

**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS
“Theater for Young Audiences” 2014-2015 Season**

**Unparalleled Programs from Scotland, the US, France, Germany and England
Premiere at The Wallis**

- ***THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES*** – From Scotland’s Puppet State Theatre Company (Oct. 7-19)
- **DAN ZANES AND FRIENDS** – Grammy-winning American Musical Artist (Oct. 19)
- ***THE QUEEN OF COLORS*** – From France and Germany’s Compagnie Les Voisins (Jan. 9-18)
- ***POTTED POTTER: THE UNAUTHORIZED HARRY EXPERIENCE - A PARODY BY DAN AND JEFF*** – Olivier Award-Nominated *Harry Potter* Parody (Feb. 25-March 1)
- ***LIFEBOAT*** – From Scotland’s Catherine Wheels Theatre Company (March 10-22)

October 1, 2014 (Beverly Hills, CA) – The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (aka “The Wallis”) is proud to unveil five dynamic theatrical experiences as part of its “Theater for Young Audiences” series. The 2014-2015 season includes works from Scotland, the United States, France, Germany and England.

Kicking off the season is ***The Man Who Planted Trees***, based on French author Jean Giono’s 1953 environment-themed classic. The program comes from Puppet State Theatre Company of Scotland and runs October 7-19 (recommended for ages 7 and above).

On October 19 comes the Grammy award-winning **Dan Zanes and Friends**, whose innovative, modern and multicultural music integrates the unique spirit of American, West Indian and English folk music with the inspiration of early soul and rock-and-roll (recommended for audiences of all ages).

Following January 9-18 is ***The Queen of Colors***, based on the renowned children’s book by Jutta Bauer. The program, which makes its West Coast debut at The Wallis, comes from Compagnie Les Voisins from France and Germany (recommended for ages 4-7).

Running February 25-March 1 is ***POTTED POTTER: The Unauthorized Harry Experience – A Parody by Dan and Jeff***. Playing to sold-out houses all over the world, this fantastically funny show takes on the ultimate challenge of condensing all seven *Harry Potter* books (and a real life game of Quidditch) into 70 hilarious minutes. Even if you don’t know the difference between a Horcrux and a Hufflepuff, ***POTTED POTTER*** will make you roar with laughter. This brilliant family entertainment is perfect for ages six to Dumbledore (who is very old indeed).

Winner of the Barclays Stage Award for Best Show for Children and Young People, ***Lifeboat***, from Catherine Wheels Theatre Company of Scotland, plays March 10-22 (last season, The Wallis presented Catherine Wheels' *White* to great acclaim and sold-out audiences). Recommended for ages 9 and up.

The Wallis' Managing Director, Tania Camargo, said, "Time and again, research has shown the positive impact that arts education has on children's academic achievement, social and emotional development, and civic engagement, as well as fostering equitable opportunity. This year, The Wallis is proud to further its commitment to education by providing tickets and transportation to 'Theater for Young Audiences' productions to 6,500 students, many of them from underserved Los Angeles schools and communities. We believe all students deserve to experience world-class performances in theater, dance and music, and are gratified to continue to offer this valuable program."

Patricia Wolff, interim artistic director, said, "We designed 'Theater for Young Audiences' to transcend the traditional definition of 'children's theater' and were dedicated to crafting a season that would be compelling to both young audiences and adults alike. Our first show, 'The Man Who Planted Trees,' imparts a critical environmental message as it entertains, while the Grammy Award-winning Dan Zanes will have everyone who listens enthralled and on their feet. These are just two examples of a rich and joyous season of which we are extremely proud."

PROGRAMMING SYNOPSES

- ***The Man Who Planted Trees*** from Puppet State Theatre Company is a multi-sensory theatrical adaptation of Jean Giono's environmental classic. It tells the inspiring story of a shepherd who, accompanied by his dog, plants a forest, acorn by acorn, and thus transforms a barren wasteland. As much a touching tale as it is a hilarious puppet show, ***The Man Who Planted Trees*** shows the difference one man (and his dog!) can make.

Richard Medrington, who plays the narrator, is the founder of Edinburgh-based Puppet State Theatre Company. After performing his one-man puppet shows for 20 years, he joined forces in 2006 with puppeteer Rick Conte (the voice of the dog), and puppet maker Ailie Cohen. Medrington and Conte have performed this piece at theatres all over the world including New York's Lincoln Center and the Sydney Opera House, as well as in tents, village Halls and festivals large and small.

The Guardian said, "Terrific! ...the best dog puppet ever. Perfect for children and grown-ups." Jason Blake in the *Sydney Morning Herald* said, "The most completely satisfying piece of theater playing in Sydney right now. All the relationships – between man and dog, performer and audience and human and puppet – are beautifully crafted and full of telling detail."

For interactive events during the public performances of *The Man Who Planted Trees*, The Wallis will be collaborating with The Tree People, an environmental nonprofit that unites the power of trees, people and technology to grow a sustainable future for Los Angeles.

- **Dan Zanes** occupies a unique place in American music where sea shanties, English music hall, North American and West Indian folk music, play-party songs, the spirit of early rock-and-roll and soulful originals collide. With his band, **Dan Zanes and Friends**, he has toured the world sharing 21st century social music with enthusiastic crowds of kids and kid sympathizers.

Zanes was a member of the hit 1980's band Del Fuegos ("Don't Run Wild"). In 1994, he released a solo CD, *Cool Down Time*, shortly after which he moved to Brooklyn, New York and released *Rocket Ship Beach* (2000), which became an immediate hit with families around America.

Guest vocalists on Zanes' albums include the Blind Boys of Alabama, Sandra Bernhard, Matthew Broderick, Roseanne Cash, Carol Channing, Sheryl Crow, Philip Glass, Deborah Harry, Kronos Quartet, Aimee Mann, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Lou Reed, Loudon Wainwright III, Bob Weir and children of the South Africa Agape Orphanage. His widely acclaimed music has been featured on *Sesame Street*, Playhouse Disney, Nickelodeon, HBO Family, Hear Music at Starbucks and *Sprout*.

The New York Times says **Dan Zanes and Friends** offers "true children's music, but executed with such sweet (and un-gooey!) humor, casual multiculturalism and shambling groove that you can call it your own." Claims *Rolling Stone*, "Wry, rootsy, real American folk music – songs that twist a little plangency into the sweetness of a melody, songs that feel like life...."

- ***The Queen of Colors*** from Compagnie Les Voisins is based on the children's book by German author Jutta Bauer, and uses ingenious puppetry to weave a simple story about kindness and originality. The Court Painter (accompanied by a Court Musician) creates vivid backdrops for the feisty little puppet queen who ventures into her kingdom to experience the personalities of each color of the rainbow. However, while fun comes in all colors, too much of a good thing can turn into a mucky yucky mess. Full of kaleidoscopic wonder and vivid imagination, ***The Queen of Colors*** is a whimsical story about unleashing creativity and choosing *not* to color within the lines.

Eva Noell and Paul Olbrich, originally of Theater Waidpeicher, founded Erfreuliches TheatErfurt (Pleasant Theater Erfurt) in 2004, which became Compagnie Les Voisins in 2010. They studied puppetry at The Actor's School of Berlin and have been working as puppeteers, puppetry directors, authors and lecturers ever since. They have staged and performed in numerous productions for children and adults, including classics, modern drama, fairy tales and adaptations of contemporary children's books.

Winner of the Children's Jury Award at the International Puppet Theater Festival, Compagnie Les Voisins makes its West Coast debut with a delightful production that weaves music, painting and puppetry that "provides a magnificent, multilayered, multimedia show that educates and entertains," said *The Star Phoenix*.

- ***POTTED POTTER: The Unauthorized Harry Experience – A Parody by Dan and Jeff*** is written and performed by two-time Olivier Award-nominated actors Daniel Clarkson and Jefferson Turner. A Critic's Pick by *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Daily Herald* and *Time Out London*, ***POTTED POTTER*** takes on the ultimate challenge of condensing, or "potting," all seven *Harry Potter* books into 70 madcap minutes, aided only by multiple costume changes, brilliant songs, ridiculous props and a generous helping of Hogwarts magic. The show also invites audiences to engage with a real-life game of Quidditch, but according to Clarkson and Turner's unique set of rules.

"Breathless and... HILARIOUS!" – *The New York Times*. "A fabulously funny parody... will tickle the funny bone of every age group." – *The London Daily Telegraph*. "The single funniest thing I've seen in ages. You're gonna love this show." – *Toronto Star*

- ***Lifeboat***, from Catherine Wheels Theatre Company, tells the extraordinary true tale of Bess Walder and Beth Cummings, two teenage girls who in 1940 set sail on a ship from Liverpool to Canada to escape the relentless bombing and dangers of war-torn Britain. Four days into the journey, their ship, *The City of Benares*, was torpedoed and sank. Bess and Beth spent 19 terrifying hours in the water on an upturned lifeboat through a pounding storm, living to tell their story of survival and friendship.

The New York Times' Lawrence van Gelder said, "The play's high adventure and touching lessons in family, fortitude and friendship are conveyed with exceptional theatrical skill...." *Edinburgh Guide* said, "Catherine Wheels has honored the girls' bravery by saving this story from oblivion in such fine form."

Lifeboat won the Barclays Stage Award for Best Show for Children and Young People. It has been performed at New York's New Victory Theater, been part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the New Zealand International Arts Festival, and was the first production by a Scottish children's theater company to perform at the Sydney Opera House.

Catherine Wheels was formed in 1999 by the director Gill Robertson. It has created award-winning shows such as *Martha* (Best Production Shanghai Festival 2008), *Pobby and Dingan* (TMA UK Award winner) and *White* (Total Theatre UK Award winner, Broadway Drama Desk Award Nominee).

FREE INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

The Wallis will be hosting free interactive workshops before the performances of *The Man Who Planted Trees* and *The Queen of Colors*:

- ***The Man Who Planted Trees* – Workshops October 11, 12, 18 & 19 at 1pm**
Puppet State Theater Company uses puppets (and people) to tell unforgettable stories. In this workshop for kids ages 7 and up, participants will create a character by building a simple puppet and then, using improvisation, bring the puppet to life! This 45-minute interactive workshop will be taught by members of The Wallis' stellar teaching artist team. The workshop takes place in The Wallis' classrooms and all materials will be provided.
- ***The Queen of Colors* – Workshops January 9, 10, 16 & 17 at 1pm**
This 45-minute workshop for kids ages 4-7 is an interactive journey with color that explore such questions as "How does the color orange make you feel?" and "What kind of music is the color blue?" Participants are invited to dive into a magical adventure with light, shadows and color. The workshop takes place in The Wallis' classrooms and all materials will be provided.

Workshops are included in the ticket price but space is limited. Reservations should be made when purchasing tickets. Contact The Wallis Education Department at 310-246-3800 for more information.

TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Family Subscription tickets and single tickets for ***The Man Who Planted Trees*, *Dan Zanes and Friends*, *The Queen of Colors*, *POTTED POTTER: The Unauthorized Harry Experience* and *Lifeboat*** are available by visiting www.thewallis.org, in person at the Box Office at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, and by phone at 310-746-4000.

Puppet State Theatre Company of Scotland's *The Man Who Planted Trees*

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

Performance Schedule: October 11 – 19, 2015
Saturdays at 12:00, 2:30 & 5:00 PM; Sundays at 12:00 & 2:30 PM

Tickets: **Price:** \$25; \$35
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

Dan Zanes and Friends

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

Performances: October 19, 2014 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM

Tickets: **Price:** \$25; \$35
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

Compagnie Les Voisins' *The Queen of Colors*

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

Performance Schedule: January 9 – 18, 2015
Fridays at 6:00 PM; Saturdays at 12:00 PM, 2:30 PM; Sundays at 12:00 & 2:30 PM

Tickets: **Price:** \$25; \$35
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

POTTED POTTER: The Unauthorized Harry Experience

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

Performance Schedule: February 25 – March 1, 2015
Wednesday at 8:00 PM, Thursday at 8:00 PM, Friday at 5:00PM & 8:00 PM
Saturday at 12:00, 4:00 & 8:00 PM, Sunday at 12:00, 3:00 & 7:00 PM

Tickets: **Price:** \$30 - \$79
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

Catherine Wheels Theatre Company's Lifeboat

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

Performance Schedule: March 13 – 22, 2015
Fridays at 6:00 PM; Saturdays at 12:00 & 2:30 PM; Sundays at 12:00 & 2:30 PM

Tickets: **Price:** \$25; \$35
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

ABOUT THE WALLIS

Located in the heart of Beverly Hills, the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** (aka “The Wallis”) opened its doors in October 2013. This fall marks its second season as the first and only performing arts center in Beverly Hills. This new venue transformed a Beverly Hills city block into a vibrant new cultural destination in the heart of Los Angeles with two distinct, elegant buildings: the historic 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (now the Paula Kent Meehan Historic Building) and the new, contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater. Within the treasured Post Office, existing spaces are re-imagined into the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, a theater school for young people, a gift shop (both scheduled to open Fall 2014) and a café. Together these two structures embrace the city’s history and future, creating an arts lover’s dream come true – all within walking distance of some of the finest dining, hotels and shopping in Los Angeles.

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