

ALLEY THEATRE

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Caroline Austin, PR and Communications Manager, carolinea@alleytheatre.org, 713.315.3335

Alley Theatre Announces Its 2023-24 Season

The Season Features Classic Works, World Premiere Plays, One World Premiere Musical and Lots of Laughter

HOUSTON, TX – Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre and Artistic Director Rob Melrose announces the 2023-24 season which includes classic works, world premiere plays, one world premiere musical, a murder mystery, and lots of laughter.

"Our 2023-2024 is designed to welcome people to the theatre," shares Alley Theatre Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**. "We are offering a wide variety of plays: comedies, family dramas, musicals, and more. There is something for everyone but if you see them all then you won't risk missing the play that changes your life! All in all, we have five world premieres as well as classic works from authors such as Anton Chekhov, Thornton Wilder, Charlotte Brönte, Agatha Christie, and Charles Dickens."

"It's time to get back to the theatre! So many of us have gotten in the habit of settling for whatever is streaming from our couch, but we are missing out on the human interactions, the community, the comradery, the laughing and breathing together that you only get in a theatre with other people. We hope you join us for the season, but most of all, we hope you subscribe and become part of the Alley family. I hope to see you next season!"

Alley Theatre's 77th Season will launch with the Summer Chills production of Agatha Christie's ***The Murder of Roger Ackroyd***, adapted for the stage by **Mark Shanahan** and directed by **Mark Shanahan**. Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* runs **July 21 – August 27, 2023** in the Hubbard Theatre.

Next, is the heartwarming play ***American Mariachi*** by **José Cruz González**, which runs **September 22 – October 22, 2023** in the Hubbard Theatre. Infused with mariachi music, *American Mariachi* is directed by **KJ Sanchez** (*Quixote Nuevo*).

Little Comedies, a collection of one-act comedies by **Anton Chekhov**, translated by Tony Award® winner **Richard Nelson, Richard Pevear, and Larissa Volokhonsky**, runs **October 6 – October 29, 2023** in the Neuhaus Theatre. This Alley Theatre Commission is directed by **Richard Nelson**.

Based on the photo memoir of the same name by Larry Sultan, ***Pictures from Home*** by **Sharr White**, and directed by Alley Theatre Artistic Director Rob Melrose, and runs from **January 19 – February 11, 2024** in the Hubbard Theatre.

The side-splitting comedy, ***The Nerd***, will grace Alley's Hubbard Theatre. Written by **Larry Shue** and directed by Associate Producer & Casting Director **Brandon Weinbrenner**, *The Nerd* runs **February 23 – March 17, 2024**.

Part of the Alley All New Festival in 2022, ***The World is Not Silent*** by **Don X. Nguyen** is directed by **Marya Mazor**. This moving story runs **March 22 – April 14, 2024** in the Neuhaus Theatre.

ALLEY THEATRE

Adapted by **Elizabeth Williamson** from the beloved classic novel by **Charlotte Brontë**, *Jane Eyre* runs **April 12 – May 5, 2024** in the Hubbard Theatre. Eleanor Holdridge (Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me A Soprano*) directs.

Next, the world premiere of Thornton Wilder's *The Emporium*, completed by **Kirk Lynn** and directed by Alley Artistic Director **Rob Melrose** runs **May 10 – June 2, 2024**, in the Neuhaus Theatre. The play was part of the 2022 Alley All New Festival.

Closing out the season is *Ella* featuring music from the Ella Fitzgerald songbook. This world premiere musical by **Anna Deavere Smith** is directed by **Philip Wm. McKinley** and runs **May 31 – June 23, 2024** in the Hubbard Theatre. *Ella* is produced by special arrangement with Steve J. Scarduzio.

Anna Deavere Smith said, "Composers wanted Ella Fitzgerald to sing their songs because listening to her, they knew how their songs were supposed to be sung. A jazz singer, a scat singer, she also famously both sang and defined the American song book. To say she had humble beginnings is a profound understatement. She sang America through some of its most discordant times. She was America's love song. She was an American miracle."

The Alley's holiday production includes the hit new adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, adapted from the Dickens novella and directed by Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**. *A Christmas Carol* runs **November 16 – December 30, 2023**.

2023-24 Season

Summer Chills

Agatha Christie's

THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD

Adapted for the stage by

Mark Shanahan

Directed by Mark Shanahan

World Premiere

July 21 – August 27, 2023 in the Hubbard Theatre

One of Agatha Christie's best-known novels and voted the best crime novel ever by the British Crime Writers' Association is turned into this murderous mystery for the stage. This twisty whodunit features extraordinary characters who hold secrets about blackmail and murder that only the detective Hercule Poirot can solve in the all-new adaptation.

The cast of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* includes Alley Theatre's Resident Acting Company members **Elizabeth Bunch** as Caroline Sheppard, **Dylan Godwin** as Ralph Paton, **Shawn Hamilton** as Roger Ackroyd, **Chris Hutchison** as Major Hector Blunt, **Melissa Molano** as Flora Ackroyd, **Melissa Pritchett** as Miss Helen Russell, **David Rainey** as Inspector Raglan, **Christopher Salazar** as Dr. James Sheppard, and **Todd Waite** as Parker. The Resident Acting Company will be joined by Susan Koozin as Gertrude Ackroyd and David Sinaiko as Hercule Poirot.

ALLEY THEATRE

The power of music to celebrate, honor, and heal

AMERICAN MARIACHI

By José Cruz González

Directed by KJ Sanchez

September 22 – October 22, 2023 in the Hubbard Theatre

Family, love, and tradition are at the core of this heartwarming play about the freedom to dream big. It's the 1970's and girls can't be mariachis ... or can they? As Lucha and her spunky cousin hunt for bandmates, dodge disapproving relatives, and bring Mom along for the ride. This play is infused with vibrant, infectious live mariachi music and reminds us how music and love can make the impossible come true.

LITTLE COMEDIES

by Anton Chekhov

Translated by Richard Nelson, Richard Pevear, and Larissa Volokhonsky

Directed by Richard Nelson

Alley Theatre Commission and World Premiere

October 6 – October 29, 2023 in the Neuhaus Theatre

What do *Swan Song*, *The Bear*, *The Proposal*, *The Wedding*, and *The Harmfulness of Tobacco* have in common? They are all one-act comedies written by Anton Chekhov that will be performed by the Alley's Resident Acting Company and directed by the Tony-Award® winning playwright and legendary director Richard Nelson. Acclaimed Russian literature translators Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky collaborated with Nelson and have put together a new English translation which will make for an extraordinary evening in the theatre.

The cast of *Little Comedies* includes Alley's Resident Acting Company members as listed: *The Bear* will include **Melissa Molano**, **Christopher Salazar**, and **Todd Waite**. *The Proposal* will include **Elizabeth Bunch**, **Chris Hutchinson** and **David Rainey**. *The Wedding* will include **Elizabeth Bunch**, **Dylan Godwin**, **Shawn Hamilton**, **Chris Hutchison**, **Melissa Molano**, **Melissa Pritchett**, **David Rainey**, **Christopher Salazar**, and **Todd Waite**. *The Harmfulness of Tobacco* will include **David Rainey**. *Swan Song* will include **Melissa Pritchett** and **Todd Waite**.

Holiday Classic

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

From the novella by Charles Dickens

Adapted and Directed by Rob Melrose

November 16 – December 30, 2023 in the Hubbard Theatre

The Alley's hit new adaptation with colorful Victorian costumes, special effects, exciting magic, lively dancing, stunning sets, and just the right blend of Christmas Carols. It is a dazzling Christmas feast with the beloved story of Ebenezer Scrooge and his miraculous transformation.

The cast of *A Christmas Carol* includes Alley's Resident Acting Company members **Elizabeth Bunch** as The Ghost of Christmas Past, **Dylan Godwin** as Bob Cratchit, **Shawn Hamilton** as The Ghost of Christmas Present, **Chris Hutchison** as Jacob Marley, **Melissa Molano** as Belle, **Melissa Pritchett** as Mrs. Cratchit, **David Rainey** as Ebenezer Scrooge, **Christopher Salazar** as Fred, and **Todd Waite** as Mr. Fezziwig.

ALLEY THEATRE

PICTURES FROM HOME

By Sharr White

Directed by Rob Melrose

Based on the Photo Memoir "Pictures from Home" by Larry Sultan

January 19 – February 11, 2024 in the Hubbard Theatre

This heartfelt memory play was part of the 2020 Alley All New Festival and is currently a hit running on Broadway. Set in the late 1980's, photographer Larry Sultan turns the lens on his parents to ferret out the truths beneath their home movies. This deeply intimate and comic portrait of a mother, a father, and the son explores the question; who gets to depict the family story?

The cast of *Pictures from Home* includes Alley's Resident Company member **Todd Waite** as Irving Sultan.

THE NERD

By Larry Shue

Directed by Brandon Weinbrenner

February 23 – March 17, 2024 in the Hubbard Theatre

An up-and-coming architect invites into his home the hero who saved his life... who also happens to be a total stranger! The visitor is a hopeless 'nerd' who outstays his welcome leading to one riotous incident after another. From a time before cell phones, this side-splitting comedy by Larry Shue (*The Foreigner*) is one of the funniest plays ever written.

The cast of *The Nerd* includes Alley's Resident Acting Company members **Chris Hutchison** as Rick, **Shawn Hamilton** as Axel, **Melissa Molano** as Clelia, **Melissa Pritchett** as Tansy, **David Rainey** as Wargrave, and **Christopher Salazar** as Willum.

THE WORLD IS NOT SILENT

By Don X. Nguyen

Directed by Marya Mazor

World Premiere

March 22 – April 14, 2024 in the Neuhaus Theatre

This moving story explores the relationship between a son, Don, and his estranged father as they try and reconnect in the wake of his father's recent hearing loss. Don learns that the key to communication and connection is speaking from the heart as the play explores how language at the same time divides and unites us. This play was part of Alley All New Festival in 2022.

Classic Novel on Stage

JANE EYRE

By Elizabeth Williamson

Adapted from the novel by Charlotte Brontë

Directed Eleanor Holdridge

April 12 – May 5, 2024 in the Hubbard Theatre

Adapted by Elizabeth Williamson from the beloved classic novel by Charlotte Brontë, this play follows the heroine who struggles for freedom and fulfillment on her own terms. She survives a childhood as an

ALLEY THEATRE

orphan and confronts poverty, injustice, and the discovery of a bitter betrayal, before taking the ultimate decision to follow her heart.

The cast of *Jane Eyre* includes Alley's Resident Acting Company **Dylan Godwin** as Mr Mason/ John Reed/ St John Rivers, **Chris Hutchison** as Edward Fairfax Rochester, **Melissa Molano** as Jane Eyre, **Melissa Pritchett** as Grace Poole/ Mary Ingram/ Bessie, and **Todd Waite** as John/ Colonel Dent/ Mr Cater/ Priest.

World premiere of Thornton Wilder's unfinished full-length play

Thornton Wilder's

THE EMPORIUM

Completed by Kirk Lynn

Directed by Rob Melrose

May 10 – June 2, 2024 in the Neuhaus Theatre

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. Maybe life is really an elaborate job interview to determine if we even qualify for our own existence. This play adapted from Pulitzer Prize-winner Thornton Wilder's unfinished script was part of Alley All New Festival in 2022.

The cast of Thornton Wilder's *The Emporium* includes Alley's Resident Acting Company members **Elizabeth Bunch** as Miss Coley, **Shawn Hamilton** as Mr. Benjamin, **David Rainey** as Mr. Foster, and **Christopher Salazar** as John.

World Premiere Musical

ELLA

by Anna Deavere Smith

Directed by Philip Wm. McKinley

By special arrangement with Steve J. Scarduzio

May 31 – June 23, 2024

Featuring music from the American songbook defined by Ella Fitzgerald, this new musical written by Anna Deavere Smith celebrates the "First Lady of Song" and her rise to household superstar. With unique diction, pure sound, phrasing, and rhythm, her scat-style and improvisations transformed American music. Ella became a beloved singer who set records and broke boundaries by taking life, with all its adversity, and turning it into beautiful songs.

Full casting and creative teams for all productions will be announced at a later date.

ALLEY THEATRE

PHOTOS: [Click here.](#)

SEASON SPONSOR: The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2023-24 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre and Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites Downtown Houston, the official hotels of the Alley Theatre.

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 10 plays and 350 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, composers, 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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