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Alley Theatre Presents Hilarious Comedy *The Nerd*

This side-splitting comedy is considered one of the funniest plays ever written

HOUSTON, TX - The Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre and Artistic Director **Rob Melrose** announce the cast of *The Nerd*. Directed by Alley Theatre's Associate Producer & Casting Director **Brandon Weinbrenner**, **Larry Shue's** uproarious play promises laughter, chaos, and an unforgettable night at the theatre. Set in a time before cell phones, the play is a nostalgic trip back to an era where miscommunication and mayhem unfold in the most hilarious ways.

"*The Nerd* was the first show I ever saw on Broadway," remarked **Melrose**. "I remember laughing so hard that I had to hold back my laughter so that I could hear the next line or I'd miss the next joke. It is so funny and I'm happy that it has now become an American comedy classic; certainly one of the best comedies written in my lifetime. Sadly, Larry Shue died way too early and only left us with *The Nerd* and *The Foreigner*. I'm grateful for the two we have and love that we can now celebrate him as one of our best comedic writers."

Brandon Weinbrenner, known for his innovative approach to storytelling and comedic timing, shared his insights on the production, "There's a reason *The Nerd* has been continually produced at so many theatres, from high school to professional, for over four decades - because it's wildly hilarious. Shue has crafted a comedic gem that all ages can appreciate. Surprise, deception, romance, spit takes, scare tactics, and cottage cheese run rampant in this entirely domestic yet completely chaotic piece of theatre. And I couldn't imagine a better group to take on these classic characters than our Resident Acting Company and local Houston actors. We're going to laugh as much in the rehearsal room as you will in the audience!"

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

Rounding out the cast is **Chelsea Ryan McCurdy** (*Amerikin*) as Clelia, and **Sebastian Ramirez** (*A Christmas Carol*) as Thor.

The creative team of *The Nerd* includes Scenic Designer **Tim Mackabee**, Costume Designer **Haydee Zelideth**, Lighting Designer **Aja M Jackson**, **Sound Designer** Jane Shaw, Fight Director & Intimacy Specialist **Adam Noble**, Stage Manager **Krissy Larson**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Amy Ramsdell**.

SPONSORS: *The Nerd* is generously sponsored by Beth Madison (Honorary Producer), Victoria and Alex Lazar, Butch and Carmen Mach, and Steve and Christina Morse (Associate Producers). Alley Theatre is supported by the 2023-24 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of Alley Theatre, and Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites Downtown Houston, the official hotels of Alley Theatre.

TICKETS: Performances of *The Nerd* begin **Friday, February 23 to Sunday, March 17** in the Hubbard Theatre. Tickets to *The Nerd* are now on sale, starting at \$29. Discounted tickets are available for military, seniors, educators and any student, regardless of age, with a valid ID for designated performances in designated sections. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

CONNECT WITH US: @alleytheatre, #AlleyNerd

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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