

THEATER @ THE WALLIS

***Turn Me Loose*, a timely tribute to legendary comedian and activist Dick Gregory starring Joe Morton, launches the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts' 2017/18 Season of significant theater on October 13**

Also on Tap: U.S. Premiere of Kneehigh's *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk*; Vesturport's swashbuckling *The Heart of Robin Hood*; Sheldon Epps' musical scorcher *Blues in the Night*; *Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic*; a one-man telling of *Great Expectations*; the return of Hershey Felder; and World Premiere of The Wallis' production of *Jackie Unveiled*

(Beverly Hills, CA September 6) Theater takes center stage this season as the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (The Wallis)** presents some of the finest work from local, national and international artists. ***Turn Me Loose***, a timely tribute to the legendary comedian and civil rights activist Dick Gregory who passed away last month, kicks off the season on October 13. Featuring Emmy Award-winner Joe Morton in a tour-de-force performance as the American trailblazer, *Turn Me Loose* will open in The Wallis' Lovelace Studio Theater, which will be transformed in part into a comedy club for the production. *Turn Me Loose* will be followed this fall by *Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic* created by filmmaker Hamid Rahmanian who combines his love of traditional Persian art forms with modern technology to create a breathtaking cinematic shadow play for the Bram Goldsmith Theater stage, as well as a classic tale gone rogue, *The Heart of Robin Hood*, created by the imaginative Icelandic theater company Vesturport.

"We are excited by the synergy of international and local artists coming together in our upcoming theatre season," said Paul Crewes, the institution's Artistic Director. "*The Heart of Robin Hood* brings together the vision of acclaimed Icelandic company Vesturport, collaborating with The Wallis and an amazing ensemble of multi-talented L.A.-based performers. As well as presenting theatre works from around the globe, The Wallis also continues to produce work alongside local artists of national and international standing. Sheldon Epps will create *Blues in the Night* with us, a work that was first conceived thirty-five years ago. We are also pleased to have supported the development of Tom Dugan's world premiere play *Jackie Unveiled* that starts its life here in the Lovelace Studio Theatre. We launch our season with the Off-Broadway hit *Turn Me Loose*. We couldn't be more proud to work with Joe Morton on this extraordinary production and carry on Dick Gregory's remarkable and important legacy."

Additionally, The Wallis' commitment to developing lasting relationships with organizations continues in the 2017/18 season with Kneehigh whose *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* recently won the Carol Tambor Best of Edinburgh Award at the 2017 Edinburgh Festival. Produced by Kneehigh and Bristol

Old Vic, *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* was written by Daniel Jamieson, composed by Ian Ross and will be directed by Emma Rice, who returns this season to The Wallis for the third time. Another Kneehigh founding member, David Mynne, takes to the stage in February with a unique one-man retelling of the Charles Dickens classic tale *Great Expectations*. And, from the creative team who brought *Wiesenthal* to The Wallis in 2015, writer Tom Duggan and director Jenny Sullivan return with the world premiere of *Jackie Unveiled*, a one-woman drama that explores the life of one of America's most private public figures.

Rounding out the 2017/18 season next spring will be two musical sensations: *Blues in the Night*, conceived and directed by Sheldon Epps, and *Hershey Felder: Beethoven*, which marks the return of the remarkable actor and pianist. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephen Schwartz, the 2018 ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Workshop, in Partnership with DreamWorks Animation and The Wallis, also returns February 7-10 for the third consecutive year presenting selections from original musical works in progress.

Single tickets are available for all theater performances. Visit TheWallis.org/Theater or 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.

The Wallis also offers three different options to subscribe to the 2017/18 season: the Premium Subscription Series; the Design-Your-Own option; and the new 3-show Flex Pass for \$99, created for busy young professionals—39 and younger—giving the most flexibility to join The Wallis family of subscribers. Learn more at TheWallis.org/Subscribe.

About Theater @ The Wallis:

Theater @ The Wallis Series is sponsored by Montage Beverly Hills.

The Wallis in association with John Legend, Get Lifted Film Company, Mike Jackson, Jackie Judd, The Private Theatre, Eric Falkenstein, Ron Simons and Beth Hubbard present

Joe Morton in

Turn Me Loose

A Play about Activist and Comic Genius Dick Gregory

By Gretchen Law

Directed by John Gould Rubin

October 13 – 29, 2017 | Lovelace Studio Theater

Turn Me Loose is a new comedic drama about the extraordinary and explosive life of the late Dick Gregory—starring Emmy Award-winner and “Scandal” star Joe Morton—that shines a light on the first black comedian to expose white audiences to racial comedy. Gregory confronted bigotry with shockingly disarming humor, marched alongside Martin Luther King, Jr., and deeply influenced comics from Richard Pryor to Chris Rock. He’s been a prolific writer, muckraker, provocateur, and candidate for Mayor of Chicago and for President of the United States. He was singled out by President Obama as one of his all-time favorite comedians. Experience the comic genius of Dick Gregory and the poetic final words of his mentor, slain civil rights activist, Medgar Evers: “Turn Me Loose.” This production is

made possible in part by generous support from The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation. Single ticket prices range from \$60 – \$75.

“One of the most astonishing performances of this or any season.” *Deadline.com*

“When Mr. Morton’s Gregory takes the state, it’s as if a wrecking ball suddenly shattered the back of the theater. He’s sharp, pointed, tearing into material about racism with a fearless bit that still takes your breath away—or would if you weren’t already wheezing from laughter.” *The New York Times*.

The Wallis in collaboration with Mark Amin present

Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic

Conceived, designed and directed by Hamid Rahmanian

In collaboration with Larry Reed and Shadowlight Productions

October 20 – 29, 2017 | Bram Goldsmith Theater

Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic is a visually breathtaking cinematic shadow play for all ages. Inspired by the 10th-century Persian epic Shahnameh (‘The Book of Kings’), the action-packed tale follows star-crossed lovers Zaul and Rudabeh who triumph at the end against all odds. Hamid Rahmanian’s graphics, derived from the visual tradition of the region, are rendered as puppets, costumes, masks, scenography and digital animation, all of which come to life in a “live animation” on a cinema-size screen. Suitable for ages 5+. *Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic* is made possible in part by generous support from Mercedes-Benz of Beverly Hills. The Farhang Foundation is the community sponsor. Single ticket prices range from \$35 – \$125.

The Wallis and Vesturport present

The Heart of Robin Hood

Written by David Farr Directed by Gisli Örn Gardarsson and Selma Björnsdóttir

November 28 – December 17, 2017 | Bram Goldsmith Theater

A classic tale goes rogue in Vesturport’s bold new twist on the world’s most infamous outlaw. Forget everything you ever knew about Robin Hood. In writer David Farr (“The Night Manager”) and acclaimed directors Gisli Örn Gardarsson and Selma Björnsdóttir’s reimagining, Robin and his unmerry gang of cutthroats steal from the rich, but it’s never occurred to them to give anything back to anyone. When wicked Prince John threatens all, bold Marion steps in to protect the poor and transform a thuggish Robin from hood to good. Suitable for ages 10+. Single ticket prices range from \$35 – \$125.

Great Expectations

By Charles Dickens

Adapted by Andrew McPherson

Additional text by Simon Harvey and David Mynne

Directed by Simon Harvey

Performed by David Mynne

February 8 – 11, 2018 | Lovelace Studio Theater

Seven-year-old orphan Pip’s encounter with an escaped convict begins a series of events that will change his life forever. Some of Charles Dickens’ most memorable characters are vividly brought to life in this anarchic and joyful one-man-adaptation of the classic tale. Suitable for ages 10+. Single ticket prices are \$40.

A World Premiere from the creators of *Wiesenthal*

The Wallis production of

Jackie Unveiled

Written by Tom Dugan

Directed by Jenny Sullivan

February 22 – March 11, 2018 | Lovelace Studio Theater

Hailed as an icon of style, grace and strength, famous for her allure and piercing sensuality, much has been written and said about America's most popular First Lady—although the one detail usually omitted is that Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was human. From the creative team of Wiesenthal, award-winning playwright Tom Dugan's newest one-woman drama explores the life of America's most private public figure. *Jackie Unveiled* is made possible by generous support from David C. Bohnett. Single ticket prices range from \$60 – \$75.



Kneehigh and Bristol Old Vic production of

The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk

Written by Daniel Jamieson

Directed by Emma Rice

February 23 – March 11, 2018 | Bram Goldsmith Theater

Emma Rice directs this soaring Kneehigh tale of the life and love of artist Marc Chagal and his amazing wife Bella. Partners in life and on canvas, Marc and Bella Chagall are immortalized as having one of the most romantic marriages of the 20th Century. *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* traces the young couple as they navigate the Pogroms, the Russian Revolution and each other. Following the artistic heights of *Brief Encounter* and *946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips*, Kneehigh and director Emma Rice return to The Wallis with a production that combines the visuals of Chagall's paintings with the music and dance of the Russian Jewish tradition. Single ticket prices range from \$35 – \$125.

"This glorious co-production from Kneehigh and Bristol Old Vic must be one of the most lusciously beautiful shows in Edinburgh this year, a magnificent feast of color and lyricism," *The Scotsman*.

Blues in the Night

Conceived and directed by Sheldon Epps

April 27 – May 20, 2018 | Lovelace Studio Theater

The soul of the blues wails out full and strong in *Blues in the Night*, the scorching, Tony and Olivier Award-nominated musical. The 26 hot and torchy numbers—by icons Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen, and more—tell of the sweet, sexy and sorrowful experiences that three women have with the lying, cheating, snake of a man, who represents the men who do them wrong. The Wallis is honored to have Los Angeles theater luminary Sheldon Epps return to his breakout hit. Staged in the intimate Lovelace Studio Theater, *Blues in the Night* will leave audiences energized, inspired and ready to wail. Single ticket prices range from \$60 – \$75.



Hershey Felder: Beethoven

Written and performed by Hershey Felder

Directed by Joel Zwick

July 26 – August 12, 2018 | Bram Goldsmith Theater

Hershey Felder, a Steinway artist, returns to The Wallis, bringing Ludwig van Beethoven to life through the eyes of a Viennese doctor who spent his boyhood by the Maestro's side. Featuring some of the composer's most famous works including the Moonlight Sonata, Pathetique Sonata, selections from the 5th and 9th Symphonies, Beethoven is a journey through time. Single ticket prices range from \$35 – \$125.

The 2018 ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Workshop in Partnership with DreamWorks Animation and The Wallis

February 7 – 8, 2018 | Bram Goldsmith Theater

The Wallis once again partners with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and DreamWorks Animation to present The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Workshop. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephen Schwartz, the free workshop gives selected composers and lyricist the opportunity to present selections from original musical works in progress for professional critique. Free event. RSVP information forthcoming.



For the complete listing of all Theater @ The Wallis programs visit TheWallis.org/Theater.

About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:

Since opening its doors in October 2013, The Wallis has produced or presented more than 150 dance, theatre, opera, classical music and family programs to an ever-expanding audience. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Paul Crewes and Managing Director Rachel Fine, 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 28 Ovation Awards, four L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards and the recipient of six architectural awards, 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.

The Official Sponsors of The Wallis' 2017/18 Season include: Delta Air Lines (official airline sponsor), Montage Beverly Hills (preferred hotel) and Mercedes-Benz of Beverly Hills (official automotive sponsor).

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

For downloadable photos, please visit TheWallis.org/Press.

Like The Wallis on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com).

TICKET INFORMATION:

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

Tickets: Single tickets: \$35 – \$125 (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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