

19/20 SEASON

Wallis Annenberg
Center for the
Performing Arts

Press Release

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**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
In Association with BODYTRAFFIC
Presents the
World Premiere Production of
*THE MINGHELLA PROJECT***

**The Wallis' First Original Dance Production Is
Written by the Late Oscar-Winning Writer/Director
Anthony Minghella
and Set by Internationally Acclaimed Choreographer Jonathan Lunn**

**Features The Wallis' 2019/2020 Company-In-Residence
BODYTRAFFIC**

April 18, 19, 29, 30 and May 1, 2, 2020

(Beverly Hills, CA, March 9, 2020) The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in association with BODYTRAFFIC presents the world premiere of *The Minghella Project*, a heartfelt tribute to the late Oscar-winning writer/director Anthony Minghella (1954-2008), who wrote the texts for the four works that comprise the piece. The Wallis' first original dance production, *The Minghella Project* features its 2019/2020 Company-In-Residence, BODYTRAFFIC, on April 18, 19, 29 and 30, and May 1 and 2, 2020, in The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater. *The Minghella Project* brings to the stage for the first time four works set by noted choreographer Jonathan Lunn to a series of original texts for dance that he collaborated on with Minghella. The four works, spanning twenty years, include *Hang Up*, *Mosaic* and *Self Assembly*, which have previously been performed individually, and *We Swim*, a world premiere. In addition to BODYTRAFFIC, *The Minghella Project*, features actors held close to Minghella and Lunn, who became friends while attending university in England in the 1980s. Minghella wrote and directed *The English Patient* (Academy Award for Best Director), *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *Cold Mountain*, among other major acclaimed films. Lunn is particularly known for skillfully incorporating language into his choreography. *The Guardian* states, "Lunn reminds us that communication in dance is only partially about reading meanings; more importantly and more rewardingly, it's about being moved."

“With this production, we are honoring Anthony Minghella and his brilliance as a writer,” says Lunn. “His four original texts for dance – the only ones he ever wrote for dance - illuminate different nuanced aspects of the human condition, shining a light on Anthony’s extraordinary insights into relationships and human behavior. I am so grateful for my decades-long friendship with him and for the gift of his remarkable words. Although each text was created to be a stand-alone work, The Wallis’ Artistic Director Paul Crewes recognized their significance as a collection and urged me to tie them together to create an evening-length program, suggesting I collaborate with BODYTRAFFIC on the development of *The Minghella Project*. It has been deeply inspiring process.”

“Anthony Minghella was a giant in the field of cinema and Jonathan Lunn has long been acclaimed in the dance world,” states Crewes. “Together they created an unusually visceral and powerful connection between spoken word and movement. Given The Wallis’ deep commitment to fostering dance locally, nationally and internationally and L.A.’s significance as the film capital of the world, it seems particularly fitting that *The Minghella Project*, which brings the human experience into sharp focus and features L.A.-based BODYTRAFFIC, is The Wallis’ first original dance production.”

Lunn notes that Minghella’s own voice is a featured aspect of the production. In 2006, just two years before his death, Minghella recorded himself reading *Self Assembly*, a tongue-in-cheek “manual,” akin to instructions for assembling flat-pack furniture, on how to construct a relationship, which became the featured audio track for the work. “Hearing Anthony’s voice resonate is incredibly powerful and makes it feel like he’s in the room with the dancers,” explains Lunn.

The text for the first work they created together in 1987, *Hang Up*, devised as a telephone call between a couple, uses a sound score recorded by actors Juliet Stevens (*Truly, Madly, Deeply, Infamous*) and Anton Lesser (*Game of Thrones, The Crown*) as the audio bed for a dance duet that explores the spoken and unspoken layers of the text.

Mosaic, created in 1990, is a work about accumulation and patterns that features live narration, as does *We Swim*, written by Minghella in 2006 but only now being choreographed by Lunn. It explores a human’s darker instincts and is being set for the first time as part of *The Minghella Project*. “So there are actually two connected world premieres – the first is *The Minghella Project* itself and the other is the world premiere of the specific work *We Swim*,” says Lunn.

BODYTRAFFIC, which made its Wallis debut in 2018, bursts with “invention, attitude and urban edge” (*The Boston Globe*) and “sheer animal magnetism” (*San Francisco Weekly*). Founded in 2007 by Lillian Rose Barbeito and Tina Finkelman Berkett, BODYTRAFFIC has surged to the forefront of the concert dance world, recruiting great talent from around the globe to create world-class contemporary dance by distinctive choreographic voices. The company was named “the company of the future” by *The New York Times*, *Dance Magazine’s* 25 to Watch, and “Best of Culture” by the *Los Angeles Times*. In 2015, BODYTRAFFIC was selected by the Obama Administration to be cultural ambassadors for the United States via *DanceMotion USA*SM, a dynamic cultural diplomacy program that supports United States foreign policy goals by engaging international audiences through educational opportunities, cultural exchange, and performance. BODYTRAFFIC has also served as cultural ambassadors for the United States in Israel (2015), South Korea (2016) and Algeria (2017).

Jonathan Lunn, an acclaimed award-winning British choreographer and director, has enjoyed an international career in the fields of dance, theatre, opera and film that spans 35 years. His choreography projects have been presented at the Edinburgh Festival, Sadler’s Wells Theatre, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, BDA Company Beijing in China, Jacob’s Pillow in Massachusetts and Dance Portland in Maine. Lunn’s work as an opera director includes *Platée*, *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *La Damnation de Faust*, *Cherubin*, *Otello* and *Orpheus in der Unterwelt*. In addition, he has choreographed productions for such major opera companies as La Scala Milan, Grand Theatre de Geneve, Opera Bastille Paris, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden and English National Opera and has

enjoyed an ongoing association with De Nederlandse Opera Amsterdam. Additionally, Lunn has choreographed musical theatre productions of *West Side Story*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Carousel*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, and *Spamalot*, among others. He served as Associate Choreographer of the Chichester Festival Theatre and earned an Olivier Award Nomination for “Best Choreographer in Theatre” for the National Theatre’s production of *Pericles*. Lunn spent ten years with London Contemporary Dance Theatre (LCDT) as dancer, choreographer and Associate Director, performing worldwide, including at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and the 1998 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. For LCDT, he created Olivier Award-nominated *Shift* and *Hang Up* - his first collaboration with Anthony Minghella. They also worked together on the film *Mosaic*. His other film work includes *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and *Love Actually*. Lunn, a graduate of Hull University and London Contemporary Dance School, was the recipient of a NESTA Fellowship and was 1993 Research Choreographer in Residence at Cross-Cultural Dance Resources in Flagstaff, Arizona. He is a Trustee for the Contemporary Dance Trust’s Lunn Prothero Dance Award.

Anthony Minghella (1954-2008), born on England’s Isle of Wight, was the son of Italian Immigrants. He was a scriptwriter for several British TV shows before earning acclaim as a dramatist in London’s West End. In 1984, he was named Most Promising Playwright of the Year by the London Theatre Critics Association. His numerous acclaimed movies showcase his superlative literary skills, high production values and careful craftsmanship. His film *The English Patient* won nine Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director. He also directed several actors to Oscar nominations, including Ralph Fiennes, Jude Law, Renée Zellweger, Juliette Binoche and Kristen Scott Thomas. Binoche and Zellweger won for their supporting roles in *The English Patient* (1996) and *Cold Mountain* (2003), respectively. Minghella and Sydney Pollack were partners in the production company Mirage Enterprises.

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.

Tickets, \$39 to \$99, 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/Minghella](#).

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.

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
In Association with BODYTRAFFIC
Presents the
World Premiere Production of
THE MINGHELLA PROJECT
Written by Anthony Minghella
Directed and Choreographed by Jonathan Lunn
Performed by BODYTRAFFIC

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Minghella Project is comprised of the following works set by choreographer Jonathan Lunn to text by the late Oscar-winning writer/director Anthony Minghella (1954-2008):
JONATHAN LUNN *Hang Up*
JONATHAN LUNN *Mosaic*
JONATHAN LUNN *Self Assembly*
JONATHAN LUNN *We Swim* (World Premiere)

RUNNING TIME:

Approximately 115 minutes with transitions and no intermission.

WHEN:

Saturday, April 18, 2020, 7:30 pm
Sunday, April 19, 2:00 pm
Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 pm
Thursday, April 30, 7:30 pm
Friday, May 1, 7:30 pm
Saturday, May 2, 7:30 pm

WHERE:

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

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

\$39 to \$99 (prices subject to change)

www.thewallis.org/Minghella

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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