

19/20 SEASON

Wallis Annenberg
Center for the
Performing Arts

Press Release

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**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Four Larks
World Premiere Production of**

FRANKENSTEIN

Created by Four Larks After Mary Shelley's Classic Novel

in an Exuberant Amalgamation of

Dynamic Physical Theatre, Live Music and Experiential Design

Wednesday, February 12 – Sunday, March 1, 2020

(Beverly Hills, CA, January 13, 2020) – The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Four Larks present their World Premiere production of ***FRANKENSTEIN***, created by Four Larks after Mary Shelley's classic novel, from Wednesday, February 12 through Sunday, March 1, 2020, in The Wallis' Lovelace Studio Theater. This unusual *Frankenstein*, commissioned by The Wallis, is an exuberant amalgamation of dynamic physical theatre, live music and experiential design that brings the tale to life in a modern take that spotlights the dangers of unregulated technology. Sourced predominantly from Shelley's novel in conjunction with its 200th anniversary, the production awakens new questions about moral responsibility for each generation. Featuring a cast of twelve, all doubling as musicians, the show is directed, created, staged and composed by Four Larks' Mat Sweeney with design and choreography by Sebastian Peters-Lazaro, the show's creative producer, both of whom created the adaptation with Jesse Rasmussen.

Four Larks' Sweeney and Peters-Lazaro, who have been creating together since 2008, combine immersive design with innovative orchestration and dynamic choreography in work that continually evolves as they explore new forms. Most recently, they presented a piece for a roving audience across the grounds and gardens of the Getty Villa, which *No Proscenium* called "triumphant...a high water mark for site-specific theatre," and they designed and curated a pop-up performance space out of a downtown L.A. flower shop. NPR affiliate KCRW described them as "eschewing the confines of theater

architecture and creating their own performance spaces. These are more than shows, they're experiences."

"With Four Larks' Mat Sweeney and Sebastian Peters-Lazaro, two artists whose boundless artistry has made its mark on Los Angeles's creative landscape for many years, we have partnered with the ideal team to build this extraordinary piece of work," says The Wallis' Artistic Director Paul Crewes. "We invite audiences to join us for a very unique interpretation of *Frankenstein*."

According to Sweeney and Peters-Lazaro, "Four Larks has been working primarily in downtown L.A. off-the-grid spaces and we're thrilled by the invitation to create a brand new piece at The Wallis. Mary Shelley's story, one of the greatest ever told, ushered in new genres, and its ethical questions continue to resonate with new advances in science and technology. In an adaptation unlike any that's come before it, we're dissecting and collaging its parts to create a brand new creature with an incredible ensemble of virtuosic physical actors and musicians surging new life into Shelley's nightmare."

Audiences are asked to note this warning:

This production utilizes a strobe light effect, flashing lights, theatrical haze and contains partial nudity.

Ticket prices are \$60 (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/Frankenstein.

About the Artists

Mat Diafos Sweeney (Creator, Director, and Music Director) is an Ovation award winning performance maker. He co-founded Four Larks to create new interdisciplinary work in 2008. In Australia he received Green Room awards for his stage compositions from 2010-2013. Since returning home to Los Angeles in 2015, major projects include *The Temptation of St Antony* (LA Times Critic's Choice, Ovation Award-Best Music & Ensemble) and *Orpheus* (KCRW Best of the Year), both staged in downtown LA, *Katabasis*, presented by the Getty Villa and a new ritual song cycle, Hymns, set to premiere later this year. He is the recipient of Center Theatre Group's Sherwood Award for 2020, recognizing innovative performance makers in Los Angeles.

Sebastian Peters-Lazaro (Design and Choreography) is an interdisciplinary artist from Northern California. He is a creative producer, choreographer, and designer for Four Larks. He co-founded the company in 2008 and has been part of the lead creative team since then. Peters-Lazaro has received critical acclaim at home and abroad for his work, winning two Australian Green Room Awards for design, and Ovation nominations for his choreography and design on *The Temptation of St Antony*. Outside of Four Larks, he has performed with Los Angeles choreographers Taisha Paggett, Cheng-Chieh Yu, and Jasmine Albuquerque among others. He is also a core artistic collaborator of Schema 47, an experimental art and science collective, that partnered most recently with scientists from Caltech, Stanford and JPL to explore the Shadow Biosphere.

Max Baumgarten (Performer) is a returning company member of Four Larks Theatre and a UCSC graduate where he studied theater and dance alongside composer/director Mat Sweeney. Recent Lark credits include 'St. Antony', *The Temptation of Saint Antony* (Basic Flowers) and 'Sisyphus', *Orpheus* (Getty Villa). Reared in Los Angeles, Baumgarten performed his first shows at Santa Monica High School and from there, in movement heavy performances across the globe, most recently spending 2018 creating and performing an original clown role in Spiegelworld's debut of *Opium* (at the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas). He is a founding member of LA clown collective, Wet The Hippo (*Simple Simples*) as well as Dr. Brown's Monday night crew (*The Epic of Gerald*) and appears on FXX's "Cake" in the original series, "Two Pink Doors."

Lu Coy (Performer) is a mixed media artist and musician based in Los Angeles, California. Originally from Southwest Texas, Coy is of Mexican/Tejanx and Russian Jewish heritage, and creates work in the form of ritual performance art, video, sculpture, experimental music, and song. Much of Coy's practice stems from an interest in forging a tangible identity as a multi-ethnic, queer person of color and a desire to give closure to moments of unresolved personal or ancestral trauma. As a multi-instrumentalist, recording artist and vocalist, Coy performs frequently with several prominent bands in LA's Queer-Latinx music scene such as San Cha, Sister Mantos, and Sin Color. Coy has been featured as a multi-instrumentalist on recording projects for artists such as Eyvind Kang, Avey Tare (Animal Collective), Blonde Redhead, Mx Matias, Tyler Holmes, PJ Sin Suela, Jarina de Marco and was recently featured with San Cha on STARZ's television series "VIDA."

Philip Grauly (Performer) is a guitarist, educator, and producer whose work is rooted in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaboration. He is the Executive Director of Bridge to Everywhere, a new music collective that explores connections between diverse musical traditions, and the Artistic Director of the Ikat Quartet, a contemporary guitar ensemble. Grauly is also a founding member of the electric guitar octet, Los Angeles Electric 8. As a chamber musician, he has performed at LA Phil's Minimalist Jukebox (with the Glenn Branca Ensemble), the Strathmore Guitar Festival, Feria Internacional del Libro, REDCAT, MicroFest, Compose LA, and Boston Court Pasadena among others. Recent solo performances include the Palace Theatre, KPFK Radio and the Solo International Performing Arts Festival in Surakarta, Indonesia. Grauly is an Adjunct Professor at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and a Teaching Fellow for National Arts Strategies' Executive Program in Arts and Culture Strategy. He received his M.M. in Guitar Performance from UCLA.

Yvette Cornelia Holzwarth (Performer) is a violinist, vocalist, composer, and music educator based in Los Angeles. Her diverse musical interests expand beyond her Western classical background to include Eastern European folk, Arabic, Americana, sonic-based improvisation, and poetry-inspired songwriting. As a violinist, she records, performs, and tours with many independent artists including Kamasi Washington, Van Dyke Parks, Gaby Moreno, and Miroslav Tadić. She also records on numerous film scores as well as appears on camera for film and TV. As a songwriter, she has self-released two original collections under the moniker Yvette Cornelia. Combining her love for singing, violin, and theater, Holzwarth performs in her second Four Larks production after her debut in katabasis at the Getty Villa last year. www.yvetteholzwarth.com.

Joanna Lynn-Jacobs (Performer) is a diverse vocal artist and performer with training in opera and classical repertoire, as well as experience in pop, musical theater, and jazz. She continues to foster a lifelong love of movement, reflected in years of swing, salsa, tango, and improvisational dancing. Last summer she had the privilege of performing at Walt Disney Concert Hall in LA Philharmonic's production of *Atlas* by Meredith Monk, in which she played the part of the explorer Alexandra, the role originated by the composer. Previous performances include LA Philharmonic and The Industry productions of *Europeras*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Nimbus* as well as local touring with LA Opera Outreach. Jacobs holds a Bachelor of Music from Boston University, and a Master of Music from the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA.

Kila Packett (Young Victor) appeared Off-Broadway in the world premiere of James Baldwin's *Another Country* (dir. Diane Paulus); *A Streetcar Named Desire, As You Like It* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); *As You Like It, The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night* (Classic Stage Company); *Tartuffe, Twelfth Night* (Pearl Theatre Company); and *Anchorpectoris* (LaMaMa etc.). Regionally Packett was in *The Christians* (Mark Taper Forum); *Train to 2010* (Crossroads Theatre Company); *A Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It* and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Theatricum Botanicum). Packett co-authored *Unnatural Acts* (Drama Desk nomination), appeared on television in "Grey's Anatomy," "Hawaii Five-0," "S.W.A.T.," "Shooter," "Counterpart" and "Wisdom of the Crowd," was Head mentor with Young Storytellers, Associate Director of Shakespeare Youth Festival LA & Kenya, and co-producer of the LA-based concert series, *A Little New Music*, a Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center fellow and a graduate of Columbia University's School of the Arts.

Lukas Papenfusscline (Performer), based in New York City, creates and performs music and theatre based on found material, ancient documentation, and queer theory. Recent projects include *&CRISEYDE* with Experimental Bitch Presents, a workshop of Kate Soper's *The Romance of the Rose*, and *Olema*, an album of futurefolk music

released with their band, mammifères, in December 2018. Papenfussline prioritizes working on very old (medieval- and renaissance-era) and very new projects with style a diverse fusion of the American folk tradition, jazz, Dadaism, and experimentation. Papenfussline has previously worked with Four Larks on *Katabasis* (Getty Villa), *Undine* (Basic Flowers), and *Hymns* (Getty Villa).

Craig Piaget (Performer) performed with Four Larks in their Melbourne production of *Peer Gynt*. Other credits include Young Amir in *The Kite Runner* (San Jose Repertory Theatre/Arizona Theatre Company), Trevor and Mr. Terrence in *Yellowjackets* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), Eugene in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Sacramento Theatre Company), Trinculo in *The Tempest* (Shakespeare Santa Cruz), and Lucas in *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* (Pacific Repertory Theatre). A founding member of Pi: The Physical Comedy Troupe, he has written and performed clown vignettes in collaboration with circuses and theatre companies throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. He also recorded a series of English language education audio supplements when he was 9, and has been searching for any evidence of them ever since. He is suspicious he may have dreamt it.

James Vitz-Wong (Performer) is a Los Angeles based experimental musician, choreographer, and narrative designer. Originally from Seattle, Vitz-Wong studied classical bass and electronic composition at Oberlin Conservatory (co '15), as well as performance and composition at California Institute of the Arts (co '18). This performance marks Vitz-Wong's second collaboration with Four Larks. In the 2018 work *Katabasis*, Vitz-Wong performed bass, vocals, and provided recording assistance and mixing for the studio album of the show. In early 2020 Vitz-Wong and partner Tom Rhodes will be co-directing *Parallax*, a hybrid theater and virtual reality project examining romantic relationships and social media identities. In the spring, Vitz-Wong will be working on game design, narratives, and interactive elements in a new puzzle experience at Arcane Escape Rooms.

Katherine Washington (Performer) is a 2018 Ovation and NAACP Theatre award winner for *When Jazz Had The Blues* whose favorite credits include *Once* (Reza), *Fun Home* (Joan), *Recorded in Hollywood* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Godspell* (Judas, SoCal Tour), *The Wedding Singer* (Musical Theatre West), *Bare: A Rock Musical* (2011 Los Angeles revival), and Geffen Playhouse musical premiere *13th Point*. When not performing in musicals, she can be found rocking out with her band Soul Rising - opening for Grammy Award-winning artists like Macy Gray and Earth, Wind, and Fire's Verdine White to name a few.

James Waterman (Performer) is a multifaceted percussionist and composer based in Los Angeles. His compositions span from the stage to the screen and include the original score for Sharine Atif's award-winning film *Jebel Banat* (Festival de Cannes and Tribeca Film Festival). As a percussionist and multi-instrumentalist, he has performed in television and radio on Los Angeles's KPFK 90.6 FM, PBS SoCal's L.A. County Holiday Celebration at The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, and NBC's "Today Show" and has played with a wide variety of ensembles and artists including Dhara, Four Larks, and Bridge to Everywhere. Waterman has performed at such venues and events as SFJAZZ, PASIC, The Getty Villa, and The Joshua Tree Music Festival. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in World Percussion from California Institute of the Arts, and received a Bachelor of Music in Percussion Performance and Instrumental Music Education The Hartt School. jameswatermanmusic.com. IG/Facebook: @jameswatermanmusic.

Claire Woolner (Performer) is a Meisner trained actor and an award-winning studio artist born and raised in Los Angeles. She graduated from Bard College with special recognition for her work in studio art, and founded "Happenings," a collective of artists who curated multi-media pop-up shows all over LA. She has starred in numerous independent film and TV projects including award-winning "The Only People" and "Trouble Creek" and the upcoming feature "I'll Be Around," to be released in 2020. Woolner is a trained idiot and member of Wet The Hippo's flagship ensemble The Murge, and is one of four creators and performers of *WOM*, a female clown show directed by Cirque du Soleil's John Gilkey, which, over the last two years, has travelled to multiple cities, spreading the womolution.

Four Larks (Producer) makes original performance work at the intersection of theatre, music, visual art, and dance. Artistic Director Mat Sweeney (creator and music director) and Creative Producer Sebastian Peters-Lazaro (design and choreography) have been creating as Four Larks since 2008, with co-founder Jesse Rasmussen (lyrics) and an expanding ensemble of performers and collaborators. Their award-winning 'junkyard operas' combine immersive

design, live orchestration, and physical theatre, often performed in unexpected locations, and have received critical commendations from LA WEEKLY (best of la), the LA Times (critics choice), KCRW (best of the year), and collected several Ovation and Stage Raw Awards. Most recently they staged a roving opera across the grounds of the Getty Villa (Best Experiences of 2019, No Proscenium), and created an ongoing series of site-specific experiential music programs with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. This is their first collaboration with the Wallis, an exciting opportunity to create a new work for a traditional theatre space. Four Larks will premiere *Hymns* later this year.

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.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

WHAT:

The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Four Larks
World Premiere Production of
FRANKENSTEIN
Created by Four Larks After Mary Shelley

PERFORMERS

Mary Shelley, and her characters Claire Woolner
Victor Frankenstein Kila Packett
“_____” Max Baumgarten
Elizabeth Lavenza/(future female) Joanna Lynn-Jacobs
Henry Clerval/Other Bodies Craig Piaget
Capt. Walton/Brother - Felix/Other Bodies Lukas Papenfusscline
Violin/Sister - Agatha/Other Bodies Katherine Washington
Violin/Sister - Agnes/Other Bodies Yvette Holzwarth
Father/Guitar/Other Bodies Philip Graulty
Woodwind/Other Bodies Lu Coy
Bass/Other Bodies James Vitz-Wong
Percussion/Other Bodies James Waterman

CREDITS

Directed, Created, Staged and Composed by Four Larks' Mat Sweeney

Adapted from Mary Shelley's novel by Mat Sweeney, Jesse Rasmussen, Sebastian Peters-Lazaro

Music by Mat Sweeney, developed with Ellen Warkentine, arranged and scored with the Ensemble, with lyrics by Jesse Rasmussen

Choreography by Sebastian Peters-Lazaro developed with the ensemble

Libretto written with Jesse Rasmussen

Costume Design Lena Sands

Lighting Design Brandon Baruch

Sound Design Alex Hawthorn

Scenic and Properties Design Sebastian Peters-Lazaro

Projection Design Gavin Gamboa

Properties Design and Construction Regan Baumgarten

Make-Up Design- Jesse Rasmussen

Production Stage Manager Danny Crisp

Assistant Stage Manager Miranda Peters-Lazaro

WHEN:

Wednesday, February 12 through Sunday, March 1, 2020

Weekdays 8 pm; Saturdays, 2:30 pm and 8 pm Sundays, 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm

RUN TIME:

Running time is 75 minutes with no intermission

AUDIENCES ARE ASKED TO NOTE THIS WARNING:

This production utilizes a strobe light effect, flashing lights, theatrical haze and contains partial nudity.

WHERE:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Lovelace Studio Theater

9390 N. Santa Monica Boulevard

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

\$60 (subject to change)

TheWallis.org/Frankenstein

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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