

ALLEY THEATRE

Sensational Political Drama **THE GREAT SOCIETY** Brings LBJ back to the Alley stage

Robert Schenkkan's LBJ's story continues, January 26-February 18, 2018

The Alley co-produces the play with 2017 Tony Award-Winner Dallas Theater Center – joining casts and creative teams from the two largest regional theaters in Texas

HOUSTON, TX – The Alley Theatre announces the cast and creative team for Robert Schenkkan's ***The Great Society***, a co-production with Dallas Theater Center (DTC) which brings the iconic figure – President Lyndon Baines Johnson– back to the Alley stage. Last year, Tony Award-winning play *All the Way* dramatized the tumultuous first year of LBJ's presidency. This play continues with the years from 1965 to 1968, as LBJ champions the most ambitious legislative work in his vision for a Great Society even as the war in Vietnam spins out of control.

The play, by Texas playwright and Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Schenkkan and directed by DTC Artistic Director Kevin Moriarity, begins performances January 26, opens January 31, and runs through February 18, 2018 in the Alley's Hubbard Theatre. Tickets are on sale now at alleytheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 713-220-5700.

The Alley collaborates with 2017 Tony Award-winning DTC, to co-produce the new LBJ play. Two dozen actors portray the roles of some of the most dynamic political figures of the century, including the 36th President of the United States himself, Lyndon Baines Johnson. Many actors who previously appeared in the Alley's *All the Way* production, return to their roles in *The Great Society*.

Dallas actor Brandon Potter returns to the role of LBJ with Alley actor and Houston native Shawn Hamilton returning to portray Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The production begins in 1965. Besieged by political opponents, Johnson marshals all his political wiles to try to pass some of the most important social programs in U.S. history while the country descends into chaos over the war and backlash against civil rights.

Alley Resident Company Members include Elizabeth Bunch as Muriel Humphrey and Pat Nixon with Chris Hutchison returning to the role of Robert McNamara. David Rainey again takes on the role of Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Jay Sullivan plays Sen. Robert Kennedy, and Todd Waite is Sen. Everett Dirksen.

The cast of artists from Dallas Theater Center's Brierley Resident Acting Company includes Ace Anderson as Stokely Carmichael and John Lewis and Tiana Kaye Johnson as Sally Childress and Coretta Scott King.

The cast also includes Alley visiting artist David Matranga as Gen. William Westmoreland and Houston actors Brandon Morgan as Bob Moses and Santry Rush as Deke DeLoach. Dallas actors include Tyrees Allen as James Bevel, David Coffee as J. Edgar Hoover, Chris Hury as Gov. George Wallace, Dean Nolen as Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and Leah Spillman as Lady Bird Johnson.

An Austin native and University of Texas graduate, Schenkkan is the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning epic, *The Kentucky Cycle*, which also won the LA Drama Critics Award, and was nominated for the Tony, Drama Desk, and the Outer Critics Circle Awards. In 2014, *All the Way*, Part One of his "LBJ Plays," won the Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League, Kennedy Prize, and the ATCA/Steinberg

Awards for Best Play and broke two Broadway box office records. Robert has since adapted *All the Way* as a feature film for HBO, produced by Steven Spielberg and starring Bryan Cranston. Robert is also co-screenwriter of the recent film *Hacksaw Ridge*, directed by Mel Gibson. Schenkkan's current play *Building the Wall* is set in 2019 during the Trump administration and had its world premiere rollout at the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles.

The Great Society creative team includes Tony Award-winning Scenic Designer Beowulf Boritt, Costume Designer Jennifer Caprio, Lighting Designer Clifton Taylor, Original Music & Sound Design by Broken Chord, and Projection Design by Caite Hevner.

The Great Society debuted at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in July of 2014. *The New York Times* says the play is "... impressive in its scope, surprisingly energetic and shines a bright, clear light on a pivotal moment in American history..."

Performances of *The Great Society* 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. *The Great Society* is recommended for ages 13 + due to mature language. After its run in Houston, *The Great Society* moves to the Dallas Theater Center where it will begin performances March 9, opens officially March 13, and runs through April 1, 2018.

SPONSORS: *The Great Society* is generously sponsored by The Humphreys Foundation (Premier Sponsor), Schlumberger (Lead Sponsor), Hogan Lovells (Supporting Sponsors), Norton Rose Fulbright (Supporting Sponsor) and Carol and Mike Linn (Associate Producers). 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.

TICKETS: Tickets to *The Great Society* are now on sale and start at \$26. Discounted tickets are available for military and senior, and any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for \$16 for designated performances in designated sections. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

TALKBACKS: The Alley Theatre will present a Designer Talk in the Texas Room (4th Floor) at 1:30 p.m. on January 28 prior to the matinee performance of *The Great Society*. The discussion will feature the creative team of *The Great Society*, giving audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the design process.

The Alley Theatre will present Artist TalkBacks following the February 3 (2:30 p.m.) and February 6 (7:30 p.m.) performances of *The Great Society*. These discussions will feature cast and artistic staff. Designer Talks, and Artist TalkBacks discussions are free and open to the public.

PRESS MATERIALS: <https://www.alleytheatre.org/press/all-the-way-photos>

**The Great Society photos will be posted when available*

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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.

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