

# ALLEY THEATRE

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## **Alley Theatre Announces the Cast & Creative Team of *Torera***

***Monet Hurst-Mendoza's poignant story makes its world premiere after  
development in 2022 Alley All New Festival***

HOUSTON TX - The Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre announces the cast and creative team of the world premiere of *Torera* by **Monet Hurst-Mendoza** and directed by **Tatiana Pandiani** runs **May 12 – June 4, 2023**, in the Neuhaus Theatre. The play was developed in the 2022 Alley All New Festival.

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 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.

"I am so excited about our world premiere production of *Torera* by Monet-Hurst Mendoza," shares Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**. "I got to know the play quite well last season through its workshop in our Alley All New Festival. The play and its exploration of the world of bullfighting and a young woman's desire to have her opportunity in the ring is so exhilarating and moving. I went over the designs for the production, and they are gorgeous. The costumes are sumptuous, and the set puts Alley audiences right in the bullfighting ring. I can't wait for Alley audiences to see it."

"I am delighted to become part of the Houston theatre scene this spring and spend the next few weeks playing at The Alley!" shares playwright **Monet Hurst-Mendoza**. "*Torera* is a sharp yet tender coming-of-age story—examining identity, class, gender, and societal expectations through the beautiful complexity of one Mexican household. The show is about breaking barriers, chasing your wildest dreams, the prices we pay, and the roads not taken. I hope it will inspire and entertain, as well as encourage audiences to engage with (and maybe even challenge) any pre-conceived notions they may have about the art of bullfighting."

The cast of *Torera* includes **Jesse Castellanos** as Tanok Cárdenas, **Jacqueline Guillén** as Elena Maria Ramírez, **Eliud Garcia Kauffman** as Don Rafael Cárdenas, and **Maria Elena Ramirez** as Pastora Ramírez. Rounding out the cast includes ensemble members **José José Arrieta Cuesta** and **Carolina Ornelas**.

The creative team of *Torera* includes Scenic Designer **Marcelo Martínez García**, Costume Designer **Rodrigo Muñoz**, Lighting Designer **Yuki Nakase Link**, Sound Designer **Yezminne Zepeda**, Projection Designer **Victoria Beuray Sagady**, Stage Manager **Emily Bohannon**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Laura Gutierrez**.

**PRESS NIGHT:** Wednesday, May 17 at 7:30pm. Invitations will be sent later.

**SPONSORS:** Alley Theatre is supported by the 2022-23 Season sponsors United Airlines, the official airline of Alley Theatre, and Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites Downtown Houston, the official hotel of Alley Theatre.

**SPANISH TRANSLATION PERFORMANCES:** *Torera* will have simultaneous Spanish translation on May 19, May 27 matinee, and June 3. Alley Theatre continues to welcome Spanish-speaking audience to enjoy the production of *Torera*. Translated performances are funded by the Bank of America ACTivate Awards, a Theatre Forward grants program, which seeks to foster and accelerate theatres' efforts to become more equitable, diverse, and inclusive of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals and groups.

**TICKETS:** Tickets to *Torera* are now on sale and start at \$51. Discounted tickets are available for military, seniors, and any student or educator, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for designated performances. The first five performances are preview performances, and these performances allow audiences to be a part of the development process of shows. Tickets can be ordered online ([alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org)) or by phone (713.220.5700).

**CONNECT WITH US:** @alleytheatre, #AlleyTorera

#### **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, 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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