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Alley Theatre Announces Programming for the 2022 Alley All New Festival

The Alley presents bold new plays by Monet Hurst-Mendoza, Don X. Nguyen, Academy-Award® nominee Kemp Powers, ShaWanna Renee Rivon, and Kirk Lynn's completion of a lost Thornton Wilder play

HOUSTON, TX – The Alley Theatre announces the line-up for the 2022 Alley All New Festival, June 16 - June 26, 2022. The Festival will feature five new plays including readings, workshop performances, and an early draft preview. Festival playwrights include Monet Hurst-Mendoza, Austin-based Kirk Lynn completing a Thornton Wilder work, Kemp Powers, Don X. Nguyen, and Alley commissioned artist and Houstonian ShaWanna Renee Rivon. Special packages are available for the Festival and include priority seating, access to the Festival lounge and a complimentary drink between performances. Packages can be booked beginning May 1 at alleytheatre.org/allnew or by calling Guest Services at 713-220-5700. Advance reservations for individual events are recommended and can be made beginning May 15 at alleytheatre.org. All readings and workshop performances are free and open to the public.

Alley All New is comprised of a variety of public and in-house programs designed to support playwrights and cater to the needs of each new project. Through this initiative, the Alley produces world premieres, commissions new plays, and supports playwrights year-round. The audience is a crucial part of the development of any new work.

Liz Frankel, Director of New Work at the Alley, said “I am thrilled that the Alley All New Festival returns with a roar, featuring new work in every stage of development. The line-up includes workshop performances, readings, an early draft preview, as well as opportunities to see two world premiere productions produced as part of the 75th Anniversary Season. We are proud to spotlight the work of Texas writers alongside talent from coast to coast all using their singular voices to tell a wildly diverse array of stories.”

“In many ways it is a testament to the success of Alley All New and the tireless efforts of Liz Frankel, Director of New Work, and literary manager Lily Wolff that this Festival is linked to two world premiere productions on our main stages in a season that featured four world premieres,” shares Artistic Director Rob Melrose. “When I arrived at the Alley three years ago, what I noticed right away about Liz and Lily was how good they are at supporting new plays at every point in their process: from a writer’s very first ideas about a project, before a word is written, to a world premiere production on the Hubbard stage or in the Neuhaus. Now with our Alley All New commissions, our Alley Playwrights Residency at Ucross, Alley All New readings, the Alley All New Festival, and so many world premiere productions, our new play development process is as robust and full as ever.”

The Festival offers audiences a first look at plays that may appear in full productions at the Alley, as well as at theatres around the country. This season, the Alley produced *72 miles to go...* by Hillary Bettis, *Amerikin* by Chisa Hutchinson, and *High School Play: A Nostalgia Fest* by Vichet Chum, all of which were developed in past Alley All New Festivals. And this year's Festival includes the workshop of *Torera* which has already been announced as a world premiere production in Alley's 2022-23 season.

Since the festival began in 2016, 19 of the 31 plays presented have gone on to world premiere productions, eight at the Alley and 11 elsewhere. The festival has been represented by at least one play Off-Broadway each season for the past three seasons, with plays developed at the Alley also produced in Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Washington DC, Seattle, and Dallas among many other locations. Alley All New Festival plays have received both the Arnold L. Weissberger Award and the Obie Award for Best New American Play.

All workshop performances, readings and the early draft preview are free and open to the public. Alley All New programming is recommended for mature audiences. Each performance will be followed by a post-show Alley Chat with the artists led by a member of the artistic staff.

All updates and schedules will be available at alleytheatre.org/allnew.

Full casting will be announced at a later date. The festival will feature the Alley Resident Acting Company in various roles.

2022 ALLEY ALL NEW FESTIVAL

WORKSHOP PERFORMANCES

TORERA

By Monet Hurst-Mendoza

Workshop director Katherine M. Carter

Artistic consultant Tatiana Pandiani

Bullfighting in Yucatán, Mexico is a world nearly exclusive to men—yet for Elena Ramírez, it is her life's ambition. With the help of her best friend, a matador's son, Elena begins secretly training to compete with the greatest. But when she discovers that her seemingly inherent talent can beat even the most accomplished toreros, this young woman must choose between accepting society's limits or breaking boundaries. A world premiere play written by a stunning new voice in the American theatre, *Torera* tells a poignant story about becoming your truest self by proudly stepping into the ring. (Production announced for the 2022-23 season, directed by Tatiana Pandiani)

Workshop Performances: June 16 (7:30 p.m.), June 18 & 26 (2:30 p.m.), June 24 (4:00p.m.)

Thornton Wilder's

THE EMPORIUM

Completed by Kirk Lynn

Directed by Rob Melrose

Kirk Lynn, Artistic Director of Austin's Rude Mechs theatre collective, collaborates with the late Thornton Wilder, three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Our Town*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and *The Matchmaker*, on Wilder's last, lost, full-length play. In the era of the great department stores, a young man from an orphanage is adopted by a farmer but runs away to the big city only to discover... all this is only a

metaphor, and maybe life is really an elaborate job interview to determine if we even qualify to apply for our own existence.

Workshop Performances: June 17 (8:00 p.m.), June 19 & 26 (7:30 p.m.), June 25 (2:30 p.m.)

READINGS

CHRISTA MCAULIFFE'S EYES WERE BLUE

By Kemp Powers

Directed by TBA

Bernard and Steven Gentry are twins living starkly different lives. One passes as white and the other lives as a Black man. Steven spent his childhood trying to fit in and is now a successful attorney. Bernard was a star student who dreamed of being an astronaut, but his prospects now are as dismal as the Space Shuttle Challenger that once inspired him. From their childhood in 1980's New York City to a Minnesota courtroom in 2006, *Christa McAuliffe's Eyes Were Blue* tells a tale of two brothers which shines a unique light on the nature of privilege in America. A bold new play by Oscar-nominee Kemp Powers, best known for his play and film *One Night in Miami* and Disney/Pixar's *Soul*.

Reading: June 25 (11:30 am)

THE WORLD IS NOT SILENT

By Don X. Nguyen

Directed by Marya Mazor

Don is a good son. He learns American Sign Language when his father, Dau, starts to lose his hearing. He moves back home to Nebraska to care for him, only to find the communication gap between them wider than ever. Dau has been learning Vietnamese Sign Language -- not ASL. And Don doesn't even speak Vietnamese! Luckily, a surprise Thanksgiving guest, bearing Dau's beloved honey ham, may be just the bridge they need. But the closer Don gets to signing with his father, the further he seems from understanding him. After all, learning a language means little if you're not willing to speak from the heart. With Dau's hearing fading fast, can father and son find a way to communicate? From the author of *The Supreme Leader* (Alley All New Festival 2019), *The World is Not Silent* is a multilingual play that explores how language simultaneously divides and unites us.

Reading: June 26 [\[GU25\]](#) (10:00 a.m.)

EARLY DRAFT PREVIEW

Join us for excerpts and an early glimpse of an Alley Theatre commission developed at the Alley at Ucross Residency by Houston playwright ShaWanna Renee Rivon. Her new play follows Arnett Cobb, the internationally acclaimed "wild man of the tenor sax," a jazz musician who grew up in Houston and influenced some of the most world-renowned entertainers and musicians as he helped carve a jazz sound that was uniquely from Texas.

Event: June 25 (10:00 a.m.)

**All readings are for mature audiences. [\[GU27\]](#) [\[LF28\]](#) [\[CA29\]](#) Dates subject to change. Check alleytheatre.org for updates and the current schedule.*

ALLEY 75th ANNIVERSARY SEASON WORLD PREMIERE ADD-ONS

In addition to the Festival workshops and readings, guests may choose to add on tickets to the following world premieres that run concurrently:

BORN WITH TEETH

By Liz Duffy Adams

Directed by Rob Melrose

Encore Performances June 18-19 and June 24-25

A post-show Alley Chat with Liz Duffy Adams will be held on June 25

An aging authoritarian ruler, a violent police state, a restless polarized people seething with paranoia: it's a dangerous time for poets. Two of them—the great Kit Marlowe and the up-and-comer Will Shakespeare—meet in the back room of a pub to collaborate on a history play cycle, navigate the perils of art under a totalitarian regime, and flirt like young men with everything to lose. One of them may well be the death of the other. Developed in the Alley All New Reading Series.

NOIR

Music by Duncan Sheik

Book by Kyle Jarrow

Lyrics by Kyle Jarrow and Duncan Sheik

Choreographed by Karla Puno Garcia

Directed by Darko Tresnjak

Noir is produced by special arrangement with Hunter Arnold

A heartbroken man never leaves his apartment, finding his only solace in the music on the radio. Then a couple moves in next door. Eavesdropping becomes his new entertainment - and his new obsession. Soon he finds himself drawn into a web of love, lies, deceit, and danger. Inspired by early radio plays and classic film noir, this new musical is written by Broadway artists Duncan Sheik (*Spring Awakening*) and Kyle Jarrow (*SpongeBob SquarePants*) and directed by Darko Tresnjak (*Anastasia, A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*).

WEEKEND PACKAGES

Weekend packages for June 24-26 including early entry seating at all presentations, a complimentary drink between shows, Festival lounge access with coffee and snack service and free Wi-Fi, and discounts to area restaurants go on sale May 1 at alleytheatre.org/allnew. Packages cost \$40 with optional add-on discounted tickets for both *Born with Teeth* and *Noir*. Free single ticket reservations can be made beginning May 15, 2022.

PRESS

All workshop performances and readings at the Alley All New Festival are works in progress and not available for review.

Press photos from previous seasons of Alley All New Festival can be found at

2019 and 2020 - <https://www.alleytheatre.org/press>

2018 - <https://www.alleytheatre.org/press/alley-all-new-festival-eighteen>

ALLEY ALL NEW

Alley All New is comprised of a variety of public and in-house programs designed to support playwrights and cater to the needs of each new project. Through this initiative, the Alley produces world premieres, commissions new plays, and supports playwrights year-round. The Alley All New Festival made its debut in 2016. Join the Alley Insider Group by emailing alleyinsider@alleytheatre.org and learn more about new work in development and be the first to hear about Alley All New events. More information and updates can be found on alleytheatre.org/allnew, on Facebook and #AlleyAllNew.

SPONSORS: *Alley All New* is sponsored by Associate Producer Rutger Beelaerts. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2021-22 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

CONNECT WITH US: #Alley75, @alleytheatre, #AlleyAllNew

ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE:

The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading nonprofit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company led by Artistic Director Rob Melrose and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. The Alley is committed to developing and producing theatre that is as diverse as the Houston community. The Theatre produces up to 16 plays and nearly 500 performances each season, ranging from the best current work and re-invigorated classic plays to new plays by contemporary writers. Home to a full-time resident company of actors, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline—actors, directors, designers, composers, playwrights—who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

The Alley is comprised of two state-of-the-art theatres: the 774-seat Hubbard Theatre and the 296-seat Neuhaus Theatre. The Alley reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance, education, and community engagement programs. Its audience enrichment programs include pre-show and post-performance talks, events, and workshops for audience members of all ages.

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