

ALLEY THEATRE

Hurricane Harvey Timeline and Impact

8/24/17—The 25th Theater District Open House is cancelled and weekend performances of Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* are cancelled in anticipation of the storm.

8/25/17—The submarine doors are closed at 6:30 p.m. in the Alley's tunnel in anticipation of Harvey's impact.

8/26/17—Hurricane Harvey hits Houston, the submarine doors hold, and no water gets into the Alley from the garage and tunnel level.

8/27/17 - Harvey's waters crest so high that an in-take vent in the Alley's driveway provides an opening that enables the flood waters to enter the building unimpeded. The waters enter the Neuhaus Theatre, Mitchell Lobby, and all basement areas.

8/27/17—*Describe the Night* playwright Rajiv Joseph walks to the theatre from his hotel and films one of the first looks of the Alley Theatre.

8/28/17—Managing Director Dean Gladden and Houston Grand Opera's Managing Director Perryn Leech drive downtown to see the damage at the Alley.

8/28/17—Andrew Davis, the Dean of the College of Arts at the University of Houston, agrees to accommodate *Describe the Night* in the Quintero Theatre.

8/29/17—Water begins being pumped out of the Theatre basement.

8/29/17— An off-site rehearsal space is secured; Alley Board member Mike Loya offers an empty floor in a downtown office building.

8/30/17—*Describe the Night* creative team redesigns the set in 48 hours to fit the University of Houston's Quintero Theater space. Alley artisans begin building the set in an off-site warehouse

8/30/17—The cast of *Cleo* who had arrived in Houston to begin rehearsals, continues rehearsals in a hotel downtown and then moves to the temporary office space.

8/30/17—Scenery staff converts their off-site warehouse to a temporary scene shop.

9/6/17 - The props staff enter the basement to begin clean-up and inventory of more than 100,000 props in the basement storage. Hurricane Harvey damaged 84,000 of that entire prop stock.

9/6/17—The Alley staff move into temporary administrative offices and alternate rehearsal and working spaces.

9/8/17—Staff members from the Alley’s Education and Community Engagement department volunteer in the KidsZone at NRG Stadium, bringing theater games to the families at the shelter.

9/1/17—The *Houston Chronicle* tours the basement level and documents the damage.

9/1/17—The cast of *Describe the Night* rehearses in an empty office floor downtown.

9/1/17—First day of demolition begins in the Neuhaus Theatre, Mitchell Lobby, and basement area spaces.

9/2/17—Unable to find another theatre for the production, *Cleo* moves to a Spring date in the Hubbard Theatre.

9/4/17—The Alley’s scenic department rebuilds the newly designed scenery for *Describe the Night*.

9/5/2017—*Cleo* by Lawrence Wright continues rehearsals on the 55th floor of an office building while waiting to hear the status of the production.

9/6/27—The Alley props teams begins going through the items in the flooded prop storage room, photographing and taking inventory of approximately 100,000 props. It takes 8 full days and 3 teams of people to complete the task.

9/15/17—*Describe the Night* begins its world premiere run at the University of Houston’s Quintero Theater. The play was later remounted in New York and won the Obie Award for Best New American Play.

9/18/17—The props team begins cleaning and sanitizing the salvaged props.

10/23/17—The Alley staff and artisans move back into the administrative offices and Production Center at the Alley Theatre.

11/24/17—Mayor Sylvester Turner leads a countdown to the lighting of the holiday trees in the lobby. The *Deck the Trees* ceremony and *A Christmas Carol* reopen the theatre to the public.

12/12/17—The in-take vent in the Alleyway where water entered the theatre is welded shut and sealed.

1/20/18–The Neuhaus Theatre reopens to the public for the Alley All New Festival.

2/9/18–*Lover, Beloved* begins its world premiere run in the Neuhaus Theatre and marks the first full performance in the reopened Neuhaus space.

Hurricane Happenings

- The Alley props staff saved almost all of the china (16-18 sets) since it was still sitting on shelves.
- 84,000 props were lost. The collection included 70 seasons of props.
- All tickets for the Alley's 2017-18 performances were damaged.
- Before the storm, production staff brought up three-year's worth of snow for *A Christmas Carol* to a higher level. They purchase it from one man who makes it in his garage in Michigan so it can take a long time to order another batch.
- The water left in the Alley to be pumped out was estimated at about 910,000 cubic feet of water, which is about 6.8 million gallons.
- IT Director Mike Bell set up the server in his apartment so staff payroll could be processed during the hurricane aftermath.
- Tailors from the Alley continued working and sewing costumes in an office conference room on the 55th floor.
- Mold began to grow on the Neuhaus Theatre seats after only 5 days.
- Many props in the basement prop storage had floated to the ceiling and remained stuck in the ceiling rafters when staff entered the space after Harvey.
- The Alley Production staff converted an empty office floor on the 55th floor of a downtown building into a rehearsal space, wig space, and costume space.
- Many of the prop weapons were salvageable. The College of the Mainland students volunteered to clean the weapons.
- The Alley Education and Community Engagement department created its 7th Oskar play, *Oskar and the Thunderous Thingamabob*, a new piece directly related to the trauma the students had gone through in the hurricane.
- Water in the Neuhaus and basement areas surpassed 2001's Tropical Storm Allison—rising up to over 10 feet in the basement areas.