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Audience will decide Big Bad Wolf's fate in *The True Story of The Three Little Pigs* at The Rose

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The Big Bad Wolf is on trial and audiences at The Rose will decide his fate in ***The True Story of The Three Little Pigs***, the latest mainstage musical playing January 27 - February 12 at The Rose. The 60-minute production features a cast of Rose favorites, along with some newcomers to the stage in a retro romp the entire family will enjoy.

"The show has a fabulous sense of humor. It has a strong sense of empathy for under-represented groups of people. And an undying love of music, especially a love of rock and roll -- specifically the rock and roll music of the icons, The Beatles." says show director Kevin Ehrhart.

The True Story of The Three Little Pigs follows the trial of Alexander T. Wolf (better known as The Big Bad Wolf) after being accused of unthinkable crimes against piggy-dom. Played by Dan Chevalier (*Honk!*, *A Year with Frog and Toad*), the Wolf insists the well-known events are simply a misunderstanding and that his side of the story has simply not been heard. Intrepid (or is it intrepig?) reporter Lillian McGill (played by Rose newcomer Ashley Laverty) is determined to get to the bottom of the story as she covers the trial of the century.

"This is just a really smart -- and a little bit subversive -- play," says Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick. "In it, you have this twisted and corrupt court system, being fed by a media circus. You have issues of race and of fairness. But it is all framed in a very fun, satirical lens. It is really hilarious, with a lot of verbal and physical humor."

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The main question at hand in ***The True Story of The Three Little Pigs***? Can the Wolf truly get a fair trial? Judge Juris Prudence, played by Kimberlee Stone (*Goodnight Moon*), has some questionable morals -- and a real passion for musical theater! She presides over a parade of Piggysylvanian porkers including Prosecutor Julia, played by Lauren Krupski (*Shrek the Musical*, *Prancer*, *A Christmas Story*, *Pete the Cat*) and Bailiff Billy, played by Robby Stone (*Shrek*, *Prancer*, *Big Nate*, *Jackie & Me*).

“This team just really does an excellent job of embodying all the smart humor that is such a big part of this script,” says Gutschick.

The True Story of The Three Little Pigs features a retro 60s vibe with music inspired by The Beatles and a wardrobe to match. Audiences can expect to be entertained by a Wolf in hippie clothing and a *That Girl*-esque reporter. The set, designed by Bridgette Dreher, is done in a “Back at the Barnyard” style with touches of 1960s flair. Costumes designed by Sherri Geerdes cover the gamut of retro styles and a rainbow of color. Music (directed by Jerry Brabec) and choreography (led by Sue Gillespie Booton) references *The Yellow Submarine* and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, James Brown and Elvis Presley.

“This show just really channels its own Beatlemania,” says Ehrhart. “Everything from the set to the costumes to the choreography. It’s just a lot of fun.”

In the end, the decision about the Wolf’s guilt or innocence comes down to an audience vote.

“There are two different endings,” explains Gutschick. “The show allows the audience to have an input on the outcome of the show, which is really unique.”

Written by Robert Kauzlaric, ***The True Story of The Three Little Pigs*** is based on the book by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. The production was called “one of the best children’s shows of the year” by *The New York Times*. Kauzlaric is a Chicago-based playwright, actor, and director who has written more than a dozen theatrical adaptations which have been performed in nearly forty U.S. states, as well as in England, Ireland, and Canada.

The music for ***The True Story of The Three Little Pigs*** was composed by Paul Gilvary and William Rush. Gilvary has composed original music for numerous shows at Lifeline Theatre in Chicago, including *Crossing California*, *Cat’s Cradle*, *Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle*, *Puss in Boots*, and *Bongo Larry and Two Bad Bears*. A bandmate to co-composer Paul Gilvary, and a student of the mystic arts, Rush is self-described “rhythmic sculptor.” This is his first theatrical work.

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The True Story of The Three Little Pigs is recommended for families of children ages six and up. The show is approximately 60 minutes long without an intermission.

The show runs January 27 through February 12, with performances on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. The 2 pm show on Saturday, Feb. 4 will be interpreted for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; the 5 pm show on Saturday, Feb. 4 is designated as sensory-friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum. The 2 pm show on Saturday, Feb. 11 will include audio description services for audience members who are blind. Contact The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 for more information.

Tickets for ***The True Story of The Three Little Pigs*** are \$20. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores. Members of The Rose receive four free tickets to the production.

The True Story of The Three Little Pigs is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Baird Holm, 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 *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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