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The Wallis in partnership with *Los Angeles* magazine presents

CENTER STAGE: MAPPING THE ECOLOGY OF DANCE IN LOS ANGELES

Free Panel Event – Thursday, May 17, 2018, at 9:00am

(Beverly Hills, CA, May 1, 2018) Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is teaming up again with *Los Angeles* magazine to present ***Center Stage: Mapping the Ecology of Dance in Los Angeles***, a dynamic discussion with both established and emerging leaders in LA's dance world on May 17, 2018 at 9:00 am. This two-part panel will explore the exciting and explosive growth of dance in Los Angeles in recent years and the influences that have made it possible. Admission is free, but reservations are required. This special event, taking place in advance of Dance USA's 10th Annual Conference in Downtown Los Angeles, will also be available as a Facebook Live stream on The Wallis' Facebook page.

Hosted by The Wallis' Managing Director **Rachel Fine**, featured panelists include: **Debbie Allen**, Emmy Award-winning actress and dancer; **Ben Johnson**, Performing Arts Director for the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; **Nigel Lythgoe OBE**, dancer and Emmy Award-winning producer of "So You Think You Can Dance"; **Paul Crewes**, The Wallis' Artistic Director; **Theresa Farrell** and **Lincoln Jones**, co-founders of American Contemporary Ballet; and **Renae Williams Niles**, Chief Operating Officer for the USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance. The conversation will be moderated by **Marielle Wakim**, Arts & Culture Editor at *Los Angeles* magazine. Networking opportunities will take place both before and immediately follow the panel discussion with morning refreshments generously provided by **Porta Via Beverly Hills**.

This free event carries forward The Wallis' commitment to accessible arts and culture programming for the Los Angeles community and follows the hugely successful inaugural *Center Stage* panel discussion this past September focused on influential women arts leaders in Los Angeles.

“Los Angeles is entering a Golden-Age of dance with an incredible breadth of quality and diverse new ground-breaking dance companies being established here alongside prominent dance schools, which are training a new generation of dancers and choreographers,” said Fine. “The city’s expanding dance culture and dynamic energy is drawing national and international attention. This event will delve into what’s fostering this expanding kinetic energy for dance in LA.”


“There’s never been a more exciting time for dance in Los Angeles than right now,” added Wakim. “Unprecedented growth and collaboration among a variety of dance and arts organizations is fueled by presenting organizations eager to program dance, audiences and funders willing to support an eclectic range of innovative dance offerings and talented young dancers choosing to continue their educations at such outstanding institutions as USC’s Gloria Kaufman School of Dance and the Colburn School.”

Complimentary general admission tickets are now available for reservation by visiting TheWallis.org/CenterStage, by emailing Tickets@TheWallis.org, calling 310.746.4000, stopping by in person at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Services located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210, or joining the Facebook events at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/378248929356365/>

About the Panelists:

Debbie Allen, whose name is synonymous with dynamic energy, creative talent and innovation, has an eclectic career spanning three decades. Her vast body of work has earned three Emmy Awards, a Golden Globe, five NAACP Image Awards, a Drama Desk Award, an Astaire Award (for Best Dancer), and the Olivier Award. She holds four honorary Doctorate degrees and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Allen was appointed by President George W. Bush to represent the United States as a Cultural Ambassador of Dance. She has been artist-in-residence at the Kennedy Center for over 15 years.

Paul Crewes is the first Artistic Director of the Beverly Hills-based Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. In his first full season, 2016/17, The Wallis produced or presented more than 50 different programs of world-class theater, dance and music featuring local, national and international artists and companies. The upcoming 2017/18 season continues that growth with 250 performances on The Wallis stages including the popular nightclub, The Sorting Room. Prior to The Wallis appointment in 2015, Crewes was the Chief Executive and Executive Producer of Kneehigh, an internationally recognized theater based in Cornwall, U.K, whose goal is to create a theater 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.



Theresa Farrell, Executive Director of American Contemporary Ballet (ACB), trained at Ballet Regent, American Ballet Theatre, the Joffrey School of Ballet, New York State Summer School of the Arts and Dance Theatre of Harlem. She co-founded ACB with Artistic Director Lincoln Jones while continuing to dance in ACB's corps de ballet. With Jones she established ACB in its permanent home Los Angeles, leading development, business operations and community outreach. Farrell was profiled in *Entity* magazine "From Ballerina to Boss"; and she and Jones were the subjects of a New York Times article on the revival of Balanchine in Los Angeles. As a dancer, Farrell has created principal roles in several new ballets with ACB and also performed solo with violinist Hilary Hahn. In addition, Farrell has performed with the Los Angeles Opera and recently performed with ACB at the Houston Grand Opera's 2018 Opera Ball. She has appeared as a dancer on television in *Glee* and *House*, as well as in commercials and print campaigns for Facebook, AT&T, Joe's Jeans and LORAC Cosmetics, among others. She has been a guest speaker for the Arts Leadership program at USC and gives talks and master classes for area schools and arts organizations.

Ben Johnson is the Director of Performing Arts for the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. He is tasked with relaunching the Performing Arts Division of the City of Los Angeles, which includes overseeing six city-owned theaters, relaunching a festival platform for the city and advocating on behalf of LA artists on a national and international level. Previously, he was the Program Manager at the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA (CAP-UCLA) in Los Angeles and Director of Programs at United States Artists Foundation. Johnson was also the Director of Northrop Concerts and Lectures at the University of Minnesota – Minneapolis, and was Director of Education and Audience Development at the University Musical Society at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. He has also worked at the Ordway Music Theater in St. Paul, Minnesota as part of the Planet Ordway Series, and interned at the American Dance Festival in North Carolina and the Walker Art Center in Minnesota. As an experienced and seasoned multi-disciplinary performing arts presenter and curator, he is affiliated with many artists, foundations, funders, and national and international peer institutions.

Lincoln Jones, Artistic Director and Choreographer of American Contemporary Ballet, began dancing at the age 19. The Fullerton, California-native was awarded scholarships to the Joffrey, San Francisco, Pennsylvania, Milwaukee and Los Angeles Classical Ballet Schools. At age 23, he joined the Columbia City Ballet in South Carolina, then moved to New York City, where he taught ballet at Broadway Dance Center, Peridance, and DanceSpace, and danced with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. With ACB, Jones conceived a groundbreaking partnership with The Da Camera Society in MUSIC+DANCE:LA, combining Da Camera's long experience with music and presentation with his own approach to ballet as a musical art form. Jones' programming for ACB includes his presentation of Balanchine works and reconstructions of important historical ballets as well as his own original works, which have garnered critical acclaim. In recent seasons, he has presented dance in increasingly compelling and creative formats. Jones has also fostered a cultural community around dance through educational programs that bring audiences further inside the art. He has given talks on ballet with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and The Da Camera Society, and choreographed ballet in commercials for Virgin Mobile, BSI Bank and other international brands.

Nigel Lythgoe OBE, dancer, choreographer and television producer, is a three-time Emmy winner for *American Idol* and *So You Think You Can Dance*. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List for his work in education, charity and the arts.

Rena Williams Niles, Chief Operating Officer for the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, has long been an advocate for dance and the importance of the art form having served as a dance company manager, grantmaker and presenter. Prior to joining USC, she was the Vice President and Director of Programming at the Music Center, where she oversaw all aspects of programming, including dance series; family programs and participatory initiatives. She also guided strategic partnerships with other entities such as Dance Camera West, Dizzy Feet Foundation's annual gala and Live Nation among others. As dance curator, she oversaw the sole commission of LA Dance Project's world debut in Walt Disney Concert Hall in 2012; the initial co-commission of Slow Dancing, a video installation project; and collaborations with Center Theatre Group, LA Opera and LA Phil. She also created Moves After Dark, a site-specific series at the Music Center, and programmed more than 50 different dance companies and artists from around the world.

About the Moderator:

Marielle Wakim dutifully pops all things culture as the Arts and Culture Editor for *Los Angeles* magazine. She earned a Masters in Professional Writing from the University of Southern California and a BA in English Lit from Miami University (the one in Ohio). Both degrees came in handy when she appeared on Wheel of Fortune. Some other places you can read/hear her: *The New York Times*, NPR, Huffington Post, Relevant, DAME, and elsewhere. Also, she went viral once <http://bit.ly/1J72Ts0> (sorry, Whole Foods).

About The Wallis:

Since opening its doors in October 2013, The Wallis has produced or presented more than 250 dance, theatre, opera, classical music and family programs to an ever-expanding audience. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Paul Crewes and Managing Director Rachel Fine, The Wallis brings audiences world-class theater, dance and music, performed by many of the world's most talented and sought-after artists. Featuring 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 create, present and celebrate unique performing arts events and educational programs that reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community. Nominated for 28 Ovation Awards, seven L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards and the recipient of six architectural awards, 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.

About Los Angeles magazine:

Los Angeles has chronicled life in the second-largest U.S. city since the magazine's founding by Geoff Miller in the spring of 1961. The definitive resource for Angelenos, *Los Angeles* covers the people, food, culture, arts and entertainment, fashion, lifestyle, and news that defines Southern California. With a signature mix of feature-length writing, service journalism, investigative reporting, and design, *Los Angeles* magazine encourages readers to discover and engage in the city in ways that are most meaningful to them. Led by Editor-in-Chief, Matthew Segal, *Los Angeles* has

been the recipient of four National Magazine Awards in addition to numerous other industry honors; and is the only local publication with 100 percent paid and verified circulation.

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

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

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TICKET INFORMATION:

What: ***CENTER STAGE: Mapping the Ecology of Dance in Los Angeles***

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Bram Goldsmith Theater
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

When: Thursday, May 17, 2017

- 9:00am Morning Refreshments sponsored by Porta Via
- 9:30am Panel discussion

Tickets: Admission is FREE, but reservations are required
RSVP:

Online – TheWallis.org/CenterStage

Email – tickets@thewallis.org

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/events/378248929356365/>

By Phone – 310.746.4000

Box Office – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Service
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

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