

The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Names Paul Crewes As Its First Artistic Director

Incoming leader from UK's Kneehigh Theatre to begin Oct 1, 2015 and assume full-time artistic leadership in April 2016

(Beverly Hills, CA—Sep 24, 2015) Paul Crewes, the pioneering head of Great Britain's innovative Kneehigh Theatre group, will take the artistic helm next month at the two-year old performing arts center in the heart of Beverly Hills. The Wallis' Board Chairman Jerry Magnin announced Mr. Crewes' appointment as the Company's first Artistic Director at this morning's Board meeting where the full Board voted to approve the Search Committee's recommendation of Mr. Crewes whose contract begins October 1, 2015. He will assume full-time artistic leadership in April 2016.



"In just two years, The Wallis has risen to a premiere position in LA's lively performing arts landscape and Paul is the perfect person to guide The Wallis to a new level of prominence," said Mr. Magnin. "We first worked with Paul when he brought Kneehigh's *Brief Encounter* to our stage for our inaugural season in a stunning, first-rate production that combined film with theater. Even then we knew it was just the beginning of a long-lasting relationship. We are confident that under his artistic leadership, Paul will guide The Wallis and our growing audience on a new and ever-expanding path of discovery."

"As we can see from last season's many successes, The Wallis is at the beginning of a very exciting journey," said Mr. Crewes. "Every time I visit The Wallis I feel passionate about the opportunities that exist for this amazing organization in the heart of Beverly Hills. I recognize the challenges of making a performing arts center work in Beverly Hills, however, it is those very challenges that will inspire me to think differently about how to generate audiences for the center's work. We will constantly explore ways of bringing this stunningly beautiful building alive with activity, performance and participation on a daily basis. We will create and program innovative work made for and created by people within this community. We will also inspire artists both nationally and internationally to make and present their work at The Wallis."

The Wallis began its international search for an Artistic Director in March of this year and quickly attracted more than 60 high level candidates from around the world. Mr. Magnin headed the Artistic Director Search Committee which was composed of Board Members Cenny Kennard (Vice-

Chair), Debbie Allen, David Bohnett, Eunice David, Bruce Goldsmith, Lauren Leichtman and Ron Rosen.

The signing of Mr. Crewes as The Wallis' first Artistic Director is a significant step in The Wallis's young history. After thirteen years in planning and building under the leadership of former Executive Director Lou Moore, The Wallis opened its doors on October 17, 2013. In just two years The Wallis has grown from presenting 50 performances in the first season to 240 performances in the just begun 2015-16 season. Patricia Wolff who has served as interim Artistic Director of The Wallis for the last fourteen months will transition into the newly created position of Director of Programming and James D'Asaro who served as Interim Producing Director for the same period will continue as Director of Production. Tania Camargo remains The Wallis' Managing Director.

About Paul Crewes

Paul Crewes is the Chief Executive and Executive Producer of Kneehigh, an internationally recognized theater company located in the United Kingdom. In that position he oversaw not only the artistic production and strategic planning, but was also responsible for the financial management of the company. Prior to serving as Chief Executive for the past five years, Mr. Crewes worked as producer for the thirty-five year-old Kneehigh which prides itself on creating a theatre of humanity both on an epic and intimate scale and who work with an ever-changing ensemble of performers, artists, musicians and technicians who are passionate about the multi-disciplined creative process.

Two of Kneehigh's productions recently toured the US with *Tristan & Yseult* performing at St. Ann's Warehouse in New York, and at South Coast Rep in Costa Mesa, and *Brief Encounter* which opened at The Wallis in February during the Company's first season. Other U.S. theatres to present Kneehigh's productions include the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Alley Theatre in Houston, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and ACT in San Francisco.

While at Kneehigh, Mr. Crewes established collaborations with the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company, and established strong working relationships with Berkley Rep which presented three of Kneehigh's productions and New York's St. Ann's Warehouse which has presented four. He also led a successful capital campaign to build a new 750-seat geometric mobile venue—The Asylum Tent—which was launched in 2010. Described as "a place pre-disposed to magic," this award-winning nomadic theatre space brings the live theatrical experience to a number of supporting communities around Cornwall, England, Kneehigh's home base.

Prior to Kneehigh, Mr. Crewes produced new and innovative theatre and dance pieces for a number of different performing arts organizations including West Yorkshire Playhouse, The Lowry, Phoenix Dance Theatre and Metal, an artistic laboratory that championed the need for investment in artistic innovation in the UK, and provided practical support for performing artists. He also produced site-specific productions and numerous international performing arts tours.

About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Since opening its doors in October 2013, The Wallis has produced or presented over 100 dance, theatre, opera, classical music and children's programs to an ever expanding audience. The 2014-15 season saw audiences at The Wallis grow to over 44,000 attendees with another 50,000

anticipated for the 2015-16 Season which officially began September 17 with a sold-out and live-streamed conversation with two-time Academy Award winning actor Denzel Washington. The season continues October 1 with three sold-out performances of the Twyla Tharp 50th Anniversary Tour with a recently added fourth performance currently on sale.

Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, California, the Wallis brings audiences world-class theater, dance and music, performed by many of the world's most talented and sought-after artists. With eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles, and its notability as the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis offers original and revered works from across the U.S. and around the globe. The mission of The Wallis is to be a vital cultural hub that uses unique arts events and education programming to entertain, enlighten and inspire children and adults in our community and across the nation.

Nominated for 12 Ovation Awards, four L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards and the recipient of five architectural awards since opening in 2013, The Wallis is a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot venue that celebrates the classic and the modern and was designed by Zoltan E. Pali, FAIA of Studio Pali Fekete architects. The building features the restored, original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places) that serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and houses the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, GRoW at The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education (a gift of Gregory Annenberg Weingarten and Family and the Annenberg Foundation) and the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater. Together, these structures embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. For more information, visit www.thewallis.org.

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