



**For Immediate Release**

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**WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF  
*STUPID FUCKING BIRD***

**PRODUCTION TO BE SUPPORTED BY  
INNOVATIVE "FREE THE BEAST!" CAMPAIGN**

(Washington, DC) **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** closes its dynamic 33<sup>rd</sup> season with playwright and director Aaron Posner's world premiere of ***Stupid Fucking Bird***, loosely based on Chekhov's *The Seagull*. Woolly Artistic Director Howard Shalwitz directs this re-imagined version, May 27 through June 23, 2013.

An aspiring young theatre director named Conrad struggles to get out from under the shadow of his mother Emma, a famous actress. Meanwhile, his young muse Nina falls for Emma's lover Doyle, and everyone discovers just how disappointing love, art, and growing up can be. In this contemporary and irreverent riff on Chekhov's *The Seagull*, Aaron Posner skillfully remixes the renowned "subtext" of the classic play into exuberant scenes and songs.

"***Stupid Fucking Bird***, like *The Seagull*, is mostly about love, art, hope, and disappointment," said Aaron Posner. "It pits passionate dreams of ideal love and artistic success against the simple hard realities of quotidian life. It's been fascinating to explore *The Seagull*—a play I truly love and, in some odd ways, loathe—to find my own resonances and rebellions within it. What has emerged, I hope, in this rough-and-tumble, meta-theatrical mash-up, is a deliberately unfaithful re-imagining that I hope will challenge, amaze, engage, and delight."

"Aaron Posner and I have been friends for many years, so it's a thrill to finally collaborate together on a new work," said Woolly Artistic Director Howard Shalwitz. "Chekhov's *The Seagull* is a cornerstone of theatrical realism, but Aaron has written a very personal response that brings contemporary language and a breezy sense of experimentation to this iconic work. The extended exploratory process made possible by our "Free the Beast!" fundraising campaign has allowed our designers and actors to find their own responses, as well—both to Chekhov and to Posner! The results will be lively and quite layered, lending fresh relevance to Chekhov's themes about the inevitable compromises of adult life."

***Stupid Fucking Bird*** is the second production to be supported by Woolly Mammoth's innovative fundraising effort, Free the Beast!, which was publicly launched last May. Free the Beast! is raising \$4 million to support the production of 25 new plays over the next ten years. Some will be commissioned from scratch; others developed from early drafts. All will be given

the time and tending they need by to reach maturity, drawing from a menu of support including commissioning, research enhancement, readings and workshops, larger casts, extra rehearsals, and increased technical resources. Most importantly, each will receive full productions on Woolly Mammoth's stage.

Free the Beast! support for ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** included a completion commission for playwright Aaron Posner, funding for the composer of the original score, a one-week workshop at Lake George Theater Lab in upstate New York, and three readings at Woolly Mammoth.

Community engagement activities surrounding ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** are featured in Woolly's "House Lights Up!" programming profile below.

Woolly Mammoth's Season 33—themed ***My Roots, My Revolution***—includes a group of unforgettable characters who choose whether to embrace their legacies, run from them, or invent a whole new future. Works include Kristoffer Diaz's *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Sept 3–Oct 7), Mia Chung's *You for Me for You* (Nov 5–Dec 2), Danai Gurira's *The Convert* (Feb 13–Mar 10), Mike Daisey's *American Utopias* (Mar 25–Apr 21), **Aaron Posner's *Stupid Fucking Bird*** (May 27–June 23), and The Second City's *America All Better!!* (July 9–Aug 4). This holiday season featured Shenoah Allen and Mark Chavez's *The Pajama Men: In The Middle of No One* (Dec 11–Jan 6).

#### **ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM**

**Aaron Posner** (playwright) is a freelance director and playwright, an Associate Artist at the Folger Theatre and Milwaukee Rep, and was a founding Artistic Director of Philadelphia's Arden Theatre. His plays and productions have been seen at more than a third of the LORT theatres in the country. Aaron has been a fan of Woolly since the early 90's and directed *In the Next Room or the vibrator play* at Woolly in 2011. He has won Barrymore Awards as both a director and playwright and Helen Hayes Awards for Best Director three in the last eight years. His published and produced adaptations include *The Chosen*, *My Name Is Asher Lev* (currently in an open-ended run Off Broadway), *Sometimes A Great Notion*, Mark Twain's *A Murder, A Mystery & A Marriage* (with James Sugg), and many more. Aaron is an Eisenhower Fellow, a graduate of Northwestern University, is from Eugene, Oregon, and lives outside DC with his wife, actress Erin Weaver, and his tiny daughter, Maisie.

**Howard Shalwitz** (director) has been the visionary force behind Woolly Mammoth for 33 seasons, steering the theatre's adventurous play selection, guiding the development and production of dozens of new works, and building a renowned acting company. Under his leadership, Woolly Mammoth has grown from a tiny "alternative" theatre to one of the leading centers for provocative new theatre in America. Howard received the 2011 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Director for *Clybourne Park*, and has received multiple Helen Hayes nominations as both a director and an actor. In recent seasons, he directed the world premieres of *Civilization*, *Fever/Dream* and *Big Death and Little Death*, along with *She Stoops to Comedy*, *Measure for Pleasure*, and *The Faculty Room*. Howard has directed for leading New York and regional companies including New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Arena Stage, Studio Arena, and Milwaukee Rep. In 2012 he was recognized as Distinguished Finalist for the Zelda Fichandler Award for Outstanding Regional Director.

The ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** cast will include Woolly Company Members **Rick Foucheux\*** (*R.U.R.*, *The Choir*, and *Dead Man's Cell Phone*), **Kimberly Gilbert\*** (*A Bright New Boise*, *Clybourne Park*, *In the Next Room or the vibrator play*, *Fever/Dream*, *Boom*, *Measure for*

*Pleasure, The K of D, Martha, Josie and the Chinese Elvis, Big Death & Little Death, Cooking with Elvis, and You for Me for You*), and **Kate Eastwood Norris\*** (*Full Circle, Fever/Dream, and She Stoops To Comedy*). Additional cast includes **Brad Koed\***, **Cody Nickell\***, **Katie DeBuys\***, and **Darius Pierce\***. The creative team will include set design by Woolly Company Member **Misha Kachman**, costume design by **Laree Lentz**, lighting design by Woolly Company Member **Colin K. Bills**, and sound design by **James Sugg**. Additional credits include **Miriam Weisfeld** (dramaturgy), and **Maribeth Chaprka\*** (production stage manager).

*\*Member, Actors' Equity Association*

***Stupid Fucking Bird*** runs May 27 through June 23; Wednesdays–Fridays at 8pm, Saturdays at 3pm and 8pm (June 1 at 8pm only), and Sundays at 2pm and 7pm (June 2 at 7pm only). Monday and Tuesday, May 27 and 28 will be Pay-What-You-Can performances beginning at 8pm.

### **TICKETS**

Tickets for ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** start at \$35, and can be purchased through the Woolly Mammoth Box Office at **202-393-3939**, online at **[www.woollymammoth.net](http://www.woollymammoth.net)**, or in person at 641 D Street, NW (7<sup>th</sup> & D). For directions and parking information, please visit **[www.woollymammoth.net](http://www.woollymammoth.net)**.

### **HOUSE LIGHTS UP! EVENTS**

House Lights Up! is a series of high-profile panel discussions, lectures, debates, film screenings, concerts, readings, and other special events, curated by Woolly's Connectivity Department.

### **Lobby Experience**

***Stupid Fucking Bird*** kicks-off a three-play long collaboration in partnership with Method 121 (founded by Alli Houseworth) during which Method 121 will digitally enhance the Woolly lobby space to deepen the audience experience with the production on stage, and allow audiences to easily share their Woolly experience with the world. Activities for ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** will challenge audiences to unleash their inner artist and revolutionize classic work to create new, fresh, and accessible forms, thus providing audiences with deeper insights around the playmaking process.

### **Artists Mixer**

**Thursday, May 30**

**Mixer at 6pm, Performance at 8pm**

*Woolly Classroom and Theater*

Tickets \$20 (includes discussion and tickets to *Stupid Fucking Bird*)

Book tickets at [woollymammoth.net](http://woollymammoth.net) with promo code "ARTIST"

Are you an artist in the DC area? Join us for a networking mixer and discussion about the challenges of creating art in our current environment, and the responsibility/burden of living up to those who have come before us. ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** playwright Aaron Posner will lead a conversation about how we create art, and how we respond, retaliate against, and remix the work of previous generations. All artistic disciplines are welcome!

Guests are invited to mix and mingle with artists and art makers of all disciplines and stay for the show. The evening includes a reception with discounted drinks, conversation and networking, and one ticket to *Stupid Fucking Bird*.

### **Post-Show Discussions**

*Woolly Theatre*

**Saturday, June 15**

**Following 3pm performance**

*Artistic Roots and Revolution: Art That Changed the World*

**Saturday, June 22**

**Following 3pm performance**

*Art on the Brain and in the Heart*

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

May 27 8pm PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

May 28 8pm PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

May 29 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

May 30 6pm ARTIST MIXER for *Stupid Fucking Bird*

May 30 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

May 31 8pm OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 1 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 2 7pm PRESS NIGHT PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 5 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 6 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 7 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 8 3pm, 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 9 2pm, 7pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 12 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 13 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 14 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 15 3pm, 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 15 3pm POST-SHOW DISCUSSION *Artistic Roots and Revolution:*

*Art That Changed the World*

June 16 2pm, 7pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 19 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 20 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 21 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 22 3pm, 8pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

June 22 3pm POST-SHOW DISCUSSION: *Art on the Brain and in the Heart*

June 23 2pm, 7pm PERFORMANCE of *Stupid Fucking Bird*

### **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

Facebook.com/woollymammothtc

Twitter.com/woollymammothtc #WoollyBird

Blog: woollymammothblog.com

## **ABOUT WOOLLY**

Now in its 33<sup>rd</sup> season, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company continues to hold its place at the leading edge of American theatre. Acknowledged as “one of the most influential outposts for the best new American plays” (*The Washington Post*), and “known for its productions of innovative new plays” (*The New York Times*), Woolly Mammoth is a national leader in the development of new works, and one of the best known and most influential mid-sized theatres in America.

Woolly Mammoth’s upcoming Season 34, themed ***America’s Tell-Tale Heart***, includes Lisa D’Amour’s *Detroit* (September 9–October 6, 2013), Branden Jacobs-Jenkins’ *Appropriate* (November 4–December 1, 2013), Jackie Sibblies Drury’s *We Are Proud To Present...* (February 10–March 9, 2014), Elevator Repair Service’s *Arguendo* (March 31–April 20, 2014), and Peter Sinn Nachtrieb’s *The Totalitarians* (June 2–29, 2014). Returning this holiday season are The Pajama Men, Shenoah Allen and Mark Chavez, with their newest show, *Just the Two of Each of Us* (Dec 10, 2013–Jan 5, 2014).

[www.woollymammoth.net](http://www.woollymammoth.net)

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