

ALLEY THEATRE

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Slam Poets @ Alley Theatre Partners with 5th Annual Bayou City Slam Competition *Students work directly with nationally recognized Slam Poets.*

HOUSTON – On Saturday, November 21, 2015 Slam Poets @ Alley Theatre will partner with Savannah Blue Arts & Outreach to provide a full day event filled with workshops and performances culminating with the 5th Annual Bayou City Slam Competition in the Neuhaus Theatre.

Each semester select students from participating partner schools have the opportunity to compete and showcase their work. Slam Poets @ Alley Theatre creates poised, proud, quick-thinking and creative young adults. Students draw from their personal wealth of knowledge and experience to write and share their unique stories and emotions through performance in a welcoming community atmosphere. For the first time ever, students from the Alley's partner schools will experience a private workshop taught by nationally recognized poet Brother Said. The top two winners of the Alley Fall Teen Slam will be invited to perform as "Sacrificial Poets" at the Bayou City Slam Competition, where poets from across the nation compete for cash prizes and the title of Bayou City Poetry Slam Champion. The 5th Annual Bayou City Slam Competition will be held on November 21 from 7 – 10 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

Prior to the Alley Teen Fall Slam, the Alley Theatre will host two free Slam workshops. In these workshops, participants write with the stage in mind and also discuss performing with the page in mind. Poets should be prepared to write and if willing, to share and perform their work. Participants can register for the workshops at www.alleytheatre.org/slampoets

NOVEMBER 21 SCHEDULE

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| Noon – 1 p.m. | Teen Workshop taught by Jasminne Mendez
Free & Open to the public, ages 12-18 |
| 2 – 3 p.m. | Adult Workshop taught by Ed Mabrey
Free & Open to the public |
| 3:30 - 5 p.m. | Slam Poets @ Alley Theatre – Fall Teen Slam (closed competition)
Free to public |
| 7 - 10 p.m. | 5 th Annual Bayou City Slam Competition |

ABOUT THE 5TH ANNUAL BAYOU CITY SLAM

The 5th Annual Bayou City Slam, featuring Buddy Wakefield and hosted by Theresa Davis, is produced by Savannah Blue Productions in partnership with Alley Theatre. Poets from across the nation compete for cash prizes and the title of Bayou City Poetry Slam Champion. For the first time ever, the top two winners of the Fall Teen Slam will be invited to perform as "Sacrificial Poets" at the Bayou City Slam. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1692133>

ABOUT THE FEATURED POETS AND INSTRUCTORS

Ed Mabrey (Adult Workshop instructor and Teen Slam Featured Poet) is the only 3 time Individual World Poetry Slam Champion, (2007 and 2012 and 2013) and was the first person of color to win the title. He has served as Host/Master of Ceremony for over 300 events in the past 4 years and over 600 events in the past 8 years. During the course of his career, he has toured internationally and has conducted performances and workshops at over 70 colleges and universities. Mabrey has curated for the Martin Luther King Jr. Performing Arts Center, been featured in the Whitney Museum, was founder of the first CUPSI/ Poetry organization for Arizona State University, mentored the first ever Brave New Voices Youth Poetry Slam team to come out of Phoenix, Arizona and Charlotte, North Carolina. He earned the honor of being a recipient of "Poet of the Year" by the Ohio Poetry Association in 2007. www.edmabrey.com

Jasminne Mendez (Public teen workshop instructor) is a performance poet, actress, teacher and published writer. She captivates audiences through the passion and energy of her words and voice. Mendez has performed her poetry in venues all around Houston, including the MFAH, Rice and the Alley Theatre. She has shared the stage with respected writers and poets, notably, Sandra Cisneros and Taylor Mali. Mendez has been published both nationally and internationally and her first multi-genre memoir *Island of Dreams* was published by Floricanto Press in November of 2013. She is currently working on her second memoir *Thick Skinned* about living life with chronic illness. <http://www.jasminnemendez.com/>

Brother Said (Teen workshop instructor) Since 1997, Cedric Ary a.k.a. Brother Said has developed a performance style deeply rooted in the belief that poetry is first and foremost an oral art form. He has featured in various poetry venues as far away as Paris, France; curated a production for Voices Breaking Boundaries; served as Slammaster for Houston Poetry Slam since 2005; and was a 2010 HAA Individual Artist Grant recipient. His CD's include *Urban Kinky Soul Epiphany* and *A Taste of Honey*.

Buddy Wakefield (Bayou City Slam featured Poet) is a three-time world champion spoken word artist featured on the BBC, HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*, ABC Radio National and signed to Ani DiFranco's Righteous Babe Records. In 2004 he won the Individual World Poetry Slam Finals thanks to the support of anthropologist and producer Norman Lear then successfully defended that title at the International Poetry Festival in Rotterdam, Netherlands against the national champions of seven European countries with works translated into Dutch. In 2005 he won the Individual World Poetry Slam Championship again and has gone on to share the stage with nearly every notable performance poet in the world in 2000+ venues internationally from The Great Lawn of Central Park, Zimbabwe's Shoko Festival and Scotland's Oran Mor to San Quentin State Penitentiary, House of Blues New Orleans and The Basement in Sydney, Australia. Wakefield is an author at Write Bloody Publishing, a queer activist and an original Board of Directors member with Youth Speaks Seattle, is published internationally in dozens of books with work used to win multiple national collegiate debate and forensics competitions.

ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE

The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading not-for-profit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company lead by Artistic Director Gregory Boyd and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. Home to a Resident Company of actors, the Alley creates a wide-ranging repertoire and innovative productions of classics, neglected modern plays, and premieres. Alley All New, the initiative to commission and develop new work year round, features the Alley All New Festival each season presenting workshops and readings of new plays and musicals in process. Additionally the Alley serves 65,000 students annually with award-winning education and community programs including in-school arts integration residencies, school tours and student matinees. A recipient of the Special Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, the Alley has brought productions to Broadway, 40 American cities including New York's Lincoln Center and internationally to London, Berlin, Paris, and St. Petersburg throughout its 69 year history.

The Alley Theatre began a \$46.5 million building renovation in 2014-2015 season, the first major improvements since the building opened in 1968. With more than 500 performances in 2015-2016, the Alley will produce more shows than all other performing arts organizations in the Houston Theater District combined.

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