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## **Alley Theatre to Receive \$25,000 Award from the National Endowment for the Arts**

HOUSTON, TX – Alley Theatre is pleased to announce that it has been approved by the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** for a Grants for Arts Projects award of \$25,000. This grant will support the world premiere production of Texas playwright **Marisela Treviño Orta's** *December: a love years in the making* and its associated community engagement initiatives. The NEA will award 1,127 Grants for Arts Projects awards nationwide totaling more than \$31.8 million as part of the recent announcement of fiscal year 2025 grants.

"The NEA is proud to continue our nearly 60 years of supporting the efforts of organizations and artists that help to shape our country's vibrant arts sector and communities of all types across our nation," said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. "It is inspiring to see the wide range of creative projects taking place, including Alley Theatre's *December: a love years in the making* as well as the Alley's community engagement initiatives."

"I'm thrilled that the Alley is producing the world premiere of *December: a love years in the making* by Marisela Treviño Orta on our large stage, the Hubbard Theatre," shares Alley Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**. "It is an incredibly moving, beautifully written play about love, music, and poetry. We gave it a reading in our 2023 Alley All New Festival, and at the end of the performance, there were tears flowing down many faces in the audience. I knew we had to do the world premiere. We are excited to share it with the city of Houston, both the audience who regularly comes to the Alley and many new audiences this play will reach through the generosity of the NEA."

Developed in the 2023 Alley All New Festival, **Marisela Treviño Orta's** *December: a love years in the making* follows two Texans connecting throughout two decades over poetry and music. **Orta**, known for her lyrical and rich writing style, infuses some of her favorite poems as well as original works that are read and discussed by the characters. Orta calls *December: a love years in the making* "a love letter to poetry." Directed by **Marcela Lorca**, this love story takes audiences through the seasons of a creative writing professor and her former student's lives, celebrating the enduring power of connection and a romance that defies time.

The community engagement initiatives include *Cuentos y Charlas*, a program featuring bilingual talks and discussions centered around the themes and issues explored within a given play, and *EducArte: Tu Voz*, a poetry workshop series. The Alley will also partner with Houston community organizations, SuVida and AAMA, to conduct *Primer Borrador* residencies with senior citizens and students throughout the county. *Primer Borrador* is a workshop series designed to encourage participants to pen their personal love stories. These stories will then be shared at Alley Theatre on January 23. Finally, the theatre will host an interactive love letter-writing station in the lobby throughout the run of *December: a love years in the making*.

Alley Theatre Manager of Community Partnerships **Baldemar Rodriguez** adds, "I am honored to bring these transformative programs to our community. For many participants—both youth and adults—it's their first opportunity to truly express themselves, share their experiences in their own language, and step into a theatre. It opens their eyes to new forms of entertainment, higher education, and career opportunities that once seemed inaccessible due to decades of marginalization. Now, these doors are being opened for them and their families."

For more information on other projects included in the NEA's grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

#### **ABOUT THE 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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