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The Tallest Slide at Sea on *Harmony of the Seas* Delivers Top Thrill Factor

Thrill Engineer and University Professor Brendan Walker Concludes Royal Caribbean International Will Astound Adrenaline Junkies

MIAMI, May 23, 2016 – Royal Caribbean International’s *Harmony of the Seas*, the world’s largest cruise ship, claims another record as home to the tallest slide and most exhilarating adventure at sea: Ultimate Abyss. The hair-raising, 10-story slide is “possibly the most thrilling manmade adventure at sea,” according to thrill engineer Professor Brendan Walker, Thrill Laboratory, U.K., director. Enlisted to identify the level of “thrill,” a sudden feeling of excitement and pleasure, triggered by the Ultimate Abyss, Walker measured physical reactions of testers brave enough to accept the challenge. Walker also compared the latest innovation by the global cruise line known for many firsts-at-sea to other Royal Caribbean signatures, the FlowRider surf simulator and RockWall, to compare the varying levels of thrill available onboard *Harmony of the Seas*. Ultimate Abyss scored a *Walker Thrill Factor* of 45.35 percent as compared to the FlowRider (36.15 percent) and RockWall (34.59 percent). Considering it is highly unlikely that a single experience could be designed to score a *Walker Thrill Factor* of 100 percent, these scores are understood to be at the highend of thrill attractions; therefore, making *Harmony* the ultimate cruise ship for adrenaline junkies.

“Royal Caribbean's legacy of imagination and innovation is reflected in all of the ships we build and *Harmony of the Seas* is no exception. It's not about building the largest cruise ships in the world, it's about creating the most amazing collection of unexpected experiences and activities at sea," said Michael Bayley, President and CEO, Royal Caribbean International. "Having experienced it myself, I have no doubt that the Ultimate Abyss will be absolutely thrilling for our guests but it is really gratifying to get confirmation from such a thrill expert as Professor Brendan Walker. The exciting multisensory experience that this tallest slide at sea offers, combined with other Royal Caribbean firsts such as the Flowrider and the RockWall, confirms that *Harmony* isn't just the largest cruise ship in the world but also the ultimate adventure at sea."

The two-day test conducted during the final days of construction at the shipyard observed 10 individuals who had never experienced Ultimate Abyss and only limited exposure to the two other activities. Demonstrating the effect that Ultimate Abyss has on the body, Walker’s data revealed that the slide experience caused heartbeats to increase by an average of 44 beats per minute compared to the resting rate for a 30-year-old adult of average fitness. Overall, Ultimate Abyss caused facial expressions of extreme pleasure to be activated more than 40 percent of the time, with the sympathetic nervous system – the body’s primary process in stimulating the fight-or-flight response – becoming 15.74 percent more active than when at rest. Riders on the Ultimate Abyss experienced a complex and unique set of sensations at each of the five stages of thrill, all culminating in a euphoric crescendo to guarantee the ultimate rider satisfaction.

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Having tested the riders' capabilities on the gutsiest of rides, Walker offered his stamp of approval that Ultimate Abyss not only unleashed the five stages of thrill but was also determined to be the most thrilling attraction onboard *Harmony of the Seas*. Walker believes that even though not all rides are the same, they need to deliver thrill across the following five separate stages in order to be classified as thrilling:

- **Imagining:** When the rider consciously entertains the idea of riding. The stronger the rider can imagine riding the ride, the stronger the moments of thrill
- **Approaching:** As the thought of riding becomes a reality, the moments of thrill created through imagination become intensified in a "countdown to thrill"
- **Committing:** The rider passes through a stage of no return such as being strapped into a ride or being urged on by friends. At this stage, the only way to proceed is forward
- **Doing:** The ride begins. If it's thrilling, the ride will provide intense novel sensations that will immerse the rider and transport them into a state of flow
- **Celebrating:** The ride ends. The rider experiences an afterglow as adrenaline and dopamine - the results of arousal and pleasure – continue to course through their brains

Walker commented: "Across the three rides we tested, the combination of thrill levels achieved at each stage caused riders to experience an overwhelming sense of elation - and *Harmony of the Seas'* Ultimate Abyss recorded the highest combined thrill score across all stages. The initial arrival experience – riders climb the stairs leading up to the slide platform, walk over the clear platform suspended above a more than 90-foot drop – sets the tone for the experience, and when combined with the multisensory experience during the slide, Ultimate Abyss has a hugely thrilling effect. This combination of a natural phenomenon – the feeling of being small in comparison to the endless ocean view – coupled with a manmade experience (i.e. a stainless steel slide) is defining a new genre of thrill that is setting the standard for future attractions as people demand more extreme and expertly crafted thrill-seeking adventures."

Harmony of the Seas is the world's largest cruise ship with a bold and unexpected lineup of experiences found nowhere else on land or sea. An architectural marvel, *Harmony of the Seas* combines the distinct seven-neighborhood concept that Royal Caribbean's Oasis class of ships are known for with some of the most modern and groundbreaking amenities. Innovative features include The Ultimate Abyss, a thrilling slide 10 stories high – the tallest at sea, robot bartenders, virtual balconies with real-time views of the destination for interior rooms, and VOOM – the fastest internet at sea – so that guests can stay connected, stream their favorite entertainment and share their adventures.

Unparalleled entertainment in the air, in water and on ice will keep guests dazzled with exciting high-diving, acrobatic and aquatic performances in the deepest pool at sea at the iconic AquaTheater; an ice show extravaganza and Broadway's hit musical *Grease*.

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Imaginative dining in the ship's 20 venues include the widest variety of cuisine from Wonderland, a whimsical culinary adventure for the senses, to the popular Jamie's Italian by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver.

Harmony of the Seas will span 16 guest decks, encompass 226,963 gross registered tons, carry 5,479 guests at double occupancy, and feature 2,747 staterooms.

Harmony of the Seas will homeport in Barcelona, Spain and embark on the first of 34 seven-night sailings in the western Mediterranean on June 7, exploring some of Europe's most beautiful locations. In November 2016, *Harmony* will arrive at her homeport of Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale, FL., from where she will offer seven-night eastern and western Caribbean sailings. The newest member of the fleet will join sister-ships *Oasis of the Seas* and *Allure of the Seas*, sailing from Port Canaveral and Port Everglades respectively, on the east coast of Florida.

For more information about *Harmony of the Seas*, please visit RoyalCaribbeanPressCenter.com/harmony.

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About Professor Brendan Walker

Professor Brendan Walker and his Thrill Laboratory (a collective of scientists, artists, designers, engineer and technologists dedicated to the practical pursuit of creating, producing and examining new forms of thrilling under Walker's direction) have been perfecting the art of engineering and quantifying thrill over the past ten years. Walker continues to refine his theories through the design, manufacture and study of his own experimental thrill rides. These most recently include *Neurosis: World's First Brain Controlled Thrill Ride*, which was revealed in 2015 to international acclaim. These experimental rides inform Walker's consultancy on the development of commercial attractions at parks owned by Disney and Merlin Entertainment (the world's number one and two themed entertainment providers) amongst others, as well as working with other international experiential brands such as Nissan and Durex. Walker also applies his expertise to survey and study existing rides and experiences.

Walker's trademark experiments and Thrill Engineer character regularly appear in the press and media both in the UK (including BBC, Channel 4, The Guardian and The Times) and internationally (including Discovery International). His science and art-inspired work has featured in festivals and shows as diverse as MoMA New York, Tate Modern, and London's Science Museum. Brendan was the senior tutor in Design Interactions at the Royal College of Art, and currently holds posts as Principal Research Fellow in Computer Science at the University of Nottingham, and Professor of Creative Industries at Middlesex University, and regularly publishes in academic journals.

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