

**The Wallis and Deaf West Theatre Join Forces Once Again**

***EDWARD ALBEE'S AT HOME AT THE ZOO***

**New Staging Marks First Major Los Angeles Albee Production Since the  
2016 Passing of the Legendary American Playwright**

**Coy Middlebrook directs a cast that includes deaf and hearing actors featuring  
Troy Kotsur (*Spring Awakening*), Amber Zion,  
Russell Harvard (*Spring Awakening*, "Fargo")  
and Tyrone Giordano (*Big River*, *The Family Stone*)**

**March 7 – 26, 2017; Opening Night Set for March 10**

(Beverly Hills, CA February 13) Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Deaf West Theatre (DWT), the performing arts organizations behind the Tony Award-nominated and Ovation Award-winning revival of *Spring Awakening*, reunite to bring multiple Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright ***Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*** to life in an innovative and new production. *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo* begins previews on March 7 and will open in the Lovelace Studio Theater at The Wallis on Friday, March 10. It will run through March 26. This production is made possible by the generous support of Meeghan and Michael Nemeroff.

***Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*** combines Albee's groundbreaking 1959 short play *The Zoo Story* with his acclaimed prequel *Homelife* written in 2004. Together these short plays form ***Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo***, the complete story of publishing executive Peter, his wife Ann, and Jerry, the volatile stranger Peter meets in the park. The Wallis' Artistic Associate Coy Middlebrook revisits his celebrated 2007 Deaf West Theatre production of *The Zoo Story*, with the new addition of *Homelife*. The cast includes deaf and hearing actors including Troy Kotsur as Peter and Jake Eberle as the voice of Peter, as well as Amber Zion as Ann and Paige Lindsey White as the voice of Ann. Russell Harvard will play the role of Jerry from March 7 – 15; Tyrone Giordano will play the role of Jerry from March 16-26, and Jeff Alan-Lee will voice the role of Jerry throughout the run.

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Deaf West Theatre after the great success of *Spring Awakening*," said Paul Crewes, The Wallis' Artistic Director. "Edward Albee was one of the great American playwrights, and this particular piece explores ongoing themes across his own career, combining two master works—*The Zoo Story* and *Homelife*—that really bookend Albee's life. This collaboration between The Wallis and Deaf West Theatre will be a powerful and engaging theatrical experience for all."

“The success that came from *Spring Awakening* has renewed our vigor in educating the world at large about our language and our culture while also advancing the appreciation of sign language theater,” said Deaf West Theatre’s Artistic Director DJ Kurs. “It’s the projects like *Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo* that excite me the most. We are not only adapting one of the classic works of the American stage but also performing it before an audience that, more than ever, is unified in an understanding and appreciation of what deaf actors bring to the material.”

### **About Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo**

Originally titled *Peter & Jerry*, *Edward Albee’s At Home at the Zoo* combines Albee’s classic short play *The Zoo Story* (1959) with its prequel, *Homelife* (2004). The play begins with *Homelife*, and offers a revealing look at Peter and Ann’s arid marriage, their missed attempts to communicate and the loneliness within their shared life. The tension escalates in the next act, *The Zoo Story*. While reading on a Central Park bench, a stranger walks up to Peter and declares that he has “been to the zoo!” The man, Jerry, begins to tell tale after tale, probing deep into Peter’s life and attempting to take the bench for himself.

According to Albee himself, combining the two works into a two-act play was very simple. He said *The Zoo Story* had “always had been (a two-act play); I just hadn’t told myself. When I wrote *The Zoo Story* in 1958, it was my first play, so to speak. Oh, I’d made a few attempts—including an embarrassing two-act play in rhymed couplets—but nothing pleased me. No, I must be fair—it was junk, all of it.

“*The Zoo Story* seemed to be a much better piece—in fact, the first I felt had any individuality and merit. It would seem I was right. It has gone on to have—at this writing—49 years of frequent performances and general acceptance.

“And...I thought it was fine, though it nagged me just a bit that it seemed to be not quite a two-character play—Jerry being so much longer a role—but more a one-and-a-half-character one. But the play “worked,” so why worry?

“Six years ago, however, I said to myself, ‘here’s a first act here somewhere which will flesh out Peter fully and make the subsequent balance better.’

“Almost before I knew it, *Homelife* fell from my mind to the page...*intact*. There was the Peter I had always known—a full three-dimensional person and—wow!—here was Ann, his wife, whom I must have imagined deep down, forty-some years ago, but hadn’t brought to consciousness.”

When reviewing the newly combined work in 2007, *The New York Times* theater critic Ben Brantley said “what makes (*At Home at the Zoo*) such an essential and heartening experience is the chance it affords to compare the dramatis of then and now...there are telling differences in inflection and timber between these creations of a man in his 20’s and his 70’s. But there is no mistaking that they

are products of one enduring and consistent voice, a voice unparalleled in American theater for its surgical elegance in exploring the animal in humanity.”

*Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo (Zoo Story)* is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Single tickets are now available for \$40 – \$75. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [TheWallis.org](http://TheWallis.org), call 310.746.4000, or stop by in person at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Services located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Ticket prices subject to change.

**About Coy Middlebrook (Director):**

Coy Middlebrook re-visits his direction of Deaf West Theatre's render of Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* and this time around in a co-production with The Wallis and with Albee's prequel *Homelife*. Directing credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* (Ford's Theatre), the world premiere of *Nobody's Perfect* (The Kennedy Center), the NY premieres of Tennessee Williams' *Spring Storm* (Lobo Theatre) and Lee Blessing's *The Roads That Lead Here* (Epic Repertory), *Orphans* (Lobo Theatre), *Wooden Nickels* and *Race Music* (The Actors Studio), *Into The Woods*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *HAIR (CCLO)* and the Los Angeles sci-fi musical, *It Came From Beyond* (LA Ovation Award nominee for Best New Musical). He directed *Baseball Swing* and *The Trumpet of the Swan* for The Wallis' inaugural season and joined as Artistic Associate that following summer. Associate Directing credits includes: Deaf West Theatre's 2004 Tony Award honored *Big River* (LA, DC, Tokyo, Broadway, US Tour), *Bonnie and Clyde* (Broadway, La Jolla Playhouse, Asolo Rep), *Brooklyn The Musical* (Broadway), *Bells Are Ringing* (Broadway) and Disney's *High School Musical On Stage* (US/Australia/UK). He is co-creator and director of the world premiere of *Summer Of Love* for Germany's Freilichtspiele where *Summer Of Love* is the most successful show in its 100 year history with over 80,000 people having attended so far. Coy is a member of the Actors Studio. MFA in Directing from New School University.

**About the At Home at the Zoo cast:**

**Tyrone Giordano** (Jerry, *performances March 16-26*) is best known for his work on stage and screen, both as an actor and ASL translator. Tyrone led the 2004 Tony-honored Deaf West Theatre musical, *Big River*, as Huckleberry Finn in all four incarnations of the production, earning a nomination for the 2004 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actor in a Musical. He also shared the title role of *Pippin* with the Wallis's current artist-in-residence, Michael Arden, at the Mark Taper Forum. Television and film: *The Family Stone*, *A Lot Like Love*, *The Next Three Days* and "CSI." ASL translation work includes the critically-acclaimed *Cyrano* at the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles and *Tribes* at the Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. He currently gets his artistic jollies as an ensemble member with dog & pony dc, which devises theater with audience integration in mind.

**Russell Harvard** (Jerry, *performances March 7-15*) is a veteran of the stage, and most recently starred in Open Circle Theatre's groundbreaking *The Who's Tommy*. Russell also performed in the critically acclaimed Deaf West Broadway revival of *Spring Awakening*. In 2012, he made his off-Broadway debut in the play *Tribes*, earning a Theatre World award and receiving nominations for Drama League Outer Critics and Lucille Lortel awards. He is most recognized for his work as HW Ailman in the 2008 Oscar nominated film *There Will Be Blood* (dir. Paul Thomas Anderson). Russell was a series regular on the multiple Emmy and Golden Globe nominated "Fargo" on FX. He also starred as Matt Hammill, the first

deaf wrestler to win a National Collegiate Wrestling Championship, in "The Hammer." Russell has recurred on ABC Family's "Switched at Birth" and has had guest star roles on "Odd Mom Out," "Fringe" and "CSI: NY."

**Troy Kotsur** (Peter) has been acting and directing on television, film and stage for over 20 years. Deaf since birth, he was raised in Mesa, AZ. His television guest starring roles include "Criminal Minds," "Scrubs," "CSI: NY" and "Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye" in a recurring role that became a fan favorite. In film, he has had notable supporting roles in *The Number 23* alongside Jim Carrey, *Universal Signs* and *Father's Day Breakfast*. Last year Troy starred in *Wild Prairie Rose*, which has been selected by several major festivals. As a director, he recently completed *No Ordinary Hero*, starring Marlee Matlin and Deanne Bray, and is attached to direct upcoming indie film, *Deaf Ghost*. Troy's stage credits include a successful Tony Award-nominated run of *Big River* on Broadway. He has also performed at the Mark Taper Forum, and in 2015 LA Drama Critics Circle Award-nominated *Spring Awakening*, and many other major productions.

**Amber Zion** (Ann) is a professional actor with experience both on stage and screen, and has the ability to give unparalleled life to a diverse range of characters. She has always had a passion for acting since the age of five. Her passion led her to New York, where she made her professional debut off Broadway in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Amber moved to Los Angeles to continue pursuing her acting career. Her talent quickly landed a guest starring role on CBS's "CSI: NY" in the episode "Silent Night." She also was in national commercials for Kay Jeweler's Christmas campaign. Amber continued performing in theater with Deaf West Theatre, gaining much acclaim for her role as Lea in Wendy Kesselman's *My Sister in This House*. She also had great success on stage in adaptation of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* as Pinocchio. Amber has continued to hone her craft in independent films.

**Jeff Alan-Lee** (Voice of Jerry) Recent credits: *The Suitcase* (Echo Theater Company), the L.A. hit *Assassins*, *Reset*, *Detective Partner Hero Villain* and *Exit the King*. Favorite roles include: *Auto da Fe* (also in Edinburgh and Ireland), *Frankie and Johnny in the Claire de Lune*, *Hello and Goodbye* and *The Boys Next Door*. Early credits: *Huck and Jim* (directed by Broadway legend Joshua Logan), *Snoopy* (with Andrea McArdle), *Losing It* (directed by Andy Cadiff), as well as many regional and stock theater credits throughout the country. Film and TV includes "As the World Turns," "Could It Be a Miracle?" *No Big Deal* (with Kevin Dillon) and *The Beniker Gang* (starring with Andrew McCarthy). Jeff is a NYU graduate, former NY and LA Lee Strasberg faculty member and the Founder and Artistic Director of The Young Actor's Studio, which is the foremost acting training program for young actors in Los Angeles.

**Jake Eberle** (Voice of Peter) Recent acting work was with acclaimed company Theatre Movement Bazaar at Boston Court in *The Treatment* and at 24<sup>th</sup> St. Theatre in *Model Behavior*. In addition, he produced and wrote a series of short films for a project called MATCH with Colaborator.com. Most of his recent time has been spent in the voiceover world where you may have heard him in commercials for clients like Boeing, Norfolk Southern Railroad and Joseph A. Bank, among many others. In animation, his voice is heard on shows like "Voltron" for Dreamworks or "Sinbad" for Netflix. For the past 25 years, he's also had a career in post-production as a sound editor/designer for film and TV.

**Paige Lindsey White** (Voice of Ann) Stage: Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* (Pasadena Playhouse); Macon Hill in *Abundance* (South Coast Rep); Brooke Wyeth in *Other Desert Cities* (Arizona Theatre Company & Indiana Rep); Catherine in *Rapture Blister Burn* (San Diego Rep); *Trying* (Ovation Nomination), *Ghost-Writer* and *The Heir Apparent* (International City Theatre); *The Children* and *R II* (Theatre @ Boston

Court); *Walking the Tightrope* (LA Drama Critics' Circle Award Lead Performance Winner, Ovation Nomination, 24<sup>th</sup> St. Theatre), Ivo Van Hove's *A View From the Bridge* (Ahmanson & Kennedy Center, u/s); *Fallen Angels* (Ensemble Theatre Santa Barbara); *Wounded* (Los Angeles Theatre Ensemble); *Mutual Philanthropy* (Ensemble Studio Theatre LA). International Tour: *Trial of the Catonsville Nine* (The Actors' Gang). TV: "Shameless," "Hampton DeVille," "Days of Our Lives" and "The Flipside."

#### **About the Production Team:**

The creative team includes: Karyl Newman (set & costume designer), Julien Elstob (lighting designer), Tom Jones (sound designer), Jennifer Brienen (production stage manager), Kelsey Gilchrist (assistant stage manager), Linda Bove (ASL master), Jessica Frank (assistant ASL master) and Justin Jackerson (assistant ASL master).

#### **About Edward Albee:**

Edward Albee was born on March 12, 1928, and began writing plays 30 years later. His plays include *The Zoo Story* (1959), *The Death of Bessie Smith* (1959), *The Sandbox* (1959), *The American Dream* (1960), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1961-62, Tony Award), *Tiny Alice* (1964), *A Delicate Balance* (1966, Pulitzer Prize; 1996, Tony Award), *All Over* (1971), *Seascape* (1974, Pulitzer Prize), *Listening* (1975), *Counting the Ways* (1975), *the Lady from Dubuque* (1977-78), *The Man Who Had Three Arms* (1981), *Finding the Sun* (1982), *Marriage Play* (1986-87), *Three Tall Women* (1991, Pulitzer Prize), *Fragments* (1993), *The Play About the Baby* (1997), *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?* (2000, 2002 Tony Award), *Occupant* (2001), *At Home at the Zoo* (Act 1, *Homelife*. Act 2, *The Zoo Story*.) (2004) and *Me, Myself & I* (2008). Mr. Albee was awarded the Gold Medal in Drama from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1980. In 1996 he received the Kennedy Center Honors and the National Medal of Arts. In 2005, he was awarded a special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement. He died September 16, 2016.

#### **About Deaf West Theatre:**

Deaf West Theatre Company, Inc., (DWT) was founded in 1991 to improve and enrich the cultural lives of deaf and hard of hearing individuals who live in the Los Angeles area. Recognized as the premier sign language theater in the United States, DWT consistently sets the standard of innovation for inclusive theatrical experiences of the highest quality for deaf and hearing audiences. DWT productions feature deaf and hearing actors working together to present stories in a seamless ballet of movement, with both American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken English.

DWT's groundbreaking adaptation of *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was first performed at DWT's intimate 99-seat theater, then in co-production with Center Theatre Group at the Mark Taper Forum before moving to Broadway's American Airlines Theater at the Roundabout where it earned two Tony nominations and a Tony Honor for Excellence. It went on to tour nationally, including performances at the Ford's Theatre in Washington D.C., and internationally at the Tokyo's Aoyama Theatre. In 2014-15, DWT's adaptation of *Spring Awakening* was performed at Inner City Arts and at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts before it moved to the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on Broadway, garnering three Tony nominations and performing on the broadcast of the Tony Awards.

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).

Like The Wallis on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

**TICKET INFORMATION:**

**What:** *Edward Albee's At Home at the Zoo*  
Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts  
Lovelace Studio Theater  
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

**When:** March 7-26, 2017  
March 7-9, 2017 (Previews)  
March 10, 2017 (Opening Night)  
Performance Schedule: Tues – Fri at 8pm; Sat 2pm & 8pm; Sun 2pm & 7pm

**Tickets:** Single tickets: \$40 – \$75 (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

**Press Contacts:**

Sarah Jarvis, The Wallis Communications Manager  
310.246.3800 | [sjarvis@thewallis.org](mailto:sjarvis@thewallis.org)

Gary W. Murphy, The Wallis Public Relations Consultant  
310.914.0178 | [gmurphypr@gmail.com](mailto:gmurphypr@gmail.com)