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**WOOLLY MAMMOTH ANNOUNCES THE ADDITION OF *THE PECULIAR PATRIOT*  
TO ITS 2018-19 SEASON**

***WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME* MOVES TO BROADWAY**

(Washington, DC) **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** is delighted to announce that it will be adding **Liza Jessie Peterson's** *The Peculiar Patriot* to its 2018-19 season this April. This production will be directed by **Talvin Wilks** and presented in association with **National Black Theatre** and **Hi-ARTS**, who produced the World Premiere production in New York City in September 2017. Peterson's "visceral" (*New York Times*) new play will be replacing Heidi Schreck's *What the Constitution Means to Me*, which just announced a transfer to Broadway this spring.

"I am thrilled for the opportunity to add Liza Jessie Peterson's timely and urgently needed show, *The Peculiar Patriot*, to this season at Woolly," says **Woolly Mammoth Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes**. "She deftly unpacks the human impact of mass incarceration in America, turning statistics into real, relatable, and hilarious stories that will stay with you for long after you leave the theater."

Betsy LaQuanda Ross is a self-proclaimed "Peculiar Patriot," who makes regular visits to penitentiaries in order to boost the morale of her loved ones. When she is not sharing neighborhood updates and gossip, Betsy illuminates our country's cruel and unjust criminal justice system and its impact not only on the 2.5 million people behind bars, but also their family and friends.

Written and performed by the inimitable Liza Jessie Peterson and inspired by her decades-long work with prison populations including on the notorious Riker's Island, *The Peculiar Patriot* is a fierce, funny, and shrewd indictment of the systemic inequity within America's fastest growing industry, tracing its roots from the plantation to the prison yard.

Following a successful run at New York Theatre Workshop this fall, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, Schreck's "personal, political, and uncannily timed" (*Vulture*) play, will transfer to Broadway for a 12-week limited engagement at the Helen Hayes Theater starting on March 14,

2019, when it was originally scheduled for Washington, D.C. Plans are in the works for Schreck to come to D.C. with the production and Woolly hopes to announce details later this year.

On the Broadway announcement, Goyanes added, "We couldn't be more excited to share the news that Heidi Schreck will take her boundary-breaking play, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, to Broadway this spring, knowing that Woolly and the commercial producers are actively working together to figure out how soon we can bring this amazing show back to Washington, DC, and to Woolly audiences."

**Liza Jessie Peterson** is an actress, playwright, poet, author and youth advocate who has been steadfast in her commitment to incarcerated populations both professionally and artistically for over two decades. Her critically acclaimed one woman show, *The Peculiar Patriot*, premiered at The National Black Theater in Harlem for two separate runs, and embarked on a national prison tour where she performed in over 35 jails and penitentiaries across the country. The show was nominated for three Audelco Awards (Best solo performance, light design and sound design) and had a successful sold out run at Arts Emerson in Boston. Her plays have been featured in notable theater festivals and performed in various theaters, nationally and internationally. Liza is author of *ALL DAY; A Year of Love and Survival Teaching Incarcerated Kids at Rikers Island (Hachette)*. As an actress Liza appeared in several feature films: *Love the Hard Way*, Spike Lee's, *Bamboozled*, K. Shalini's, *A Drop of Life*, and Jamie Catto's, *What About Me*. She was featured in Ava DuVernay's Emmy award winning documentary *The 13<sup>th</sup>* (Netflix) and was a consultant on Bill Moyer's documentary *RIKERS* (PBS). Visit her website at:

[www.lizajessiep.com](http://www.lizajessiep.com)

**Talvin Wilks**, who directed earlier engagements of *The Peculiar Patriot*, is the director of this production. The remaining members of the production team will be announced later.

## SCHEDULE

The dates and performance times for Woolly's production of *The Peculiar Patriot* will be announced later this month.

## TICKETS

Tickets for *The Peculiar Patriot* will be made available shortly. Ticket-holders for *What the Constitution Means to Me* will be offered same value seats for corresponding performances of *The Peculiar Patriot* or for a limited time may request a refund by calling the box office. For more information, visit us online at [woollymammoth.net](http://woollymammoth.net), by phone at (202) 393-3939, via email at [tickets@woollymammoth.net](mailto:tickets@woollymammoth.net), or in person at the Box Office, located at 641 D Street NW.

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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## ABOUT WOOLLY

Woolly Mammoth, a national innovator in the development and production of new plays, is one of the best known mid-sized theaters in the country and “the hottest theater company in town” (Washington Post). For almost four decades, Woolly has held a unique position at the leading edge of the American theater, earning a reputation for staying “uniquely plugged in to the mad temper of the times” (New York Times). We’ve garnered that reputation by holding fast to our unique mission: to create rousing, visceral, enlightening theater experiences that galvanize diverse artists and audiences to engage with our world in unexpected and often challenging ways.

## ABOUT NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE

Founded by visionary Dr. Barbara Ann Teer in 1968, **National Black Theatre (NBT)** is a nationally recognized cultural and educational institution. Dr. Teer pioneered “the healing art of black theatre as an instrument for wholeness in urban communities where entrepreneurial artists of African descent live and work.” In 1983, Dr. Teer expanded the vision of NBT by purchasing a 64,000-square-foot building on 125th Street and Fifth Avenue (renamed “National Black Theatre Way” by local law in 1994). This was the first revenue-generating Black arts complex in the country, an innovative arrangement through which for-profit businesses who shared NBT’s spiritual and aesthetic values rented retail space to subsidize the arts. Out of her vision, NBT houses the largest collection of Nigerian new sacred art in the Western hemisphere and is considered the authentic representation of a model whose time has come. NBT is partially supported by grants from the Ford Foundation, New York Community Trust, Time Warner Corporations, Howard Gilman Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Andrew Mellon Foundation, City Council of New York, City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, Columbia Service Society and private donations. Visit [www.nationalblacktheatre.org](http://www.nationalblacktheatre.org) or follow NBT on Facebook (@NationalBlackTheatre) and Twitter/Instagram (@NatBlackTheatre).

## ABOUT Hi-ARTS

Hi-ARTS (formerly known as the Hip-Hop Theater Festival) is a leading organization within the urban arts movement. For over seventeen years, Hi-ARTS has consistently broken new ground, advancing urban art by empowering artists to develop bold new works, while creating a lasting and positive impact on urban communities. Hi-ARTS is adding to the legacy of the HHTF at an exciting stage of growth that engages Hip-Hop while creating the new urban arts. With the move to our permanent home at El Barrio’s Artspace PS 109, Hi-ARTS is poised to grow into new realms of artistry, advocacy, and service to the communities in which we live and create.