

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 29, 2025

## **Alley Theatre Receives Prestigious Grant from The Roy Cockrum Foundation to Present World Premiere Adaptation of *Peer Gynt***

HOUSTON, TX – Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre and Artistic Director **Rob Melrose** announce it has been awarded a generous grant from **The Roy Cockrum Foundation** to produce a world premiere translation and adaptation of ***Peer Gynt*** in the Alley's 2027-28 Season. **Henrik Ibsen's** epic theatrical poem will be directed by Melrose and feature the Alley Theatre's Resident Acting Company in a new translation by **Paul Walsh**.

*Peer Gynt* is an epic journey of ambition, identity, and redemption. Ibsen's classic play follows a misfit who sets out to conquer the world from the fjords of Norway to the deserts of the Middle East. As he chases fame, fortune, and power, the question looms: What does it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul? As the world approaches the 200th anniversary of Ibsen's birth in 2028, this adaptation shines new light on the relevance of his most imaginative and philosophical work.

While performances begin in 2027, the Alley will hold closed readings and workshops starting in January 2026 as part of the development process for this bold production.

The Roy Cockrum Foundation's intent is to expand the capacity of theaters to realize work in development and on stage that is ambitious or large in scope.

**Melrose**, expressed his excitement about this production, stating, "I'm so grateful to The Roy Cockrum Foundation for this incredible opportunity to direct a full two-part epic production of Henrik Ibsen's masterpiece: *Peer Gynt*. In many ways, *Peer Gynt* is the Mount Everest of Modern Drama. I always dreamed of directing it but never imagined that I would actually get the chance. *Peer* is the original anti-hero, and the play is a perfect examination of the human self. It is an epic adventure that goes from a small town in Norway into the Hall of the Mountain King to the deserts of Egypt, to an insane asylum underneath the Sphinx, to a shipwreck, and back to Norway again. Even if you don't know the story, you will recognize all the iconic music by Edward Grieg and the image of peeling back layers of an onion (kind of like the Norwegian "to be or not to be" speech). 2028 will usher in worldwide celebrations of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ibsen's birth, and I'm proud to have the Alley start the celebration early in the fall of 2027."

This world premiere continues Alley Theatre's commitment to producing groundbreaking new work alongside beloved classics.

More production details will be announced at a later date.

### **ABOUT THE ROY COCKRUM FOUNDATION:**

The Roy Cockrum Foundation – Founded in 2014 by Roy Cockrum and Benita Hofstetter Koman with winnings from Mr. Cockrum's Powerball lottery jackpot, the Foundation's mission is to award grants to support world-class performing arts projects in not-for-profit professional theatres throughout America. Since 2014, 76 American theaters and performing arts organizations have received major grants from the Foundation. Inspiration for its mission derives from a Camus quote: "Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future." — Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*.

### **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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