

# Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts



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## WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS Inaugural Season Programming

- Martha Graham Dance Company
- A new production of *Parfumerie*, by Miklos Laszlo, directed by Mark Brokaw
- From England, Kneehigh Theatre's celebrated production of *Noël Coward's Brief Encounter*
- *Love, Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward*
- Frederica von Stade in *A Coffin in Egypt*, west coast premiere of new chamber opera with music by Ricky Ian Gordon and libretto by Leonard Foglia
- Maurice Hines is *Tappin' Thru Life*
- E.B. White's *The Trumpet of the Swan* adapted by Marsha Norman, with music by Jason Robert Brown
- Jessica Lang Dance in their West Coast debut
- Les Ballet Jazz de Montréal
- Scotland's internationally renowned children's theater companies: Visible Fictions and Catherine Wheels Theatre Company
- *Baseball Swing with The All-Star Baseball Jazz Band: A Musical Event in conjunction with the National Baseball Hall of Fame*
- Concerts by St. Lawrence String Quartet, Rueibin Chen and Ramin Bahrami
- *ComposersLA On Stage* collaboration with Sundance Institute Film Music Program

**(Beverly Hills, September 9, 2013)** - The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts announces its Inaugural Season beginning with performances by the **Martha Graham Dance Company**, which opens the Bram Goldsmith Theater on November 8 and 9, 2013, followed by the play *Parfumerie* by Miklos Laszlo, adapted by E. P. Dowdall and directed by Mark Brokaw, from November 26 to December 22, 2013. The romantic comedy *Parfumerie* inspired the films *The Shop Around the Corner*, *In the Good Old Summertime*, and Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail*, as well as the Broadway musical *She Loves Me*. As a special program, an exhibition on perfume entitled ***Timeless Scents: 1370-2013***, a history of iconic fragrances through the ages is being created especially for The Wallis by Chandler Burr, former *New York Times* scent critic.

Highlights include the celebrated Kneehigh Theatre production of *Noël Coward's Brief Encounter*, which played to great acclaim in London and New York, from February 15 to March 23, 2014. *Brief Encounter* is complemented by

**Love, Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward** February 20 to 22, 2014 be performed in the Lovelace Studio Theatre. The chamber opera **A Coffin in Egypt**, composed by Ricky Ian Gordon with libretto and direction by Leonard Foglia, is a co-production with Houston Grand Opera and Opera Philadelphia. Based on a Horton Foote play, it will have its West Coast premiere from April 23 to 27, 2014 and stars beloved mezzo-soprano **Frederica von Stade**.

Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** will officially open its doors to the public in October 2013. This new venue will transform a Beverly Hills city block into a vibrant new cultural destination with two distinct, elegant buildings: the historic 1933 Italianate-style Beverly Hills Post Office and the new, contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Goldsmith Theater. Together these two structures embrace the city's history and future, creating a new cultural landmark. Within the treasured Post Office, existing spaces are re-imagined into the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, a theater school for young people (opening in 2014), a café and gift shop. The Wallis, the first performing arts center to be built in Beverly Hills, will be a home for artists from around the world and audiences of every age.

Subscription tickets go on sale October 1, 2013; the remainder of the 2013 – 2014 Season will be announced in September. Ticket prices will range from \$25 to \$199. For more information please visit [www.thewallis.org](http://www.thewallis.org).

The inaugural season will also include **Maurice Hines** performing his **Tappin' Thru Life**, May 9 to 24, 2014; **Jessica Lang Dance**, May 30 and 31, 2014, in their West Coast debut; **Les Ballet Jazz de Montréal**, January 10 and 11, 2014; and concerts by **St. Lawrence String Quartet**, January 15, 2014, **Rueibin Chen**, March 27, 2014, and **Ramin Bahrami**, April 9, 2014.

**Baseball Swing**, a new show, produced in conjunction with Robert Thompson and the National Baseball Hall of Fame, April 4 to 6, 2014 celebrates the unique love affair between baseball and music with a “major league” concert featuring the greatest music about the greatest sport, with 2,000 images and video synchronized to the live performance.

Family programming at the Bram Goldsmith Theater will be highlighted by the novel symphony **The Trumpet of the Swan**, May 2 to 4, 2014, adapted by Pulitzer Prize winner Marsha Norman from the E.B. White novel, with music by Tony Award winning composer Jason Robert Brown. In the intimate Lovelace Studio Theater, the **Catherine Wheels Theatre Company** from Scotland presents **White**, February 26 to March 23; the production won three 2010 Edinburgh Fringe Festival Awards (including Total Theatre) and the 2011 Scotland Critics Award for Best Production for Children, Design, and Technical Presentation. Also in the Lovelace will be a two-actor import from **Visible Fictions**, **Jason and the Argonauts**, based on the classic Greek myth, which performs January 16 to February 2, 2014.

A collaboration with **Sundance Institute Film Music Program** will bring **ComposersLab LA On Stage – An Afternoon with Harry Gregson-Williams** to The Wallis (March 30 *Editors please note: this date has been revised since the original press materials*), giving the audience a behind-the-scenes look into the creative process of a film composer. World-renowned composer Harry Gregson-Williams (the *Shrek* films, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Man on Fire*, *Spy Game*) will be onstage as he shares insight into his creative techniques including a live demonstration of his work, with special guests.

Executive Director Lou Moore said, "In this season, we celebrate the transformation of the Post Office and its return to public use as well as the community's influence past and present that brought us to this historic moment. We open with **Martha Graham**, who began her dance training in Los Angeles, and went on to change the idea of what dance could be. Her company will present **Chronicle**, considered a masterwork that was created in Los Angeles in the 1930's when the Post Office was being built. Following Graham, we're excited to be producing **Parfumerie** during the holidays. The play centers on a romance conducted through love letters, which is a perfect homage to the post office. We are also thrilled to be presenting the highly acclaimed theater production of **Noël Coward's Brief Encounter**, an international sensation that will have its L.A. premiere.

Children's programming is a major part of who we are. This year, we are bringing two productions from Scotland, a country known worldwide for its high quality professional theater for young people. We'll be presenting shows age specific including a play for our youngest theatergoers, ages 2-5. These shows will have extended runs of performances and we'll offer each child the opportunity to have their own subscription. We are so excited to be working with such established artists as Mark Brokaw, Leonard Foglia, Ricky Ian Gordon, Frederica von Stade, Maurice Hines, Marsha Norman, Jason Robert Brown, Emma Rice, Harry Gregson-Williams, the Kneehigh Theatre, and Les Ballet Jazz de Montréal during our first season."

Board Chairman Jerry Magnin said, "Beverly Hills boasts five star hotels, the best restaurants, and legendary shopping. Now imagine a performing arts center with world-class programming that complements all of the great amenities of our community. Guests at The Wallis will embrace these experiences in two state of the art venues that provide a special intimacy between performers and audience."

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTIONS**

**All productions in the Bram Goldsmith Theatre, except those noted for the Lovelace Studio Theatre**

### **Martha Graham Dance Company**

November 8 – 9, 2013

The renowned Martha Graham Dance Company, a leader in contemporary dance since 1926, will help launch The Wallis with a special inaugural presentation. *Prelude and Revolt* opens the program and uses dance and media to chart the era of Graham's revolutionary discoveries – including her early years in Los Angeles. The evening will include Graham's signature solo, *Lamentation*, as well as her stunning masterwork, *Chronicle*.

### ***Parfumerie***

Adapted by E. P. Dowdall

from the Hungarian play *Illatszertar* by Miklos Laszlo

Directed by Mark Brokaw

November 26 – December 22, 2013

Set during Christmastime, 1937 in Budapest Hungary, the play concerns two bickering employees at an upscale boutique, who have been building an anonymous romantic relationship through letters. Written by Hungarian émigré Miklos Laszlo, and adapted by E. P. Dowdall, *Parfumerie's* charming plot has inspired several films, including *The Shop Around the Corner*, *In the Good Old Summertime*, and *You've Got Mail*, and as the Broadway musical *She Loves Me*. Mark Brokaw (*As Bees in Honey Drown*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *The Lyons*, Broadway's *Cinderella*) directs this inaugural theatrical production for The Wallis.

### **Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal**

**January 10 – 11, 2014**

An internationally renowned repertory company, **Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal** works today with some of the most prestigious figures in the world of dance and contemporary ballet, including acclaimed choreographers Barak Marshall and Benjamin Millepied. This special engagement will feature Barak Marshall's "Harry," a piece teeming with energy that underscores a recurrent theme in human interactions: conflicts and our ability to overcome them and Benjamin Millepied's romantically tender "Closer."

### **St. Lawrence String Quartet**

January 15, 2014

Established in 1989, the St. Lawrence String Quartet has developed an undisputed reputation as a truly world class chamber ensemble. The quartet performs more than 120 concerts annually worldwide and calls Stanford University home, where the group is Ensemble in Residence. St. Lawrence String Quartet continues to build its reputation for imaginative and spontaneous music making, through an energetic commitment to the great, established quartet literature as well as championing new works by such composers as John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, Eziquiel Vaino, and Jonathan Berger. Alex Ross in *The New Yorker*, said, "the St. Lawrence are remarkable not simply for the quality of their music making, exalted as it is, but for the joy they take in the act of connection."

## ***Jason and the Argonauts***

### **Visible Fictions**

January 16 – February 2, 2014 Lovelace Studio Theatre

Using two actors, a handful of action figures and one incredible wooden cart, Visible Fictions from Scotland innovatively recreates this classic Greek myth. Jason's uncle isn't exactly lovable...he's murdered his brother (the king) and stolen the crown and now no one dares stand up to him. After being banished as a baby, our wannabe hero returns to claim his rightful throne and make some big changes. Things are about to get a major shake-up though because Jason is BACK! Recommended age 8+ / Running time 65 minutes

"Sly, silly, sophisticated and altogether winning take on an ancient Greek myth." – *The New York Times*.

Kneehigh Theatre Production of

### **Noël Coward's**

#### ***Brief Encounter***

Adapted and Directed by Emma Rice

Originally commissioned and produced by David Pugh & Dafydd Rogers and Cineworld

February 15 – March 23, 2014

**Noël Coward's *Brief Encounter*** is remembered as one of the most haunting love stories ever told. The 1945 British film, directed by the great David Lean, centered on a housewife who discovers passion with a stranger outside of her marriage. The film was based on Coward's 1936 one-act play *Still Life* and memorably featured a soundtrack by Sergei Rachmaninoff. In this new production, the ingenious international theater company Kneehigh cleverly uses film and music to provide a highly theatrical setting for this classic, timeless tale of illicit lovers. The production for The Wallis features the original Broadway cast.

"The most enchanting work of stagecraft ever inspired by a movie," said Ben Brantley in *The New York Times*. "The captivating adaptation of the 1945 movie's real raison d'être is to love, honor and obey the spirit of the film that inspired it ... celebrating every moviegoer who has felt personally invested in that cinema classic. Through musical numbers, film projections and vaudeville jollity it spells out not only what the show's doomed lovers are experiencing but also what we, who have known them for years, experience whenever we watch them on screen."

### ***Love Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward***

February 20 – 22 Lovelace Studio Theatre

***Love, Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward*** was devised and written by Barry Day (based on "The Letters of Noël Coward") and interweaves the music of Coward and witty letters between his famous friends across the years. Noël Coward's career as a playwright, composer, director, actor and singer spanned six decades. Known for his wit, flamboyance, and what *Time* magazine called "a sense of personal style, a combination of cheek and chic, pose and poise," his works remain as universal and relevant as ever and continue to influence pop culture today.

### ***White***

#### **Catherine Wheels Theatre Company**

February 28 – March 23, 2014 Lovelace Studio Theatre

Two friends, Cotton and Wrinkle, diligently look after a grove of birdhouses, making sure that everything stays "bright, ordered and white." But when colors start to appear, things become truly magical. Winner of three Edinburgh Fringe Festival awards, *White* is a playful, highly visual new show for very young children, and is the perfect first time theater experience. Recommended ages 2 - 5 / Running time 35 minutes

"This may be the only show that will remind you simultaneously of "Teletubbies" and *Waiting for Godot*." – *NY Times*.

## **Rueibin Chen**

**March 27, 2014**

Rueibin Chen's distinguished career as an internationally acclaimed pianist has earned him a reputation for technical brilliance, immense energy, and intense artistic expression. He was invited as the opening soloist in the 2010 World Expo in China, performing the Yellow River Concerto. Critics hailed it as the best performance of the iconic piece in its history. His masterful performances of Rachmaninoff's complete piano concertos (including the Paganini Rhapsody Op. 43) in two consecutive nights at Taiwan's National Concert Hall garnered significant critical acclaim. A Chinese Austrian born in Taiwan, Chen has won a total of eighteen medals, five of them gold before the age of 20; in various international piano competitions.

## **Sundance Institute Film Music Program**

### ***ComposersLab LA On Stage – An Afternoon with Harry Gregson-Williams***

March 30, 2014 (*Note: this date has been revised since the original press materials*)

An intimate behind-the-scenes look into the creative process of a film composer. Peter Golub, Director of the Sundance Institute Film Music Program, hosts an afternoon delving into the career one of the most successful and exciting film composers working today. Join world-renowned composer Harry Gregson-Williams (the *Shrek* series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Man on Fire*, *Spy Game*) onstage at The Wallis as he shares insight into his creative techniques including a live demonstration of his work, with special guests. A select group of Sundance Institute's Composer fellows will also show their own scored version of a scene from an established film offering the audience a unique chance to discover first hand how music shapes and enhances the identity of a film and the experience of the viewer.

### ***Baseball Swing with The All-Star Baseball Jazz Band***

*Produced in conjunction with Robert Thompson and the National Baseball Hall of Fame*

April 4 – April 6, 2014

No other sport has been celebrated in music like Baseball, our national pastime. ***Baseball Swing*** celebrates the unique love affair between baseball and music, with a major league concert featuring the greatest music about the greatest sport. With more than 2,000 images and video from the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, all synchronized to the music and narrated by a noted baseball legend, ***Baseball Swing*** is a hugely entertaining event that the whole family will remember.

## **Ramin Bahrami**

**April 9, 2014**

**Ramin Bahrami** is one of the most innovative interpreters of Johann Sebastian Bach performing today. The Persian pianist came to Italy as a boy, where he studied piano with Piero Rattalino, graduating from the Giuseppe Verdi State Conservatory of Milan. Bahrami's debut at Teatro Bellini in Catania was so impressive that he was granted honorary citizenship. His repertoire of the most monumental of Bach's keyboard works has been enchanting audiences across Europe. Having performed in the most prestigious concert halls throughout Italy as well as a solo artist for acclaimed piano festivals around the world, Ramin Bahrami has been hailed as "a wizard of sound" and "a poet of the keyboard." Bahrami is also an accomplished recording artist with 14 albums of his solo works and contributed works since 2004.

## ***A Coffin in Egypt***

### **West Coast Premiere**

Music by Ricky Ian Gordon

Libretto and Direction by Leonard Foglia

Based on a play by Horton Foote

A co-production with the Houston Grand Opera and Opera Philadelphia

April 23 – 27, 2014

90-year-old grand dame Myrtle Bledsoe has outlived her husband, her daughters and virtually everyone else in Egypt, Texas. But in the last stage of her life, she can't outlive the truth. The Wallis presents the West Coast Premiere of this haunting tale of memory and murder, racism and recrimination. Known for opera and musical theater, composer Ricky Ian Gordon and librettist/director Leonard Foglia based their chamber opera on a play by Horton Foote, providing the perfect showcase for beloved mezzo-soprano **Frederica von Stade**. Von Stade's

formidable bravura has won her wide acclaim, including being called “one of America’s finest artists and singers” by *The New York Times*. Ricky Ian Gordon is the composer of *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Rappahannock County*, and *Orpheus and Euridice*. Leonard Foglia (*Master Class*, *Thurgood*, and Jake Heggie’s opera *Last Acts* at Houston Grand Opera) directs.

### ***The Trumpet of the Swan***

A Novel Symphony for Actors and Orchestra

Adapted by Marsha Norman

From the novel by E.B. White

Music by Jason Robert Brown

May 2 – 4, 2014

E.B. White’s classic novel is now a brilliant symphonic concert experience for the whole family. *The Trumpet of the Swan*, like all of White’s novels, concerns a youngster who must overcome a problem. In Louis’s case, he is a trumpeter swan born without a voice. On an epic journey of challenge and discovery, Louis finds the gift of music through his father’s heartbreaking and heroic love. Originally produced at The Kennedy Center, The Baltimore Sun said that ***The Trumpet of the Swan*** “sets the gold standard for children’s productions ... utterly enchanting – easily holds its own alongside classics like ‘Peter and the Wolf.’”

Recommended age 7+

### ***Maurice Hines is Tappin’ Thru Life***

May 9 – 24, 2014

Broadway legend Maurice Hines teams up again with the unforgettable Manzari Brothers for the first time since the smash hit production of *Sophisticated Ladies* to tap us through his incredible 40 years in show business. With song and dance, Hines pays tribute to his brother, Gregory, and the singers who have inspired him, from Frank Sinatra to Lena Horne. To help bring the history of American tap to life, Hines brings The Diva Orchestra, an all-female nine-piece big band. Get ready to laugh, smile and tap your feet to the infectious song and dance of Maurice Hines!

### ***Jessica Lang Dance***

May 30 -- 31, 2014

Founded in 2011, the young and innovative Jessica Lang Dance from New York City has become one of the most talked about new companies in the dance world, enriching and inspiring global audiences by immersing them in the beauty of movement and music. Hailed as “a master of visual composition” by Dance Magazine, Lang seamlessly incorporates striking design elements and transforms classical ballet language into artfully crafted, emotionally engaging contemporary works. The company will make its west coast debut with a program of Lang’s diverse work, ranging from minimal and simplistic to rich and complex with stunning visuals.

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