

75TH SEASON ALLEY THEATRE

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Alley Theatre Celebrates 75th Anniversary Season by Reopening the Theatre and Adding Two New Resident Acting Company Members

HOUSTON, TX – After having closed its doors to the public in March 2020 due to COVID-19, the Alley Theatre is elated to announce its plans to reopen the theatre in Fall 2021. Reopening the Alley Theatre coincides with its 75th Anniversary Season with performances beginning on **October 1, 2021**. The 75th Anniversary Season and the Alley’s celebratory return to live performances includes three world premiere plays and one world premiere musical.

“I couldn’t be more excited to get back into the Theatre with this fabulous line-up including a Pulitzer Prize-winning play, a world-premiere musical, and three world premiere plays,” said **Artistic Director Rob Melrose**. “Our 75th Season boasts the most world premieres of any of our 74 previous seasons! When founder Nina Vance started this Theatre in 1947, she sent out 214 penny postcards and stated ‘It’s beginning! Houston, this is your Theatre.’ For the 75 Anniversary and beyond, we are committed to being a Theatre for all Houstonians. I’m thrilled to usher in the 75th Anniversary Season. I’m also excited to announce two new members of our Resident Acting Company!”

The new Resident Acting Company Members are two actors that Alley guests will recognize from shows such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, *The Humans*, and *The Winter’s Tale*: **Melissa Molano** and **Christopher Salazar**.

Melissa Molano last appeared at the Alley Theatre as Chorus in *Medea*, Dion/Dorcas in *The Winter’s Tale*, Countess Andrenyi in *Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express*, Belle/Fred’s Wife in *A Christmas Carol*, and Attendant in *Twelfth Night*. In addition to those roles, Molano was in the 2020 Alley All New workshop of *Survivors: An Alamo Play* and a reading of *Queen Basel* in 2018. Molano was featured in *Houston Press*’ “Actors to Watch” in 2017. In 2016 she received both a Houston Theatre Award for “Best Breakthrough Performances” and a Laura Award from Landing Theatre Company. Other previous roles include

The River Bride (Belmira), *Luna Gale* (Lourdes), *I and You* (Caroline), and *The Book of Maggie* (Maggie) at Stages Repertory Theatre. She is a SHSU Musical Theatre and TPAP alumna. She is also a voice actor who has been featured in various projects with Sentai Filmworks that stream on HiDive and Netflix.

Christopher Salazar last appeared at the Alley Theatre as Captain Horster in *An Enemy of the People*, Cleomenes/Archidamus/Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*, and Richard Saad in *The Humans*. He also was featured in the Theatre's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, reading a selection from Octavio Solis' *Retablos*. Salazar has appeared in three seasons with The Oregon Shakespeare Festival: *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the world premieres of *The Copper Children*, *The Way the Mountain Moved*, and *Off the Rails*; 11 productions at The Old Globe; *Thieves* at The Public Theater (NYC); Portland Center Stage; Barter Theatre; The American Shakespeare Center; The Barnstormers Theatre; A Noise Within; Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, and the Ovation-nominated and award-winning *Ameryka* with Critical Mass Performance Group; and on television as Robert Torres on *Jane*, *The Virgin*. Salazar's voice can be heard in video games, animated films, and dozens of audio books. Salazar has an MFA from Old Globe Theatre/USD and a BA from UNC – Chapel Hill.

The Alley Theatre's 75th Anniversary Season will launch with the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Sweat* by **Lynn Nottage**, which runs **October 1 – 24, 2021** in the Hubbard Theatre. *Sweat* will be directed by **Rob Melrose**, associate directed by The Ensemble Theatre's Artistic Director, **Eileen J. Morris**, and produced in collaboration with **The Ensemble Theatre**.

72 Miles to Go... by **Hilary Bettis** will run **October 15 – November 14, 2021** in the Neuhaus Theatre. The gripping family drama will be directed by **José Zayas**. This play by Hilary Bettis returns to the Alley following development in the 2019 Alley All New Festival and its world premiere Off-Broadway at Roundabout Theatre Company.

After being developed in the 2020 Alley All New Festival, *High School Play: A Nostalgia Fest* by Texan playwright **Vichet Chum** will have its world premiere and run **January 21 – February 13, 2022** in the Hubbard Theatre. The play will be directed by Houston native **Tiffany Nichole Greene**.

The world premiere of *Amerikin* by **Chisa Hutchinson** will be directed by **James Black** and will run **February 11 – March 13, 2022** in the Neuhaus Theatre. *Amerikin* was developed in the 2019 Alley All New Festival.

Based on the novel by Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* by **Kate Hamill** will be directed by **Adriana Baer**. The classic romantic favorite will run **March 4 – 27, 2022** in the Hubbard Theatre.

The off-the-wall comedy *Dead Man's Cell Phone* by **Sarah Ruhl** will run **April 15 – May 8, 2022** in the Hubbard Theatre. Associate Producer & Casting Director **Brandon Weinbrenner** will direct the show.

Next, *Born with Teeth* by **Liz Duffy Adams** will have its world premiere. The play was originally developed in the Alley All New Reading Series. Directed by Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**, *Born with Teeth* will run **May 6 – June 5, 2022** in the Neuhaus Theatre.

The world premiere of new musical, *Noir with music* by Tony Award®-winner **Duncan Sheik**, **book** by Tony Award nominee **Kyle Jarrow**, and **lyrics** by **Kyle Jarrow and Duncan Sheik** will grace the Alley's Hubbard Theatre. *Noir* will be directed by **Tony Award-winner Darko Tresnjak** and will run **June 2 – July 3, 2022**. *Noir* is produced by special arrangement with Robert Cole, Mary Beth O'Connor, Carl Moellenberg, and LuckyGodot LLC.

The Alley's holiday production will be **Doris Baizley's** adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* originally written by Charles Dickens. *A Christmas Carol* will be directed by Associate Producer & Casting Director **Brandon Weinbrenner** and will run **November 19 – December 29, 2021**.

The Alley All New Festival will take place from **June 15 – 26, 2022**. Learn more about the Alley All New initiative at alleytheatre.org/allnew.

Casting and creative teams for all productions will be announced at a later date.

The Alley Theatre's team has been diligently planning this celebratory return. The Alley will continue to monitor Houston's COVID-19 cases and vaccinations as the safety of guests, staff, and artists are of the utmost concern. As the Theatre begins to reopen, the Alley will keep guests updated on any changes to subscription packages, seating capacities, ticketing options, and safety protocols for returning.

2021-22 Season

HUBBARD

Pulitzer Prize Winner

SWEAT

By Lynn Nottage

Directed by Rob Melrose

Associate Directed by Eileen J. Morris

Produced in collaboration with The Ensemble Theatre

October 1 – 24, 2021

Filled with humor and tremendous heart, *Sweat* tells the story of three women who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while working together on the factory floor. But

when layoffs and picket lines begin to chip away at their trust, they find themselves pitted against each other in a heart-wrenching fight to stay afloat.

World Premiere Comedy

HIGH SCHOOL PLAY: A NOSTALGIA FEST

By Vichet Chum

Directed by Tiffany Nichole Greene

January 21 – February 13, 2022

It's senior year in Carrollton, Texas, and Riverside High School's competitive theatre troupe is climbing back to the top from last year's unprecedented loss. Dara is trying to rally his teammates, while new kid Paul disrupts Dara's complete understanding of himself and his small-town suburban life. When coaches Dirkson and Blow make a bold choice for the one-act play competition and the community takes issue, friends and rivals duke it out and find themselves in this uniquely Texan and thoroughly universal coming of age comedy by Texan playwright Vichet Chum, directed by Houston native Tiffany Nichole Greene. Developed in the 2020 Alley All New Festival.

Classic Romantic Favorite

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

By Kate Hamill

Based on the novel by Jane Austen

Directed by Adriana Baer

March 4 – 27, 2022

A playful new adaptation of Jane Austen's beloved novel follows the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the Dashwood sisters—sensible Elinor and hypersensitive Marianne—after their father's sudden death leaves them financially destitute and socially vulnerable. Set in gossipy late 18th-century England, with a fresh female voice, the play is full of humor, emotional depth, and bold theatricality. *Sense and Sensibility* examines our reactions, both reasonable and ridiculous, to societal pressures. When reputation is everything, how do you follow your heart?

Off-the-Wall Comedy

DEAD MAN'S CELL PHONE

By Sarah Ruhl

Directed by Brandon Weinbrenner

April 15 – May 8, 2022

An incessantly ringing cell phone in a quiet café. A stranger at the next table who has had enough. And a dead man. So begins *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, a wildly imaginative comedy by MacArthur "Genius" Sarah Ruhl (*The Clean House*). An off-the-wall play about the odyssey of a

woman forced to confront her own assumptions about morality, redemption, and the need to connect in a technologically obsessed world.

World Premiere Musical

NOIR

A new musical

Music by Duncan Sheik

Book by Kyle Jarrow

Lyrics by Kyle Jarrow and Duncan Sheik

Directed by Darko Tresnjak

By Special Arrangement with Robert Cole, Mary Beth O'Connor, and Carl Moellenberg

June 2 – July 3, 2022

A heartbroken man never leaves his apartment, finding his only solace in the music on the radio. Then a couple moves in next door. Eavesdropping becomes his new entertainment - and his new obsession. Soon he finds himself drawn into a web of love, lies, deceit, and danger. Inspired by early radio plays and classic film noir, this new musical is written by Broadway artists Duncan Sheik (*Spring Awakening*) and Kyle Jarrow (*SpongeBob SquarePants*) and directed by Darko Tresnjak (*A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*).

NEUHAUS

Gripping Family Drama

72 MILES TO GO...

By Hilary Bettis

Directed by José Zayas

October 15 – November 14, 2021

72 miles. It's the distance between Tucson, Arizona and Nogales, Mexico—and the distance between a recently deported mother and her American-born husband and children. *72 Miles to Go...* follows one family over a decade as they grow up, fall in love, fight in wars, and fight for each other. This play by Hilary Bettis ("The Americans") returns to the Alley following development in the 2019 Alley All New Festival and its world premiere Off-Broadway.

World Premiere Play

AMERIKIN

By Chisa Hutchinson

Directed by James Black

February 11 – March 13, 2022

Developed as part of the 2019 Alley All New Festival. Jeff Browning, a new father desperate for community, casually follows his buddy's advice and tries to join a white supremacist group...but the results of his ancestry test prove surprising. *Amerikin* follows Jeff as serious consequences come knocking and the line between "us" and "them" gets incredibly blurry.

World Premiere Play

BORN WITH TEETH

By Liz Duffy Adams

Directed by Rob Melrose

May 6 – June 5, 2022

An aging authoritarian ruler, a violent police state, a restless polarized people seething with paranoia: it's a dangerous time for poets. Two of them—the great Kit Marlowe and the up-and-comer Will Shakespeare—meet in the back room of a pub to collaborate on a history play cycle, navigate the perils of art under a totalitarian regime, and flirt like young men with everything to lose. One of them may well be the death of the other. Developed in the Alley All New Reading Series.

HOLIDAY

Charles Dickens'

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Adapted by Doris Baizley

Directed by Brandon Weinbrenner

November 19 – December 29, 2021

A highly inventive adaptation of the Dickens classic pared down to its essential elements. A resident company of actors assemble to perform a new production of the heartwarming Christmas story. When two of the troupe's actors can't arrive in time for the performance, others step in to create a magical world of holiday make-believe. It will be *A Christmas Carol* like no other.

ALLEY ALL NEW FESTIVAL

June 15 – 26, 2022

New plays in development from some of the most exciting voices in contemporary theatre. All readings and workshops are free and open to the public.

PHOTOS: [Click here.](#)

ALLEY THEATRE MEDIA UPDATES:

<https://www.alleytheatre.org/ActionsSpeakLouderThanWords>

ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE:

The 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 Theatre produces up to 16 plays and nearly 500 performances each season, ranging from the best current work and re-invigorated classic plays to new plays by contemporary writers. Home to a full-time resident company of actors, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline—actors, directors, designers, composers, playwrights—who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

The Alley 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. Its audience enrichment programs include pre-show and post-performance talks, events, and workshops for audience members of all ages.

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