

19/20 SEASON

Wallis Annenberg
Center for the
Performing Arts

Press Release

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**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Presents**

LULA WASHINGTON DANCE THEATRE

Thursday, January 30 through Saturday, February 1, 2020, 7:30 pm

**Company's Milestone 40th Anniversary Celebration Features
World Premieres by Christopher Huggins and Tommie Waheed Evans;
a West Coast Premiere by Esie Mensah; a favorite by world renown hip hop
artist Rennie Harris; plus a new premiere work by
Co-Founder/Artistic Director Lula Washington.**

(Beverly Hills, CA, December 4, 2019) The venerated Los Angeles-based Lula Washington Dance Theatre returns to the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts to celebrate its milestone 40th anniversary with a dynamic and powerful program exploring social and humanitarian issues. The company performs for three nights only, from Thursday, January 30 through Saturday February 1, 2020, 7:30 pm, in The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater. The program, which includes two world premieres and a West Coast premiere, celebrates the dance company's past with some repertory gems and is also decidedly forward-looking, with new works from new voices, some of whom are a generation younger than co-founders Lula and Erwin Washington. Mixing jazz, hip-hop, African movement, ballet, modern, tap and other dance styles, the company has built an international reputation for the vitality, energy and depth of its repertory and the charisma and interpretive power it brings to each and every performance. Hailed as a major "taste-makers in the dance world" (NPR) and "an expresser of inner-city culture" (*Reno-Gazette Journal*), the company uses "the art of dance to make a deep impact" (*Anchorage Press*). A talk-back with members of the company immediately follows the performance on January 30.

For this special event, the dance troupe presents the world premiere of *To Lula with Love* created for the occasion by celebrated choreographer Christopher Huggins, a former member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and alum of Lula Washington Dance Theatre. Another Lula Washington Dance Theatre company alum is creating a new work for the program. Tommie Waheed Evans received a 2019 Princess Grace Foundation Honorarium Grant to create a

(*Hands Up: A Testimony*) work for the 40th Anniversary that focuses on his experience growing up in Los Angeles and what it meant to him to be a product of that city.

Additionally, the program features two works by company Founder/Artistic Director Lula Washington, *Fragments*, which she describes as “a reaction to the chaotic times we live in,” and *King*, about the struggles of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a key moment in his life during the civil rights movement. Other repertoire includes the West Coast premiere of *Zayo*, a bold, Afro-fusion, dance-theatre work about self-discovery, destiny and personal strength by Esie Mensah, who hails from Toronto, Canada and Ghana, and *Reign*, a joyous gospel-fueled work by hip-hop concert pioneer Rennie Harris commissioned by Lula Washington Dance Theatre a decade ago for its 30th anniversary.

Washington, reflecting on the dance company’s 40th anniversary, says, “At the same time the company is pushing forward with new groundbreaking work, it is also holding true to its original mission of doing work that is ‘reaching for your soul.’ Our dancing and programming is designed to touch the soul and spirit of people, aiming to move them to a place of humanism and fairness for all.”

“Lula Washington Dance Theatre is among our country’s most important and influential dance companies,” states The Wallis’ Artistic Director Paul Crewes. “The Wallis is honored to celebrate its 40th Anniversary, a landmark occasion for dance locally and internationally.”

The Wallis’ 2019/2020 dance programming features Los Angeles-based companies exclusively, marking the first time a major Southern California performing arts venue has presented an all-local dance line-up during a single season. Dance @ The Wallis is sponsored, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Lula Washington Dance Theatre, a repertoire dance ensemble founded in 1980 by Lula and Erwin Washington in the inner city area of South Los Angeles, has risen to become one of the most admired African-American contemporary dance companies in the world. It is known for its powerful, high-energy dancing and innovative and provocative choreography primarily by Lula Washington along with other established and emerging choreographers. The company, which tours internationally, has steadfastly focused on using dance to explore social issues, including aspect of African-American history and culture.

Tickets, \$29 to \$79, are on sale now. 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/Lula](#).

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 48 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.

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

WHAT:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Presents
LULA WASHINGTON DANCE THEATRE
40th Anniversary Celebration

PROGRAM:

TOMMIE WAHEED EVANS *Hands Up: A Testimony* (World Premiere)
LULA WASHINGTON *King* (Excerpts from *The Movement*)
CHRISTOPHER HUGGINS *To Lula with Love / Warrior* (World Premiere)
ESIE MENSAH *Zayo* (West Coast Premiere)
-intermission-
LULA WASHINGTON *Fragments*
RENNIE HARRIS *Reign*

WHEN:

Thursday, January 30, 2020, 7:30 pm (artist talk-back immediately follows the performance)
Friday, January 31, 2020, 7:30 pm
Saturday February 1, 2020, 7:30 pm

RUN TIME:

Running time is 100 minutes, including a 15 minute intermission.

WHERE:

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

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

\$29 to \$79 (prices subject to change)
TheWallis.org/Lula
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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