

An Era-Spanning Drama of Identity, Love and Sexuality

THE PRIDE

**Comes to The Wallis During Pride Month in a New Production
Directed by Artist-in-Residence Michael Arden**

June 8 – July 9, 2017; Opening Night Set for June 14

(Beverly Hills, CA May 1) This June, the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts will present *The Pride*, a stylish, witty and affecting play that alternates between two very distinct time periods and the lives of three characters whose fate is destined by their eras. Written by Alexi Kaye Campbell, *The Pride* will receive its Los Angeles premiere in this new Wallis production that stars Neal Bledsoe as Philip, Jessica Collins as Sylvia, Augustus Prew as Oliver and Matthew Wilkas as The Man. Performances begin in the intimate Lovelace Studio Theater on June 8 through July 9 with opening slated for Wednesday, June 14.

The Pride takes place in both 1958 and 2008 as it eloquently juxtaposes scenes that examine changing attitudes to sexuality over a period of 50 years. In 1958, Philip is married to Sylvia, but is secretly attracted to her colleague, Oliver. In 2008, Philip lives with his boyfriend Oliver, who continually destroys their relationship with his addiction to casual sex, and turns to their friend Sylvia for guidance and support. As the past and present worlds collide, *The Pride's* complex love triangle provides a provocative, humorous and insightful look at identity, fidelity and forgiveness.

"*The Pride* is without doubt a rich and uplifting work, one of subtlety and sophistication," said Paul Crewes, The Wallis' Artistic Director. "It's no wonder it won the Laurence Olivier Award when it premiered at London's Royal Court in 2009. I'm delighted that we can present its Los Angeles debut at The Wallis during June's Pride celebrations."

"I'm thrilled to be directing the Los Angeles premiere of Mr. Campbell's masterful play at my artistic home," said Arden. "I have always been interested in cause and effect in theatre and this play beautifully examines how our past transgressions ripple and reverberate through time into our present shame and shortfalls. I am so lucky to have assembled a team of incredible designers and a truly exquisite company of actors to bring this timeless work to audiences at the Wallis during Gay Pride month."

Single tickets are now available for \$40 – \$75. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit TheWallis.org, call 310.746.4000, or stop 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. Ticket prices subject to change.

About *The Pride*

The Pride is an elegantly-drawn elliptical play that alternates between two very distinct time periods and the lives of three characters whose fate is written by their eras. Oliver, Philip, and Sylvia are caught in a kind of erotic time warp. Their complex love triangle, replete with conflicting loyalties and passions, jumps from 1958 to 2008 and back in a maelstrom of fantasy, repression and rebellion in this innovative new drama. As the play continues, we realize that these characters share the same names and are shadows of one another. Philip, Oliver and Sylvia are all fighting for what they hope will be an easier life than the one they have known. The actions that they take in 1958 mirror, affect and illustrate those that take place in 2008. Playwright Alexi Kaye Campbell's witty dialogue and perceptive observations bring the characters to vivid life as it explores fate, love, fidelity and forgiveness. *The Pride* asks questions about contemporary life (gay and straight), without presuming to answer any of them concretely. *The Pride* received the Laurence Olivier Award, the Critics' Circle Award for Most Promising Playwright and the John Whiting Award for Best New Play in 2009.

About Director Michael Arden

Michael Arden returns to The Wallis this season to direct *The Pride*, continuing his Artist-in-Residence tenure which began with the hit revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*. His other directing credits include: Deaf West Theatre's *Spring Awakening* (Ovation, Outer Critics Circle Awards, Tony and Drama Desk Award Nominations), *My Fair Lady* at the Bay Street Theater, LA Ronde for The Forest Of Arden Theatre Collective, *For The Record: John Hughes* at Rockwell Table and Stage. Michael is a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, a recipient of the 2015-2016 Standout Award for Diversity and Inclusion and winner of the 2004 Tony Honor. His next project will be a revival of the musical *Once on This Island* scheduled to open on Broadway this fall.

About Playwright Alexi Kaye Campbell

Alexi's first play *The Pride* premiered at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in November 2008 for which he was awarded the Critic's Circle Prize for Most Promising Playwright and the John Whiting Award for Best New Play. The production was also awarded the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an affiliate theatre. *The Pride* then transferred to America in 2010 and was produced at MCC Theatre in New York. In 2011, a revival of *The Pride* was produced at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, directed by Richard Wilson, followed by another revival in 2013, directed by Jamie Lloyd, which enjoyed a successful run in London's West End before embarking on a national tour. His second play, *Apologia*, was short-listed for The John Whiting Award and nominated for Best Play at the Writers Guild Awards. Other plays include *The Faith Machine*, *Bracken Moor* and *Sunset at the Villa Thalia*, which opened at the Royal National Theatre directed by Simon Godwin with Ben Miles and Elizabeth McGovern. He also wrote the feature film *Woman in Gold* which told the story of Beverly Hills resident Maria Altman's fight to reclaim her family's Klimt painting from the Austrian government. It was directed by Simon Curtis and starred Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds, and was the highest earning independent film of 2015.

About *The Pride* cast:

Neal Bledsoe (Philip) is a Toronto born actor who most recently was seen on the hit Amazon series "The Man in the High Castle" and NBC's "Mysteries of Laura." Last year he also appeared in the popular network drama series "Code Black" and "Timeless." Some of his other television credits include starring in NBC's "Ironside" opposite Blair Underwood, "Smash" opposite Debra Messing and ABC's "Ugly Betty." On the big screen, Neal has landed roles in everything from popular studio films such as DreamWorks' *Revolutionary Road* and Warner Bros' *Sex and the City 2* to independents like

Junction, West End, Under New Management, Grand Street, Police State and *Highrise*. For the last year, Neal also has been a guest correspondent for the podcast *The MMQB with Peter King*, writing "Delicate Moron" which chronicles his quest to make it in the Arena Football League with the Los Angeles Kiss.

Jessica Collins (Sylvia) is a Juilliard trained actress who recently starred in *King Lear* opposite John Lithgow at The Public Theater in NYC. Previously, Jessica appeared in the Academy Award-nominated *Zero Dark Thirty* and was seen in a season-long arc on JJ Abrams' NBC series, "Revolution." In 2010, Collins starred in the AMC series "Rubicon" and ABC's "The Nine." Other television credits include "House," "Blue Bloods," "Law and Order: LA," "The Good Wife," "CSI," "Law and Order: Criminal Intent" and "Ghost Whisperer." Collins made her feature debut in the 2009 film *Loss of a Teardrop Diamond* opposite Bryce Dallas Howard and Ellen Burstyn. She made her Broadway debut in the 2009 production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and starred in the world premiere of *Manic Flight Reaction* at Playwrights Horizons, as well as *We Live Here* for Manhattan Theatre Club and *A Month in the Country* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival.

Augustus Prew (Oliver) is currently appearing in a recurring role in the limited event series "Prison Break." He also recently starred as the title character in Jason Katims' CBS series medical drama "Pure Genius." Prew gained attention from American television audiences when he starred as Prince Alfonso in the Showtime series "The Borgias." His additional U.S. television credits include guest starring roles in the series "NCIS," "Major Crimes" and the mini-series "Klondike." Prew's first television role was in the British series "24Seven." His additional British television credits include guest-starring roles in "The Time of Your Life," "Silent Witness," "MI-5," "The Bill," "The Village" and "Spooks," and the television movie "Marigold." On the big screen, Prew made his debut in the hit movie *About a Boy*. His additional film credits include *High-Rise, Kick-Ass 2, Copperhead, Charlie St. Cloud, The Secret of Moonacre, Animals, Hated, The Kid* and *Sophie & Sheba*. Augustus Prew began his career in entertainment when he nabbed a coveted spot with the prestigious YoungBlood Theatre Company in England, which counts British actors Carey Mulligan and Imogen Poots as its alumni.

Matthew Wilkas (The Man) is a New York City-based actor and writer. "New York is Dead," the series he wrote and stars in premiered at this April's TriBeCa Film Festival. On Broadway, he appeared in *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* where he played the role of Flash Thompson and then Peter Parker/Spider-man. He is also the star of the award-winning indie film hit *Gayby*. Wilkas acted at The Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Huntington Theatre Company, The Berkshire Theatre Festival, The Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and The Sundance Theatre Institute, under the direction of Michael Greif, Anna D. Shapiro, Will Frears, Carolyn Cantor, Mark Brokaw, Nicholas Martin and Trip Cullman. His television credits include guest appearances on "Looking," "Ugly Betty," "Hope and Faith," "All My Children," "As the World Turns" and "Law and Order." He also appeared in Chris Rock's film *Top Five*. Look for him starring alongside Laila Robbins in the soon to be released horror film *Island Zero*.

About the Production Team:

The creative team includes: Lara Hillier (assistant director), Christopher Soley (associate set designer), Danae Iris McQueen (costume designer), Travis Hagenbuch (lighting designer), Josh Reid (sound designer), Giles Cooper (dialect coach), Eric Souliere (casting director), Nikki Hyde (production stage manager) and Nidia Flores (assistant stage manager).

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: *The Pride*
Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Lovelace Studio Theater
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

When: June 8 – July 9, 2017
June 8 – 13, 2017 (Previews)
June 14, 2017 (Opening Night)
Performance Schedule: Tues – Fri at 8pm; Sat 2pm & 8pm; Sun 2pm & 7pm

Tickets: Single tickets: \$40 – \$75 (prices subject to change)
Online – TheWallis.org
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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