

ALLEY THEATRE

Alley Theatre Announces Programming for the 2020 Alley All New Festival

The Alley presents work by returning playwrights Theresa Rebeck and Sharr White; and bold new plays by Katie Bender, Vichet Chum, Arthur M. Jolly, Jiehae Park, and C. Denby Swanson

HOUSTON, TX – The Alley Theatre announces the line-up for the 2020 Alley All New Festival, January 16 - January 26, 2020. The fifth annual festival will feature readings, workshop performances, and an early preview of seven new plays. Festival playwrights include Katie Bender, Vichet Chum, Arthur M. Jolly, Jiehae Park, Theresa Rebeck, C. Denby Swanson, and Sharr White. Special packages are available for the final weekend of the festival and include priority seating, exclusive artist access, and meals between performances. Packages can be booked now at alleytheatre.org/allnew or by calling the Box Office at 713-220-5700. Advance reservations for individual events are recommended and can be made on December 16 at alleytheatre.org. All readings and workshop performances are free and open to the public.

“One of the many strengths of the Alley All New Festival is its ability to support its writers at every step of the process. We have workshop performances, play readings, and even an early draft preview,” said Alley Theatre Artistic Director Rob Melrose. “I’m particularly excited about the wide variety of subjects and styles in this year’s festival: reevaluations of the histories of our Constitution and of the Battle of the Alamo, science fiction, a play that deconstructs family photographs, a play about high school drama, and a mystery of the disappearance of Agatha Christie. It is going to be a fabulous festival this year!”

Elizabeth Frankel, Director of New Work at the Alley, said “The line-up of the fifth annual Alley All New Festival features artists with a combination of Texas roots, Broadway credits, and national profiles. Some are frequent Alley collaborators while others make their Alley debuts. We are proud to present their plays which take a deeper look at the state of Texas and the state of our nation, examine the past, challenge our view of the future, as well as surprise and inspire.”

The Alley All New Festival provides playwrights the resources needed to grow their work. The festival offers audiences a first look at plays that may appear in full productions at the Alley, as well as at theatres around the country. Last season, the Alley produced two full productions of former festival plays; *The Carpenter* by Robert Askins and *Quack* by Eliza Clark. This season, the Alley will produce *Amerikin* by Chisa Hutchinson which was developed in the last Alley All New Festival.

72 Miles to Go... by Hilary Bettis, Julliard playwright and writer on the Emmy-nominated television show “The Americans,” will premiere Off-Broadway at Roundabout Theatre Company this winter, following development in the last festival. Also presented at 2019 festival, *The Supreme Leader* by Don Nguyen will have its world premiere in June 2020 at Dallas Theater Center.

Since the festival began four years ago, 19 of the 25 plays presented have gone on to world premiere productions, seven at the Alley and 12 elsewhere. The festival has been represented by at least one play off-Broadway each season for the past three seasons, with plays developed at the Alley also produced in Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Washington DC, Seattle, and Dallas among many other locations. Alley All New Festival plays have received both the Arnold L. Weissberger Award and the Obie Award for Best New American Play.

All presentations are free and open to the public. Alley All New programming is recommended for mature audiences. Each performance will be followed by a post-show conversation led by a member of the artistic staff.

All updates and schedules will be available at alleytheatre.org/allnew.

Full casting will be announced in 2020. The festival will feature the Alley Resident Acting Company in various roles.

2020 ALLEY ALL NEW FESTIVAL

WORKSHOP PERFORMANCES

Enlightened by Theresa Rebeck
Directed by Brandon Weinbrenner

It's 1776. Witchcraft meets Enlightenment aspirations when news of the Declaration of Independence drifts into the Pennsylvania woods. Mr. Ames is inspired by the Founder's notions of equality but his high ideals may not extend to his entire household. His wife and slaves ask, "When it says all men are created equal, does that mean me?" An intellectually provocative new play by frequent Alley artist Theresa Rebeck, the most Broadway-produced female playwright of our time.

Workshop Performances: January 16 & 18 (7:30 p.m.), January 19 & 26 (2:30 p.m.), January 24 (8:00 p.m.)

Survivors, an Alamo Play by Katie Bender
Directed by Jerry Ruiz

Based on the historically documented group of women, children, and enslaved people who survived the battle of the Alamo, Texas native Katie Bender's epic new play puts the story back into the hands of the people who lived to tell it. Told by a diverse ensemble of voices that didn't make the history books, with supporting roles for some well-documented figures as well, *Survivors* is an intimately drawn look at the surprising alliances necessary to persist in the shifting and mercurial climate of Mexico's fledgling democracy.

Workshop Performances: January 17 & 18 (8:00 pm), January 19 & 26 (7:30 p.m.), January 25 (8:30 p.m.)

READINGS

Pictures from Home by Sharr White
Directed by Rob Melrose

In 1981, photographer Larry Sultan decided to turn the lens on his parents to ferret out the darker truths lurking beneath sunny home movies and his father's proud salesman veneer. While his wife and young boys spent weekends without him, Larry interrogated the notion of manhood by interviewing his father. Though set in the recent past, this slyly poignant and theatrically inventive new play by Sharr White (*The Other Place* on Broadway and at the Alley; writer on Showtime's *The Affair*) is both of-the-moment and timeless.

Reading: January 26 (11:00 a.m.)

Nutshell by C. Denby Swanson
Directed by Leslie Swackhammer

Frances Glessner Lee, the "mother of forensic science" and creator of The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death, has been dead since 1962. But that doesn't stop her from hijacking a seminar on

homicide investigation in Baltimore. She's come to investigate a crime. But which crime? Austin playwright C. Denby Swanson's play *Nutshell* is inspired by a vital real-life character who demands to know: who gets justice?

Readings: January 24 (4:00 p.m.), January 25 (4:00 p.m.)

The Aves by Jiehae Park
Directed by Rob Melrose

In the summer, an old man and an old woman sit on a park bench, talk about birds, and bet on the rain...but things may not be as simple as they look. You'll want to listen closely as the seasons pass in this new play set in the near future from the inventive and singular mind of playwright-on-the-rise Jiehae Park.

Reading: January 25 (1:30 p.m.)

High School Play: A Nostalgia Fest by Vichet Chum
Directed by Tiffany Nichole Greene

It's senior year in Plano, Texas, and Riverside High School's competitive theater troupe is climbing back to the top from last year's unprecedented loss. Leader of the troupe Dara is trying to rally his teammates to get them back on track, while new student Paul disrupts Dara's complete understanding of himself and his small-town suburban life. As coaches Dirkson and Blow make a controversial choice in their one-act play selection and the community takes issue, friends and rivals duke it out to find themselves in this uniquely Texan and thoroughly universal coming of age comedy by Texas native Vichet Chum.

Reading: January 25 (10:00 a.m.)

EARLY DRAFT PREVIEW

Join us for excerpts and an early glimpse of a new play by Houston playwright Arthur M. Jolly inspired by the disappearance of Agatha Christie in 1926. In this fanciful story woven from actual events, Christie's professional rivals Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Dorothy L. Sayers compete to uncover the truth about how the famed writer mysteriously vanished.

Event: January 26 (10:00 a.m.)

**All readings are for mature audiences. Dates subject to change. Check alleytheatre.org for updates and the current schedule.*

WEEKEND PACKAGES

Weekend packages for January 24-26 including early entry seating at all presentations, exclusive artist access, and meals between performances are on sale now at alleytheatre.org/allnew. Packages cost \$125 with an optional add-on for *Quixote Nuevo* by Octavio Solis. Prices increase January 6. Free single ticket reservations can be made beginning December 16, 2019.

**Reserved package prices reflect the cost of the meals and parties.*

PRESS

All workshop performances and readings at the Alley All New Festival are works in progress and not available for review.

2020 Alley All New Festival artists' headshots can be found here:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Lu3xuM0Wr_NnP8MruJHz6kUS9AfUdwXx

2019 Alley All New Festival artists' bios can be found here:
www.alleytheatre.org/allnew

Press photos from previous seasons of Alley All New Festival can be found at
2019 - <https://www.alleytheatre.org/press>
2018 - <https://www.alleytheatre.org/press/alley-all-new-festival-eighteen>

ALLEY ALL NEW

Alley All New is comprised of a variety of public and in-house programs designed to support playwrights and cater to the needs of each new project. Through this initiative, the Alley produces world premieres, commissions new plays, and supports playwrights year-round. The Alley All New Festival made its debut in 2016. Join the Alley Insider Group by emailing alleyinsider@alleytheatre.org and learn more about new work in development and be the first to hear about Alley All New events. More information and updates can be found on alleytheatre.org/allnew, on Facebook and #AlleyAllNew.

SPONSORS: The Alley All New Festival is generously sponsored by Meredith and Cornelia Long, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Rutger Beelaerts, and Sally J. Langston. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2019-20 season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

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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 produces at least 16 plays each year in its newly renovated Theatre, ranging from the best current work, to re-invigorated classic plays, to new plays by contemporary writers. The Alley is home to a Resident Acting Company. In addition, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline – actors, designers, composers, playwrights – who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

The 2015 renovation of the Alley's Hubbard Theatre created a new 774-seat state-of-the-art performance venue. Matched with the newly rebuilt 296-seat Neuhaus Theatre, the Alley offers nearly 500 performances each season. The Alley Theatre reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance and education 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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