

**19/20 SEASON**

Wallis Annenberg  
Center for the  
Performing Arts

Press Release

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**Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts  
Announces Cast for  
the U.S. Digital Premiere of  
*Wise Children's Critically Acclaimed Production of  
ROMANTICS ANONYMOUS*  
To be Live Streamed from UK's Bristol Old Vic  
The One-Time-Only Live Streamed Performance  
to Benefit The Wallis  
on  
Saturday, September 26, 2020, 1 pm (PDT)**

(Beverly Hills, CA, September 14, 2020) Wise Children, Bristol Old Vic and Plush Theatricals, in conjunction with the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, announces the cast for Emma Rice's critically acclaimed musical *Romantics Anonymous*, which will be performed live in the U.K. as part of a 'digital tour' that will livestream in the U.S. as a benefit for a collective of theaters across the country, including The Wallis in Beverly Hills, CA, on Saturday, September 26, 2020, 1 pm (PDT). This marks the digital U.S. premiere of the award-winning production, following the cancellation of the launch of its live U.S. premiere at The Wallis earlier this season due to the global pandemic. With book and direction by acclaimed adaptor/director Emma Rice, lyrics by Christopher Dimond and music by Michael Kooman, the show played to rave reviews at Shakespeare's Globe and the Bristol Old Vic. The U.S. livestream is part of a week of performances that sees the show streamed live across the UK and internationally from September 22 -26. The cast and crew have been in quarantine together in the UK and will remain so through the end of the run to ensure their safety and enable them to perform without socially distancing measures.

The cast features **Marc Antolin** (Jean-René), **Carly Bawden** (Angélique), **Me'sha Bryan** (Suzanne/Mimi), **Harry Hepple** (Ludo/Remi), **Laura Jane Matthewson** (Young Woman), **Sandra Marvin** (Magda/Brigitte/Dr Maxim), **Philip Cox** (Father/Pierre/Receptionist), **Gareth Snook** (Mercier/Mumbler/Marini) and **Omari Douglas** (Salesman/Fred). Antolin, an Olivier nominee, last appeared at The Wallis as Marc Chagall in *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk*, described as an "enchanting production" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Angélique is a gifted chocolate maker inhibited by social anxiety and Jean-René is the boss of a failing chocolate factory. When Angélique takes a job in Jean-René's struggling factory, a fragile love affair unfolds. Funny, tender and painfully awkward, *Romantics Anonymous* is a delicious love story about breaking the mold and finding the courage to be happy. *Financial Times* described *Romantics Anonymous* as "a gentle, joyous, melt-in-the-mouth show," *The London Times* said it was, "A sweetly funny, gorgeously tender musical rom-com," and *The Guardian* called it, "a multifaceted gem, chock-full of love, generosity and joy." *Romantics Anonymous* was originally presented at Shakespeare's Globe in 2017 and then remounted by Wise Children and Plush Theatricals in 2020.

Says Rice, "I cannot believe that, in less than two weeks, Wise Children will be performing our beloved *Romantics Anonymous* to an audience – live! The last weeks have been filled with scrupulous planning and careful preparations to ensure the safety of the cast and crew. When we get onto that stage, under the lights, for a few short hours, we will forget our fears and remember other essentials in life; imagination, celebration, story, community and song. Hand in virtual hand with our audience, we will feel the joy and exhilaration of a collective experience, that sweet, delicious, much missed treat!"

Tom Morris, Artistic Director of the Bristol Old Vic added, "Tickets for the streamed performances of *Romantics Anonymous* are flying out the door. Wise Children have shown once again that they are the company leading where the boldest theatre experimenters, artists and audiences alike, are sure to follow."

The Wallis' Artistic Director Paul Crewes says, "Emma Rice's gift for storytelling and her groundbreaking, uplifting and socially relevant work has made a significant impact on contemporary theatre. *Romantics Anonymous*, her latest production, is truly a delicious love story with wonderful music and lyrics by Kooman and Dimond. It will certainly leave you with a smile on your face."

Tickets for the live streamed broadcast of *Romantics Anonymous* are available per household for viewing on Smart TV, computer, smartphone or tablet. Patrons will receive a link and password which will enable them to view the live stream. Tickets purchased or before September 19 are 15 British pounds (\$19.65 + \$1.31 processing fee = \$20.96 US\*, based on current exchange rates); after September 20 they are 20 British pounds (\$26.20 + \$1.31 processing fee = \$27.51 US\*. Ticket sales are being handled by the Ticket Co. in UK, so prices are in British pounds, but credit cards will be charged in US dollars. Some exchange rates may apply. For tickets and information, visit [TheWallis.org/Romantics](http://TheWallis.org/Romantics) or call 310.746.4000 (Tue.-Fri. 9:30 am – 2:30 pm).

\* based on current exchange rates

#### **About the Artists:**

**EMMA RICE** (Director, Playwright), Artistic Director of Wise Children, adapted and directed the company's first two productions, Angela Carter's *Wise Children* and Enid Blyton's *Malory Towers*. As Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe, her credits include *Romantics Anonymous*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Little Matchgirl (and Other Happier Tales)*. As joint Artistic Director of Kneehigh, credits include *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk*, *Tristan & Yseult*, *946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips*, *The Wild Bride*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Wooden Frock*, *The Bacchae*, *Cymbeline* (in association with RSC), *A Matter of Life and Death* (in association with National Theatre), *Rapunzel* (in association with Battersea Arts Centre); *Brief Encounter* (in association with David Pugh and Dafydd Rogers Productions); *Don John* (in association with the RSC and Bristol Old Vic); *Wah! Wah! Girls* (in association with Sadler's Wells and Theatre Royal Stratford East for World Stages) and *Steptoe and Son*.

**Michael Kooman** (Music) and **Christopher Dimond** (Lyrics) are a stage and screen writing team. They currently serve as songwriters for "Vampirina," an animated musical TV series on the Disney Channel and Disney Junior, reaching over 100 million viewers in 115 countries. Their theatre credits include *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes* (Village Theater); *Orphie & The Book of Heroes* (The Kennedy Center); *The Enlightenment of Percival Von*

*Schmootz* (Adirondack Theatre Festival); *Judge Jackie: Disorder in the Court* (Pittsburgh CLO); *Dani Girl* (Exit; Pursued by a Bear); *Golden Gate* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Homemade Fusion* (Ambassadors Theatre/Edinburgh Festival Fringe) and *Junior Claus* (Orlando Repertory Theatre). Kooman and Dimond have received the Fred Ebb Award, a Jonathan Larson Grant, the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award, the Samuel French Next Step Award, the Burton Lane Award and the Harold Adamson Award.

**MARC ANTOLIN** (Jean-René) has a vast array of theatre credits. His previous theatre credits include *Camelot* (Watermill Theatre), *Hedda Gabler* (Sherman Theatre), *Cry Havoc* (Park Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors* – for which he received an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actor in a Musical, *Into the Woods*, *Hello Dolly!* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare's Globe), *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk* (Kneehigh), *Peter Pan* (National Theatre), *The Trial* (Young Vic), *Taken at Midnight* (Theatre Royal Haymarket/ Chichester Festival Theatre), *Amadeus*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *The Music Man* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *From Here to Eternity* (Shaftsbury Theatre), *Matilda* (RSC/Cambridge Theatre), *Billy Liar* (UK tour) and *Imagine This* (New London Theatre). His television credits include *Keeping Faith*; and for film his credits include *London Road* and *Love Actually*.

**CARLY BAWDEN** (Angélique) has appeared on stage in *Ghost Quartet* (Boulevard Theatre), *Sylvia*, *Natives* (The Old Vic), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare's Globe), *wonder.land* (National Theatre), *McQueen* (Haymarket Theatre), *Assassins*, *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *Dead Dog in a Suitcase*, *Tristan & Yseult* (Kneehigh), *My Fair Lady* (Sheffield Theatres), *The Lion*, *The Witch and The Wardrobe* (The Threesixty Theatre), *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (Kneehigh/Curve Leicester /Gielgud Theatre), *Sleeping Beauty* (Wakefield Theatre), *Vice* (Arcola Theatre), *Whistle Down the Wind* (UK tour), *Evita* (UK tour - Nominated for TMA Award for Best Supporting Actress 2009); and for television, *Call the Midwife* and *Close to the Enemy*.

**ME'SHA BRYAN** (Suzanne/Mimi) has appeared in *Caroline, or Change* (Playhouse Theatre/Hampstead Theatre/Chichester Festival Theatre), *As You Like It*, *Porgy and Bess* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Desire Under the Elms* (Sheffield Theatres), *Sister Act – A Divine Musical Comedy* (National Concert Hall, Dublin), *The Lion King* (UK tour), *Been So Long* (Young Vic), *Moziz The Musical* (Hackney Empire), *Ragtime* (Piccadilly Theatre), *The Wizard of Oz* (Birmingham Rep) and *The Little Shop of Horrors* (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Her television credits include *Doctors*, *Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators*. Her film credits include *The Witches* 2021.

**PHILIP COX** (Father/Pierre/Receptionist) has had theatre roles in *Romantics Anonymous*, *Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare's Globe), *The Mousetrap* (St Martin's Theatre), *Cinderella* (Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds), *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Iford Arts), *Robin Hood*, *Mother Goose* (Watford Palace Theatre), *The Go-Between* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Oliver!* (Madinat Theatre, Dubai), *Aspects of Love* (UK tour), *Hard Times* (Theatre Royal Haymarket), *Doctor* (National Theatre), *Sweeney Todd* (Theatr Clwyd/UK tour), *Paradise* (Nottingham Playhouse) and *Les Misérables* (Palace Theatre). For television, his credits include *The Armada*; and for film *Oklahoma!*

**OMARI DOUGLAS** (Salesman/Fred/Swing) trained at the Arts Educations Schools, London, graduating in 2015. His theater credits include *Rush* (King's Head Theater); *Peter Pan* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Five Guys Named Moe* (Marble Arch Theatre); Kneehigh's *Tristan & Yseult* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Life* (Southwark Playhouse); *Annie Get Your Gun* (Sheffield Crucible); *High Society* and *Wise Children* (Old Vic); and *Hairspray* (Leicester Curve). He recently completed filming one of the leads in Russell T Davies' new five-part TV series *Boys for Red Productions*.

**HARRY HEPPLER** (Ludo/Loizeau/Remi) has been seen on stage in *Rutherford and Son*, *Follies*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Burnt by the Sun* (National Theatre), *Hot Mess* and *The Daughter-in-Law* (Arcola Theatre), *Wonderland* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Into the Woods* and *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory), *The Saints* (Nuffield Southampton Theatres), *The Lightning Child* and *Macbeth* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Privates on Parade* (Noël Coward Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Ragtime* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Donmar Warehouse), *Jump* (UK tour), *Been So Long* (Young Vic), *I Caught Crabs in Walberswick* (Bush Theatre,) and *Alaska* (Royal Court Theatre). His television credits include *Moving On*, *Boy Meets Girl*, *Hustle* and *Misfits*; and for film, *Peterloo*, *Stan and Ollie* and *Criminal*.

**SANDRA MARVIN** (Magda/Brigitte (mother)/Dr Maxim) has extensive theatre credits that include *Waitress* (Adelphi Theatre), *Committee* and *City of Angels* (Donmar Warehouse), *Stepping Out* (Vaudeville Theatre), *Showboat* (Sheffield Theatres/New London Theatre), *Chicago* (UK tour/Curve Theatre), *Hairspray* (Shaftsbury Theatre/UK tour), *A Fairytale of New York*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Ragtime* (Regent's Park Open Air

Theatre), *Cool Hands Luke* (Aldwych Theatre), *The New Yorkers* (Sadler's Wells Theatre), *Porgy and Bess* (Savoy Theatre), *Momo* (Greenwich Theatre) and *A Rake's Progress* (Royal Opera House). Her television credits include as series regular Jessie Grant in *Emmerdale*.

**LAURA JANE MATHEWSON** (Young Woman/Self-help Tape/ Swing has appeared in *Orpheus Descending* (Theatr Clywd/Menier Chocolate Factory), *Harriet Martineau Dreams of Dancing* (Live Theatre), *The World Goes 'Round* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Beyond The Fence* (Arts Theatre), *Dogfight* (Southwark Playhouse – Winner of Evening Standard Award 2014 for Best Emerging Talent), *Daisy Pulls It Off* (Hever Festival), and *After The Tone* (Bridewell Theatre). Her television credits include *Press*, *Vera* and *Dark Angel*.

**GARETH SNOOK** (Mercier/Mumbler/Marini) has appeared on stage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Wise Children* (Old Vic/UK tour), *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *A Pacifists Guide to the War on Cancer* (National Theatre), *Casa Valentina* (Southwark Playhouse), *Company* (Donmar Warehouse/Albery Theatre), *Assassins* (Noël Coward Theatre/Donmar Warehouse), *Made in Dagenham* and *Sunset Boulevard* (Adelphi Theatre), *The Phantom of the Opera* (Her Majesty's Theatre), *Aspects of Love* (Prince of Wales Theatre), *Les Miserables* (Palace Theatre), *Cats* (New London Theatre), *The Rink* (Cambridge Theatre), *The Hired Man* (London Astoria), *Guys and Dolls* (Prince of Wales Theatre), *Girlfriends* (Playhouse Theatre), *Closer Than Ever* (Jermyn Street Theatre/Criterion Theatre/Vaudeville Theatre), *My Fair Lady* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane), *The Full Monty* and *Martin Guerre* (UK tours). His television credits include *That Uncertain Feeling*, *Ten Glorious Years*, *Company* and *French and Saunders*; and for film, *Paddington 2*, and *Les Miserables*.

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

The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 275 dance, theater, opera, classical music, cinema and family programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as “au courant” (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, “If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis.” Its programming has been nominated for 57 Ovation Awards and seven L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is led by Chairman of the Board Michael Nemeroff, Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer Rachel Fine and Artistic Director Paul Crewes.

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:**

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Presents the live streamed broadcast of

The Wise Children, Bristol Old Vic and Plush Theatricals Production of

#### ***ROMANTICS ANONYMOUS***

Book by Emma Rice

Lyrics by Christopher Dimond, Music by Michael Kooman

Directed by Emma Rice

Based on the Film *Les Émotifs Anonymes* written by Jean-Pierre Améris and Philippe Blasband

**CAST:**

**Jean-René** Marc Antolin

**Angélique** Carly Bawden

**Salesman/Fred/Swing** Omari Douglas

**Suzanne/Mimi** Me'sha Bryan

**Ludo/Remi** Harry Hepple

**Magda/Brigitte/Dr. Maxim** Sandra Marvin

**Young Woman/Self-Help Tape/Swing** Laura Jane Matthewson

**Father/Pierre/Receptionist** Philip Cox

**Mercier/Mumbler/Marini** Gareth Snook

**WHEN:**

Saturday, September 26, 1 pm (PDT)

**TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:**

TheWallis.org/Romantics

310.746.4000

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