

**AKIRA KUROSAWA
EXPLAINS HIS MOVIES
AND YOGURT
(WITH LIVE & ACTIVE CULTURES!)**

MAY 4–JUNE 1

**WOOLLY
HLOWMMW**

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This play includes general profanity, as well as discussion of grief, depression, death particularly within families, including mention of suicide.



Filming, recording, or taking photographs of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited. Please silence your cell phones and any other noisemaking devices.

A NOTE FROM MARIA



I am having a case of the feels.

First, *Akira Kurosawa Explains His Movies and Yogurt (with Live and Active Cultures!)* is my last world premiere play as Artistic Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company.

And this morning, before writing this note and after a year of searching, my father was officially diagnosed with vascular dementia.

His younger sister, my namesake, has been battling Lewy body dementia in his native country of Spain for four years now, and can no longer walk or communicate with us. Zoom calls between my father and his beloved sister are painful, and will only become more so.

Grief's a bitch, ain't it?

Our playwright Julia Izumi certainly thinks so. Like the character of Julia in this play, I will do anything to avoid feeling all these feels. Add in complex interpersonal family dynamics and POOF! I want to evaporate into thin air at the sheer mention!

So let's avoid it. Let's talk about YOU!

We have gotten to know each other pretty well over these last seven years. Woolly audiences are accustomed to boundary-pushing work, and I certainly have tried my best to experiment with exactly where the edges of those boundaries lie (for better or for worse!). *Akira* is an experimental AND a more "traditional" play at the same time—it is a delicious irreverent theatricalized romp into the world of a world-renowned filmmaker AND it is a linear look at the relationship of two brothers who loved each other deeply. I encourage you to enjoy the romp while

understanding that these brothers represent something richer and more powerful for Julia and her own family. These types of *feels* are how artists are born. Artists like Akira Kurosawa. Artists like Julia Izumi.

Witnessing director Aileen Wen McGroddy in action, from conceptual development with Julia to now its full execution, has been a masterclass in care, originality, and intellectual rigor. I expect this will be the first of many productions you will see helmed by her, in DC and elsewhere. And to get to partner with Susan Bernfield and Jaynie Saunders Tiller at New Georges, one of the foremost developers of new work for the American theatre...it's a dream team! Truly!

I can't wait for you to see this play. In true Woolly fashion, it is unlike any play you have seen before. And yet, in the end, I hope you realize it is like EVERY play on our stage at Woolly Mammoth.

It is a play that shows us how to look.

And by not averting our eyes, this is a play that teaches us how to feel ALL the *feels*.

Thank you for coming along for the ride with me these past seven years at Woolly Mammoth. It's been one of the greatest honors of my life.

Con todo amor y cariño para Woolly y cada uno de ustedes,

Maria Manuela Goyanes

Maria Manuela Goyanes

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

MARIA MANUELA GOYANES
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

KIMBERLY E. DOUGLAS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

**PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW GEORGES
PRESENTS**

***AKIRA KUROSAWA
EXPLAINS HIS MOVIES
AND YOGURT
(WITH LIVE & ACTIVE CULTURES!)***

**BY JULIA IZUMI
DIRECTED BY AILEEN WEN MCGRODDY ~**

**COSTUME DESIGNER
CAMILLA DELY⁺**

**DRAMATURG
SONIA FERNANDEZ**

**LIGHTING DESIGNER
VENUS GULBRANSON⁺**

**SCENIC DESIGNER
MISHA KACHMAN⁺**

**VIDEO + PROJECTION DESIGNER
PATRICK W. LORD⁺**

**SOUND DESIGNER
TOSIN OLUFOLABI**

**CASTING DIRECTORS
GEOFF JOSSELSO, CSA
JORGE ACEVADO**

**STAGE MANAGER
JUANCARLOS CONTRERAS***

NEW GEORGES



(-) Recognizes representation by the Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC), a national theatrical labor union.



(+) Recognizes representation by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE. (*) Recognizes representation by Make-up Artists & Hair Stylists, Local 798 of the IATSE.



(*) Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CAST

JULIA IZUMI*
JAMAR JONES*
ASHIL LEE*
LIZZY LEWIS*
KENTO MORITA*
JIHAN HADDAD*

CREW & PRODUCTION TEAM

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER.....Madison Bahr
 ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER.....Fe Miranda
 ASSOCIATE SCENIC DESIGNER.....Sarah Beth Hall
 ASSOCIATE COSTUME DESIGNER.....Logan Benson
 ASSOCIATE PROJECTION DESIGNER.....Clara Ashe-Moore
 ASSOCIATE LIGHTING DESIGNER.....Sage Green
 ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER.....Ian Vespermann
 SDCF FELLOW.....Rebecca Rovezzi
 LIGHTING SUPERVISOR.....Sarah Chapin
 COSTUME SUPERVISOR.....Jessica Utz
 PROPS SUPERVISOR.....Leo Bassow
 VIDEO SUPERVISOR.....Eli Golding
 SOUND SUPERVISOR.....Ian Vespermann
 LIGHTING PROGRAMMER.....Susannah Cai, Angela Armstrong
 VIDEO AND PROJECTION PROGRAMMER.....Jerran Kowalski
 REHEARSAL PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....Briana Padgett
 PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....Erin Schoff
 AUDIO ASSISTANT.....Kristie Taiwo-Makanjuola
 WARDROBE SUPERVISOR.....Sydney E. Bronaugh
 RUN CREW.....Adam Franks
 LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR.....Dahvi Walker
 A/V BOARD OPERATOR.....Macayla Leigh

CREW & PRODUCTION TEAM

SCENIC CHARGE.....Yaritza Pacheco
 STAFF CARPENTERS.....Mickey Cappiello, Lily Anglin
 WELDER.....Faye Joseph
 CARPENTERS.....Hakeem Ford, Carlos Hernandez, Jaye Overton,
 Zhy Strowbridge, Velli Jones, Jo Lau'ren Peele, Adam Franks, Randi Lee
 ELECTRICIANS.....Annie Choudhury, Milan Robinson, Max Abramovitz,
 Isa Pelegero, Jordan Patnett, Jimmy Engelkemier, Benjamin Knauth,
 Connor Skalitzky, Toni Rachal

Special thanks to the Kennedy Center /
 Kenan Fund's Artists-in-Residence Program

PLAYING PRETEND: AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT JULIA IZUMI

Woolly's New Work Department, Sonia Fernandez and Aysha Zackria, connected with Julia Izumi, playwright and actor in AKIRA KUROSAWA [...] to discuss theater-making, yogurt, and being weird.

SONIA FERNANDEZ: Can you talk about the origins of the play?

JULIA IZUMI: I had always wanted to write about Akira Kurosawa because he's such a big Japanese figure internationally, and I didn't know a lot about him or about film in general.

My first play, where I feel like I found my voice, was a play about Murasaki Shikibu¹, a Japanese novelist who arguably wrote the first novel in the world. I was like Kurosawa could be a part of a series of plays about a Japanese figure who has made impacts globally that I can investigate further.

Then I was in grad school, and I started having a lot of stomach issues. I was trying to eat things that were good for my gut health. I was eating a lot of yogurt – like a LOT of yogurt. I was riding in a car with one of the other playwrights in my [MFA Playwriting] program, and I was suddenly like, “Oh my gosh! I've got it! What if Akira Kurosawa is giving a lecture about his movies, but all he can talk about is yogurt.”

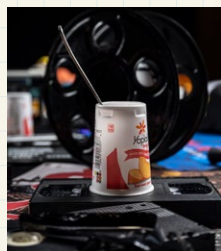


photo by Teresa Castracane

SF: Julia, we're curious about your relationship to storytelling. You're in this piece and thinking about the several roles that you play in creating your work. Is this the first project that you've written and performed in?

Ji: I actually also did in that Murasaki piece. I played Murasaki Shikibu.

SF: So, it is going to be a cycle! Who's next?

Ji: The third one is a little up in the air. I'm thinking either Japanese baseball players playing in the American leagues or the guy who invented the Emoji.

AYSHA ZACKRIA: Both thrilling.

Ji: Thank you. Yeah, both making big impacts in worlds I don't know a lot about. Especially the baseball thing.

SF: What is it like to be writing, knowing that you're a character?

JJ: It's both harder and easier in some ways. Easier because I'm like, "Well, who cares? I can just change this." I'm a little bit less precious about it. Once I'm up there, I can flub around here and there, make it sound better. At the same time, my skills as an actor are pretty limited. I have a few more constraints to stick to, in a funny way.

AZ: How close is Julia, you as a person in this interview right now, to Julia on stage? Are you the same Julia? Are you the different Julias for narrative purposes?

JJ: The Julia on stage is just a hair more full-of-herself and a little more braggadocious. She has the confidence to perform, to be up there and take up space, talking at an audience for a long time. She's a slightly heightened version of me.

AZ: How do you hold both the acting and the playwriting?



photo by Gisela Estrada

JJ: When I did it with Murasaki, we had a much shorter run, so I had to freeze the script² early. While I was in the rehearsal room, I was just an actor. But if there's like really big questions about changing something, they can be asked. This time, because the process is longer, I'll be staying in the playwright-actor situation

for a bit longer. I'm hoping we can find ways for me to pop in and out. Then at a certain point, I want to be like, "Okay, from this point onward, Julia is just an actor." I can be a little less jumbled in the brain.

SF: I'm curious about your style. It's quite singular to you. How did you come to this irreverent, playful writing voice?

JJ: Irreverent is a really good word. Especially when I'm looking into the lens of history. When I was a kid, I hated history class because I was like, "Oh, this is so boring." Because of that, when I look into something historical, or a figure of some kind, I always try to ask, "How would young Julia like to receive this information?" – and make it a little less serious. I also just think it's funny.

I do think there are things that we take very seriously that maybe we don't need to. If we didn't take it so seriously, it would actually become more accessible. Theater being one of them, prices

notwithstanding. To the general public, theater gives an air of being highbrow. I think if people knew that theater is also just silly people playing pretend, then they might find it more relatable.

SF: I see the seriousness in Akira Kurosawa. I studied his films in a college class, and they were held up as, “the pinnacle of filmmaking” – film, not movie. You chose “*Explains His Movies*,” which is a distinction about prestige and accessibility in art. The play itself attempts to take Akira down to a human level.



photo by Gisela Estrada

JJ: Absolutely, [it has] this assumption that you have to be really knowledgeable to get it.

SF: And have reverence for the craft.

JJ: Yeah. I'm really into dismantling those things.

As you can tell from my writing, I'm not as interested in realism. I try to see what the weirdos are doing. All my favorite playwrights around me, my friend playwrights who I love, are weirdos.

It's less about “weird” honestly because weird is another one of those things that people will think they're not smart enough to understand. But really theatrical. Theater that understands that it's theater as opposed to theater that thinks it's a movie. That's what I want to see.

SF: Some of the play is in Japanese and being translated – to varying degrees of truthfulness – by intertitles. Do you consider this play bilingual?

JJ: I wouldn't call it bilingual, even though there is another language heavily included. I've used Japanese in my plays to varying degrees of how it's understood to an audience who doesn't necessarily speak Japanese.

I feel like my generation of playwrights, especially those of us who are children of immigrants are in an era of playing around with how language is used on stage and what is communicated to an audience who might not understand the other language. There's this gambit of not translating at all, or really making it translated,

or maybe making it translated funnily. And I think all ways are valid, which is why in this play I kind of do a mix of all of it.

The intertitles really did come from the idea of a presentation like, “Here’s the PowerPoint slide that goes with this lecture.” Then I realized it’s going to be really useful as a way of pointing out the lies that are happening, almost as footnotes.³

SF: I came across your essay about grief and your play *Regretfully, So The Birds Are* for Playwrights’ Horizons. How has your thinking about grief evolved while writing *Akira Kurosawa*...?

JJ: I also wrote this play [around the same] time. Although, the grief in this play is very different from the ones that I was experiencing then. I do feel like my plays are responding to my understanding of grief in the moment.

I’m definitely not alone in writing about grief. I feel like most writers are writing about grief always, even if they’re not conscious of it or it’s not necessarily a tangible grief. This current process of grief I’m in is making me understand that we really actually still don’t know how to talk about it as human beings, even though this has been happening from the beginning. We’ve had thousands of years to prepare.

SF: Is there anything else that you want to say to our readers?

JJ: I hope they have fun. Get some yogurt. Look at the things in your life you’re supposed to look at. Face the brave things. Yeah, that’s all.

SF: Thanks for taking the time, Julia.

FULL INTERVIEW

[1] Born in the 10th century, Murasaki Shikibu was a Japanese novelist, poet and royal attendant. She is known for writing *The Tale of Genji* between 1000 and 1012. It is widely considered to be one of the world’s first novels.

[2] To “freeze” a script means to stop making edits. This needs to happen early enough in the process for the actors to memorize their lines and the production team to build their light and sound cues.

[3] While there may be lies in the play, there are no lies (that we are aware of) in this interview.



GOLDEN TICKET

The Golden Ticket is Woolly's
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Beginning next season, Golden Ticket holders
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MAY 29-JUNE 6

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CAST BIOS



JULIA IZUMI* (Julia, Playwright) is a writer and performer who makes all kinds of theatrical nonsense. Her plays include *Regretfully, So the Birds Are* (Playwrights Horizons/WP Theater), *miku, and the gods.* (ArtsWest), and *Sometimes the Rain, Sometimes the Sea* (Rorschach Theatre, Helen Hayes Award Nomination for Best New Play Adaptation). Her work has been developed at MTC, Clubbed Thumb, New Georges, Berkeley Rep, Portland Center Stage, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ojai Playwrights Conference, and more. Honors include the Kerry English Award and KCACTF's Darrell Ayers Playwriting Award. Current New Dramatists Resident. Current commissions: True Love Productions, MTC/Sloan, Playwrights Horizons, Seattle Rep. MFA: Brown University. Her resume as an actor is not as robust, but she is listed in the New York Times as being in a show that got a Critic's Pick even though she was let go from the production weeks before the premiere, so that's kind of cool. Love to Mami-chan.



JAMAR JONES* With roots stemming from both Carolinas, and raised in Virginia, Jamar Jones is a multi-hyphenate creative molded with a Southern sensibility. Formerly a Resident Company Member of PlayMakers Repertory Company, credits include *Fat Ham, Much Ado about Nothing, Emma, The Legend of Georgia McBride, Hamlet,* and Seattle Rep's *Blues for an Alabama Sky.* As a museum theater practitioner, Jamar has collaborated with museums and history-forward institutions, including the International Spy Museum, Museum of the American Revolution, Mount Vernon, and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, to research, excavate, and share stories from centuries ago, particularly those centering Black American life. This work has even expanded to international collaborations (*200 Years of Returns*) in Monrovia, Liberia. 2019 RTCC Award- Best Actor in a Play for *An Octoroon* (TheatreLab). 2022 RTCC Award- Best Lead Performance- Play for *Fires in the Mirror* (Firehouse Theatre). Television: *Law & Order* (NBC). UNC at Chapel Hill- M.F.A (Acting). jamarjonesofficial.com



ASHIL LEE* As a kid, Ashil caught the theatre bug playing a series of lovable bugs (Glow-Worm from the giant peach, Cricket from *Pinocchio*, Charlotte from that web). NYC-based actor, playwright, director, and sex educator. Korean-American, trans nonbinary, child of immigrants, and bestie to microceleb pup, Hux. 2023 Lucille Lortel nominee (Outstanding Ensemble: *The Nosebleed*). Proud reigning 'Troll King' (Clubbed Thumb Holiday Party 2024). Selected acting: *The Nosebleed* (LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater, Woolly Mammoth, US Tour), *OriGen Story* (Clubbed Thumb: Winterworks), *Dogville* (theatrical premiere, dir. Robert O'Hara). Selected playwriting: Relentless 2024 Semi-Finalist (*Me No Know Korean*), *'Pericles: Prince of Tyre'* adapted with Mark Wing-Davey (NYU: Grad Acting), *PRELUDE (Rooting for You!)*, Clubbed Thumb Early Career Writer's Group (23-24), Pataphysics (with Clare Barron). Selected directing: *Coach Coach*, *US Drag* (NYU: MSNR), *The Big Pick* (Sapphest Festival), *Manifest Destiny* (LimeFest). Education: NYU Tisch. BFA: Acting, Minor: Youth Mental Health. ashilllee.com



LIZZY LEWIS* A Washington, D.C. native, Lizzy is excited to be working at Woolly Mammoth. She is a Chicago-based interdisciplinary artist, working across media in theater, music, and writing. Theater credits include Lydia/Lady Catherine in *Pride and Prejudice* at Baltimore Center Stage and Arkansas Repertory Theatre and Lucy in *A Christmas Carol* at Trinity Repertory Company. An in-progress poetry collection was selected for a Theater and Performance Studies workshop at the University of Chicago, where she performed excerpts of her writing. For the past two decades, she has worked as a professional choral singer and vocalist. Lizzy holds an M.F.A. in Acting from Brown University/Trinity Rep and a B.A. in Comparative Literature (focuses in Music and French Lit.) from the University of Chicago.



KENTO MORITA* is an actor and comedian who appears in the upcoming animated series *Get Jiro!* and the action RPG *Rise of the Ronin*. A graduate of The Second City's Conservatory, The Upright Citizens Brigade's improv program, and The Barrow Group, he has performed at *SF Sketchfest*, *Asian Comedy Festival*, *Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival*, and *SketchFest Seattle*. Kento created *Cyberpunk Live With Kento*, a sci-fi comedy talk show featured at *UCB*, where he also performed as part of the house sketch team *Baby Todd*. His interactive AI film *Moment*

in Manzanar won Bronze at the 2023 Anthem Awards, and *My Daughter Yoshiko*, which he co-wrote, received the Zeno Mountain Award at the *Miami Film Festival*. Originally from the Bay Area and raised between California and Okinawa, Japan, Kento was once the NYU mascot and has been trying to top that gig ever since.



JIHAN HADDAD* (Cover) New York: *Maria, Dead Girl's Quinceñera* (Ensemble Studio Theatre BLOODWORKS); *Yanira, Tesseract* (Playwright's Realm Ink'd Festival); Regional: *Ophelia, Hamlet* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Connie, The Great Leap* (Lyric Stage Company); *Sarah Hazratji, Someone Will Remember Us; Gail, Becky Nurse of Salem; Estrella, Sueño* (Trinity Rep); *Viola, Twelfth Night; Jeanne 1,*

Thrive (American Shakespeare Center) Brown/Trinity Rep: *Eleanor and others, The Late Wedding; Miranda and others, The Tempest*; Education: Brown/Trinity MFA Acting Program Other: Jihan is ecstatic to be making her Woolly Mammoth debut and diving into the beautiful world that has been built for her by these amazing artists.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

AILEEN WEN MCGRODDY (Director) is a Chinese- and Irish-American theatre director. She is delighted to be helming the world premiere of this play after directing its first workshop in 2018 at the Writing is Live Festival at Brown University. Past work includes: *Sisters and Sense and Sensibility* (Northern Stage), *A Christmas Carol* (Trinity Rep); *The Chinese Lady* (Kitchen Theatre and Geva Theatre Center); *Attempts on Her Life* (TUTA); *Airness* (Breckenridge Backstage Theatre); *The Late Wedding, The Dumb Waiter, Summer and Smoke, and The Tempest* (Brown-Trinity); *Kingdom, Cold War Choir Practice, Throwback Island, On The Y-Axis* (Writing is Live); *The Glass Menagerie, Or., Dani Girl* (Winnepesaukee Playhouse); *Ulysses* (The Plagiarists). She has developed new work with NYTW, The Bushwick Starr, Clubbed Thumb, NY Classical Theatre, The Yale Drama Prize, and Northern Stage. She is a co-artistic director of TUTA Theatre Chicago, Creative Producer for the Writing is Live Festival at Brown University, and a member of SDC. Fellowships: Roundabout Directors Group, 2050 at NYTW, BOLD Resident Director at Northern Stage. MFA Directing from Brown-Trinity. AileenWenMcGroddy.com

MISHA KACHMAN (Set Designer) has designed numerous Woolly productions including *My Mama and the Full-Scale Invasion*, *Fairview*, *Describe the Night*, *Gloria*, *Botticelli in the Fire*, *Hir*, *An Octoroon*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Kiss*, *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *A Bright New Boise*, *Oedipus el rey*, *Groesome Playground Injuries*, and *Fever/Dream*. He has also worked at Arena Stage, Arizona Theatre Company, Asolo Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, Berkeley Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cleveland Playhouse, Court Theatre, Kennedy Center, Opera Lafayette, Pasadena Playhouse, Portland Center Stage, Round House, Signature, Seattle Opera, Seattle Rep, Studio Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Theatre for A New Audience, and Wilma Theater, among many other companies. Misha is a recipient of the Helen Hayes Awards for his Woolly designs for *Mama* and *Chad Deity*. He is a Woolly Company Member and a graduate of the St. Petersburg Theatre Arts Academy. Misha Kachman serves as Professor and Head of MFA in Design at University of Maryland.

CAMILLA DELY (Costume Designer) is a South African costume designer and visual artist working across theater, opera, and dance. Her work spans international, regional, and off-Broadway productions in both traditional and unconventional spaces, and she is excited to make her Woolly Mammoth debut! Past designs include: *King Lear* (Almeida Theater, London), *Diary of a Tap Dancer* (America Repertory Theater), *Mary Gets Hers* (The Playwright's Realm), *Sense and Sensibility*, *Sisters*, *Beauty and The Beast* (Northern Stage), *Hurricane Diane* (People's Light), *A Christmas Carol* (Trinity Rep), *La Traviata* (City Lyric Opera), *Attempts on Her Life* (TUTA), and *Little Comedies* (Alley Theater). Camilla is a Watson Fellowship and 1/52 Project Grant recipient and holds an MFA in Design for Stage and Film from NYU Tisch. camilladely.com

VENUS GULBRANSON (Lighting Designer) is a proud Filipino lighting designer based in Brooklyn NY. BROADWAY asst: *New York, New York* (St. James Theatre). DC AREA select: *My Mama and the Full-Scale Invasion* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre), *Primary Trust* (Signature Theatre), *10,000 Dreams* and *The Dragon King's Daughter* (The Kennedy Center), *Tick, Tick... Boom!* (Monumental Theatre). REGIONAL select: The Wilma Theatre, Arena Stage, Nashville Opera, Oklahoma City Rep, New Studio on Broadway. INTERNATIONAL: *Rituel* (Philharmonie de Paris). Lighting Director with L.A. Dance Project: Sydney Opera House, Dubai Opera House, Müpa Budapest. Venus is a member of United Scenic Artists 829 and is an advocate for underrepresented artists in the industry. Venus enjoys a park day and is a below average volleyball player. venusgulbranson.com

TOSIN OLUFOLABI (Sound Designer) is excited to be returning to Woolly Mammoth. OFF-BROADWAY: *Stargazers* (Page 73); *Dirty Laundry, Bite Me* (WP Theater) REGIONAL: *Gloria* (2018 Helen Hayes Nomination for Outstanding Sound Design for a Hayes Production), *There's Always the Hudson, Hi, Are You Single? Incendiary, The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes* (Woolly Mammoth); *The Thanksgiving Play* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Life is a Dream* (Baltimore Center Stage); *The Sound Inside, The Chinese Lady, Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (Everyman Theater) *it's not a trip it's a journey, School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Round House Theatre); *Moses, Fires in the Mirror* (Theater J); *A Wind in the Door* (Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences); *Lovers' Vows* (We Happy Few); *Head Over Heels* (Monumental Theater); *Lela & Co.* (Factory 449) and more.

Patrick W. Lord (Projection/Video Designer) NATIONAL TOUR: *On Your Feet, Hairspray*. NEW YORK: *Where Words Once Were* (Lincoln Center). DC AREA: *Finn, The Dragon King's Daughter* [Helen Hayes Nomination], *Earthrise, Voyagers, Digging Up Dessa, Where Words Once Were* (The Kennedy Center); *Hair, Private Jones* [Helen Hayes Nomination] [Signature Theatre]; *Hamlet, Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *The World Goes 'Round, Dinner and Cake* (Everyman Theatre); *Frozen, The World Goes 'Round, Hedwig and the Angry Inch, A Christmas Carol* (Olney Theatre Center); *On Your Feet* [Helen Hayes Award], *Fame* (Gala Hispanic Theatre); *The Phlebotomist, Columbinus* (1st Stage); *The Phantom of the Opera* (Synetic Theatre); *Mnemonic* [Helen Hayes Nomination] (Theatre Alliance). REGIONAL: *Thurgood* [Barrymore Award Nomination] (People's Light Theatre Company); *Jesus Christ Superstar, Shawshank Redemption, Girl on the Train, Cinderella, West Side Story, South Pacific* (Flatrock Playhouse). EDUCATION: MFA, The University of Texas at Austin. Proud member of USA829. patrickwlord.com

SONIA FERNANDEZ (Dramaturg) is a dramaturg, administrator and producer specializing in new work. She serves as Director of New Work at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company where she manages new play development activities and leads the organization's local, national, and international search for projects and artists. Recent production dramaturgy credits at Woolly include the world premieres of *The Sensational Sea Mink-ettes* by Vivian J.O. Barnes and *Incendiary* by Dave Harris. Prior to her position at Woolly Mammoth, Sonia was at Magic Theatre in San Francisco as interim Artistic Director and before that Associate Artistic Director. She serves as Vice President of the board of the National New Play Network.

JUANCARLOS CONTRERAS (Production Stage Manager) (yes...

JuanCarlos is his first full name!) is a stage manager who has recently moved to the DMV area after three years of working at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Some notable productions there include *Lizard Boy*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *unseen*. JuanCarlos grew up in California and began his theatre life as a typical drama kid in high school. He threw himself into doing everything and anything in the program from sound and lighting design, directing, and being the voice of the Sorting Hat in a Harry Potter themed murder mystery. He received his BA in Theatre, Film, and Dance from Humboldt State University where he found his love for stage management. He also received his MFA in Stage & Production Management from Carnegie Mellon University. JuanCarlos is a proud member of Actors Equity Association.

UPCOMING PROGRAMMING

TALKBACKS

Time to chat! Join us over the course of the run for two Artist Talkbacks. Want to hear from the artists and ask your burning questions? Join us after the performance.

- **May 16 + 31**

Now that Akira Kurosawa has explained his films (and yogurt) **join us after every performance for post show conversations!** During these discussions we'll chat and digest the show as a community. Join us in the lobby for a drink and conversation!

HERD HAPPY HOUR

Herd Happy Hours are back! Come at **7pm every Thursday** during the run to learn more about the show and our slated programming from our Artistic Team. The first 10 people get a free drink so come early!

- **May 8, 15, 22, 29**



photo by Gisela Estrada

ICONIC INFLUENCES: KUROSAWA AND OZU

As a prelude to our production of Julia Izumi's play, we teamed up with the National Museum of Asian Art to present two films by the iconic Japanese directors Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu. The screenings of *Seven Samurai* and *Walk Cheerfully* took place in April, and we're excited to be hosting a special post-show conversation with that same team to discuss Kurosawa's legacy alongside Izumi's play.

- May 14, post show



INFO +
TICKETS

MICHIO ITŌ MODERN DANCE'S ASIAN AMERICAN PIONEER



Washington, DC's premier modern dance company, **Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company**, performs five historic gems by the first Asian American modern dance pioneer, Michio Ito (1892-1961). The program includes: *Ave Maria* (1914), *Pizzacati* (1916), *Tone Poem I and II* (1928) and *En*

Bateau (1929). Itō's indelible mark spans artistic generations – Martha Graham, Lester Horton and DTSBDC, Artistic Director, Dana Tai Soon Burgess were all influenced by his signature aesthetic.

Burgess sheds insight into the legacy of this fascinating dancer and choreographer, by highlighting selections of work reminiscent of danced haiku, from 1914 through 1929 which demonstrate his unique movement and his complicated journey. From Ito's beginnings in Europe and NYC – to his impact on Los Angeles and Hollywood and, ultimately, his incarceration under Executive Order 9022. This modern dance history experience is presented in celebration of Asian American Heritage month.

- May 17, 5–6:30PM in the Rehearsal Hall

ABOUT WOOLLY MAMMOTH

The Tony Award®-winning Woolly Mammoth creates badass theatre that highlights the stunning, challenging, and tremendous complexity of our world. Woolly is proud to be considered “a national champion of the new—and frequently provocative—American play” (*Washington Post*).

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. Woolly Mammoth was co-founded in 1980 by Roger M. Brady, Linda Reinisch, and Howard Shalwitz and is now co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Kimberly E. Douglas. Located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol Building and the White House, this unique location influences Woolly’s investment in actively working our mission: To produce courageous and invigorating new work to radically redefine theatre as a catalyst for an equitable, creative, and engaged society.

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.

A Strange Loop was produced at Woolly in 2021, ran on Broadway from April 2022 through January 2023, and won the Tony Award® for Best Musical in 2022. Other notable highlights 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 F*cking Bird* across the nation, bringing Aleshea Harris’ *What to Send Up When It Goes Down*

to neighborhoods throughout DC, and launching a national tour of Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong*.

Woolly has built a reputation for innovation off the stage as well. Woolly values building relationships with its local community 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.

WE'VE EARNED OUR REPUTATION BY HOLDING FAST TO OUR CORE VALUES.

We are an anti-racist and radically inclusive community—across race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability, socioeconomic background, and political viewpoint—in which all are encouraged to exchange ideas freely and reach for new understanding. We are a supportive home for creative risk-taking by our company and guest artists, staff, board, volunteers, audiences, donors, and colleagues. Through relentless inquiry and experimentation, we strive for world-class excellence and innovation in every aspect of our work.

OUR AUDIENCE COMPLETES OUR MISSION.

Woolly attracts one of the youngest and most diverse theatre audiences in DC, and we're committed to making our work widely accessible. Woolly was the first to pioneer Pay-What-You-Will tickets in the DMV, which are now available at every single performance.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS, SUBSCRIBERS, AND AUDIENCE MEMBERS. WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIND AND PRODUCE THE MOST INNOVATIVE NEW PLAYS IN AMERICA.

WOOLLY MAMMOTH LEADERSHIP



MARIA MANUELA GOYANES

[she/her] is the **Artistic Director** of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Prior to joining Woolly, she served as the Director of Producing and Artistic Planning at The Public Theater, where she oversaw the day-to-day execution of a full slate of plays and musicals at the Public's five-theatre venue at Astor Place and the Delacorte Theater for Shakespeare in the Park.

Earlier in her career at The Public, she managed some of the theatre's most celebrated productions, including *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Josephine and I* by Cush Jumbo, *Straight White Men* by Young Jean Lee, *Barbecue* by Robert O'Hara, and *Here Lies Love* by David Byrne and Fatboy Slim.



Pictured in *A Strange Loop*: Jason Veasy, John-Michael Lyles, Jaquell Spivey, John-Andrew Morrison, James Jackson, Jr., Antwayn Hopper.

While at The Public, Maria also held a position on the adjunct faculty of Juilliard and curated the junior year curriculum of the Playwrights Horizons Theater School at NYU. She has guest lectured at Bard College, Barnard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Juilliard, the National Theater Institute at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, UCSD, the University of Texas-Austin, and Yale University, among others.

Since 2015, Maria has also served as a member of the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. From 2006 to 2008, she co-chaired the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab with Jason Grote, and from 2004 to 2012, Maria was the Executive Producer of 13P, one of her proudest achievements. Maria is a first-generation Latinx-American, born to parents who emigrated from the Dominican Republic and Spain. She was raised in Jamaica, Queens, and has a collection of hoop earrings to prove it. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in 2001 from Brown University.



KIMBERLY E. DOUGLAS (she/her)

is the **Managing Director** of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. She has 20+ years of experience in event production management, program development, strategic partnerships, arts education, and the performing arts.

Graduating from Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Kimberly then continued her studies at Howard University College of Fine Arts graduating with a B.A. in Music Business and a minor in Jazz Voice.

Kimberly served as the Managing Artistic Director for THEARC Theater, a program of Building Bridges Across the River. For 15 years she led the theater operations for a 365-seat theater and a Black Box, led the development and fundraising for theater initiatives such as facilities and buildings enhancements and upgrades, curated seasonal programming on THEARC Theater stage and Black Box,

and expanded relationships and funding for the iCAN Technical Theater internship. Through her leadership, THEARC Theater is widely recognized as a cultural staple for artists, arts organizations, and community East of the River. Kimberly served as a board member for Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company from April 2021–March 2023 after establishing a long-standing partnership as Woolly Mammoth’s Core Connectivity partner.

Kimberly launched her company KD ARTS Consulting in March 2022, providing program curation and production services, talent and operations management, and arts administration. Through KD ARTS Consulting, she worked with organizations like Demaskus Theatre Collective in residency at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center and The Musicianship’s 2023 Wammie Awards. Currently, Kimberly is co-chair of the D.C. Co-lab Equity and Justice Committee advocating for arts education. She was born and raised in D.C. and presently resides in Upper Marlboro, MD.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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*

WOOLLY MAMMOTH STAFF

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Aysha Zackria

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Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company remains more dedicated than ever to the evolution of the American theatre, and we could not produce groundbreaking new plays and world class artistry without our fearless family of donors. We would like to thank the following contributors who made gifts of \$300 or more between January 1, 2024 and April 21, 2025. Thank you!

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The Ambassadors are a network of volunteers who help advocate for Woolly Mammoth, deepen our ties to a range of DC communities, and support resourcing the work of the theatre. They work closely with the Connectivity, Marketing, and Development Departments to offer insights on the plays from an audience perspective, mobilize their circles, organize events, coordinate groups, support special events, and more.

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If you are interested in becoming an ambassador, please contact Associate Director of Connectivity Emily Lathrop at emily.lathrop@woollymammoth.net



Rose: You Are What You Eat Copy photo by Teresa Castracane



WHY GIVE?

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.

YOUR GIFT TO WOOLLY MAMMOTH ALLOWS US TO:

Produce innovative theatrical productions you cannot see anywhere else.

Offer ticket accessibility programs such as Pay-What-You-Will seats for every performance, ensuring our work remains accessible to all.

Pilot radical care programs like our Company Pool Fund, which offers grants to our Company members to invest in their personal and professional growth.

Provide transformational career development opportunities through the Miranda Family Fellowship program to train and compensate the next generation of theatre makers.

Establish innovative collaborative partnerships with local organizations like SPIT DAT, DC's longest running open mic, THEARC Theater, and Howard University.

And so, so much more!

SUPPORT WOOLLY TODAY!

To learn more about making a gift to Woolly Mammoth or to take advantage of our 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!





BECOME A MAMMOTH FOREVER:

Arranging a planned gift to Woolly Mammoth today is a special way to ensure your legacy and have a long-term impact on the theatre even after your lifetime. We are here to provide resources and ensure that making a planned gift to Woolly Mammoth is as seamless as possible.

WOOLLY MAMMOTH CAN ACCEPT PLANNED GIFTS IN THE FORM OF:

Bequests:

A bequest is made by adding a codicil to an existing will or preparing a new will.

Retirement Plan:

Make Woolly a beneficiary of a retirement plan such as a 401(k); IRA; 403(b).

Life Insurance Name:

Woolly Mammoth as a beneficiary to receive proceeds at the end of a lifetime.

Charitable Trust Gifts:

A charitable trust is an irrevocable trust established for charitable purposes.

LET US KNOW YOUR PLANS—AND DEEPEN YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH WOOLLY.

For a confidential conversation or to share your intentions, please contact Woolly's Development Department at **202-312-5276** or email development@woollymammoth.net.

"In my view, theatre arts endure as one of humanity's greatest achievements—speaking across centuries and civilizations. I want Woolly's bold voice to continue these critical conversations across cultures and between generations. So... through my estate I've planned for the future, mine and Woolly's."

—Donna Ari, Mammoth Forever



MAMMOTH FOREVER: A PLANNED GIVING INITIATIVE

We would like to thank the farsighted group of donors who have included Woolly Mammoth in their estate plans:

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photo by Gisela Estrada



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