhetoric surrounding the disabled experience." - Maria Manuela Goyanes

WHERE WE BELONG
In Association with Folger Theatre

By Madeline Sayet
Directed by Mei Ann Teo

In 2015, Mohegan theatre-maker Madeline Sayet travels to England to pursue a PhD in Shakespeare. Madeline finds a country that has yet to reckon with its colonial past, just as the Brexit vote threatens to further disengage Great Britain from the wider world. In this intimate and exhilarating solo piece, Madeline echoes a journey to England braved by Native ancestors in the 1700s following treatise betrayals – and forces us to consider what it means to belong in an increasingly globalized world.

“In 2019 we placed a land acknowledgment onto the concrete wall in our lobby. This wasn’t a one-time moment of reflection but rather the beginning of a commitment to have Woolly present, produce, and support Indigenous artists and an acknowledgment of our local Native community. I couldn’t be prouder that *WHERE WE BELONG* is the first step on that journey. Madeline’s piece is so compelling in its raw honesty about the centuries of harm Native people have endured - physically, culturally, emotionally, and academically. Partnering with Folger Theatre on this project feels like a perfect fit given Madeline’s interrogation of her relationship with Shakespeare.” - Maria Manuela Goyanes

OCTAVIA E. BUTLER’S PARABLE OF THE SOWER
Co-Presented by Strathmore

By Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon
Directed by Eric Ting

Parable of the Sower is a triumphant, mesmerizing work of rare power and beauty that illuminates deep insights on gender, race, and the future of human civilization. This theatrical concert brings together over 30 original anthems drawn from 200 years of Black music to recreate Butler’s sci-fi, Afrofuturist masterpiece live on stage. With music and lyrics composed by Toshi Reagon in collaboration with her mother, Bernice Johnson Reagon (Sweet Honey in the Rock), this compelling work gives life to Butler’s acclaimed science fiction novel of the same name.

“Toshi Reagon is a mainstay at The Public Theater, my former stomping grounds, and this piece was developed in collaboration with Joe’s Pub and the Under the Radar Festival there. From the moment I first heard the stunning score Toshi and Bernice created for this epic adaptation of Octavia E. Butler’s renowned novel, I just knew we needed to find a way to share it with our audiences. Since then, the need to elevate this powerful post-apocalyptic story filled with hope and human connection has only become more urgent. With a powerhouse ensemble of 20 singers and musicians, there could be no better home, or better partner, for this piece than Strathmore. I’m thrilled to join forces and unite our audiences to witness this visceral and mesmerizing new operatic work that beautifully reveals Butler’s stunningly prophetic insights on gender, race, and the future of American civilization.” - Maria Manuela Goyanes

A STRANGE LOOP

Book, Music, and Lyrics by Michael R. Jackson
Directed by Stephen Brackett
Choreographed by Raja Feather Kelly
Music Directed by Rona Siddiqui

Usher is a Black, queer writer working a job he hates while writing his original musical... about a Black, queer writer working a job he hates while writing his original musical. Michael R. Jackson's blistering, mind-blowing, Pulitzer-Prize winning new musical follows a young artist at war with a host of demons — including the punishing thoughts in his head — in an attempt to capture and understand his own strange loop.

“When I think about all the unexpected work Woolly could do, what’s more unexpected than a Broadway-bound musical? This show is very special to me. When I was 25, and Michael R. Jackson was still in graduate school, I directed the first early readings of *A STRANGE LOOP*. With this project, my past is becoming my present, and, in a way, my very own strange loop. This musical centers a black queer man whose experience stands in sharp relief to the more mainstream LGBTQ progress we’ve seen over the past decade. Woolly Mammoth will break into song with what I believe to be completely Woolly material – a bold show with nerve, replete with soaring and gut-wrenching show tunes.” - Maria Manuela Goyanes

ABOUT WOOLLY ON DEMAND

“Innovation is deeply entwined with who we are, so during a time where many people might not want to return to in-person events, we Mammoths will continue to find ways to bring unique events to you. All year long we’ll be surprising you with programming you can experience at home. And this is more than just streaming a play, these are wonderfully theatrical experiences designed specifically for this moment and medium. The artists we have lined up to create this work are brilliant innovators and I know you’ll find the journey surprising and very Woolly.” - Maria Manuela Goyanes

AMIR NIZAR ZUABI DIGITAL COMMISSION

By Amir Nizar Zuabi

THE TELEPHONIC LITERARY UNION PRESENTS HUMAN RESOURCES

Created by Brittany K. Allen, Christopher Chen, Hansol Jung, Sarah Lunnie, Stowe Nelson, Zeniba Now and Yuvika Tolani

The Telephonic Literary Union understands that these are disorienting times. Whether you need to file a claim or plan your escape, remember: we are here to support you. We request that you please listen to all options before making your selection as our menu has recently changed.

MAKERS LAB

Collaborations with the creative DC collective **Makers Lab** continue with a streaming platform of Black LGBTQIA+ content that directly intersects with our fall of sex and intimacy.