

ALLEY THEATRE

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Alley Theatre's Alley Transported Production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will tour Houston in January 2023

This will be FREE for select schools and community locations

HOUSTON TX - The Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre announces a new community engagement program, Alley Transported, and its production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare and directed by Alley Theatre's Artistic Director Rob Melrose.

Alley Transported is an "up-close and personal" experience of live, professional theatre designed to reach all generations of Houstonians in every one of our neighborhoods. Professional productions of Shakespeare and community-relevant plays will take place in schools, recreation centers, libraries, and other community venues. Alley Transported gives the community an intimate, heartfelt, visceral, and transporting experience of live performance and fosters a shared sense of community.

Taking place on a 14-foot by 14-foot playing area with many Alley Resident Acting Company members, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a feast for the eyes, heart, and funny bone. Viewers are led from an elegant but earthbound palace into a magical forest where some of the inhabitants may not be bound by anything at all. It's a world where even the fools are enchanting. The audience is a part of the wacky action in this abridged version of Shakespeare's text.

Building off of strong community ties developed through Alley Theatre's Alley in Residence and El Zócalo programs, Alley Transported will be performed in schools and community centers across the Greater Houston area. Partners include select middle and high schools in Pearland ISD, Katy ISD, and Spring ISD, as well as BakerRipley, Houston Community College, and the Spring Branch Family Development Center, with audiences spanning eighth grade to Senior Citizens.

"I'm so excited to be directing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Alley's newest program: Alley Transported," said Alley Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**. "Alley Transported brings our work out of our theatre building downtown and into communities throughout Houston through schools, libraries, and community centers. I've created work through similar programs in New York and San Diego and find it to be truly life-changing both for the people who see the play as well as those making it. Seeing this level of professional theatre in such an intimate setting is really powerful. Our production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* leans into the world of magical realism and has been deeply influenced by Gabriel García Márquez's novel *100 Years of Solitude*. It is not Shakespeare in Elizabethan ruffles and pumpkin pants. It is Shakespeare's magic meeting the magic of one of the greatest modern novels of all time."

"We have pulled out all the stops," shares Alley Director of Education & Community Engagement **Mary Sutton**. "It's exciting to see a whole new accessible program come alive within our shops and rehearsal rooms, getting ready to launch out into the community. Our professional actors and designers have really responded to the challenge of bringing top-notch work to folks who don't normally get an opportunity to see live theatre, especially professional work so up-close and intimate."

The cast of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* includes Alley's Resident Acting Company members **Elizabeth Bunch** as Titania/Hippolyta, **Dylan Godwin** as Demetrius/Snug/Cobweb, **Chris Hutchison** as Ageus/Peter Quince, **Melissa Molano** as Hermia/Robin Starveling/Fairy/Peaseblossom, **David Rainey** as Oberon/Theseus, and **Christopher Salazar** as Bottom.

Rounding out the cast are **Christine Friale** as Puck/Philostrate, **Amanda Martinez** as Helena/Snout/Wall/Moth, and **Luis Quintero** as Lysander/Francis/Thisby/Mustardseed.

The creative team of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* includes Scenic & Puppet Designer Afsaneh Aayani, Costume Designer Trish Rigdon, Composer & Music Director Alex Navarro, Choreographer Lydia Hance, Fight Director & Intimacy Specialist Adam Noble, Assistant Director Laura Moreno, Stage Manager Rachel Dooley-Harris, and Assistant Stage Manager Ryan Barrett.

SPONSORS: Alley Transported is part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. Alley Theatre is supported by the 2022-23 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of Alley Theatre and Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites Downtown Houston, the official hotels of Alley Theatre.

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ABOUT SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

The National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest presents Shakespeare in American Communities. Alley Theatre is one of 40 professional theater companies across the nation selected to perform a Shakespeare play with a professional team of actors for middle- and high-schools and conduct related educational activities for students. In addition, the company was one of ten organization selected to engage youths within the juvenile justice system with the works of Shakespeare through theater education programs.

ABOUT ALLEY THEATRE:

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 Alley produces up to 11 plays and nearly 400 performances each season, ranging from the best current work and classic plays to new plays by contemporary writers. Home to a full-time resident company of actors and expert artisans in all theatre crafts, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline – actors, directors, designers, composer, playwrights – who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

Alley Theatre performs at the Meredith J. Long Theatre Center which 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.

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