

19/20 SEASON

Wallis Annenberg
Center for the
Performing Arts

Press Release

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**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Presents
Slingsby Theatre Company's
*EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES***

by Erich Kästner

Adapted for the Stage by Nicki Bloom

Directed by Andy Packer

**Recommended for Adults and Children ages 8+
Five Performances Only!**

Friday, March 27 through Sunday, March 29, 2020 / Lovelace Studio Theater

(Beverly Hills, CA, March 4, 2019) The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents Slingsby Theatre Company's *Emil and the Detectives*, a family-friendly adventure story that follows young Emil into a precarious world as he bids to right a wrong, from Friday, March 27 through Sunday, March 29, 2020, in The Wallis' Lovelace Studio Theater. Based on Erich Kästner's 1929 novella and directed by Slingsby Co-Founder Andy Packer, the play is performed by Elizabeth Hay and Nathan O'Keefe, two skilled actors immersed in smoke and mirrors, miniature worlds and a cinematic score. Teenage Emil is sent by his mother from his rural home with some money for his grandmother in the city. On the way, he meets a sinister man who robs him. With a group of quick-thinking and resourceful children to rally around, Emil is determined to solve the crime and catch the culprit. Kästner's novella, more than a good romp, is the author's only pre-1945 work to escape Nazi censorship. According to Packer, "It's a journey of discovery and self-discovery, the value of friendships and learning about trust and taking risks." Recommended for adults and children age eight and up, *Emil and the Detectives* is the seventh production of Slingsby, the internationally acclaimed Adelaide-based Australian theater company. *The Australian* said, "The performances are pitch perfect," and called it, "A delight."

"*Emil and the Detectives* is a true children's classic," says The Wallis' Artistic Director Paul Crewes. "With its beautifully written story, it's as relevant today as when the book was first published, and Slingsby's production will captivate audiences of all ages."

Tickets are on sale now for \$25 (prices subject to change). The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase tickets and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 or visit TheWallis.org/Detectives.

About the Artists:

ERICH KÄSTNER (Author), born February 23, 1899, in Dresden Germany, was a novelist, satirist and poet who studied to become a teacher and journalist and wrote children's books that became famous for their sense of humor and respect for children. *Emil and the Detectives*, his most popular story, has been translated into over 59 languages and was his only book to avoid Nazi censorship. Kästner printed many of his works in Switzerland because of this issue. After World War II, he edited the magazine *Die Neue Zeitung of Munich* and also created a children's newspaper. From 1952 to 1962 he undertook the role of president for the German branch of P.E.N., an organization of international writers. He died in Munich, West Germany on July 29, 1974, at the age of 75.

NICKI BLOOM (Playwright) is a multiple award-winning writer working across the fields of stage, screen, and prose whose plays have been produced throughout Australia and internationally, and have won multiple awards. Her plays include *Tender*, *Bloodwood*, *The Sun And The Other Stars*, *Land & Sea*, *A Cathedral*, *Little Bird* and *Vale*. Awards include the Adrian Consett Stephen Memorial Prize and the 2007 Inscription Chairman's Award (*Tender*); the 2008 Patrick White Playwrights' Award and the 2009 Inscription Playwriting Award (*Bloodwood*); the 2012 Barbara Hanrahan Fellowship and the 2012 Patrick White Playwrights' Award (*The Sun And The Other Stars*); the 2012 Jill Blewett Award (*A Cathedral*) and the 2015 AWGIE for Best Writing for Music Theatre (*Little Bird*). She has also worked as an adaptor, creating new versions of Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Shakespeare's *Romeo And Juliet* and Oscar Wilde's *The Young King*. She has been twice nominated for Helpmann awards, in 2015 (Best New Australian Work, *Little Bird* and 2016 (Best Production Children's Theatre, *The Young King*.) Her plays are published by Currency Press and Phoenix Educational Press.

ANDY PACKER (Director) Since completing a BA in Theatre Studies at Adelaide University in 1992, Packer's arts career has encompassed many roles including Creative Producer, ensemble Actor/ Creator and Festival Director. In 2007, he co-founded Slingsby Theatre Company as Artistic Director. In thirteen years, Slingsby has toured its original productions to more than 100 venues in 80 cities and towns across Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, USA, Canada, UK, Scotland, Spain, Ireland and Norway, India and China, winning 16 industry awards along the way. Alongside Slingsby, Packer has built a freelance career as a director of opera, musical theatre, cabaret and concerts. He has directed for State Theatre Company of South Australia, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, State Opera of South Australia, Adelaide Fringe, Adelaide Festival of Arts and Adelaide Chamber Singers and Australian String Quartet. In 2019, he was show director of the World of Wearable Art Awards Show in Wellington, New Zealand's largest theatrical event attracting an audience in excess of 60,000. Packer and his wife, Jane, live in Adelaide, South Australia with their three sons, nine chickens and retired greyhound.

ELIZABETH HAY (Performer) has been living and working in Adelaide since graduating from the Flinders Drama Centre in 2010. Most recently, she was a deviser and performer for *Stories in the Dark*, which won the InSpace Development Award at this year's Adelaide Fringe. She has performed with the State Theatre Company of South Australia in new Australian work *Jesikah*, *Volpone*, and *Red Cross Letters*. She has been involved as a performer with many local independent theatre companies, such as five.point.one in *The Last Time I Saw Richard*, and ActNow Theatre in *Speak Out*. Hay joined the main cast of "Danger 5" for the series return on SBS, and has appeared in many commercials and locally made television productions. She has served on the National Performer's Committee for MEAA for the past few years, and has recently been made President of the South Australian branch of Equity.

NATHAN O'KEEFE (Performer) has worked extensively in theatre, both nationally and internationally. He has toured Asia, USA, and all across Australia, working for companies such as Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Windmill Theatre, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Griffin Theatre, Malthouse, Bell Shakespeare, Brink, Slingsby and Patch Theatre Company to name a few. He was a member of the State Theatre Company Actors Ensemble for 2017 and 2018. Recent credits include the title role in *Macbeth*, *Sense & Sensibility*, *In The Club*, *A Doll's House* (STCSA Ensemble), *Tartuffe* (STCSA/Brink), *Things I Know To Be True*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hedda Gabler* (STCSA), *Masquerade* (STCSA/ Griffin), *Betrayal* (STCSA/MTC) and the title role of *Pinocchio* (STCSA/Malthouse/STC/NY for the US Premiere Season at The New Victory Theatre on Broadway). Other

credits include *Talk to Me Like the Rain* and *Let Me Listen*, *Hot Fudge*, *Ghosts*, *King Lear*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged*, *Three Sisters* (STCSA), *The Comedy Of Errors* (STCSA/Bell Shakespeare), *Thursday*, *The Hypochondriac*, *Harbinger* (Brink), *this uncharted hour* (STCSA/Brink), *Man Covets Bird* (Slingsby), *I Am Not An Animal*, *I Animal* (The Border Project), *Mr. McGee and the Biting Flea*, *Emily Loves To Bounce*, *Me & My Shadow* (Patch), *Plop!*, *Grug, Grug & The Rainbow*, *Beep* (Windmill), *Checklist for an Armed Robber*, *Ruby Bruise* (Vitalstatistix), *Assassins* (Flying Penguin), *The Country*, *Blackout* (Stone/Castro). O'Keefe is an Adelaide Theatre Guide and Adelaide Critics Circle Award Recipient.

SLINGSBY THEATRE COMPANY has been described as, “If more theatre were like this, the world would be a magical place indeed” (*Australian Stage Online*). Founded in 2007 and based in Adelaide, South Australia, Slingsby presents emotionally challenging and engaging storytelling in rich, live theatrical realms for family audiences and young people aged eight years and over. Artistic Director Andy Packer and General Manager Stacey Baldwin are passionate about creating memorable experiences for audiences of all ages. They collaborate with Australia’s finest artists across many disciplines and foster international theatrical alliances. Slingsby’s productions have been presented in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Singapore, Norway, China, and India, earning the company a reputation for excellence in the creation of work for young audiences. The company’s world worn, timeless aesthetic is embedded into each show, transporting audiences to a time and place that is at the same time familiar and new. The company’s first work *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy* (written by prolific Australian playwright Finegan Kruckemeyer) was an international success and has been performed over 300 times worldwide. Current works in repertoire, *The Young King* and *Emil and the Detectives*, have built on Slingsby’s international reputation as a company of excellence. Slingsby has garnered many coveted awards for its work including three Ruby Awards, a prestigious Victor Award (People’s Choice) – International Performing Arts for Youth Showcase 2017 for *The Young King* and a Helpmann Award (Best Presentation for Children) for *Emil and the Detectives* in 2018. Slingsby produces and tours original theatre productions that captivate, challenge and inspire hope through memorable theatre experiences that evoke a sense of renewed wonder in the world we live in, and the role we each can play in building a happy and harmonious global society. Slingsby encourages togetherness through a sophisticated aesthetic and complex emotional storytelling. The company focuses on sharing timeless, otherworldly stories of loss, hope and wonder, helping audience members find resilience in their own situations and empathy for those around them. “We invite you to ‘Journey in Wonder’ with us. It may be dark and you may feel uneasy. That’s only natural. You are not alone. See that light in the distance? Take our hands. We know the way.”

About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:

The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 275 dance, theater, opera, classical music, cinema and family programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as “au courant” (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, “If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis.” Its programming has been nominated for 57 Ovation Awards and seven L.A. Drama Critic’s Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater’s dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city’s history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is led by Chairman of the Board Michael Nemeroff, Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer Rachel Fine and Artistic Director Paul Crewes.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: TheWallis.org.

For downloadable photos, please visit: TheWallis.org/Press.

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EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

WHAT:

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Slingsby Theatre Company's
EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES
By Erich Kästner
Adapted for the Stage by Nicki Bloom
Directed by Andy Packer

CAST:

Performer Elizabeth Hay
Performer Nathan O'Keefe

CREDITS:

Scenic Design Wendy Todd
Composition & Sound Design Quincy Grant
Costume Design Ailsa Paterson
Lighting Design Geoff Cobham & Chris Petridis
Stage Manager Laura Palombella
Production Manager Vanessa van de Weyer
American Stage Manager Jill Gold

WHEN:

Friday, March 27 through Sunday, March 29, 2020
Friday, 7:00 pm; Saturday, 10:30 am and 2:30 pm; Sunday, 10:30 am and 2:30 pm

RUN TIME:

Running time is one hour with no intermission

WHERE:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Lovelace Studio Theater
9390 N. Santa Monica Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

\$25 (prices subject to change)
The production is recommended for adults and children age eight and up.
TheWallis.org/Detectives
310.746.4000
Box Office – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Services
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

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