

ALLEY THEATRE

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Alley Theatre Presents World Premiere of SYNCING INK

An *Alley All New* World Premiere, **Syncing Ink** by NSangou Njikam, combines poetry, Hip Hop and theatre

HOUSTON- Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director of the Alley Theatre, announces the cast and creative team for the world premiere of **Syncing Ink**, which begins previews February 3, opens February 8 and runs through March 5 in the Neuhaus Theatre. **Syncing Ink**, a semi-autobiographical play by NSangou Njikam leads audiences on a mystical, lyrical Hip Hop ride to discover what it really takes to freestyle. Tickets are on sale now at alleytheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 713-220-5700.

"Now what you hear is not a test/I'm rapping to the beat!" In **Syncing Ink**, 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. **Syncing Ink** is directed by Niegel Smith, Artistic Director of New York's Flea Theater.

"NSangou and Niegel are two singular talents in the American Theatre. **Syncing Ink** is an extraordinary theatrical piece about storytelling. The most exciting thing in the Theatre is to be part of the creation of new work, of introducing new voices, and we are thrilled to present the premiere of this play," said Boyd.

Njikam's **Syncing Ink** was first seen at the Alley in a workshop performance in the Alley All New Festival last year and it was the first play to receive a full production at the Alley since the launch of the *Alley All New* initiative. The Alley All New Festival is one component of *Alley All New*, a major new work initiative that expands the Alley's commitment to playwrights and to produce more world premieres. This year, **Syncing Ink** coincides with the 2017 festival which runs February 2-12.

The cast of **Syncing Ink** includes playwright NSangou Njikam, McKenzie Frye, Nuri Hazzard, Elisha Lawson, Adesola A. Osakalumi, Kara Young, and Robyn "DJ Reborn" Rodgers.

The **Syncing Ink** creative team features scenic design by Riccardo Hernandez, costume design by Claudia Brown, lighting design by Kevin Rigdon, sound design by Justin Ellington, and choreography by Gabriel "Kwikstep" Dionisio. The team also includes Assistant Director Joseph "JoeP" Palmore, Associate Scenic Designer Taisa Malouf, Research Consultant Sybil Roberts and Stage Manager Kristen Larson.

NSangou Njikam is an actor and playwright originally from Baltimore, MD. He is the author of **Syncing Ink**, *Re:Definition, I.D., When We Left, Search For The Crystal Stairs*, and one of the authors of *Hands Up: 6 Plays, 6 Testimonials*. Njikam's work focuses mainly on Identity stories and the empowerment of the human spirit by recognizing and embracing one's personal gifts, utilizing Hip Hop theatre, poetry, and West African performance aesthetics. He also aims to develop new, diverse and younger audiences by creating "theatre of the now and for tomorrow." He received his BFA in acting from Howard University. After tracing his roots to the Tikar people in Cameroon, West Africa, he was named NSangou by Sultan Ibrahim MBombo Njoya, 19th king of the Bamoun kingdom in Cameroon. He currently resides in New York.

The Alley celebrates the upcoming production with the creation of a custom **Syncing Ink** mural located at McGowen and Crawford in Midtown by Houston artist Brionya James. Brionya created a mural illustrating the themes in **Syncing Ink**—the power of Hip Hop, self-discovery and a passion for lyrics—and the mural was used as inspiration for the official production poster. The mural will remain even after the show has closed.

Performances of **Syncing Ink** are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. **Syncing Ink** contains explicit language and adult content.

TICKETS: Tickets to **Syncing Ink** are now on sale and start at \$35. Discounted tickets are available for any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for \$16 for designated performances in designated sections. Discounted tickets are available for 2017 Alley All New Festival attendees. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

KICK-IT TIX: There will be a limited number of seats available for \$18 for every performance of **Syncing Ink**. Tickets may be purchased 60 minutes before the start of each performance in person at the Alley Theatre Box Office.

SPECIAL EVENTS

TOP BILLIN': Immediately following the 8:00 p.m. show of **Syncing Ink** on Saturday, February 18th, [The Hue](#) and **Syncing Ink** present Top Billin', a party emphasizing a multi-layered cultural exchange and immersion into theatre and Hip Hop featuring a live performance by The Hue. The event is free and open to the public. Must be 21 years+ to attend.

TALKBACKS: The Alley Theatre will present a Designer Talk in the Texas Room (4th Floor) one hour before the February 7 (6:30 p.m.) performance of **Syncing Ink**. The discussion will feature the creative team of **Syncing Ink**, giving audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the design process.

The Alley Theatre will present Artist TalkBacks following the February 14 (7:30 p.m.) and February 18 (2:30 p.m.) performances of **Syncing Ink**. These discussions will feature cast and artistic staff.

The Alley Theatre will also present Alley In Context discussions following the February 25 (2:30 p.m.) and March 4 (2:30 p.m.) performances of **Syncing Ink**. These discussions will feature civic leaders, local academics, and community members discussing the themes of the play and how they are reflected in our lives today. Designer Talks, Artist TalkBacks and Alley In Context discussions are free and open to the public.

GROUP SALES: Groups of 10 or more can receive special concierge services and select discounts by calling the Group Sales Department at 713.315.3346

PRESS MATERIALS:

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3tKrof2NzQ>

Playwright Feature: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHaqBFhoy5c>

Photos: <https://www.alleytheatre.org/press/syncing-ink>

SPONSORS: **Syncing Ink** is sponsored by the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2016-2017 season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

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 plans to produce more world premieres, commission new plays, and engage and support playwrights year round. The Alley All New Festival made its debut this past winter and will be back again with more workshop performances and play readings, as well as the World Premiere production of **Syncing Ink**. The dates for the 2017 Alley All New Festival are February 2 - 12, with special events and final festival presentations February 10-12. 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.

ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE: The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading not-for-profit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company led 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 70 year history.

After a year-long, \$46.5 million renovation during the 2014-15 season, the Alley Theatre now has one of the most technically advanced non-profit theatre complexes in the nation. With more than 450 performances in 2016-2017, the Alley will produce more shows than all other performing arts organizations in the Houston Theater District combined.