

**PRESS CONTACT:**

Press@TheWallis.org

Libby Huebner, 562.799.6055

Laura Stegman, LauraStegmanPR@gmail.com

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Paul Crewes

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**Pioneering Arts Leader Paul Crewes,  
the First Artistic Director  
of the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts,  
To Step Down and Transition to a New Role  
as Artistic Advisor at End of 2021**

(Beverly Hills, CA, September 22, 2021) – Pioneering arts leader Paul Crewes, who has served since 2015 as the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts' first Artistic Director, steps down from his position at the end of this year and transitions to a new role as Artistic Advisor for the balance of The Wallis' 2021-2022 Season, it was announced by Michael Nemeroff, Chairman of the Board. During six years of extraordinary artistic leadership, Crewes has guided the Beverly Hills performing arts venue to a level of noteworthy prominence with innovative programs and productions. He has brought an eclectic mix of local, national and international artists and companies to The Wallis' stages, with several hundred produced and presented works encompassing classical, popular and jazz music; dance styles ranging from modern to hip hop; original Wallis-produced and touring productions of contemporary and classic theater; cinema; and family programming. Along with his wife and their children, Crewes will return to his native England in order to attend to family commitments.

Crewes' tenure at The Wallis has been marked by groundbreaking work celebrating, integrating, and reimagining music, dance, theater, and film for adults as well as for young audiences. He has ensured The Wallis' presence as an artistic home for renowned, culturally diverse artists of all ages, backgrounds, and aesthetics from around Southern California, the country, and the world. Since its inaugural 2013-2014 Season, The Wallis has seen incremental growth in programming and patron attendance and most notably an increase in ticket sales and financial stability from the 2015-2016 Season and forward when Crewes and Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer Rachel Fine joined The Wallis' leadership team.

"Paul Crewes has had an indelible impact on The Wallis, shaping its artistic mission and fostering new work on our stages while championing both established and emerging artists across genres," said Board Chair Michael Nemeroff. "The Wallis has benefitted beyond measure from his artistic guidance, staunch support and deeply felt passion. His visionary leadership has

helped position The Wallis as one of the country's preeminent performing arts venues and has also helped bring attention to L.A.'s own deep pool of astounding artists. We appreciate Paul's vast contributions to The Wallis and his considerable impact on the arts scene locally and beyond. Through his work, he has touched the lives of so many people on both sides of the stage, leaving an enduring legacy, which we are delighted he will continue to nurture in his new capacity as The Wallis' Artistic Advisor."

"Under Paul's artistic direction, The Wallis has captivated, challenged and inspired wide-ranging audiences," adds Executive Director & CEO Rachel Fine. "Collectively, we have accomplished a great deal over the past six years, working closely to put a solid foundation in place during the organization's nascent stages of development while also building its reputation and expanding its visibility both nationally and internationally. We are confident that The Wallis will build beautifully on that incredible momentum in the years to come."

"It has been a once in a lifetime opportunity to serve as Artistic Director of The Wallis," says Crewes. "The organization's Board, staff, supporters and audiences have afforded me an extraordinary opportunity to think big, push boundaries, and help advance new artistic ideas and perspectives – all in a world class state-of-the-art venue in the heart of Beverly Hills. It's certainly not easy to step away from a job I love, but family considerations are taking me back to England. I've chosen to announce my departure now to ensure that The Wallis has ample time to evaluate next steps. When I assume the role of Artistic Advisor in January, I'll be working closely with Wallis staff to make sure the artistic elements put in place for the 2021-2022 Season, which is now fully programmed, continue running smoothly. Although I'm not saying a formal goodbye just yet, I absolutely want to acknowledge Michael Nemeroff, the Board of Directors, Rachel Fine, and all of my incredible Wallis colleagues who make it a joy to be part of The Wallis family."

Prior to joining The Wallis, Crewes was Chief Executive and Executive Producer of Kneehigh Theatre, the internationally recognized Cornwall, U.K. company, whose goal was to create "theater of humanity" with an ever-changing ensemble. He also worked throughout the U.K. in Producer and Executive Producer roles at The Lowry, Phoenix Dance Theatre, Jude Kelly's Metal, Crewes Gale Productions, which he formed, and West Yorkshire Playhouse, as well as serving as Production Manager at Theatre Royal and Director of Technical Training at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, with stints earlier at London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Paines Plough Theatre Company and Bristol Old Vic.

Among Crewes' signature contributions to The Wallis are those made through his theater programming. He began his association with The Wallis by programming during the organization's inaugural 2013-2014 Season Kneehigh's *Brief Encounter*, a "winning, cinematic adventure" (*Los Angeles Times*) combining film with theatre and adapted/directed by Emma Rice. Other artists, companies and productions he has engaged at The Wallis include Al Pacino, who headlined a staged reading of *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel; An Inspector Calls* directed by Stephen Daldry ("The Crown," *Billy Elliot*, *The Inheritance*); a co-production with Elizabeth Weber and Don and Dale Franzen (*Hadestown*) of *Sisters In Law* about Supreme Court justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor; Jeremy Irons and Leslie Manville, who starred in the Bristol Old Vic production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* directed by the National Theatre's Sir Richard Eyre; *The Encounter*, created by Simon Mc Burney and Complicite; *Battlefield*, under leading director Peter Brook; *The Pride*, directed by Michael Arden; *Turn Me Loose*, starring Joe Morton as famed comic-activist Dick Gregory; and *The Flying Lovers of*

*Vitsebk*, directed by Emma Rice. Among his most successful and highly-acclaimed produced productions are For The Record's *Love Actually Live*, the multimedia concert celebration and the biggest hit in The Wallis' history; *Frankenstein*, in collaboration with Four Larks, the acclaimed immersive theatre company; *Witness Uganda*, developed with creators Matt Gould and Griffin Matthews; *Blues in the Night*, directed by Sheldon Epps; *The Legend of Little Girl Blue*, starring Grammy Award-winning vocal powerhouse Ledisi; and *The Bitter Game*, Keith A. Wallace's multi-character performance that brilliantly explores the experience of being Black in America.

During his tenure, Crewes has also transformed The Wallis into one of the country's leading dance presenters, showcasing dozens of world premiere works and providing a home for a diverse range of dance artists, particularly those based in Los Angeles. BODYTRAFFIC, L.A. Dance Project, and Jacob Jonas the Company are among The Wallis' companies-in residence brought on board by Crewes, and Contra-Tiempo, Lula Washington Dance Theatre, ATE9, Heidi Duckler Dance, Versa-Style Dance, Blue13, and DIAVOLO, are just some of the many other Southern California-based dance companies that have performed on The Wallis' stage under Crewes' stewardship. Additionally, he has spotlighted such acclaimed national and international dance companies as San Francisco's Alonzo King LINES Ballet; Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; New York's Paul Taylor Dance Company, Limon Dance Company and Dorrance Dance; Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company; South Africa's Dada Masilo; and U.K.'s Matthew Bourne's New Adventures.

Over the years, Crewes has programmed the world's most celebrated and rising music performers, among them jazz artist Arturo Sandoval; popular music stars Art Garfunkel, Judy Collins, Arturo Sandoval and Herb Albert; Broadway's Stephen Schwartz, Audra McDonald, Chita Rivera, Megan Hilty, Cheyenne Jackson, Dee Dee Bridgewater, and Jennifer Holliday; composer Matthew Aucoin; cellists Alisa Weilerstein, Matt Haimovitz, and Joshua Roman; violinists Daniel Hope, Sarah Chang, Anne Akiko Meyers, Vijay Gupta, and Johnny Gandelsman; pianists Ory Shihor, Jeremy Denk, Benjamin Grosvenor, Inon Barnatan, Leif Ove Andsnes, Marc-André Hamelin, Joyce Yang, and Angela Hewitt; and the Emerson String Quartet, Delirium Musicum, the Harlem Quartet, wildUp, National Sawdust, Tetzlaff Trio, and many more.

Crewes established a partnership with Film Independent Presents for a diverse series of events that reunited *Breaking Away's* original film cast members Dennis Christopher and Paul Dooley for a live read; reimaged *When Harry Met Sally* with an Asian-American cast; reunited the cast of HBO's "Deadwood"; delved into the inspiration for the *Black Panther* score; and saw George St. Geegland and Gil Faizon drop in on Michael Keaton and Paula Pell's one-of-a-kind performance of *My Dinner with Andre*.

Another Crewes-led innovation has been The Wallis' popular Sorting Room, the wildly successful series that transforms the Lovelace Studio Theater into an intimate nightclub offering the best talent from a wide range of genres including the American songbook, spoken word, comedy, classic cabaret, storytelling, dance, contemporary music, and more. Among his family-friendly (and free) programming has been the highly popular Dance Sundays with Debbie Allen & Friends and presentations by Story Pirates and guitarist Parker Bent, all on The Wallis' Promenade Terrace.

In March 2021, on its last night before the pandemic-forced closure, The Wallis' two stages hosted sold out crowds, with *Frankenstein* in the Lovelace Studio Theater, and Al Pacino in the Bram Goldsmith Theater. During the pandemic and the extended closure of its campus and theaters, Crewes insured that The Wallis remain active with a vibrant series of streamed

presentations and productions. Under his direction, The Wallis roared back this summer with a full slate of theater, music, and dance under the evening stars on a newly built outdoor performance stage, including the West Coast Premiere of *Tevye in New York*, written and performed by Tom Dugan (*Wiesenthal*).

During the 2021-2021 Season, Crewes' last at The Wallis, live indoor performances return with an eclectic array of programming for the first half that encompasses produced and presented works in dance, theater, music, and cinema featuring exceptional Southern California-based artists and companies. As Artistic Advisor, Crewes will continue to oversee the 2021-2022 Season's second half with the return of Joe Morton in a new production of *King Lear*, directed by John Gould Rubin, and more to be announced in October.

**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 300 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 79 Ovation Awards and nine 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](http://TheWallis.org).

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