



**Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company**  
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## **ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT FOR**

### ***Arias with a Twist***

To Members of the Media:

As part of Woolly's ongoing green initiatives, moving forward every one of our performances will have an electronic press kit available on our website. Here you can view all the contents of the show's press kit, including press releases, links to feature articles and/or past reviews, as well as password protected press photos.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

Sincerely,

Brooke Miller  
Press and Digital Content Manager



For Immediate Release  
March 7, 2012  
Contact: Brooke Miller  
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## WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS DC PREMIERE OF ARIAS WITH A TWIST APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH MAY 6<sup>TH</sup>

RENOWNED COLLABORATION BETWEEN LEGENDARY CHANTEUSE JOEY ARIAS AND  
INNOVATIVE PUPPETEER BASIL TWIST COMES TO DC AFTER SOLD OUT NEW YORK  
PRODUCTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TOUR

(Washington, DC) – Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company will present the DC premiere of *Arias with a Twist* created by drag chanteuse extraordinaire **Joey Arias** (performer) and master puppeteer **Basil Twist** (director). This “sometimes racy, occasionally raunchy, and always riveting” (*New York Daily News*) journey transports audiences to unpredictable worlds: from a neon-lit space lab, to an abundant Garden of Eden, to a smoky Manhattan night club. The legendary voice of **Joey Arias** with the puppetry talents of **Basil Twist** creates a trippy musical fantasia of ecstatic desires and eye-popping enchantments. *Arias with a Twist* will run April 4–May 6, Tuesdays–Fridays at 8pm, Saturdays at 8pm and 10:30pm, and Sundays at 7pm.

*Arias with a Twist* was created in 2008, and marked **Joey Arias**’ return to New York after his six year stint as the emcee “Mistress of Seduction” in the Las Vegas Cirque Du Soleil production *Zumanity*. *Arias* features ‘The Dream Music Orchestra,’ a collection of antique hand carved wooden puppets that depict famous big band instrumentalists. These puppets were created for **Twist**’s grandfather Griff Williams during the golden age of big band in 1930’s Chicago.

Originally performed in a tiny basement space in New York at HERE Arts Center in 2008, the critically acclaimed production extended twice before touring nationally and internationally for three years. In 2011 *Arias with a Twist* returned to New York, adding in some “deluxe” touches for the larger Abrons Arts Center. *Arias with a Twist* was nominated for a 2009 Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience and is the subject of the film *Arias with a Twist: The Docufantasy*.

**Joey Arias** has been featured recently in DC at SpeakEasy at L’Enfant Café. This classic cabaret and supper club event takes place on select Sundays every month featuring New York’s finest legendary entertainers and drag artists. For more information visit [lenfantcafe.com](http://lenfantcafe.com).

DC-area arts organizations have joined forces to create a festival of **Basil Twist** works: the first time four of his works will be presented in one city in a close repertory with collaborating organizations. The festival runs from March 16–April 6 with productions of *Petrushka* at Shakespeare Theatre Company, *Symphonie Fantastique* at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, *Arias with a Twist* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and *Dogugaeshi* at The Studio Theatre.

*Arias with a Twist* will feature lighting design by **Aayumu “Poe” Saegusa**, sound design by **Greg Duffin**, and projection design by **Daniel Brodie**. Internationally renowned fashion designer **Manfred Thierry Mugler**, who has worked with Beyoncé and Lady Gaga, serves as artistic advisor and costume designer.

## ***Arias with a Twist***

Created by Joey Arias and Basil Twist  
Directed by Basil Twist  
Featuring Joey Arias

### **CAST**

Creator and performance artist.....Joey Arias  
Puppeteer.....Chris DeVille  
Puppeteer.....Kirsten Kammermeyer  
Puppeteer.....Matt A. Leabo  
Puppeteer.....Jamie Moore  
Puppeteer.....David Lloyd Olsen  
Puppeteer.....Amanda Villalobos

### **CREATIVE TEAM**

Creator and director.....Basil Twist  
Artistic advisor and costume designer.....Manfred Thierry Mugler  
Lighting designer.....Aayumu "Poe" Saegusa  
Sound designer.....Greg Duffin  
Projection designer.....Daniel Brodie

***Arias with a Twist*** Catering Sponsor: Matters of Taste

***Arias with a Twist*** Restaurant Sponsor: Fiola

### **ABOUT JOEY ARIAS**

Most recently, renowned drag diva **Joey Arias** enjoyed a wildly successful run as the emcee "Mistress of Seduction" in the Las Vegas Cirque Du Soleil production *Zumanity*. Revered since the 1980's as a central figure in the underground New York art scene responsible for recreating drag as high art, Arias has performed worldwide at venues including Carnegie Hall, The Freedom Theatre in London, and on a transatlantic world tour into the cabaret clubs of Paris, Tokyo, Germany, Canada, and England. Off stage, Joey has amassed an extensive resume of media appearances as an actor, vocalist, and outrageous personality. On film, he has appeared in *Mondo New York*, *Big Top Pee Wee*, *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*, *Wigstock – The Movie*, *Flawless*, and *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar*. Television credits include "Saturday Night Live" with David Bowie, Ann Magnuson's "Vandemonium" (Cinemax), Elvira's MTV Halloween Special, HBO's "Dragtime," HBO's "Real Sex," and "Gayer Than Gay" on VH1, along with numerous appearances on a wide variety of talk shows and programs. Additionally, Arias has produced several of his own recordings including *Arias on Holiday*, *Strange Fruit*, *Jazzo Lozo*, *God Shave the Queen*, and live recordings of *StarLust* in Berlin and *Bar D'O* in New York.

### **ABOUT BASIL TWIST**

Originally from San Francisco, **Basil Twist** is a third generation puppeteer. He is the sole American graduate of the Ecole Superieure National des Arts de la Marionnette in France. His original creations include *The Araneidae Show*, *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Petrushka*, *Master Peter's Puppet Show*, *Dogugaeshi*, and *La Bella Dormente nel Bosco*. Collaborations include *Behind The Lid* with the late Lee Nagrin and *Red Beads* with Lee Breuer/Mabou Mines. Since 1998, Twist has continually expanded the

realm of puppetry by creating and touring new works that integrate live music. He has partnered with such premier institutions as The Spoleto Festival, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center's Voice and Visions Series, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, Japan Society, and Gotham Chamber Opera. Twist premiered his *Hansel and Gretel* with The Houston Grand Opera and Atlanta Opera Company. His work has been recognized with an OBIE Award, three UNIMA Awards for Excellence in Puppetry, two Bessie Awards, a New York Innovative Theatre Award, and an American Theatre Wing/Henry Hewes Design Award. Twist is a Guggenheim Fellow and is an inaugural United States Artist Ford Fellow.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

To follow the conversations surrounding *Arias with a Twist* on social media:

Facebook.com/woollymammothc

Twitter.com/woollymammothc, hashtag: **#WoollyArias**

Woollymammothblog.com

Radio Woolly: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/radio-woolly/id359206232>

## **CONNECTIVITY EVENTS**

Jump right in and explore the world of this musical fantasia! Watch as our lobby gets a make-over, evoking 1930's glamour as well as the futuristic science fiction universe that we see in *Arias with a Twist*. Through a series of exciting events, we invite you to join us in discovering what's behind the magic of *Arias with a Twist*.

### **Get your glam on!**

Waiting for an excuse to wear those new shiny shoes, a fancy bow-tie, or try on a new shade of lipstick? Look no further! **Every Saturday night for the late show (10:30pm)** during the run of *Arias with a Twist* we invite you to class yourself up, get decked out, and come to the theatre for a night on-the-town. Whether dressed as a full-out formal Old Hollywood movie star, or a bedazzled bombshell of the future, no glam is too big or too small. The best outfits will be rewarded at the end of the night!

### **Are you the next Woolly Glamazon?**

#### **Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> following the 8pm performance**

Inspired by **Joey Arias** and **Basil Twist**'s celebration of self-expression, artistry, and glamour, Woolly will be hosting a post-performance Glamazon Pageant. Watch as pros from the DC burlesque and vaudeville scene compete on the catwalk for a chance to be crowned as the ultimate "Glamazon." Stay after the show for a cash bar, great music, and a chance to win your own Glamazon crown. Don't forget to glam up!

## **Post-Show Conversations**

- **Wednesday, April 11** following the 8pm performance and **Sunday, April 15** following the 7pm performance:  
Puppets Up Close & Personal: Led by the talented puppeteers of *Arias with a Twist*, you get two chances to take a closer look at Basil's innovative puppetry and see what brings this wild adventure to life.
- **Thursday, April 19** following the 8pm performance:  
Stay tuned for a special Audience Exchange conversation featuring a guest emcee to be announced!
- **Wednesday, April 25** following the 8pm performance:  
A special event with Basil Twist himself! Here's your chance to hear Basil tell the story of the making of *Arias with a Twist*, and its journey from New York City to Washington, DC.

## **DC BASIL TWIST FESTIVAL 2012**

### ***Petrushka***

by Basil Twist

featuring Irina and Julia Elkina

Originally commissioned for Lincoln Center for The Performing Arts

March 16-25, 2012

Shakespeare Theatre Company's Lansburgh Theatre

To purchase tickets, visit [ShakespeareTheatre.org](http://ShakespeareTheatre.org) or call 202-547-1122.

Set to Stravinsky's Sonata, *Petrushka* tells of a tragic love triangle between three magical puppets. This work puts a new magic around the legendary Ballets Russes production of *Petrouchka*.

### ***Symphonie Fantastique***

by Basil Twist

March 29-31, 2012

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

To purchase tickets, visit [ClariceSmithCenter.umd.edu](http://ClariceSmithCenter.umd.edu) or call 301-405-2787.

*Symphonie Fantastique* is an intimate show set to the five movements of Hector Berlioz's 19th century classical composition of the same name. The production is performed entirely in a specially constructed water tank.

### ***Arias with a Twist***

by Joey Arias and Basil Twist

April 4-May 6, 2012

Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

To purchase tickets, visit [WoollyMammoth.net](http://WoollyMammoth.net) or call 202-393-3939.

Drag diva Joey Arias sings an array of magical songs amongst a backdrop of fantastical puppets. Listen to one of the most beautiful voices while being taken along on an extravagant adventure.

### ***Dogugaeshi***

by Basil Twist

April 12-22, 2012

The Studio Theatre

To purchase tickets, visit [StudioTheatre.org](http://StudioTheatre.org) or call 202-232-7267.

Twist presents an intimate journey of images and emotions influenced by Japanese dogugaeshi stage mechanism technique and his own experiences with the rare art form of puppetry.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING**

### **Happenings at the Harman: Local Puppeteers**

**March 21, 2012 at noon**

Shakespeare Theatre Company's Forum in Sidney Harman Hall

Free

For this installment of *Happenings at the Harman*, puppeteers from the DC area, including puppet theatre company Pointless Theatre, will feature examples of their work and excerpts from previous performances, in conjunction with the presentation of Basil Twist's *Petrushka*.

### **Conversation with Basil Twist**

**March 22, 2012 at 8 p.m.**

Shakespeare Theatre Company's Lansburgh Theatre

Free

This moderated conversation with Basil Twist will focus on the breadth of Twist's body of work. Audience members can ask questions of Twist and even view puppets from his productions.

## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

***Arias with a Twist*** runs April 4–May 6, Tuesdays–Fridays at 8pm, Saturdays at 8pm and 10:30pm, and Sundays at 7pm. \*No 10:30pm performance Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. **There will be a Pay-What-You-Can performance on Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 8pm.**

## TICKETS

Tickets for ***Arias with a Twist*** 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 the Box Office located at 641 D Street, NW (7<sup>th</sup> & D). For directions and parking information, please visit [www.woollymammoth.net](http://www.woollymammoth.net).

## ABOUT WOOLLY

Now in its 32nd Season, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company continues to hold its place at the leading edge of American theatre. Acknowledged as “the hottest theatre company in town” (*The Washington Post*), “known for its productions of innovative new plays” (*The New York Times*), Woolly Mammoth is a national leader in the development of new plays, and one of the best known and most influential midsized theatres in America.

Woolly’s 32nd Season features five works that relate to the question, “Does our civilization have an expiration date?” They include Samuel D. Hunter’s *A Bright New Boise* (Oct 10-Nov 13), The Second City’s *Spoiler Alert: Everybody Dies* (Dec 6-Jan 8), Jason Grote’s *Civilization (all you can eat)* (Feb 13-Mar 11), Joey Arias and Basil Twist’s ***Arias with a Twist***\* (Apr 4-May 6), and Anne Washburn’s *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (May 28-July 1).

\*This tour of Basil Twist is made possible by a grant from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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

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## ***Arias with a Twist***

### **Feature Article Links:**

“Unchained Arias” by Doug Rule –*Metro Weekly*, 3/29/12

<http://www.metroweekly.com/feature/?ak=7208>

“Born to Puppeteer” by Doug Rule –*Metro Weekly*, 3/29/12

<http://www.metroweekly.com/feature/?ak=7207>

“Basil Twist: A Genius, with Many a String Attached” by Elizabeth Blair –*NPR Weekend Edition Saturday*, 3/24/12

<http://www.npr.org/2012/03/24/148922534/basil-twist-a-genius-with-many-a-string-attached?sc=tw&cc=share>

“Puppeteer Basil Twist’s First Retrospective Comes to Life in Washington” by Celia Wren –*The Washington Post*, 3/11/12

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater\\_dance/puppeteer-basil-twists-first-retrospective-comes-to-life-in-washington/2012/03/02/gIQAG7hZ1R\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/puppeteer-basil-twists-first-retrospective-comes-to-life-in-washington/2012/03/02/gIQAG7hZ1R_story.html)

### **Past Review Links:**

*The New York Times*

<http://theater.nytimes.com/2011/09/19/theater/reviews/arias-with-a-twist-at-abrons-arts-center-review.html>

*Time Out New York*

<http://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/review-arias-with-a-twist-off-broadway>

*TheaterMania*

[http://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city/reviews/09-2011/arias-with-a-twist\\_40914.html](http://www.theatermania.com/new-york-city/reviews/09-2011/arias-with-a-twist_40914.html)



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## WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY ANNOUNCES 33<sup>RD</sup> SEASON

### WOOLLY COMPANY MEMBERS AND GUEST ARTISTS MINE THE BEAUTY AND VOLATILITY OF CULTURES IN COLLISION

(Washington, DC) – After Season 32 asked “Does our civilization have an expiration date?” Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company’s Season 33 places our society in collision with many others, taking a global perspective on the beauty and volatility of our multicultural era.

“Woolly Mammoth’s 2012-13 Season is a passionate excavation of our cultural souls, encompassing both the joy of cultural expression and the struggle of cultures in conflict,” says **Artistic Director Howard Shalwitz**. “With a unique global perspective, these ambitious new works carry us to far flung destinations including Africa, North Korea, Disney World, Zuccotti Park, and even the world of professional wrestling. Each destination is revealed as a hot zone where human emotions are bombarded by complex forces of religion, heritage, values, and ethnicity. Fueled by Woolly’s brilliant company and guest artists, the results will be unexpectedly humorous, heartbreaking, and intensely provocative.”

Shalwitz continues, “We’re delighted to start our Season with works by two rising young playwrights: first, the 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist ***The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity***, by **Kristoffer Diaz**. Inspired by his love of both hip hop and wrestling, Kristoffer draws us into a world of daring stunts and wild stereotypes, woven together by a simple tale of friendship in a world gone mad with jingoistic fever. Next, Woolly is honored to launch **Mia Chung**’s first major production ***You for Me for You***. With brilliant Russian director **Yury Urnov** at the helm, this fascinating and delicate story of two North Korean sisters who immigrate to the US offers a unique perspective on both cultures.”

“Woolly is also thrilled to welcome back some of our favorite collaborators: **Mike Daisey**, **Danai Gurira**, and **Aaron Posner**. **Mike Daisey**, fearless theatrical provocateur, returns to reveal another delicious paradox of American life. After exorcizing the demons embedded in our iPhones in ***The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs***, Mike turns his attention to the many attempts at utopia that have idealistically sprung up since our nation’s founding. Zimbabwean-American playwright **Danai Gurira** returns after the wildly successful ***In the Continuum*** and ***Eclipsed*** with ***The Convert***, about the clash of native religion and Christianity. We finish the season with ***Stupid Fucking Bird*** by **Aaron Posner**, one of our city’s best directors and adaptors. ***Stupid Fucking Bird***, a contemporary riff on Chekhov’s ***The Seagull***, reveals the depth of Aaron’s passion, humor, and sheer originality.”

“This year’s holiday show ***In the Middle of No One*** by **The Pajama Men** introduces DC to a crazily inventive duo from Albuquerque, New Mexico. A smash hit on the international comedy circuit for years, their ironic sketches about love among strange humans and even stranger aliens seemed to me a perfect fit for Woolly’s adventurous audience.

## Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company--Season 33 (2012/13)

Subscription Season:

### ***The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity***

By **Kristoffer Diaz**

Directed by Company Member **John Vreeke**

September 3–September 30, 2012

Cast will include **Jose Joaquin Perez** (*Oedipus el Rey*), Company Member **Michael Russotto** (*A Bright New Boise*, *House of Gold*, *Full Circle*), and **Jamin Olivencia**.

The Helen Hayes Award-nominated design team from *A Bright New Boise* will return with set design by Company Member **Misha Kachman**, lighting design by Company Member **Colin K. Bills**, costume design by **Misha Kachman** and **Ivania Stack**, sound design by **Chris Baine**, video design by **Jared Mezzocchi**, and fight choreography by **Joe Isenberg**.

This 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist is a drop-kicking, body-slamming, balls-out theatrical happening about the larger-than-life world of professional wrestling. Tired of making other pro wrestlers look good, Macedonio “The Mace” Guerra recruits a smart-mouthed Indian kid to dethrone the current All-American champ, Chad Deity. But in wrestling, as in life, even the most idealistic freedom-fighter can be seduced by the roar of the crowd.

### ***You for Me for You***

World Premiere

Presented in association with Ma-Yi Theater Company

By **Mia Chung**

Directed by **Yury Urnov**

November 5–December 2, 2012

Two North Korean sisters—facing starvation at the hands of a dizzyingly corrupt regime—make a bargain with a smuggler to flee to the United States. When one of the sisters is denied passage because she is too weak to make the treacherous transpacific crossing, the other sister makes a promise to race across time and space to save her.

### ***The Convert***

By **Danai Gurira**

Directed by Company Member **Michael John Garcés**

February 4–March 3, 2013

OBIE Award-winner **Danai Gurira** returns to Woolly with her rich, unflinching, and compassionate new play. Set amid the colonial scramble for Southern Africa in 1895, the play follows Jekesai, a young girl who escapes a forced marriage in her native village and lands in a Westernized household where Africans find themselves at odds over the arrival of Christianity.

### ***American Utopias***

World Premiere

Created and performed by **Mike Daisey**

Directed by **Jean-Michele Gregory**

March 25–April 21, 2013

**Mike Daisey** shows us a distinctly American vision of utopia—how we create civic spaces for ourselves in which we act out our dreams of a better world. Daisey takes us everywhere to pursue the story: from Disney World and its theme park perfection, to the drug-fueled anarchic excesses of Burning Man, from the Masonic underpinnings of our nation’s capitol, to Zuccotti Park, where in the unlikely place a new movement gets born. Gunplay, giant glittery dildos, police actions, and secret Freemason underwear come together to tell the history of our American dream.

***Stupid Fucking Bird***

World Premiere

By **Aaron Posner**

Directed by **Howard Shalwitz**

Sort of adapted from Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull*

May 27–June 23, 2013

Cast will include Company Member **Kimberly Gilbert** (*A Bright New Boise, Clybourne Park, In the Next Room or the vibrator play*) and **Katie DeBuys** (*In the Next Room or the vibrator play*).

The design team will include set design by Company Member **Misha Kachman** and lighting design by Company Member **Colin K. Bills**.

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** transforms the famous "subtext" of the classic play into exuberant scenes and songs.

**Subscription Add On (Holiday Show)**

***The Pajama Men:***

***In the Middle of No One***

Created and performed by **Shenoah Allen** and **Mark Chavez**

Music by **Kevin Hume**

December 11, 2012–January 6, 2013

Following sell-out runs in London’s West End, Albuquerque duo **The Pajama Men** come to Woolly with their stand-up/sketch comedy/physical theatre extravaganza, ***In The Middle of No One***. A delightfully silly comedy thriller about love, alien abduction, and the spirit of adventure, the show captures **The Pajama Men**’s trademark style of blink-of-an-eye character switches, plot twists, and audacious jokes.

**Subscriptions are now on sale and may be purchased through the Box Office at 202-393-3939, or in person at 641 D Street, NW (7<sup>th</sup> & D). Single tickets will go on sale on July 1, 2012.**

\*Play, artists, and dates are subject to change

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