



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Brooke Miller

Press and Digital Content Manager

202-312-5263 [brooke@woollymammoth.net](mailto:brooke@woollymammoth.net)

## WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY LAUNCHES “FREE THE BEAST”

### \$4 MILLION CAMPAIGN SUPPORTS THE PRODUCTION OF 25 NEW PLAYS OVER A TEN YEAR PERIOD

(Washington, DC) – Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company announces the public launch of its fundraising campaign **Free the Beast**, an innovative effort that will support the production of 25 new plays starting 2012 through 2022. These plays will be given the time and tending they require to reach maturity, drawing from a menu of support including new commissioning models, comprehensive research, readings and workshops, larger casts, extra rehearsals, increased technical resources, and the expertise of Woolly’s Company of Artists. Most importantly, all will receive full productions on Woolly Mammoth’s stage.

“**Free the Beast** is a game-changer for Woolly Mammoth’s future,” says Artistic Director **Howard Shalwitz**. “Funds from the campaign will dramatically increase what we can spend on 25 ambitious new plays, and by raising these funds in advance we’re able to commit to multi-year projects for the first time, creating a pipeline of new work for our stage. Most significantly, **Free the Beast** will support new kinds of collaborations among the brilliant playwrights, actors, directors, and designers in our growing resident company, together with outstanding guest artists. I want to thank all the generous supporters who have helped us pass the halfway point of this landmark effort. And I especially want to thank Arlene and Robert Kogod, who have long recognized the uniqueness of Woolly’s mission to create challenging new theatre, and whose generosity has provided the cornerstone for **Free the Beast**.”

Two plays in Woolly Mammoth’s 2012-2013 Season will be supported by **Free The Beast** funding—the World Premieres of *You for Me for You* by Mia Chung and *Stupid Fucking Bird* by Aaron Posner. In addition, **Free the Beast** will support the World Premiere of *Zombie: The American* by Robert O’Hara, tentatively planned for 2014.

Planned **Free the Beast** projects:

#### ***You for Me for You* by Mia Chung**

Korean-American playwright Mia Chung is one of the most imaginative young writers of her generation, and Woolly is honored to launch her first major production: a play about two North Korean sisters who make a bargain with a smuggler to flee to the United States. With brilliant Russian director Yury Urnov at the helm, this delicate story shatters our conception of life inside and outside the rigid borders of an ominous regime.

**Free the Beast** will support:

- Completion commission for playwright
- Three-day workshop at Woolly

- Four-week workshop production with Drama Desk and Obie Award-winning Ma-Yi Theater Company in New York City
- World Premiere at Woolly in fall 2012, in association with Ma-Yi's network of Asian-American artists

### ***Stupid Fucking Bird* by Aaron Posner**

Aaron Posner is one of DC's foremost directors and adapters, and the idea for this play emerged when Aaron was rehearsing Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next Room or the vibrator play* at Woolly. In this contemporary and irreverent musical riff on Chekhov's *The Seagull*, everyone discovers just how disappointing love, art, and growing up can be.

**Free the Beast** will support:

- Completion commission for playwright
- Funding for composer and musical director of original score
- Three-day workshop at Woolly Mammoth
- One-week workshop at Lake George Theater Lab in upstate New York
- An extra week of rehearsals with director Howard Shalwitz
- World Premiere at Woolly in spring 2013

### ***Zombie: The American* by Robert O'Hara.**

Woolly Company Member Robert O'Hara directed Danai Gurira's *In the Continuum*, wrote *Antebellum*, and drew a record number of new audiences to Woolly with *Bootycandy*, which he both wrote and directed. We've been dreaming of commissioning Robert to create a brand new play for his fellow Company Members, and this is it: a futuristic thriller about a White House literally haunted by America's past.

**Free the Beast** will support:

- Commissioning fee for playwright
- Two research visits to explore DC architecture and history
- Two workshops at Woolly
- Further production development steps
- World Premiere at Woolly, tentatively planned for 2014

## **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 mid-sized 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).

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

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