

**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS,
DEAF WEST THEATRE AND CODY LASSEN PRESENT**

Spring Awakening

Book and Lyrics by STEVEN SATER

Music by DUNCAN SHEIK

Directed by MICHAEL ARDEN

**22 Performances Only! May 21 to June 7, 2015
(Press Opening May 28, 2015)**

(Beverly Hills, CA – January 7, 2015) Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (“The Wallis”), Deaf West Theatre and Cody Lassen present the Tony Award-winning musical *Spring Awakening* for a limited 22-performance engagement Thursday, May 21 to Sunday, June 7, 2015 (press opening May 28) in the Bram Goldsmith Theater. Tickets are now on sale.

The innovative and acclaimed production, which enjoyed a sold-out engagement at downtown L.A.’s Rosenthal Theatre in fall 2014, is performed simultaneously in American Sign Language and spoken English by a cast of 25. *The Los Angeles Times* said that *Spring Awakening* is “an emotional triumph,” and that “*Awakening* awakens us to the dormant possibilities of this musical, with all the goose-bumps and teardrops to prove it.”

Patricia Wolff, Interim Artistic Director of The Wallis says, “We are thrilled to welcome to The Wallis Los Angeles’ own Tony-winning Deaf West Theatre, and to share the creativity and joyousness of this brilliant and utterly original production with a broader audience. In *Spring Awakening*, American Sign Language is not just incorporated but actually choreographed into this emotionally charged musical, creating an organic and beautifully theatrical metaphor, ultimately expanding the theme of adolescent struggle to one that also celebrates the universal human need for communication and connection.”

James D’Asaro, Interim Producing Director of The Wallis noted, “Our role as lead producer for the transfer of *Spring Awakening* to our venue points to two of our presenting tenets – to not only partner with the best and most creative theaters in this country and abroad, but to support in the fullest sense visionary and innovative work created in our own Los Angeles theatre community. It feels especially important that we can show that support, by bringing a show produced on the Los Angeles 99-seat plan to a full production on our main-stage Bram Goldsmith Theater.”

Deaf West Theatre Artistic Director David J. Kurs says, “We are thrilled to be able to bring our patrons another opportunity to see our unique, mesmerizing production of *Spring Awakening*. Bringing this production to a bigger stage allows us to bring our show closer to our original vision, including new scenic and projection design elements.”

Kurs explains that his production illuminates the divide between deaf children and their hearing parents who do not share their world. “The play is all about the fraught relationship between parent and child, about navigating the world without strong guidance. The inability of the characters in *Spring Awakening* to connect to and communicate with their parents is similar to the experience of many deaf children.”

Spring Awakening, with book and lyrics by Steven Sater and music by Duncan Sheik, is directed by Michael Arden and choreographed by Spencer Liff. Arden, who plays Patrick on the FX series “Anger Management,” recently originated the title role in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the La Jolla Playhouse and previously appeared in Deaf West productions of *Big River* on Broadway and *Pippin* at the Mark Taper Forum. Liff is an Emmy-nominee for his work on “So You Think You Can Dance” and choreographed the current Broadway revival of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* starring Neil Patrick Harris.

Based on Frank Wedekind’s controversial 1891 expressionist play of the same name and featuring an electrifying pop/rock score, *Spring Awakening* follows the lives of a group of adolescents as they navigate their journey from adolescence to adulthood in a fusion of morality, sexuality and rock & roll. An extraordinary creative team, including director Arden, choreographer Liff, and musical director Jared Stein (first National Tour of *Spring Awakening* as well as Broadway productions of *American Idiot* and *Hair*) reinvents the groundbreaking musical about lost innocence and the struggles of youth in true Deaf West style.

F. Kathleen Foley said in *The Los Angeles Times*, “It’s hard to enumerate all the ways in which Deaf West’s *Awakening* is so very, very good. The signing in this production does more than simply translate; it ennobles. Spencer Liff’s choreography incorporates signing and movement into perfectly coordinated sequences that seem completely organic to the narrative, while music director Jared Stein exploits the show’s young singers to spine-tingling effect. Yet the real star of the evening is director Michael Arden, whose staging involves a mind-bogglingly intricate meld of the show’s many disparate elements.”

The cast of *Spring Awakening* will be announced at a later time.

Tickets are \$19 - \$99 and are available at www.thewallis.org or by calling 310-746-4000 or in person at The Wallis Ticket Services located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

About The Wallis

Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, California, the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (aka “The Wallis”) brings audiences world-class theater, dance and music, performed by many of the world’s most talented and sought-after artists. With 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 US and around the globe. This fall marks The Wallis’ second season, which also includes its prestigious “Arts & Ideas” series, conversations with guests from the realms of culture, literature and politics. Housed in a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot venue designed by Zoltan E. Pali, FAIA of Studio Pali Fekete architects, The Wallis celebrates the classic and the modern. This is reflected in the juxtaposition of 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, as well as a theater school for young people, and the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater. Together, these two structures embrace the city’s history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for LA-area visitors and residents alike.

About Deaf West Theatre

Deaf West Theatre (DWT) productions are renowned for weaving ASL with spoken English to create a seamless ballet of movement and voice, thereby creating a fully inclusive theatrical experience for deaf, hard of hearing and hearing audiences. *Spring Awakening* marks DWT’s fifth musical production. The company’s *Big River* received Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle and Backstage Garland awards for Best

Musical in its L.A. premiere, then went on to garner a Tony nomination and four Drama Desk Awards when it transferred to Broadway. *Pippin* was produced at the Mark Taper Forum in a co-production with Center Theatre Group, and *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, also a co-production with CTG, was presented at the Kirk Douglas Theatre. DWT's production of *Oliver!* was honored with an Ovation Award for Best Musical. Other award-winning productions from Deaf West include *Cyrano* (a co-production with the Fountain Theatre – Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Production) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Ovation Award for Best Play). In 2005, DWT was selected to receive the Highest Recognition Award by the Secretary of Health and Human Services for its “distinguished contributions to improve and enrich the cultural lives of deaf and hard of hearing actors and theater patrons.” DWT’s next production is *American Buffalo* by David Mamet in February 2015 in association with Cal State Los Angeles.

Calendar Listing for *Spring Awakening*

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

Previews: Thurs, May 21 at 8 pm; Fri, May 22 at 8pm; Sat, May 23 at 3pm and 8 pm;
Sun, May 24 at 2pm and 7 pm; Tues, May 26 at 8pm; Wed. May 27 at 8pm

Press Opening: Thur, May 28

Regular Run: Fri, May 29 to Sun, June 7, 2015

Perf Schedule: Tues through Fri Eves at 8 pm; Sat at 3 pm and 8 pm; Sun at 2 pm and 7 pm

Age: Adult language and mature themes including sexual content. Suggested for mature high school students and up

Tickets: **Prices** – \$19 - \$99
In Person – The Wallis Ticket Services
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210
By Phone – 310-746-4000
Online – www.thewallis.org

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STEVEN SATER (Book and Lyrics) was awarded the 2007 Tony Awards for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score for *Spring Awakening* along with the Drama Desk and Outer Critic Circle Awards for Best Lyrics. With alt-rocker Duncan Sheik, he received the 2007 Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album for *Spring Awakening*. In addition, the two received The Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award, the Outer Critics Circle, the Drama Desk, the Lucille Lortel, New York Drama Critics’ Circle, and Drama League Awards for Best Musical. Steven is the author of numerous plays, including the long-running *Carbondale Dreams*, *Perfect for You*, *Doll* (the Rosenthal Prize, Cincinnati Playhouse); *Umbrage* (Steppenwolf New Play Prize); *A Footnote to the Iliad* (New York Stage and Film, The Miniature Theatre of Chester); *Asylum* (Naked Angels); *Murder at the Gates* (commissioned by Eye of the Storm); *In Search of Lost Wings* (Sanford Meisner Theater) and a re-conceived version of *Shakespeare’s Tempest*, with music by Laurie Anderson, which played London’s Lyric Hammersmith and toured throughout Great Britain. In addition to *Spring Awakening*, Sater has collaborated with Sheik on the NY premiere of *Umbrage* (HERE), *Nero* (The Magic Theatre, workshopped at the New York Shakespeare Festival and New York Stage & Film), and *The Nightingale* (workshopped at the O’Neill Musical Theatre Conference, La Jolla Playhouse, A.C.T., and New York Theater Workshop). He is also hard at work with System of a Down’s Serj Tankian on a musical version of *Prometheus Bound*, to be directed by Diane Paulus at the American Repertory Theater. Sater is the lyricist for Sheik’s critically acclaimed album *Phantom Moon* (Nonesuch), and together the two wrote the songs for Michael Mayer’s feature film *A Home at the End*

of the World (Warner Classics) as well as the independent features *Brother's Shadow* and Mary Stuart Masterson's *The Cake Eaters*. Sater is also co-creator and executive producer, with Paul Reiser, of recent pilots for both NBC and Sony/FX, and has developed two projects for HBO, and another for Showtime (with Reiser). He is also at work, with Jessie Nelson, on a feature film and is creating an original movie musical for producer Larry Mark. In addition, Steven works as a lyricist with various composers in the pop/rock world -- recently writing songs with Burt Bacharach, Johnny Mandel, Andreas Carlsson and William Joseph.

DUNCAN SHEIK (Music) In addition to writing the music for *Spring Awakening* (2007 Tony Awards for "Best Orchestrations" and "Best Original Score", 2008 Grammy Award for "Best Musical Show Album"), Sheik's other theater credits include: *Nero* (Another Golden Rome) (currently in development), *The Nightingale* (currently in development), and *Whisper House* (currently in development). Recorded works include: *Whisper House* (Sony/Victor 2009), *White Limousine* (Rounder 2006), *Daylight* (Atlantic Records 2002), *Phantom Moon* (Nonesuch 2001), *Humming* (Atlantic Records 1998), and *Duncan Sheik* (Grammy Nomination "Best Male Vocal") (Atlantic Records 1996). Film Scores include: *DARE* (2009), *Little Spirit: Christmas in New York* (2008), *Capers* (2007) and *The Cake Eaters* (2007). Producer Credits include: *Holly Brook* (forthcoming CD 2009), *Micah Green* (2008), *Spring Awakening Original Cast Album* (Universal 2007) and *Chris Garneau* (2006).

MICHAEL ARDEN (Director) made his Broadway debut in Deaf West and the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of *Big River*. Directing credits include *La Ronde*, for The Forest of Arden, *For the Record: John Hughes*, both in Los Angeles and NYC, *A Tale of Two Cities* (Associate) on Broadway and various other plays in bedrooms and kitchens. Other theatre credits include; *The Times they are a Changin'*, *Ragtime* (Avery Fisher), *It's Only Life*, *Swimming in the Shallows*, *Ace*, *Juno*, *As You Like It*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Secret Garden*, *Pippen* (Mark Taper Forum) and *Aspects of Love*, directed by Sir Trevor Nunn (Menier Chocolate Factory, London) Film credits include *Source Code*, *Bride Wars*, *The Good Shepherd*, *Over/Under*, *My Eleventh* and *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*. Michael can currently be seen on the series "Anger Management" on F/X and FOX. Other TV credits include: "GCB," "Nurse Jackie," "Royal Pains" "Unforgettable," "Off the Map" "Kings," "The Closer," "The Forgotten," "Bones," "The Return of Jezebel James," "Cashmere Mafia," "Grey's Anatomy" and "NUMB3RS." His concert work includes: Barbra Streisand, Chris Botti, BELOW 54, Feinstein's at the Regency and Joe's Pub. Michael also formed the site-specific theater company The Forest of Arden and their immersive production of *La Ronde* is currently being developed into a feature film. Training: The Julliard School. Michael recently appeared as Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the La Jolla Playhouse.

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