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**Grow @ The Wallis Presents**  
**The Wallis Studio Ensemble Production of**  
***THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY***

by Douglas Adams

Directed by Madeleine Dahm

Lighting Design by Bosco Flanagan; Puppets and Masks by  
Alexander Sheldon

**Thursday, June 6 – Sunday, June 9, 2019**

(Beverly Hills, CA April 29, 2019) The Wallis Studio Ensemble's *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Douglas Adams' much loved, absurdist and subversive satire, is back at the Wallis by popular demand from Thursday, June 6 through Sunday, June 9, 2019, at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in the Lovelace Studio Theater. First presented in 2018, this hilarious, vibrant, fast-paced, gender-bending romp, directed by Madeleine Dahm, was a *Los Angeles Times* "Pick of the Week" and described by *ArtsNowLA* as "unmitigated lunacy with Ferrari-like pacing, a deep dive into hallucinogenic territory." Lighting design is by Ovation Award-winning Bosco Flanagan, and puppets and masks are by Alexander Sheldon.

After its first appearance as a radio play, originally produced by BBC 4 Radio in 1978, Adams' work quickly became a worldwide cult classic celebrated for its sharp wit and ironic style. Dahm's version at The Wallis integrates puppetry, stylized movement, miniature sets and live music to bring the timely political satire to life.

Each night, audience members are invited to come in "Science Fiction Costumes," take photos at the designated "selfie spot" and tag #ZaphodsCloset. A winner will be chosen after every performance to receive two tickets to a performance of their choice in The Wallis' 2019/2020 Season.

A true space opera, commonly referred to by its adoring followers as "HHGG," the story begins after the earth is completely destroyed to make way for an

intergalactic bypass. The last human, now known as Martha Dent -- in a switch from Adams' original main character, Arthur Dent -- and her intergalactic traveler sidekick, Ford Prefect, take a hysterical journey through unsuspecting parts of the galaxy hoping to discover the meaning of life, the universe and everything.

Cast members Trecey Dory, Schuyler Girion, Ella M. Joseph, Kelvin Morales, Sina Pooresmaeil, Jo Rodriguez, Helya Salarvand, Alexander Sheldon, Lucia Towers, Viva Kanani Obiajulu Wittman and Siera Williams are part of an ensemble created by Dahm and GRoW @ The Wallis for early career actors committed to creating innovative theatre for social change. Its mission is to cross boundaries with an ethos of collaboration and create thoughtful and provocative work that is rooted in examining humanity.

### **About The Wallis Studio Ensemble:**

2018-19 marks the third season of this groundbreaking physical theater company for early-career actors, creating innovative and visceral theatre as a galvanizing force for social change. Described by the San Diego Tribune as "*hauntingly beautiful*" and by ArtNowLA as "*mesmerizing, harrowing and provocative, this is avant-garde theater that sticks with you long after the curtain comes down.*" The Ensemble received *Los Angeles Times*' theatre pick of the week and was featured on NPR. Since its inception, The Ensemble has acquired a reputation for creating socially conscious, cutting edge theatre, with a strong physical component. This year the company performed a devised piece, *S.O.S* at Circle X, soon to be seen at The LGBT Center as part of The Hollywood Fringe Festival 2019. 2018 saw the original production of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Disposable*, a devised work that examined the intersection between environmental destruction and human displacement, also seen at The San Diego International Fringe Festival in June 2018. In 2016/17, The Ensemble premiered *Thebes* at The Wallis, a contemporary feminist adaptation of the Greek classic by Gareth Jandrell, and its first original devised play, *Word of Mouth*, an examination of post truth, that was also seen at Rise Up LA and at The Crisis Art Festival in Tuscany, Italy, where The Ensemble spent a week in residence in 2017.

**Single tickets are \$20. Visit [TheWallis.org/HitchHiker](http://TheWallis.org/HitchHiker), call 310.746.4000, or stop by in person at the ==Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Services Office located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210.**

### **About the Artists**

**Douglas Adams** (writer) was an award-winning British comic writer, advocate for environmentalism, conservation and technological innovation, whose works satirize contemporary life. Adams is best known for the mock science-fiction series known collectively as *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Adams received an M.A. in English literature from the University of Cambridge. He was a writer and script editor for the television series *Doctor Who*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, and wrote scripts for the BBC. *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide* series is an epic parody that lampoons modern society with biting humor. According to Adams, the idea for the title occurred to him while he lay drunk in a field in Innsbruck, Austria, gazing at the stars. He was carrying a copy of the *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to Europe*, and it occurred to him that "somebody ought to write a *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. He later said that the constant repetition of this anecdote had obliterated his memory of the actual event. Despite the original outline, Adams was said to make up the stories as he wrote. The work achieved great popularity, first as a 12-part series on radio in 1978-80 and then in a 5-book series that sold more than 14 million copies internationally. Adams received the Hugo Award in 1979 for Best Dramatic Presentation. *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide* was later adapted for television and film. Adams passed away in 2001 aged 49, the evolutionary biologist Richard

Dawkins said of him "*Science has lost a friend, literature has lost a luminary, the mountain gorilla and the black rhino have lost a gallant defender.*"

**Madeleine Dahm** (director and production designer) is an award-winning theater director, choreographer, dramaturg and arts activist. Originally from London, her work has been presented across the UK, in Europe, and the U.S. She has been the Resident Artist at GRoW @ The Wallis since 2015, and is the Founding Director of The Wallis Studio Ensemble. Recent directing credits include Co-Director and Choreographer of *Salt*, for newly formed Italian physical theatre company, Bamsemble; Rehearsal Supervisor of *Panorama* for The Martha Graham Dance Company; Associate Director and Choreographer for *The House is Black Multi-Media Project*, a seminal work on *Forough Farrokhzad* by Sussan Deyhim (*Argo*), Co-Director Robert Egan (*Angels in America*); recently seen at The Met, New York, and at The Wallis. Madeleine is working on the dramaturg and direction of the staged play *Isn't it Rich* taken from the feminist novella by international journalist Victoria Looseleaf. She is the Director and Choreographer of a new musical comedy by Emmy Award-winning film composer Harold Faltermeyer (*Beverly Hills Cop*), and renowned Disney writer Philip LaZebnik. Madeleine hails from the UK and trained at the Old Vic as well as with legendary Martha Graham. Madeleine is the Development Director for the Ojai playwrights conference, and she is an Associate Member of the Stage Director and Choreographer Society of America and Founding Member of the British Association of choreographers.

**Bosco Flanagan** (lighting designer) is a multi-award winning lighting designer who has worked across the UK, Ireland and the US. He is the resident lighting designer for Tim Robbin's company *The Actors Gang*, and the critically acclaimed *Independent Shakespeare Company*. Bosco has worked with Madeleine on various theatre and dance productions in Los Angeles for the past twelve years. Bosco is the recipient of 6 Ovation Awards for Lighting Design. His other lighting credits include: The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Grand Opera House (Dublin), The Royal Court Theatre (London), The New York and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals and touring with the late David Bowie, U2 and The Rolling Stones.

**Calvin Ripley** (assistant director/company manager) has spent over 6 years working along-side artists as an administrative assistant, stage-hand, light board operator, and co-director. Born and raised in the twin cities of Minnesota, Calvin was involved in the vibrant theatre scene of children's theatre, fringe festivals, and local outreach programs. Now in LA, Calvin is honored to be a part of the Wallis Studio Ensemble and the dynamic work that they do - finding new and interesting ways to talk about important social issues and highlight often neglected topics.

**Andrew Villareal** (acting coach) is a proud graduate of Texas A&M Int'l and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Andrew is honored to have been given the opportunity to work with such stellar artists. Honors include 'Year's Best Performance' - Stage Scene LA for his work as Arnold Beckoff in *Torch Song Trilogy*. 'Best Actor' wins for *The Rocky Horror Show* (Stage Scene LA), and *Equus* (Santa Monica Theatre Guild). Andrew recently completed work on the comedy web series, *Kaplan's Korner* and *Dead Sexy*, which won 'Best Comedy' at the IFS Film Festival. Additional credits: Konstantin in *The Seagull*, Dieter Keller in *The Red Dress* at The Odyssey, and Voldar in the beloved Orange County cult classic *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*.

### **The Company**

**Schuyler Girion** is a theatre-maker and proud Angeleno. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley, where she studied English, Theater and Performance Studies. Growing up in a family of storytellers, she was inspired by the societal impact of stories from a very young age and is particularly interested in the cultivation of new and challenging theatrical works. While at Berkeley she was a founding member of the New Play Practicum, a developmental readings and workshops series. After graduating Berkeley, she became the assistant to the Director of New Work Development at The Public Theater NY, where she spent a year and a half osmosing the inner workings of new play development at the renowned off-Broadway house. She then worked as the Community Impact Coordinator during the 2017 PublicWorks production of *As You Like It*, assisting a community ensemble of 125 everyday New Yorkers (Public Theater); she was the Associate Director of the concert reading of *The River is Me*, a new musical inspired by the life and death of Emmett Till (54 Below); and Dramaturg for the MFA playwriting developmental workshop of *Civil* (Columbia University). She has trained at the American Conservatory Theater and the Lee Strasberg Institute. Acting credits

include: Tessa in *Summertime*, Olga in *After the War Blues*, and Niblo in the workshop production of *American Shakespeare Riot*. She is currently a resident artist of the LA theatre company, The Vagrancy, where she most recently assistant directed *Romeo and Juliet*. Schuyler is thrilled to join the Wallis Studio Ensemble as an actor and hopes to continue to create innovative, moving and dynamic works that challenge our place in this world.

**Trecek Dory** is happy to be in his third season with The Wallis Studio Ensemble. He is Afro-American, with Afro-Caribbean, Cherokee, and Caucasian lineage, and is passionate about fighting for equality and social justice. Trecek has been acting since he was 12 years old. He has been a regional finalist of the August Wilson Monologue Competition. His credits with the Studio Ensemble include, Word of Mouth at the Crisis Art Festival, Italy. Oedipus in *Thebes*, Other in *Disposable*, at the San Diego International Fringe Festival. He was the Main Puppeteer and the Vagon Captain in the ensembles recent hit production of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, he recently appeared in the workshop production of *Essie The Musical* at Independent Shakespeare.

**Ella M. Joseph** is an Actor from Savannah, Georgia. She and her family emigrated from Panama. At sixteen, she began her training in performance with All Walks of Life Inc., a non-profit organization that focuses on educating young people through the arts, and promoting positive and active involvement between individuals and their communities. This was where she first gained insight into the power of theatre to create bonds and push boundaries. After graduating from Savannah Arts Academy, she trained at Northern Arizona University for four years as a Performance Emphasis Theatre major. Ella has always felt that it is imperative to provide opportunities in the arts to those who are disadvantaged in order to ensure people from all backgrounds take part in theatre - and that the demographic of those involved in the Arts is diverse. As a theatre practitioner, she believes it is crucial to constantly question the world we live in, and bring light to the voices of the unheard. Recent acting credits include Calpurnia in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Williamina in *Silent Sky*, Esther in *Intimate Apparel*.

**Kelvin Morales** is the youngest of two immigrant parents from El Salvador, Kelvin grew up hearing stories of his parents' home country, so at an early age he fell in love with the power of storytelling, and has been telling his own stories ever since. His heritage, and passion for performing have paved a unique path in his professional career, working in contemporary theatre, cultural events, commercials, musicals, and Shakespeare. This is Kelvin's third year with the Wallis Studio Ensemble. Company credits include the Crisis Art Festival Tuscan, Rise Up LA, Wallis Annenberg Center for Performing Arts and the San Diego International Fringe Festival. Recent acting credits include In the *Realm of the Maya* directed by Enrique Castillo at Plaza de la Raza; Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*; Salerio in *The Merchant of Venice*, Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a member of Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum. With Project Nongenu, Conrad in *Much Ado About Nothing*. This summer he performed in the Griffith Park Shakespeare Festival as a member of Independent Shakespeare Company, performing Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Chiron in *Titus Andronicus*. Most recently he was Dumain in *Love's Labour's Lost* with Chase What Flies theatre company.

**Viva Kanani Obiajulu Wittman** is an actor and dancer from the thick jungle of the windward side of the island of Maui. She is a recent graduate of Bennington College and is interested in making art that addresses current social issues. Her advanced work at Bennington was an evening-length dance theatre production on memory, inheritance, and the reproduction of history in the present body, and was in part a reflection on what it means to be biracial but white-presenting throughout girlhood. Recent theatrical credits include Quincy Long's new play *Daughters of Io* and *East Coast Curriculum* by Lucy Thurber. Viva was the Story Editor and Casting Director with the studio 1RIC's Augmented Reality experience *Terminal 3*, which premiered at the 2018 TriBeCa Film Festival, then appeared at the 2018 Sheffield Film Festival, the 2018 Barbican Center season (with a month-long installation) and the 2018 LA Film Festival. The project was nominated for the TriBeCa Storyscapes award and was covered by Fast Company, VR Scout, Venturebeat, New York Times and the BBC. Viva has also held several competitive internships, including with the Martha Graham Dance Company in New York and the Centre de Danse du Marais in Paris. Viva works in activism as much as she can and is delighted to be a part of the Wallis Studio Ensemble's third season.

**Lucia Towers** always had a passion for storytelling and more importantly, listening to the stories of others. Growing up as a lesbian in a small farm town in Northern California, she did not see movies or art that accurately represented queer people. Now 25 years old, Lucia is passionate about representing lesbians and queer people in a more relatable and normalized way in the hopes of providing the representation she wishes she had as a child. Lucia started acting at ten years old in a small community theatre and went on to study at the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts. Recent credits include Marina in Shakespeare's *Pericles*, *Much Ado About Nothing* with Project Nongenu, starring in the LGBT Webseries *Twenty and The Leslie*, and the short film *Sanctuary*.

**Sina Pooresmaeil** hails from Northern Virginia just outside of Washington D.C, and fell in love with acting while on a trip to Los Angeles during a college summer break, where he began training with The Actors' Gang. Sina pursued the arts further while finishing his double majors in Biology and Kinesiology at Penn State University. His East Coast

productions include *Steve*, *Almost Maine* and Patrick in *Sacred Trauma*, a play by Ellis Stump. His own one-act play *Chief's Well*, based on a Samoan ghost story, was seen at Wonderlust Theater Company, and his play *The Sad Clown* was a finalist for the No Refund Theatre playwriting competition. Recent acting credits include Gregory in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Group Repertory Theater and multiple roles in *The Bomb-itty of Errors*. Sina trains and performs improvisational comedy with the Upright Citizens Brigade. His artistic interests lie in continuing the tradition of storytelling for Iranian-Americans and more generally, for people of Middle Eastern descent, with a focus on the specificity of his culture rather than gross generalizations and stereotypes drawn from the current media landscape.

**Jo Rodriguez** is a recent graduate from AMDA with a BFA in Acting where she had the opportunity to play various roles in productions such as Annabella in *Lightless Sulphur* and Jenny/Marge in *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play*. Jo is an original member of The Wallis Studio Ensemble, now beginning her third season. Jo is also their in-house photographer and social media manager. Outside of The Wallis Jo manages ArtNowLA's social media and writes plays. While she has had several plays produced, her biggest accomplishment as a writer is participating in The Strawberry One-Act Festival in New York 2019. As a playwright she has a nonlinear approach and is interested in analyzing and breaking down the fundamentally human questions of, who we are, why we are, and what we are supposed to be.

**Alex Sheldon** is one of the founding members of the Wallis Studio Ensemble, now in its third year. He was raised as an artist at Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum, steeped in classical theatre throughout his life and training, and has since performed over a decade of Shakespeare as a company member at Theatricum. As a member of the Studio Ensemble, Alex is not only an actor, but a designer as well, serving as the company's mask/puppet maker, and resident fight choreographer. Most recently Alex created the entire alien puppet and mask characters for The Ensemble's hit production *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Mired in classical tradition, Alex integrates a gothic and romantic aesthetics with a modern, progressive approach. Alex also works in a variety of other mediums, serving as an illustrator, sculptor, and playwright. His favorite acting credits include: The Trickster (*Word of Mouth*, the Studio Ensemble, performed in Arezzo, Italy), Creon (*Thebes* - Studio Ensemble), The Cat (*Animal Farm* - Theatricum Botanicum), Paris (*Romeo and Juliet* - Theatricum Botanicum), Borachio (*Much Ado About Nothing* - Project Nongenuine), Slartibartfast (*The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* - Studio Ensemble), Dull (*Love's Labour's Lost* - Chase What Flies). Alex is a member of the Society of American Fight Directors.

**Siera Williams** is a 23 year old African American woman hailing from Huntsville, Alabama. This is Siera's second year with the Studio Ensemble, last year she took a starring role in their hit production of Douglas Adam's *A Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Siera is a poet, writer and actor, hoping to travel with a production company of her own one day. She has been in two short films, *Blessed* and *Social Life*, had her poetry featured and performed in the play *He Calls Me Ribs*. Recent credits include: Velma in *Birdbath*, Rowena in *Biloxi Blues*, Rebecca in *Social Life*, Other in *Disposable* with the Studio Ensemble. Siera volunteers at FTC's Food Bank and supports Convoy Of Hope, and New Hope Opportunities.

**Helya Salarvand**, having moved to California from her home in Iran, has always found herself drawn to the intersection of politics and theater. Coming from a country where artistic censorship is prevalent, the political nature of artistic and theatrical work has always been of vital importance to her. Her work as an actress is rooted in her desire to give voice to women who are absent from mainstream narratives; including but not limited to queer, radical, and feminist Muslim women in the Middle East whose stories remain unheard. Helya is interested in the fight for prison abolition and freedom for Palestine, furthering global feminist conversations and exploring the resilient nature of womanhood through art. Helya was recently seen in the radical interactive augmented reality project *Terminal 3*, which premiered at Tribeca Film Festival in 2018 and is not at the Barbican Centre in London, and is part of the LA Film Festival. Helya joined the Wallis Studio Ensemble in their second season and is eager to continue working with the company because of its commitment to creating original socially conscious theater works. She is drawn to the ensemble's avant-garde work and its authentic storytelling which strives to create a deeper, more layered relationship with its audiences. Helya is the Social Justice Coordinator for the Studio Ensemble.

#### **About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:**

Since opening its doors in October 2013, The Wallis has produced or presented more than 250 dance, theatre, opera, classical music, cinema and family programs to an ever-expanding audience. Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, California, The Wallis brings audiences world-class theater, dance and music, performed by many of the world's most talented and sought-after artists. Featuring eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its notability as the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis offers original and revered works from across the U.S. and around the globe. The mission of The Wallis is to create, present and celebrate unique performing arts events and educational programs that reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community. Nominated for 48 Ovation Awards, seven L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards and the recipient of six architectural awards since opening in 2013.

The Wallis is a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot venue that celebrates the classic and the modern and was designed by Zoltan E. Pali, FAIA, of Studio Pali Fekete architects. The building features the restored, original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places) that serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and houses the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, GRoW at The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education (a gift of Gregory Annenberg Weingarten and Family and the Annenberg Foundation) and the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater. Together, these structures embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: [TheWallis.org](http://TheWallis.org).  
For downloadable photos, please visit: [TheWallis.org/Press](http://TheWallis.org/Press).  
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## **EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

### **WHAT:**

Grow @ The Wallis Presents Presents  
The Wallis Studio Ensemble Production of  
*THE HITCH-HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY*  
By Douglas Adams  
Directed by Madeleine Dahm

### **Credits**

Lighting Design by Bosco Flanagan  
Puppets and Masks by Alexander Sheldon

### **The Company**

Treacey Dory, Schuyler Girion, Ella M. Joseph, Kelvin Morales, Sina Pooresmaeil  
Jo Rodriguez, Helya Salarvand, Alexander Sheldon, Lucia Towers,  
Viva Kanani Obiajulu Wittman, Siera Williams

### **WHEN:**

Thursday, June 6, 8 p.m.  
Friday, June 7, 8 p.m.  
Saturday, June 8, 2:30 and 8 p.m.  
Sunday, June 9, 3 p.m.

### **WHERE:**

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

### **TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:**

\$20 (prices subject to change)  
[TheWallis.org/HitchHiker](http://TheWallis.org/HitchHiker)  
310.746.4000  
Box Office – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Services  
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

### **RUNNING TIME:**

Running time is 90 minutes with no intermission.

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