



For Immediate Release
March 7, 2012
Contact: Brooke Miller
Press and Digital Content Manager
202-312-5263 brooke@woollymammoth.net

WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS DC PREMIERE OF ARIAS WITH A TWIST APRIL 4TH THROUGH MAY 6TH

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.

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 13th 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 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 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 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 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 7th. **There will be a Pay-What-You-Can performance on Tuesday, April 10th 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, or in person at the Box Office located at 641 D Street, NW (7th & D). For directions and parking information, please visit 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

#