

ALLEY THEATRE

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Alley Theatre Announces Upcoming Productions for 2016-2017 Season, including New Musical FREAKY FRIDAY, Celebration of Shakespeare's 400th Anniversary and World Premiere of SYNCING INK

Alley's 70th Season Line-Up Features Playwrights Robert Askins, Sarah Burgess and NSangou Njikam and Exciting Collaborations with National Theatre of Scotland and New York's Flea Theater.

HOUSTON- Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director of the Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre, announces eight productions for its 2016-2017 season including the world premiere of NSangou Njikam's Hip Hop play **Syncing Ink**; a new musical based on the beloved novel and Walt Disney motion pictures - **Freaky Friday**; the National Theatre of Scotland's internationally acclaimed **Let the Right One In**; a celebration of Shakespeare's 400th anniversary with the joyous comedy **A Midsummer Night's Dream**; Arthur Miller's classic drama **A View from the Bridge**; recent Broadway hit **Hand to God**, by Texas playwright Robert Askins; new play **Dry Powder** by Sarah Burgess; and David Javerbaum's critically acclaimed comedy **An Act of God**.

Freaky Friday, the story of a mother and daughter who swap personalities for just one day, takes on a fresh identity as a new stage musical with book by Bridget Carpenter (*Friday Night Lights, Parenthood*) and score by the Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning team of Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey (*Next to Normal, If/Then*). The world premiere production of **Syncing Ink**, a semi-autobiographical play by NSangou Njikam that emerged from the first Alley All New Festival, leads us on a mystical, lyrical Hip Hop ride to discover what it really takes to freestyle. **Syncing Ink** is directed by Niegel Smith, Artistic Director of New York's Flea Theater.

For the first time, the Alley will collaborate with the National Theatre of Scotland to bring the supernatural thriller **Let the Right One In** to Houston audiences. Based on the Swedish novel and screenplay of the film by John Ajvide Lindqvist, this contemporary romance was adapted by Jack Thorne and directed by Tony and Olivier Award-winning director John Tiffany (*Once*).

"We are thrilled to be making our Houston debut with one of the National Theatre of Scotland's flagship productions. We hope audiences at the Alley Theatre will be as excited as we are about this exquisite wintery love story," says Neil Murray, Executive Producer at the National Theatre of Scotland.

With the Alley's heightened focus on America's most exciting and original voices, Cypress-born Robert Askins returns to his home state with his Broadway hit **Hand to God**, a fast-paced irreverent comedy starring a puppet named Tyrone. Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Finalist Sarah Burgess makes her Alley

debut with her explosive new play, **Dry Powder**, about the price of success and the real cost of risk. And Broadway hit comedy **An Act of God**, "written by God" and transcribed by David Javerbaum (*The Daily Show*), takes the Alley stage with His Almighty and His devoted angels answering some of the deepest questions that have plagued mankind since Creation.

A Midsummer Night's Dream will open the Hubbard Theatre season and features the Alley's Resident Acting Company in a spectacular production of Shakespeare's most joyous comedy, in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the playwright's life. Following productions of *Death of a Salesman* (2012) and *All My Sons* (2015), the Alley presents **A View from the Bridge** – Arthur Miller's taut drama that confronts the American dream in this dark and passionate masterpiece.

In addition, the Alley plans to produce the second annual **Alley All New Festival**, February 11-19, 2017. Following its debut in 2016, the festival focuses on giving Houston audiences and industry professionals from around the country the first opportunity to view works-in-progress, meet the artists, and immerse themselves in the world of new play development.

The popular ExxonMobil Summer Chills Series returns in July 2016 with **Agatha Christie's Spider's Web**, a classic whodunit that leaves the audience untangling a captivating puzzle. In August, audiences are invited to spend **A Night With Janis Joplin** in celebration of the iconic rock singer.

The traditional holiday special **A Christmas Carol – A Ghost Story of Christmas** returns with Michael Wilson's adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic story. And as an alternative holiday option, Todd Waite reprises his role as "Crumpet the Elf" in the outlandish, and true, chronicles of David Sedaris' experience as a worker in Macy's SantaLand display in **The Santaland Diaries**.

TICKET AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Season Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700). Subscribers can purchase a 5-play package containing **A Midsummer Night's Dream, Dry Powder, Let the Right One In, A View from the Bridge, and Freaky Friday**; prices range from \$125-\$440. An 8-play package is also available containing all the plays in the 5-play package plus **Hand to God, Syncing Ink and An Act of God**, with prices from \$198-\$629. Subscribers may purchase priority tickets for **Agatha Christie's Spider's Web, A Night With Janis Joplin, A Christmas Carol and The Santaland Diaries** before going on sale to the general public. Groups of 10 or more may reserve discounted tickets now by calling 713.315.3346.

Single tickets for **Agatha Christie's Spider's Web** and **A Night With Janis Joplin** go on sale June 3, 2016 either online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700). The remaining productions for the 2016-2017 season will go on sale in August 2016. Discounted tickets are available for any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for \$16 for designated performances in designated sections.

THE 2016-2017 ALLEY THEATRE SEASON

Hand to God

By Robert Askins

Directed By Mark Shanahan

Previews Start August 19, Opens August 24, Through September 18, 2016

Neuhaus Theatre

The devil is lurking in a church basement puppet show in Cypress, Texas. And his name is...Tyrone. He may look like an innocent sock puppet, but when he infiltrates the angst-ridden church youth group and takes possession of Jason's arm, all Hell breaks loose. Spectacularly foul-mouthed and wickedly scandalous, Tyrone shocks the congregation with his outrageous insinuations, exposing their deepest secrets—and teaching us all about what it means to be human. A smashing success on Broadway and now in London, this fast-paced irreverent comedy is the Texas playwright's Alley debut. *The New York Times* called the play "Darkly delightful" and *The New Yorker* described it as "Sesame Street meets The Exorcist." *Hand to God* contains explicit language, profanity, sexual situations, and very rude puppets. *Mature audiences only.*

A Midsummer Night's Dream

By William Shakespeare

Directed By Gregory Boyd

Previews Start October 7, Opens October 12, Through November 5, 2016

Hubbard Theatre

The Alley Theatre joins companies around the globe in celebrating 400 years of Shakespeare with Shakespeare@400. In the Bard's most popular and enchanting comedy, the woods outside Athens are a busy place as four young lovers and a troupe of actors find themselves in the middle of a dispute between the King and Queen of the fairies. Alongside **A Midsummer Night's Dream** the Alley will host community and school performances, readings, and an evening of songs and sonnets hosted by members of the Alley Company. *A Midsummer Night's Dream is suitable for general audiences ages 12 and up.*

A Christmas Carol – A Ghost Story of Christmas

By Charles Dickens

Adapted and originally directed by Michael Wilson

Directed By James Black

Previews Start November 19, Opens November 20, Through December 27, 2016

Hubbard Theatre

Houston's seasonal favorite described by the *Houston Press* as having "Spectacular London sets... the inimitable Dickens' tale – spiced with the usual fog and an unusual twist on the ghosts past, present and future." **A Christmas Carol - A Ghost Story of Christmas** returns this year with a re-telling of Charles Dickens' classic story, which follows Ebenezer Scrooge's journey with the three ghostly spirits who visit him on Christmas Eve. **A Christmas Carol** instills a powerful message about redemption and the spirit of the holiday season. *A Christmas Carol is suitable for general audiences, ages 6 and up.*

The Santaland Diaries

By David Sedaris

Adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello

Directed By David Cromer

Previews Start December 1, Opens December 3, Through December 31, 2016

Neuhaus Theatre

Company Artist Todd Waite reprises his role as "Crumpet the Elf" in the outlandish, and true, chronicles of David Sedaris' experience as a worker in Macy's SantaLand display. This compact, one-character comedy is a hilarious cult classic, featuring comic encounters during the height of the holiday crunch.

NPR humorist and best-selling author of *Let's Explore Diabetes With Owls*, David Sedaris has become one of America's preeminent humorists. *The Santaland Diaries* is recommended for mature audiences due to language and subject matter.

Dry Powder

By Sarah Burgess

Previews Start January 20, Opens January 25, Through February 12, 2017

Hubbard Theatre

The same week his private equity firm forced massive layoffs at a national grocery chain, Rick threw himself an extravagant engagement party, setting off a publicity nightmare. Fortunately, Seth, one of Rick's partners, has a win-win deal to invest in an American-made luggage company for a song and rescue his boss from a PR disaster. But Jenny, Seth's counterpart, has an entirely different plan: to squeeze every last penny out of the company, no matter the consequences. The game is on in Sarah Burgess' gripping, razor-sharp new play about the price of success and the real cost of getting the deal done. *Dry Powder* contains explicit language and adult content.

WORLD PREMIERE

Syncing Ink

By NSangou Njikam

Directed By Niegel Smith

Previews Start February 3, Opens February 8, Through March 5, 2017

Neuhaus Theatre

"Now what you hear is not a test/I'm rapping to the beat!" Gordon wants to learn how to rap, thinking it will gain him respect, admiration, and the attention of a beautiful woman. What he doesn't know is that his journey to learn how to rhyme will take him not just deeper into Hip Hop, but deeper into his legacy and his purpose. Based on true events, NSangou Njikam leads us on a lyrical ride to discover what it really takes to freestyle. Directed by Niegel Smith, Artistic Director of New York's Flea Theater. *Syncing Ink* contains explicit language and adult content.

Let the Right One In

Presented by the National Theatre of Scotland by arrangement with Marla Rubin Productions Ltd and Bill Kenwright

A stage adaptation by Jack Thorne

Based on the Swedish novel and screenplay of the film by John Ajvide Lindqvist

Directed By John Tiffany

Supported by the Scottish Government International Touring Fund

Previews Start February 24, Opens March 1, Through March 19, 2017

Hubbard Theatre

Supernatural thriller *Let the Right One In* is a brutal and tender vampire myth told through the turbulence of a coming-of-age romance. Oskar, a lonely boy from a broken home, is bullied at school and longing for friendship. Eli, the young girl who moves in next door, doesn't attend school and rarely leaves home. When a series of mysterious killings plagues the neighborhood, these two young misfits, sensing in each other a kindred spirit, forge a deep connection. But the shocking truth about one of them tests their young friendship—and love—beyond all imaginable limits. Tony and Olivier Award-winning director John Tiffany (*Black Watch*, *Once*) directs this major new production which was adapted

for the stage by Jack Thorne following the international success of the original Swedish novel and subsequent film. *Let the Right One In* contains adult content, explicit language, and violence. *Recommended for mature teens and up.*

An Act of God

By David Javerbaum

Previews Start March 17, Opens March 22, Through April 16, 2017

Neuhaus Theatre

An Act of God is a sinfully funny and critically acclaimed new play where the Almighty and His devoted Angels answer some of the deepest questions that have plagued mankind since Creation. He's returned to set the record straight... and He's not holding back! This hilarious 90-minute comedy is "written by God" and transcribed by 13-time Emmy® Award winner David Javerbaum (*The Daily Show*). *An Act of God* contains mature themes.

A View from the Bridge

By Arthur Miller

Previews Start April 28, Opens May 3, Through May 21, 2017

Hubbard Theatre

Following the success of *Death of a Salesman* (2012) and *All My Sons* (2015), the Alley returns to one of America's greatest playwrights with a new production of Arthur Miller's **A View from the Bridge**. This dark and passionate story centers on Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman by trade, who is confident of his place in the working-class Brooklyn neighborhood he calls home. That life changes when he agrees to harbor his immigrant cousins. A love affair exposes a dark family secret, and suspicion, jealousy and betrayal soon follow. *A View from the Bridge* contains mature themes.

Freaky Friday

Book by Bridget Carpenter

Music and Lyrics by Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey

Based on the novel "Freaky Friday" by Mary Rodgers and the Walt Disney motion pictures

Directed by Christopher Ashley

Co-Production with La Jolla Playhouse and Cleveland Play House

Previews Start June 2, Opens June 7, Through July 2, 2017

Hubbard Theatre

Freaky Friday, a new musical based on the celebrated novel by Mary Rodgers and hit Walt Disney films, is a hilarious, contemporary update of an American classic that follows an overworked mother and teenage daughter on a wild journey after magically swapping bodies. The musical, with book by Bridget Carpenter (*Friday Night Lights*, *Parenthood*) and score by the Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning team of Tom Kitt and Brian Yorkey (*Next to Normal*, *If/Then*), is a sure-fire hit for the whole family. *Freaky Friday* is suitable for general audiences.

Agatha Christie's Spider's Web

Previews Start July 12, Opens July 14, Through August 14, 2016

Hubbard Theatre

Clarissa, the second wife of Henry Hailsham Brown, is adept at spinning tales of adventure for her bored diplomatic circle. When a murder takes place in her drawing room, she finds real life much harder to cope with. Clarissa's fast talking places her in hair-raising situations, as she comes to learn that the facts are much more exciting than fiction. *Spider's Web is suitable for general audiences.*

A Night With Janis Joplin

Written and directed By Randy Johnson

Previews Start August 19, Opens August 21, Through September 18, 2016

Hubbard Theatre

Like a comet that burns far too brightly to last, Janis Joplin exploded onto the music scene in 1967 and, almost overnight, became the queen of rock & roll. The unmistakable voice, filled with raw emotion and tinged with Southern Comfort, made her a must-see headliner from Monterey to Woodstock. Now, you're invited to share an evening with the woman and her influences in the new Broadway musical **A Night With Janis Joplin**. Fueled by such unforgettable songs as "Me and Bobby McGee," "Piece of My Heart," "Mercedes Benz," "Cry Baby" and "Summertime," and a remarkable cast, **A Night With Janis Joplin**, written and directed by Randy Johnson, is a musical journey celebrating Janis and her biggest musical influences - icons like Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Odetta, Nina Simone and Bessie Smith -who inspired one of rock & roll's greatest legends. *A Night with Janis Joplin contains explicit language and adult content.*

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. The Alley produces up to 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 Company of actors. 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 current renovation of the Hubbard Theatre at the Alley was completed in October 2015 – and created a new 774 seat state-of-the-art performance venue. Matched with the 310-seat Neuhaus Theatre, the Alley offers nearly 500 performances each season. The Company 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.

The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2016-2017 season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

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