

ALLEY THEATRE

Director Rob Melrose Embraces Texas with THE WINTER'S TALE

Artistic Director Rob Melrose sets the classic Shakespearean production in Texas, directing his second play at the Alley alongside the Alley Resident Acting Company

Playing in the Hubbard Theatre, September 13 – October 13, 2019

HOUSTON –The Alley Theatre and Rob Melrose, Artistic Director of the Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre, announce the cast and crew of the Hubbard Theatre season opener ***The Winter's Tale*** by **William Shakespeare**. Melrose will direct the cast, which includes the entire Alley Resident Acting Company (who currently appear in *Murder on the Orient Express*). This whimsical tale runs September 13-October 13, 2019, on the Hubbard Theatre stage. Tickets are available now at alleytheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 713.220.5700.

In *The Winter's Tale*, romance, tragedy, and comedy take center stage. Set in Texas, this magical tale is viewed through the imaginative eyes of a young, Houstonian child. This play is a sweeping story of wrath and redemption and of lost and then found love. The Resident Acting Company will join together to tell Shakespeare's beloved fable of hard-won joy and the promise of renewal.

"*The Winter's Tale* is Shakespeare's play about healing, about atonement, about correcting missteps, even unimaginatively big ones. Shakespeare reminds us that after every winter, no matter how bleak, there is always spring," said Melrose, "I asked myself, what does this play mean to the Alley, to Houston, to Texas, and to our nation. I felt like this was a time when we needed to be reminded of the resiliency of the human spirit and of time's ability to heal wounds. It is one of Shakespeare's most hopeful plays and it captures my current mood as I start my tenure here at the Alley, one of profound hope."

The Winter's Tale is set in two locations, with Alley's new Director of Design Michael Locher recreating the looks for Sicilia and Bohemia. The Sicilian environment is a sophisticated, cosmopolitan city, like Houston. Bohemia encompasses a West Texas atmosphere with ranches and cowboys.

The cast of *The Winter's Tale* includes Resident Acting Company members **Elizabeth Bunch** as Paulina, **Dylan Godwin** as Clown, **Shawn Hamilton** as Camillo, **Chris Hutchison** as Polixenes, **Melissa Pritchett** as Mopsa/Emilia, **David Rainey** as Shepherd, **Jay Sullivan** as Florizel, and **Todd Waite** as Antigonus.

In addition to the Resident Acting Company are returning Alley actors **Juan Sebastián Cruz** (*72 Miles to Go... Alley All New* reading) as Mamillius, **Melissa Molano** (*Murder on the Orient Express*) as Dion, **Christopher Salazar** (*The Humans*) as Autolycus, and **Mike Whitebread** (*One Man, Two Guvvorns; A Midsummer Night's Dream*) serves as the Musician.

Actors making their Alley debut in *The Winter's Tale* include **Elijah Alexander** (Barrington Stage Company: *Gertrude and Claudius*) as Leontes, **Margaret Ivey** (Epic Theatre Ensemble: *Measure for Measure*) as Perdita and **Tiffany Rachelle Stewart** (Broadway: *The Curious Incident of the Dog In The Night-time*) as Hermione.

The creative team includes Scenic Designer Michael Locher, Costume Designer Raquel Barreto, Lighting Designer Cat Tate Starmer, Sound Designer Cliff Caruthers, Assistant Director Brandon Weinbrenner, Voice and Text Director Andrew Wade, Movement Coach Melissa Pritchett, New York Casting by McCorkle Casting, Ltd., and Stage Manager Rebecca R.D. Hamlin.

The Winter's Tale by William Shakespeare begins previews September 13, opens September 18, and runs through October 13 in the Hubbard Theatre. Performances of *The Winter's Tale* 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 Winter's Tale* is recommended for ages 12 and up.

Two student matinees of *The Winter's Tale* will be held October 9 and 10 at 10:00 a.m. Alley's Education and Community Engagement department has created an online resource for students and younger audience members. You can access Alley Re-Sourced [HERE](#).

TICKETS: Tickets to *The Winter's Tale* are now on sale and start at \$28. Discounted tickets are available for military, seniors, and any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for designated performances. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

SPONSORS: *The Winter's Tale* is supported by Supporting Sponsors: National Endowment for the Arts and The Rand Group; and Associate Producers: Cynthia and Anthony Petrello. The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2019-20 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre; and The Four Seasons Hotel Houston, the official hotel of the Alley Theatre.

ALLEY IN CONTEXT: The Alley Theatre will present a post-show discussion following the 2:30 p.m. performance on Saturday, September 21 with two local Shakespearean scholars discussing the themes of the play. Following the 7:30 p.m. performance on Tuesday, September 24, the cast will hold a post-show discussion.

DESIGNER TALK: One hour before the Sunday, September 15 matinee preview performance (2:30 p.m.), a member of the artistic staff will lead a discussion with the production's creative team to give audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the design process. These pre-show talks will offer audiences an exclusive opportunity to ask questions about the designer's work and learn how they brought the script to life. Designer Talks will take place in the Texas Room.

PHOTOS: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hjlwzeemx7jdb0t/AAA1w6sbgFZ-a4Y5vliiFzAoa?dl=0>

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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 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 Alley's Hubbard Theatre created a new 774-seat state-of-the-art performance venue. Matched with the newly rebuilt 296-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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