

For Immediate Release

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J. Isaiah Smith
Marty the Zebra



Jordan Smith
Alex the Lion



Sue Gillespie Booton
Gloria the Hippo



Manny Oñate
Melman the Giraffe



Alphonse Kroeten
King Julien



Brian Guehring
Skipper

The Rose Theater announces the cast of *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The Rose Theater is pleased to announce the cast of its upcoming production, ***Madagascar: A Musical Adventure***, playing October 6-22, 2017. The show is being directed by long-time Rose artist educator Kevin Ehrhart.

Based on the Dreamworks Animation motion picture, ***Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*** features everyone's favorite friends from the movie: Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Gloria the Hippo, Melvin the Giraffe, King Julien the Lemur and more. The menagerie will embark on an exciting expedition that leads them from the safety of the Central Park Zoo to the mysteries of Madagascar.

Brothers J. Isaiah Smith and Jordan Smith will portray best friends Marty the Zebra and Alex the Lion, respectively. Isaiah is a former Rose student who has been featured in a number of mainstage productions, including Shere Khan in last season's *The Jungle Book*, Flotsam in *The Little Mermaid*, and the ensemble in *Mary Poppins*. At the Community Playhouse he tackled the role of TJ in *Sister Act*. He is a Freddy G Award winning actor and singer, and was nominated for a Nebraska High School Theatre Arts award. Jordan Smith is a local artist who is currently active film making. He recently made his stage debut at the Omaha Community Playhouse in the ensemble of *Beauty and The Beast*. ***Madagascar*** marks Jordan's first appearance on The Rose stage.

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Sue Gillespie Booton will be featured as Gloria the Hippo. Booton is the resident choreographer at The Rose and serves as the director of the theater's BROADWAY at The Rose education program. She was last seen on stage as the Dragon in last season's *Shrek the Musical*. Other Rose stage credits include *The Cat in the Hat*, *Pete the Cat*, *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, *How I Became a Pirate*, and *Pinkalicious-The Musical*. In 2014, Booton was one of eight outstanding educators from schools and performing arts centers around the country selected to work one-on-one with Broadway greats at as a part of the annual Freddie G Broadway Experience.

Manny Oñate will play Melman the Giraffe. A musical theatre student at Creighton University, Oñate will make his Rose debut with ***Madagascar***. Other credits include *Antigone* at Creighton, *Yucca Corridor* at the Great Plains Theatre Conference and *The Dairy Maid-Right* a joint project with Creighton and the Blue Barn Theatre.

The kooky King Julien will be played by Alphonse Kroeten, who recently performed in The Rose's productions of *Peter Pan* and *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. Other credits include Papa Bear in *The Berenstain Bears Save Christmas* and the Guard in *The Wizard of Oz*. He also played the Monkey in *The Little Engine That Could* Rose touring show. During ***Madagascar***, Kroeten will also portray a Police Officer and the Ship's Captain.

A highlight of ***Madagascar*** is the portrayal of the mischievous penguins. Brian Guehring will play the leader of the penguins, Skipper, as well as Lars Lemur. Guehring is The Rose's education director and playwright-in-residence. A true Rose favorite, Guehring has been seen in *Shrek the Musical* as Lord Farquaad, *Honk!* as Turkey, *Robin Hood* as Prince John and *A Year with Frog and Toad* as Toad, among many others.

Rounding out the adult cast of ***Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*** are Kendra Ball as Kowalski the Penguin and the Foosa Leader; Anna Jordan as Rico the Penguin, Candy and Lynn Lemur; and Karl Houser as Maurice the Penguin, Mason, Animal Control Officer and Old Lady.

Madagascar: A Musical Adventure features several youth actors, many of whom are students at The Rose. These actors include: Cooper Alber, Liam Brenzel, Nora Coffey, Audrey Egbert, Jude Glaser, Elliot Kerkhofs, Phonenix Nehls, Chase Robinson, Will Rodgers, Audrey Saucier, Brooke Vogel, and Sophie Williams.

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The *Madagascar* team is being led by director Kevin Ehrhart. Ehrhart is a long-time staff member of the Omaha Theatre Company, with a 23-year history with the organization that dates back to the days of the Emmy Gifford Children’s Theater. Ehrhart studied dramatic arts at UNO and is a Master Teacher with the Nebraska Arts Council’s Artist-in-Schools program. He teaches improvisation, directing, Shakespeare and all forms of creative drama for ages preschool through high school. As a director, Kevin has been responsible for numerous main stage productions including *Madeline’s Christmas* and *A Year with Frog and Toad*. He has performed on stage as Smee in *Peter & the Starcatcher*, George in *George and Martha: Tons of Fun*, as the Cat in the Hat in *Seussical – The Musical* and as Pierre in *How I Became a Pirate*.

The complete cast and crew of The Rose’s production of *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure* consists of:

Marty	J. Isaiah Smith*
Alex	Jordan Smith
Gloria.....	Sue Gillespie Booton
Melman	Manny Oñate
King Julien/Police Officer/Ship’s Captain.....	Alphonse Kroeten
Skipper/Lars Lemur	Brian Guehring
Kowalski/Foosa Leader	Kendra Ball
Rico/Candy/Lynn Lemur.....	Anna Jordan
Maurice/Mason/Animal Control/Old Lady	Karl Houser
Private/Steak/Foosa/Lemur.....	Audrey Egbert* † Will Rodgers ‡
Mort/Penguin/Steak/Zoo Visitor	Chase Robinson* † Nora Coffey* ‡
Zelda/Server/Steak/Penguin/Foosa/Lemur.....	Audrey Saucier* † Sophie Williams* ‡
Zeke/Server/Steak/Penguin/Foosa/Lemur.....	Cooper Alber † Liam Brenzel ‡
Zoo Visitor/Steak/Penguin/Foosa/Lemur	Phoenix Nehls* † Brooke Vogel* ‡
Zoo Visitor/Steak/Penguin/Foosa/Lemur	Jude Glaser* † Elliot Kerkhofs* ‡

* Current or former Rose student † Lemur Cast ‡ Foosa Cast

Lemur Cast Performance Dates: Oct. 7 at 2 pm; Oct. 8 at 2 pm; Oct. 13 at 7 pm; Oct. 14 at 5 pm; Oct. 15 at 2 pm; Oct. 21 at 2 pm; Oct. 22 at 10 am
Foosa Cast Performance Dates: Oct. 6 at 7 pm; Oct. 7 at 5 pm; Oct. 14 at 2 pm; Oct. 15 at 10 am; Oct. 20 at 7 pm; Oct. 21 at 5 pm; Oct. 22 at 2 pm

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Madagascar: A Musical Adventure runs October 6-22, 2017, with performances on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, Sundays at 2 pm, and select Sundays at 10 am. The 2 pm show on Saturday, October 14 will be interpreted for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; this show will also include audio description services for audience members who are blind. The 5 pm show on Saturday, October 14 is designated as sensory-friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum. Contact The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 for more information.

Tickets for ***Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*** are \$20. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores for \$16. Members of The Rose receive four free tickets to the production.

Madagascar: A Musical Adventure is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kiewit Companies.

About The Rose

The Rose Theater is one of the largest and most accomplished children's theaters in the nation, with a reputation for enriching the lives of children and families through top-quality professional productions and arts education. In 2016, *American Theatre* magazine named The Rose one of the 20 top children's theaters in the United States. The Rose is committed to making the arts accessible to all children, providing opportunities for thousands of children throughout the community to attend shows and participate in classes each year. Over the course of a year, approximately 70,000 people attend the public performances held at the theater, and nearly 30,000 students attend field trip shows annually. The theater strives to introduce young people to a mix of both traditional favorites and ground-breaking original productions. A number of plays and musicals have made their world premiere on The Rose stage, including the stage adaptation of *Prancer*, *Pete the Cat: The Musical*, *Sherlock Holmes & the First Baker Street Irregular*, *Zen Ties*, *Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band*, and *The Grocer's Goblin & The Little Mermaid*. We take pride knowing that The Rose is the place where children of all ages experience theater for the first time, and we are dedicated to helping them appreciate theater for a lifetime.

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