Alley Theatre Announces the Cast & Creative Team of Sarah Ruhl’s *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*

This Off-the-Wall Comedy Celebrates Life: The Good, The Bad, and The Bizarre

HOUSTON TX - The Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre announces the cast and creative team of Sarah Ruhl’s *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*. This off-the-wall comedy is directed by Alley Associate Producer & Casting Director Brandon Weinbrenner and runs April 15 – May 8, 2022 in the Hubbard Theatre.

An incessantly ringing cell phone in a quiet café. A stranger at the next table who has had enough. And a dead man. So begins *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*, a wildly imaginative comedy by MacArthur “Genius” Sarah Ruhl (*The Clean House*). A romantically surreal play about the odyssey of a woman forced to confront her own assumptions about morality, redemption, and the need to connect in a technologically obsessed world.

“*Dead Man’s Cell Phone* is by far my favorite play by Sarah Ruhl,” said Alley Artistic Director Rob Melrose. “That is saying quite a lot because in the past decades she has written some of the greatest plays for the American theatre: *Eurydice, The Clean House, In the Next Room*, and *The Oldest Boy*. For some reason, this play remains the American Theatre’s best kept secret (hopefully until now). It contains such brilliant writing and is a kind of modern *Odyssey*, in which one set of strange experiences leads to another and another. It reminds me of other favorites of mine: *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Caroll, and *Dream Story* by Arthur Schnitzler where the main character is sucked into a surreal world and has to manage the new reality. Of course, instead of a tollbooth, or a hole or a dream, what starts this story off is the most omnipresent piece of technology of our times: the cellphone.”

“In *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*, playwright Sarah Ruhl creates a world unlike any other. The audience, like the play’s characters, must navigate this world with a new sense of space, time, and reality,” shares director Brandon Weinbrenner. “By focusing on the ubiquitous cell phone, Ruhl incites a quest for her protagonist that is completely relatable yet utterly bizarre. The result is nothing short of magic. I’m humbled to bring all the unifying and isolating moments of *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* to the Hubbard Theatre at the Alley Theatre.”
The cast of *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* includes Alley’s Resident Acting Company members Elizabeth Bunch as Jean, Chris Hutchison as Gordon, Melissa Pritchett as The Other Woman, Christopher Salazar as Dwight, and Todd Waite as Mrs. Gottleib.

Rounding out the cast is Michelle Elaine (*Sweat, Sense and Sensibility*) as Hermia.

The creative team of *Dead man’s Cell Phone* includes Scenic Designer Michael Locher, Costume Designer Tricia Barsamian, Lighting Designer Isabella Byrd, Sound Designer Matt Starritt, Stage Manager Rebecca R.D. Hamlin, and Assistant Stage Manager Emily Bohannan.

**PRESS NIGHT:** Wednesday, April 20 at 7:30pm. Invitations will be sent at a later date.

**UPDATED COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS:** Due to recent guidance from government officials, including the CDC, the Mayor of Houston, and the Houston City Health Department Chief Medical Officer, the Alley has updated COVID-19 policies and protocols.

Beginning Wednesday, March 9, the Alley will no longer be requiring proof of negative COVID test or proof of vaccination to enter the Theatre. Additionally, guests and volunteers will no longer be required to wear a mask inside the Theatre, though anyone is, of course, still welcome to do so. The Alley Theatre is not alone in the Theater District, as other venues have already changed or will change protocols in the near future.

The Alley will continue to monitor the community levels for Harris County. Should anything change, we will update all guests of new protocols in advance of their ticketed performance or event.

We continue to ask that if guests feel ill, please refrain from coming to Theatre. In that instance, we ask that guests contact Guest Services at boxoffice@alleytheatre.org or call 713-220-5700 to reschedule tickets.

**DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION:** From May 9 through May 22, paid digital version of *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* filmed live at the Alley, will be available for viewing. Guests who have purchased an in-person ticket and do not feel comfortable attending in-person may transfer their ticket before the start of their ticketed performance to a digital ticket. Digital tickets are $20 and can be purchased at alleytheatre.org. Limited digital tickets will be available for purchase.

**SPONSORS:** *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* is sponsored by Honorary Producer Beth Madison; Associate Producers Deloitte, Norton Rose Fulbright and Kathryn Ketelsen. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2021-22 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre.

**TICKETS:** Tickets to *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* are now on sale and start at $28. Discounted tickets are available for military, seniors, and any student or educator, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for designated performances. Tickets can be ordered online ([alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org)) or by phone (713.220.5700).

**CONNECT WITH US:** #Alley75, @alleytheatre, #AlleyDMCP

**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 is
committed to developing and producing theatre that is as diverse as the Houston community. The Theatre produces up to 16 plays and nearly 500 performances each season, ranging from the best current work and re-invigorated classic plays to new plays by contemporary writers. Home to a full-time resident company of actors, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline—actors, directors, designers, composers, playwrights—who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

The Alley is comprised of two state-of-the-art theatres: the 774-seat Hubbard Theatre and the 296-seat Neuhaus Theatre. The Alley reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance, education, and community engagement programs. Its audience enrichment programs include pre-show and post-performance talks, events, and workshops for audience members of all ages.

###