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**WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES WEISSBERG
COMMISSIONS FUNDED BY THE WEISSBERG FOUNDATION**

**Introducing the Weissberg Commissions, Woolly Mammoth's
First Dedicated Commissioning Program**

(Washington, D.C) **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** has been chosen by the **Weissberg Foundation** for a grant to honor the late Marvin Weissberg, tremendous philanthropist and theatre lover, through the creation of the theatre's first dedicated commissioning program, the **Weissberg Commissions**.

Marvin Weissberg was a mainstay in Woolly's audiences from our beginnings at Church Street to our current home on D Street in Penn Quarter. Most recently, the Foundation's Fund for Diversity in Theater helped Woolly Mammoth build a strong equity and inclusion lens to prepare for the search for a new artistic director in 2018, and then subsequently a new managing director in 2019.

The Weissberg Commissions will be a three-year program that will give generative artists the opportunity to innovate and take artistic risks in the creation of new theatrical works. These commissions are opportunities to support DC-based or born artists, and/or non-local artists writing about topics that directly relate to our lives in the DMV.

"I am thrilled to launch Woolly's first formal commissioning program," says **Sonia Fernandez, Director of New Work**, "to expand the ways in which Woolly develops new work to include not only writers, but other generative artists. That this program aligns with our values of creating work that centers racial justice and addresses themes that directly impact this community makes it that much more meaningful."

"It is an immense privilege to honor Marvin's staggering legacy in the DMV arts community through a program that supports new works of theatre created in, and influenced by, our regional home. Woolly Mammoth would not be the same without a champion like Marvin Weissberg, whose support has been transformative for so many organizations in our area and for so long," says **Maria Manuela Goyanes, Artistic Director**.

The Weissberg Commissions will be 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. The artists will be a mix of local, national, and potentially international creators whose commissions will feature a connection to the DC-area.

There will be three kinds of commissions: full commissions, seed commissions, and finishing commissions. Commissions under this new program would range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per project and fund completely new full-length plays, test out an idea, or give artists the opportunity to finish incomplete works. The list of commissioned artists will be curated by the Artistic Director and Woolly's Director of New Work.

After the conclusion of this three-year cycle, Woolly intends to continue with a commissioning program and is excited to see this commissioning model develop over the next several years.

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ABOUT WOOLLY

Woolly Mammoth 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. Co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Emika Abe, Woolly is located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol Building and the White House. This unique location influences Woolly's investment in actively working towards an equitable, participatory, and creative democracy.

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. These 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 and 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 Fucking Bird* across the nation and bringing Aleshea Harris's *What to Send Up When It Goes Down* to neighborhoods throughout DC. A national tour of Madeline's Sayet's

Where We Belong launched in 2022. In addition, Woolly was the first to pioneer Pay-What-You-Will tickets in the DMV, which are now available at every single performance.

Woolly Mammoth acknowledges that the 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. Understanding that history and context, Woolly values building relationships with neighbors 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.

“Uniquely plugged in to the mad temper of the times” (*New York Times*)

“The hottest theater company in town” (*Washington Post*)

“A place where Washingtonians can find clever, unusual, often over-the-top theatrical experiences they can’t find anywhere else” (*Washington Life Magazine*)

ABOUT THE WEISSBERG FOUNDATION

The Weissberg Foundation envisions a world that recognizes inequities and actively seeks to dismantle structural racism by continuously building access, opportunity, and power so that all can thrive. Through funding, amplification, capacity building, and collaboration, we advance organizations and efforts building power of those most negatively impacted by racism.

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