

ALLEYWAY THEATRE ANNOUNCES 30TH ANNUAL BUFFALO QUICKIES WILL BE PRESENTED IN-PERSON, OUTDOORS

Innovative thinking allows for a return to live theatre fifteen months later

Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.



Rachel Lynett is the winner of the 2021 Yale Drama Series Prize. Her play IN TRANSIT is one of six featured in the festival, directed by Josie DiVincenzo, starring Smirna Mercedes and Victoria Perez.

A safe, socially distanced, and (mostly) outdoor theatre experience will mark a return to live theatre at Alleyway Theatre, fifteen months after the pandemic shutdown began. From June 17 – July 10, the festival will play Wednesdays thru Saturdays at 8:15pm on the 600 block of Main Street. Storefronts along Main Street will be transformed into distinct theatrical worlds, each containing a short play. Small audience groups will watch from seats on the sidewalk, and listen through headphones, as the actors perform behind the storefront glass. Audiences will then rotate to the next window to peek in on another story, seeing all six in a single evening. Tickets are \$30-42 and must be purchased in advance.

“Last year, when the pandemic began, we brought BUFFALO QUICKIES to WNY live on YouTube. This year, we’re bringing it back live outdoors and in-person,” executive artistic director Chris J Handley explains. The company is finishing its first season under new leadership with another milestone in this unique theatrical experience. “We did YouTube live this year. We did a commissioned film on location, we did a radio play, we did all the Zooms. It was time to get people back inside the theatre. Well, outside the theatre.”

Audiences will don a set of headphones usually used for silent discos as they sit in front of Main Street windows, watching a live play through the glass. Each play happens simultaneously, as different audience members see each play on a unique schedule. By night’s end, they’ll have rotated through all six.

THE SAFETY

“We needed to find a way to do theatre again, live and in-person. By putting the play in a window and letting the audience watch from the sidewalk, we knew we had a safe way to make it happen,” says Handley. The theatre has a full slate of COVID protocols, including weekly testing of its artists. “It’s about bringing everything back slowly and safely – actors, audiences, designers. Once we started talking about the project, everyone just jumped in with both feet,” says Handley. “We’ve been planning this for months. It’s how we hope to mark the end of the pandemic programming and get back to butts in seats.”

Safety is the foremost concern for Alleyway. Actors will be tested weekly. A guide will lead each audience group between windows, ensuring masking and distancing. Stage management will sanitize seats in between use. The

theatre installed new MERV-13 filters and air/surface sterilizers throughout its HVAC system, and a designated Covid Compliance Officer is now on staff.

“We want to do this right, and safely. While limiting time indoors (box office and restrooms) was always a priority, we also thought it would be a good way for people to test coming back to the theatre. So, we’ve got one of the ten-minute plays inside, but we’ve rearranged the seating so you’ll be far away from everyone else, and you’ll be out the door again in ten minutes. This way, our audience can get their feet wet coming back to the theatre again.”

THE PLAYS

The six plays run the gamut from a musical based on the hallmark short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*, a solo peek into Helen Mirren's day off, and a grown-ass man's dream about a note he sent up to heaven in a balloon. While some were chosen from recent submissions to the Maxim Mazumdar New Play Competition, others are plays and playwrights the company has had its eye on. “We think these are some of the best playwrights working today. Their plays are delightful, funny, challenging, and timely. It’s everything Quickies has been for the last thirty years and more, Handley says. “This is Alleyway making good on our commitment to bring bold and innovative theatre to Buffalo. If you haven’t seen what we’re doing, this is the perfect time to check us out.”

THE PEOPLE

Written by Lauren Davenport, Devon Hayakawa, Alex Lin, Rachel Lynett, Sam Norman & Eliza Randall, and Bruce Walsh. Directed by Josie DiVincenzo, Susan Drozd, Chris J Handley, Robyn Lee Horn, and Steve Vaughan. Starring Kelly Copps, Steve Copps, Trevor Dugan, Jane Hereth, Amy Jakiel, Smirna Mercedes, David C. Mitchell, Shanntina Moore, Victor Morales, and Victoria Perez. Designed by Dyan Burlingame, Lynn Koscielniak, Emily Powrie, with costumes by Todd Warfield and sound by Andy Borchick.

IN-PERSON PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

JUNE 17 - JULY 10, 2021.

Wednesday thru Saturdays at 8:15pm (Arrive by 8pm).

Tickets (\$30-~~\$42~~) must be purchased in advance at alleyway.com or **716-852-2600 x0**.

Seating is limited. Masks and distancing will be required. Patrons should plan to walk to multiple storefront locations within a half-block radius of the Alleyway throughout the course of the evening. Sterilized headphones will be provided to each ticket holder. A credit card or license must be held on deposit until the headphones are returned at the end of the night.

About the Plays

PAY YOUR FERRYMAN

By Lauren Davenport

World Premiere Directed by Chris J Handley

Starring Victor Morales

Charon, the ferryman of Hades, is in desperate need of a break. You just happen to be next in line for passage into the Afterlife. Your afterlife, to be exact. How you choose to compensate Charon for your passage will determine where you end up.

LILY AND TESSA'S SUPER STAR SHOW, EPISODE 37

By Devon Hayakawa

World Premiere directed by Robyn Lee Horn

Starring Jane Hereth

It's time for Lily and Tessa's Super Star Super Special Show, and they're going to revive all of their greatest hits -- Avril Lavigne dance party! Celebrity impressions! Puppet shows! The only problem is that Lily still hasn't shown up yet... and Tessa might have to do the whole show alone.

HELEN MIRREN TAKES A DAY OFF

By Alex Lin

Directed by Steve Vaughan

Starring Shanntina Moore

Helen Mirren has a day off. Helen Mirren needs to work on her monologue. Helen Mirren's brother needs way too much attention. Helen Mirren gets a call from frenemy Judi Dench with ex-husband Kenneth Branagh on the same line. Helen Mirren's dog is dying. Can she handle it? Of course she can. She's Helen Mirren.

IN TRANSIT

By Rachel Lynett

Directed by Josie DiVincenzo

Starring Victoria Perez and Smirna Mercedes

Becca and Ryan run into each other at an airport having not seen each other for five years. This chance encounter asks them both to reflect on their past relationship and navigate their possible future.

THE YELLOW WALLPAPER

Music by Eliza Randall

Book and Lyrics by Sam Norman

2020 Mazumdar New Play Competition Finalist

World Premiere directed by Susan Drozd

Music Direction by Phil Farugia
Starring Amy Jakiel, Kelly Copps, Steve Copps
Developed in a reading with HARP Theatricals

It's 1890 and Charlotte is forced into isolation following a postpartum disorder diagnosis. Charlotte's husband and sister-in-law, following doctor's orders, keep Charlotte away from her newborn son, sending her deeper into despair. Eventually, in her seclusion, she becomes convinced another woman is living inside the wallpaper. Charlotte desperately tries to free the shadow – but at what cost?

This story is reimaged in a beautiful new musical score based on the famous short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, which in 1892 was considered a hallmark of feminist literature,

GROWN-ASS LOUIS

By Bruce Walsh
Winner 2017 Actors Theatre of Louisville Heideman Award and Kennedy Center Gary Garrison National Ten-Minute Play Award
Directed by Chris J Handley
Starring David C. Mitchell and Trevor Dugan

When Louis was eleven years old, he wrote a note to his recently deceased father, tied it to a balloon, and released it to the heavens. But now, even though he's a grown-ass man, he can't stop wondering if his dad ever received the message.