

ALLEY THEATRE

FOR RELEASE

Alley Theatre Announces Programming for the 2018 Alley All New Festival

The festival includes work from playwrights Hilary Bettis, Eliza Clark, Selina Fillinger, Daisy Foote, Ike Holter, and Laura Jacqmin; and special events including the announcement of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize finalists.

HOUSTON, TX – The Alley Theatre announces the line-up for the 2018 Alley All New Festival, January 20-January 28, 2018. The festival will reopen the Alley's Neuhaus Theatre and will feature readings of six new plays as well as special events throughout two weekends. Participating playwrights include Robert Askins, Glen Berger, Hilary Bettis, Eliza Clark, Daisy Foote, Selina Fillinger, Ike Holter, Laura Jacqmin, Claire Kiechel and Suzanne Vega. Packages are available for the second weekend and 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 next week at alleytheatre.org. All readings and special events are free and open to the public.

Playwright Daisy Foote adapts Horton Foote's Oscar-winning screenplay *Tender Mercies* for the stage in a new play reading directed by Michael Wilson. Jealousy and drinking destroyed Mac Sledge's marriage and his country music career. Then he meets Vietnam widow Rosa Lee Wadsworth at her Texas roadside motel. Their dare for a second chance tests faith and love in this powerful story of human endurance and forgiveness.

The lineup includes readings of *Queen of Basel* by Hillary Bettis, a writer on the Emmy-nominated television show "The Americans." Set during Art Basel, Miami's decadent annual festival, this bold contemporary take on Strindberg's classic *Miss Julie* follows a party queen after she is publicly humiliated and refuses to let the night end unless it's on her terms.

The festival will feature readings of Selina Fillinger's plays *Cinched* and *Strapped*. From a posh nineteenth century dinner party to a war over resources in a dystopic future, these paired plays explore gender and rebellion through the ages. The staged readings will be directed by Leslie Swackhamer.

New drama (*end of message*) by Laura Jacqmin follows a diverse team of video game developers working to meet a fast approaching deadline. Exhaustion sets in, tempers flare, and modern day work place grievances rise to the surface. The reading will be directed by Monty Cole.

The festival includes a reading of *Put Your House In Order* by Ike Holter (*Hit the Wall*). Equal parts romantic comedy and old school thriller, *Put Your House In Order* explores new beginnings at the end of the word. The reading will be directed by Matt Hune.

Playwright Eliza Clark, a writer/producer on TNT's "Animal Kingdom," participates in the festival with a reading of her play *Quack*. It centers on Dr. Irving Baer, whose daytime health and wellness show is watched by millions of women. When Dr. Baer is implicated in a national health crisis, his career and marriage suffer. But if Irving Baer is falling from grace, he's not going down alone. The reading is directed by Brandon Weinbrenner.

In addition to readings and staged readings, festival programming includes three special events – two **Artist Talks** (first weekend) and **Early Draft Preview** (second weekend).

Playwright Robert Askins (*Hand to God*, *The Carpenter*) returns to the Theatre and Alley All New Festival for a conversation with Alley Artistic Director Gregory Boyd to discuss his career writing for stage and screen.

Lover, Beloved's author/performer Suzanne Vega and director Jackson Gay will take a break from their rehearsal process to discuss their upcoming Alley world premiere.

Additionally, the festival will feature a special **Early Draft Preview** event that will showcase work by Glen Berger (*Underneath the Lintel*, *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*) and Claire Kiechel (*Pilgrims*, “The OA” on Netflix) and also include the announcement of the finalists for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize.

The Alley All New Festival continues to provide playwrights the resources needed to grow their work. The Festival also offers audiences a first look at plays that may appear in full productions at the Alley, as well as at theatres around the country. A past festival play and Alley commission, *Describe the Night* by Rajiv Joseph recently premiered Off-Broadway at Atlantic Theater Company following its fall world premiere here and *Syncing Ink* by NSangou Njikam, which appeared in the 2016 festival and premiered here last season during the 2017 festival, went on to New York’s Flea Theater earlier this fall. Upcoming plays in the Alley’s season that were part of past festivals include *Cleo* by Lawrence Wright; *Lover, Beloved: An Evening with Carson McCullers* by Suzanne Vega and Duncan Sheik; and *The Cake* by Bekah Brunstetter.

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

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

The full creative teams and casting will be announced in 2018.

2018 ALLEY ALL NEW FESTIVAL

READINGS

Tender Mercies

Adapted for the stage by Daisy Foote
Based on *Tender Mercies* written by Horton Foote
And by Special Arrangement with STUDIOCANAL
Directed by Michael Wilson

Playwright Daisy Foote adapts her father’s Oscar-winning screenplay *Tender Mercies* for the stage in a new play reading directed by Michael Wilson. Jealousy and drinking destroyed Mac Sledge’s marriage and his country music career. Then he meets Vietnam widow Rosa Lee Wadsworth at her Texas roadside motel. Their dare for a second chance tests faith and love in this powerful story of human endurance and forgiveness.

Queen of Basel by Hilary Bettis

It’s Art Basel, Miami’s week-long festival where the rich and famous party with impunity. Julie reigns queen at the South Beach hotel owned by her real estate mogul father. Tonight he’s thrown a decadent blowout but when her fiancé breaks up with her in front of the crowd, Julie hides out in the storage kitchen, humiliated and devastated. She is comforted by Christine, a cocktail waitress from war-torn Venezuela, whom her father has paid to get her home discretely. Christine calls her fiancé, John, an Uber driver from the Miami slums. But Julie refuses to let the night end unless it’s on her terms...A bold and contemporary take on Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* from a writer of the Emmy-nominated “The Americans.”

Cinched and Strapped by Selina Fillinger
Directed by Leslie Swackhamer

Corsets become armor, the sewer is salvation, lives are gambled on parlor games and sacrificed in war. From the posh guests of a 19th century dinner party in *Cinched* to the hardened warriors of a dystopic future in *Strapped*, these paired plays explore gender and rebellion by playfully examining the past and boldly imagining the future. A thrilling new voice in the American theatre, Fillinger questions what makes a man, what makes a woman, and who will make the rules in a fast-approaching new world.

(end of message) by Laura Jacqmin
Directed by Monty Cole

When the milestone date on their new video game is suddenly moved up – the week before Thanksgiving – a diverse team of game developers must camp out at the office for seven days straight, crunching to meet an impossible deadline. Exhaustion sets in, tempers flare and modern day work place grievances rise to the surface in this timely new drama with both humor and heart. Jacqmin has written for the theatre (winner of the 2008 Wasserstein Prize), television (“Get Shorty” and “Grace and Frankie”) and video games (*The Walking Dead, Season 3* and *Minecraft: Story Mode*).

Put Your House In Order by Ike Holter
Directed by Matt Hune

Just outside of Chicago. Fall. In only 24 hours, a first date turns into a life shaking adventure against the clock as two people are thrust into circumstances outside of their control. Equal parts romantic comedy and old school thriller, this new play from the author of *Hit the Wall* (Chicago’s Steppenwolf Garage Rep and New York’s Barrow Street Theater) and *Sender* (recently seen at Houston’s Rec Room) explores new beginnings at the end of the world.

Quack by Eliza Clark
Directed by Brandon Weinbrenner

Irving Baer is America’s doctor. His daytime health and wellness show is watched by millions of women. When enterprising young blogger River Thumbolt publishes an article implicating Dr. Baer in a national health crisis, America begins to turn on him. But Dr. Baer adores being adored. With his career suddenly hanging in the balance, his marriage on the rocks, and his carefully maintained public persona in peril, one thing becomes clear... If Irving Baer is going to fall from grace, he’s bringing River Thumbolt with him. *Quack* is a play about when happens when good people forget their best intentions.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Early Draft Preview and Susan Smith Blackburn Prize Announcement

Join us for excerpts from new plays in development at the Alley Theatre by Glen Berger (*Underneath the Lintel*, *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*) and Claire Kiechel (*Pilgrims* in the Alley All New Reading Series, “The OA” on Netflix) followed by a discussion with the writers led by Artistic Director Gregory Boyd. Next, Leslie Swackhamer, Executive Director of the prestigious international Susan Smith Blackburn Prize recognizing female playwrights, will announce the finalists for the 2018 award, which will be presented at the Alley in March.

Artist Talk with Suzanne Vega and Jackson Gay

Join Director of New Work Elizabeth Frankel in conversation with Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Suzanne Vega and director Jackson Gay as they take a break from their rehearsal process to discuss their upcoming Alley world premiere *Lover, Beloved: An Evening With Carson McCullers*.

Artist Talk with Robert Askins

Join Artistic Director Gregory Boyd in conversation with Houston-native Robert Askins, author of last season's *Hand to God* and *The Carpenter* from the 2017 Alley All New Festival, as they discuss Askins' career writing for the stage and screen from having a Tony-nominated play on Broadway to developing television shows set in Texas.

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

WEEKEND PACKAGES

A Weekend Package for January 26-28 including prime seating at all presentations, exclusive artist access, and meals between performances are on sale now at alleytheatre.org/allnew and costs \$120.

PRESS

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

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

2018 Alley All New artists' headshots can be found here:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jfqamepj77qjpzs/AABzyfDhmzJLI_Jd_3CjQlf7a?dl=0

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 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 National Endowment for the Arts, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Sally J. Langston and Rutger Beelaerts. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2017-2018 season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre; Four Seasons Hotel Houston, the official hotel of the Alley Theatre; and Lynn Wyatt.

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. 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 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.

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