

WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The Kneehigh Theatre production of
Noël Coward's Brief Encounter
Adapted and Directed by Emma Rice
Originally produced by David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers

43 Performances Only!

February 15 – March 23, 2014 Bram Goldsmith Theater

Concurrently with *Noël Coward's Brief Encounter*
Love Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward
February 20 – 22 Lovelace Studio Theater

November 19, 2013 – (Beverly Hills CA) - The UK's Kneehigh Theatre acclaimed production of ***Noël Coward's Brief Encounter***, will have a 43-performance limited engagement at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts February 15 to March 23, 2014. The production, which *The New York Times* has hailed as "The most enchanting work of stagecraft ever inspired by a movie" ... switches seamlessly between theater and film using a combination of Noël Coward's original stage play *Still Life* and Coward's screenplay of the classic 1945 British film directed by David Lean. It takes the audience back to a bygone age of romance and the silver screen.

Remembered as one of the most haunting love stories ever told, the action of ***Brief Encounter*** is centered on a suburban housewife who discovers passion and falls madly in love with a married stranger in a railway station tearoom over a series of stolen afternoons. The film was based on Coward's 1936 one-act play *Still Life* and memorably featured in the score Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto #2." In this new production, the ingenious international theater company Kneehigh cleverly uses film and music to provide a highly theatrical setting for this classic, timeless tale of illicit lovers. The production for The Wallis features the original Broadway cast headed by Hannah Yelland and Tristan Sturrock.

Director and Adaptor Emma Rice said, "Can any of us go through a lifetime without meeting someone and feeling a spark of recognition that we shouldn't, an attraction that goes beyond the physical? Here is where real life ends and folk tales begin. In the language of stories, we are able to examine the bargains that human beings make. We see how we bargain our own needs (the needs of the self), for reasons imposed by society. These reasons will be familiar to us all: the fear of being alone or of being excluded from 'normal' life, the fear of hurting those we love and the fear of falling into deep waters that may destroy everything we have strived to build. That is the power of a great and enduring story; we can all own it and feel it and find something of ourselves in it."

"This ingenious multimedia import from Britain pays homage to the movie by translating the romantic fable into a playfully eccentric language that fuses theater, music and film in a most delightfully populist fashion," said Charles McNulty in the *Los Angeles Times*. "The versatile ensemble are unflinchingly creative in their whimsical efforts to bring us back in time to 1938. From its game performers to its

unostentatiously imaginative design team, the company offers its audience a broad embrace ... in a production that revels in a buoyant theatricality.”

Ben Brantley in *The New York Times* said, “The captivating adaptation of the 1945 movie’s real *raison d’être* is to love, honor and obey the spirit of the film that inspired it ... celebrating every moviegoer who has felt personally invested in that cinema classic. Through musical numbers, film projections and vaudeville jollity it spells out not only what the show’s doomed lovers are experiencing but also what we, who have known them for years, experience whenever we watch them on screen.”

Concurrently with ***Brief Encounter, Love Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward*** will be performed February 20-22 in the Lovelace Studio Theater. Devised and written by Barry Day (based on “The Letters of Noël Coward”), this cabaret interweaves the music of Coward and witty letters between his famous friends across the years. Noël Coward’s career as a playwright, composer, director, actor and singer spanned six decades. Known for his wit, flamboyance, and what *Time* magazine called “a sense of personal style, a combination of cheek and chic, pose and poise,” his works remain as universal and relevant as ever and continue to influence pop culture today.

About Noël Coward’s *Brief Encounter*

The Kneehigh production of ***Noël Coward’s Brief Encounter***, originally commissioned and produced by David Pugh & Dafydd Rogers and Cineworld, toured the United Kingdom before opening in February 2008 at the Haymarket Cinema in London, which was converted into a theatre for this production. The production ran through November 2008, followed by a 27 week UK tour. In September 2009, American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, held the United States premiere, which transferred to St. Ann’s Warehouse in Brooklyn, New York, December 2009, followed by an engagement at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis in February 2010.

The Roundabout Theatre Company brought the production to Broadway at Studio 54 in September 2010, where it ran for 21 previews and 19 performances starring Hannah Yelland and Tristan Sturrock, who will return to the production for The Wallis engagement. After Beverly Hills, the production travels to The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington D.C.

Emma Rice (Adaptor & Director) is the Joint Artistic Director of Kneehigh. Productions for Kneehigh include: *The Red Shoes*, *The Wooden Frock*, *The Bacchae*, *Tristan & Yseult* (2003-6; UK/US tour 2013-14), *Cymbeline* (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company), *A Matter of Life and Death* (Royal National Theatre in association with Kneehigh), *Rapunzel* (in association with Battersea Arts Centre), *Brief Encounter* (a David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers Production in association with Kneehigh Theatre); *Don John* (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Bristol Old Vic); *Midnight’s Pumpkin*, *The Wild Bride*, *Wah! Wah! Girls* (with Sadler’s Wells, Theatre Royal Stratford East for World Stages) and *Steptoe and Son*. Emma’s other work includes the West End production of *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *Oedipussy* for Spymonkey, and *The Empress* for the RSC.

Kneehigh is a UK based theatre company with a local, national and international profile. For over 30 years, Kneehigh has created vigorous, popular and challenging theatre and performs with the joyful anarchy that audiences have come to expect from this groundbreaking company. Kneehigh tells stories. Based in Cornwall in breath-taking barns on the south coast the company creates theatre of humanity on an epic and tiny scale. They work with an ever-changing ensemble of performers, artists, technicians, administrators, makers and musicians and are passionate about their multi-disciplined creative process. In 2010 Kneehigh launched The Asylum, a beautiful and flexible nomadic structure, which means the company now has a venue to call home as well as being one of the leading touring theatre companies in the UK. The company have now presented three seasons in The Asylum in Cornwall, and will continue to reinvent the space and explore new locations in future years

Alongside their national and international touring and Asylum seasons, Kneehigh runs their Rambles program aiming to engage creatively with communities in Cornwall and beyond through event and adventure.

Kneehigh is supported by Arts Council England and Cornwall Council.

ABOUT THE WALLIS

Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (The Wallis) transforms a Beverly Hills city block, facing Santa Monica Boulevard, between Crescent and Canon Drives, into a vibrant new cultural destination with two distinct, elegant buildings: the historic 1933 Italianate-style Beverly Hills Post Office (now the Paula Kent Meehan Historic Building) and the new, contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater. Together these two structures embrace the city's history and future, creating a new cultural landmark. Within the treasured Post Office, existing spaces are re-imagined into the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, a theater school for young people, a café (both opening in 2014) and gift shop (currently a Salvatore Ferragamo pop-up shop). The Wallis, the first performing arts center to be built in Beverly Hills, will be a home for artists from around the world and audiences of every age. For its Inaugural Season, The Wallis will produce and present outstanding theater, music and dance, as well as exciting programming for the family audience. The venue will also enhance the live theater experience through special exhibitions that will reveal another layer of meaning to a show or presentation.

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Calendar Listing for Noël Coward's Brief Encounter

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

Performance Schedule: February 15 through March 23, 2014
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Evenings at 8 pm
Saturdays at 3 pm and 8 pm; Sundays at 2 pm and 7pm

Tickets: **Prices:** Previews 2/15-2/18 \$49.00 - \$89.00; following 2/20 \$59.00-\$129.00
In Person – Wallis Annenberg Center Ticket Services,
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210
By Phone - 310-746-4000
Online – www.thewallis.org

Love Noël: The Letters and Songs of Noël Coward

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

Performance Schedule: February 20-22, 2014
Thursday, February 20 at 7:30pm; Friday, February 21 at 7:30pm;
Saturday, February 22 at 4:00pm and 8:30pm

Tickets: **Price:** \$75.00
In Person – Wallis Annenberg Center Ticket Services,
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210
By Phone - 310-746-4000
Online – www.thewallis.org

