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Rose Theater 2018-19 Season Shines a Spotlight on Stories of Courage and Personal Adventure

*Upcoming season brings world premiere shows
and theater upgrades to theatergoers*

(OMAHA, NE) During its 2018-19 season, The Rose Theater plans to shine a spotlight on stories of courage and personal adventure. Building on more than 70 years of inspiring a love of theater in young people, The Rose's new season brings audiences along on journeys with characters who push beyond their own limits, challenge the world around them, face their fears and succeed despite adversity. In addition, recent upgrades to the theater's lighting and sound system will make the theater-going experience more enjoyable for audiences.

"This season finds us following along with a wide range of characters as they attempt to find their place in the community, mustering their courage to overcome obstacles," says Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick.

The 2018-19 Rose season consists of seven hour-long mainstage shows included with membership, along with two premium mainstage shows that will run approximately two hours with an intermission. The Rose's First Stage program for very young children returns with two interactive shows performed on the theater's smaller Hitchcock Stage.

Shows in the upcoming season include familiar favorites like ***Winnie the Pooh*** and the ***Hungry Caterpillar***, stories from popular book series like ***Judy Moody*** and ***Goosebumps***, and dramatic new works like *Return to Niobrara* and *The Doll Maker's Gift*. The two premium shows -- ***Elf the Musical*** and ***Roald Dahl's Matilda*** -- immerse larger-than-life characters into whole new environments for a theater experience that is both hysterical and moving. Two classic children's tales -- ***The Little Engine That Could*** and ***Thumbelina*** -- will introduce children to the world of theater through The Rose's First Stage series for very young children.

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The complete 2018-19 season includes:

MEMBER SHOWS:

Judy Moody & Stink: The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt (Sept. 7-23, 2018)

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites (Sept. 28 - Oct. 14, 2018)

Goosebumps: The Musical: The Phantom of the Auditorium (Oct. 26 - Nov. 11, 2018)

Return to Niobrara (Jan. 25 - Feb. 10, 2019)

The Doll Maker's Gift (Feb. 22 - Mar. 10 2019)

Winnie the Pooh (Mar. 22 - Apr. 7, 2019)

Dragons Love Tacos (Apr. 26 - May 12, 2019)

PREMIUM SHOWS:

Elf: The Musical (Nov. 30 - Dec. 23, 2018)

Roald Dahl's Matilda (June 7-23, 2019)

FIRST STAGE SHOWS:

The Little Engine That Could (Oct. 13 - Nov. 4, 2018)

Thumbelina (Feb. 9 - Mar. 3, 2019)

The Rose remains dedicated to its mission of enriching the lives of children and families through live theater and arts education. Central to this mission is the understanding that theater has the power to transform the community by helping audiences better understand a variety of viewpoints and building empathy for others. "We believe theater is essential to helping children develop the skills they need to lead a successful, fulfilled life," says Gutschick. "This has been a core value from our early beginnings in 1948, and it is just as true today."

Gutschick explains that children's theater is much more than just an entertaining way to spend an afternoon or evening. "Studies show time after time that young people who attend live theater performances show greater empathy; they are better at understanding what other people think and feel. What a wonderful gift to give to your children, particularly in this day and age," he said.

Recent renovations to the theater mean that Rose audiences will enjoy significant improvements in the sound and lighting on both the mainstage and Hitchcock stage, as well as fun, interactive elements in the Hitchcock lobby to entertain young guests attending First Stage shows and Teens 'N' Theater productions.

Gutschick believes that audiences will certainly be impressed with the new technological advances. "Audiences will notice more dynamic, richer color use onstage. Designers will also have more opportunities to add unique textures to surfaces," says Gutschick. "The new lighting instruments widen the emotional range of any particular show - within seconds we can transition from a scene that feels small and intimate to a look that feels like a major pop concert in an arena, if we want to."

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The nine mainstage shows in the 2018-19 season introduce topics like understanding others, persistence, community, exploration, environmentalism, heritage and multiculturalism. Titles include innovative twists on well-known stories and world premiere scripts making their debut on The Rose stage. The two new scripts making their debut on The Rose stage are particularly noteworthy: ***Return to Niobrara*** is a story of Nebraska's own Standing Bear and his legacy that has been recognized by the Kennedy Center; the script will be featured during its New Visions/New Voices conference in April 2018. ***The Doll Maker's Gift*** brings together artists from New York City, Omaha and beyond to tell a poignant story about a Russian girl living through the horrors of war in a collaboration led by local theater maven and producer, Deborah Denenberg.

The Rose's holiday premium event features a stage adaptation of the popular film featuring Will Ferrell, ***Elf, the Musical***, a hilarious fish-out-of-water comedy that follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his true identity. In the spring, The Rose will introduce Omaha to ***Roald Dahl's Matilda***, an extraordinary girl who, armed with a vivid imagination and a sharp mind, dares to take a stand and change her own destiny.

"These are all stories about characters that are trying to gain access to or mastery of the rules of a specific community, oftentimes one that is not naturally their own," says Gutschick. "Judy Moody is on a vacation treasure hunt in a place that is foreign to her. The phantom in Goosebumps is trying to reconcile with the school he once attended. Chief Standing Bear and Steven are both trying to lift up the compassion and ideals of an entire nation -- seeking recognition for his own community. Winnie the Pooh is actually about what happens when a place that is otherwise very loving (the Hundred Acre Wood) actively turns its back on a neighbor that is misunderstood, Matilda is trying to gain access to a fair and just community of peers and adults that understand the importance of imagination and compassion. That's really an emergent theme that links these shows together and shares an important message with our community."

The Rose's seven regular season mainstage shows are free with Rose membership or \$20 per ticket for non-members. Tickets for the FIRST STAGE series shows held on The Rose's Hitchcock Stage are \$12. Tickets to The Rose's two premium shows, ***Elf the Musical*** and ***Roald Dahl's Matilda*** are \$27 main floor, \$22 balcony. Rose members receive a \$7 discount off the price of premium event tickets and \$2 off the price of the FIRST STAGE series.

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2018-19 MEMBERSHIP SHOWS

**Judy Moody & Stink:
The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt**

September 7-23, 2018

Adapted for the stage by Allison Gregory
Based on the book series by Megan
McDonald

*Based on the books: "Judy Moody" and "Judy Moody & Stink:
The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt" written by Megan
McDonald and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds. Published by
Candlewick Press, Inc.*

This play was co-commissioned by First Stage, Adventure Theatre MTC, Bay Area Children's Theatre, The Rose Theater, Oregon Children's Theatre, Children's Theatre of Charlotte and Orlando Repertory Theatre.

Judy Moody & Stink
THE MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD
TREASURE HUNT

The season opens September 7 with the perfect story to start the school year, **Judy Moody & Stink: The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt**. Based on the popular book series by Megan McDonald, Judy is a girl who wants to be going places, but finds herself saddled with a brother who "stinks." School is starting back and Judy knows that all of her friends will have thrilling tales of their summer vacations to depict in their "Me Collage." Judy feels her summer break just doesn't live up to that of her friends at school. With big dreams and ample ambitions, Judy hopes an exciting end-of-summer family vacation adventure on Ocracoke Island—a mysterious place packed with legends of pirates and treasure hunts!—will make her the envy of her whole class. This rollicking tale finds Judy and Stink in a race for their lives (or at least their pride) to win the Pirate Challenge and give Judy more than a boring T-shirt to represent her amazing summer vacation.

This brand new stage adaptation is the result of a never-before collaborative effort by seven of America's leading theaters for young audiences. The project emerged when Michael Bobbitt, artistic director of Adventure Theatre MTC in Glen Echo, Md., met with a group of six other children's theaters to discuss his idea of commissioning a play based on author Megan McDonald and Peter H. Reynolds' stories. The participants include Bay Area Children's Theatre in Oakland, Calif.; Children's Theatre of Charlotte in Charlotte, N.C.; First Stage in Milwaukee, Wis.; Oregon Children's Theatre in Portland; Orlando Repertory Theatre in Orlando, Fla.; and the Rose Theater in Omaha. Starting in the fall and running through the spring of 2019, each theater will stage its own production of the play.

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The Judy Moody book series are international bestsellers with over 22 million copies in print and translated into 26 languages worldwide. The Judy Moody franchise includes the original Judy Moody series and three spin-off series: Stink, Judy Moody and Stink, and Judy Moody and Friends.

“Judy Moody is a compelling character and a great fit for the stage,” said playwright Allison Gregory. “She activates the world around her. From her dogged determination (which frequently looks like impulsivity), to her scrappy resourcefulness, she engages other characters, and us, to root for her.”

Karen Lotz, president and publisher of Candlewick and managing director of the Walker Books Group, said in a statement, “We’re so excited about this incredible, unprecedented collaboration. We know young readers everywhere relate to Judy as their favorite dynamic and funny ‘real-girl’ character.”

McDonald said of the adaptation, “I’m thrilled readers will get to see my books make the leap from page to stage. Judy Moody has been to Antarctica, the Freedom Trail, Artichoke Island, and college. She has gone around the world in eight (and a half) days. But never before has she been on stage!”

Judy Moody & Stink: The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt will be directed by Rose artist educator Kevin Ehrhart, whose directing talents were last seen on The Rose mainstage in last season’s *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*.

The 65-minute production of ***Judy Moody & Stink: The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt*** will be presented on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for guests who are deaf and hard of hearing and audio description services for blind audiences will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, September 15. The 5 pm performance on Saturday, September 15 is designated as sensory friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. The show is appropriate for children of all ages.

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**The Very Hungry Caterpillar
& Other Eric Carle Favorites**
Sept 28 - Oct 14, 2018



Produced by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
Adapted, directed & designed by Jim Morrow
Music by Steven Naylor
Narrated by Gordon Pinsent

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites is back by popular demand after a fantastic production at The Rose in 2014. Featuring evocative music, innovative puppetry, and stunning black light visual effects, ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** comes to life on The Rose stage courtesy of the renowned Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. Directed and designed by Jim Morrow, who ranks among Canada's most esteemed puppetry creators, the triple-bill show was a hit among Rose audiences when it first visited Omaha in 2014, and The Rose is thrilled to once again welcome the production to its mainstage.

Three beloved stories by Eric Carle, award-winning children's book illustrator and author, are retold on stage through the magic of black light and fanciful puppets. ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** follows the wonderful adventures of a very tiny and very hungry caterpillar as he eats his way through an amazing variety of foods on his path to becoming a beautiful butterfly. High up in the sky, Little Cloud playfully transforms himself into various creatures, including a sheep, and an airplane, a shark and more. The Mixed-Up Chameleon is bored with his life, sitting about predictably changing colour all day. Following an adventurous trip to the zoo, he attempts to emulate the beautiful animals he sees before coming to the conclusion that there is value in his own unique self. Adapted, designed and directed by Jim Morrow, with music by Steven Naylor and narration by Gordon Pinsent, the production features the imaginative approach to storytelling through theatre that has earned international recognition for Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites is 45 minutes long without an intermission and is appropriate for all ages.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites will be presented on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, October 6. The 5 pm performance on Saturday, October 6 is designated as sensory-friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. Contact The Rose Box Office for information on the resources available for families.

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**Goosebumps: The Musical
The Phantom of the Auditorium
October 26 - November 11, 2018**

Book and Lyrics by John Maclay, Music and
Lyrics by Danny Abosch Orchestrations and
Arrangements by Danny Abosch
*Adapted from Goosebumps: Phantom of the Auditorium
by R. L. Stine*



In a show perfect for budding theater enthusiasts, ***Goosebumps: The Musical - The Phantom of the Auditorium*** is sure to bring a tickle and a chill. The story follows Zeke and Brooke and all the other young thespians of Woods Mill Middle School as they put on the best darn musical ever – even better than last year’s Guys and Dolls. It doesn’t take long before mysterious things start happening when the theater director chooses a spooky script -- one that her great grandmother tried to stage but was never performed because of odd occurrences plaguing rehearsals. From a creepy trap door with an elevator to hidden tunnels, to strange voices that echo in the theater, this show might go on -- or might go off the rails!

Goosebumps: The Musical is adapted from the popular book series by R. L. Stine. Since the release of its first novel, the Goosebumps series has sold over 350 million books worldwide and has been translated in 32 languages. These children’s horror fiction novellas by R.L. Stine follow characters that find themselves in various scary situations.

Leading the cast of ***Goosebumps*** will be Suzanne Withem, a director chosen for her depth of experience. According to Gutschick, “Suzanne has undertaken many roles within the theatrical world during her career. She has served productions around Omaha variously as stage manager, producer, assistant director, actor, and director. Her background at The Rose in education and production makes her an ideal fit for a show that will feature youth performers blended into a cast with adults.”

Even though ***Goosebumps*** presents some slightly scary moments, the show is mild enough for anyone who likes a spine-tingling experience.

Goosebumps: The Musical will be presented October 26 - November 11, 2018, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm & 5 pm and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, November 3. A sensory-friendly performance will be offered on Saturday, November 3 at 5 pm.

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WORLD PREMIERE!
Return to Niobrara
January 25 - February 10, 2019

By Mary Kathryn Nagle

Return to **NIOBRARA**

This play was workshopped and presented as a rehearsed reading in April 2018 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of New Visions/New Voices 2018.

Fresh from a reading at the Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices conference, **Return to Niobrara** will make its fully-staged debut on The Rose stage. An original play commissioned by The Rose Theater, **Return to Niobrara** was selected by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for inclusion in the biennial festival, New Visions/New Voices, taking place April 27-29, 2018, marking the 15th showcase of this renowned industry workshop. New Visions/New Voices is dedicated to the development of new plays and musicals for young people and their families, and The Rose is honored to have this play included in the 2018 conference.

Return to Niobrara is inspired by the true story of Chief Standing Bear, a Native American who stood up in court and demanded that a federal judge recognize that Indians were "persons" under the law. The script follows Chief Standing Bear's great-great grandson, Steven, who, 180 years after his ancestor's historic court case, is being bullied at school on account of his long hair. When Steven is involved in an altercation at school, he must follow in his grandfather's footsteps and speak out against his school district's attempt to force him to cut his hair, and ultimately, to erase his identity.

Return to Niobrara was written by Mary Kathryn Nagle, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. The show is directed by Roxanne Wach.

"**Return to Niobrara** invites the audience to see the past emerging in our present, and ultimately, what it means to truly stand for who we are," says Gutschick.

Audiences will appreciate **Return to Niobrara**'s theme of courage under pressure and standing up for what is right; it is these themes that sparked the adjudicators from the Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center explains that **Return to Niobrara** and the other plays selected for the New Visions/New Voices conference highlight characters who exist in different cultures, different countries, in the past and in the present. "They transcend emotional, spiritual, and physical obstacles, and, when they emerge on the other side, both they and the audience are changed," said the organization in a news release announcing the honorees.

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Playwright Mary Kathryn Nagle combines her expertise in law with her personal heritage to the piece. She is a partner at a law firm specializing in tribal sovereignty of Native nations and peoples and an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. In her law practice, Nagle works to protect tribal sovereignty and the inherent right of Indian Nations to protect their women and children from domestic violence and sexual assault. She has authored numerous briefs in federal appellate courts, including the United States Supreme Court.

Nagle also currently serves as the executive director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program. Her talent in portraying the experiences of Native Americans through theater has been recognized by many leading organizations and publications, including the New York Times, which did a feature story on her in January 2018. Her plays have been performed at law schools across the United States, and she has received commissions from Arena Stage, the Rose Theater, Portland Center Stage, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Nagle studied theater and social justice at Georgetown University as an undergraduate student, and received her JD from Tulane Law School where she graduated summa cum laude and received the John Minor Wisdom Award. She is a frequent speaker at law schools and symposia across the country. Her articles have been published in law review journals including the Harvard Journal of Law and Gender, Yale Law Journal, Tulsa Law Review, and Tulane Law Review, among others.

Roxanne Wach is charged with directing the show. “Roxanne has worked with many new plays by virtue of being one of the leaders of the Shelterbelt Theatre, which focuses on new works,” says Gutschick. “She has brought prior plays by Mary Kathryn Nagle successfully to the stage and those two artists have an excellent working relationship and friendship that should continue to shape the show.”

With a more complex storyline that centers on bullying, justice and legal issues, ***Return to Niobrara*** is suggested for ages eight and up.

Return to Niobrara will make its world debut on The Rose stage on January 25, 2019, and will run through February 10. Shows are Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, February 2. A sensory-friendly performance will be available on Saturday, February 2 at 5 pm.

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**WORLD PREMIERE!
The Doll Maker's Gift
February 22 - March 10, 2019**

THE Doll Maker's GIFT

Book by EllaRose Chary and Fran Sillau
Music by Brian Feinstein. Lyrics by Sammy Buck
Based on *The Doll Maker's Gift* by Sashi Fridman
Produced in Partnership With Deborah Denenberg

The Doll Maker's Gift tells the story of Nora, an imaginative little girl whose Russian Jewish community faces the Pogroms of the 1900s, a time of ethnic cleansing of Jews in Russia. It isn't long before soldiers infiltrate the town, and stories of attacks echo through the village. After their cousins' village is attacked, Nora's father decides they must flee to America. At the last minute, the family discovers that they don't have enough funds to pay for everyone's passage. Young Nora will have to stay behind, with the threat of attacks ever increasing. She is left with a family friend, a kind doll maker who offers to care for her until they can earn enough money to pay for her journey to America. Nora and the devoted doll maker show that all obstacles can be overcome with the help of good friends and community.

"*The Doll Maker's Gift* features beautiful original music and an essential story drawn right from history," says Gutschick. "It is an uplifting exploration of what makes humanity great."

Gutschick will co-direct the show with veteran Rose artist Fran Sillau. "Fran has had a vision of adapting this book for the stage for several years. He also serves as its co-bookwriter, so my job as the co-director on this project is to make certain the vision in his mind makes its way to the stage," says Gutschick. "Fran has worked at theater and education institutions all around Omaha and is excellently equipped to lead a cast that includes children and adults."

Gutschick also notes that ***The Doll Maker's Gift*** is a unique opportunity for The Rose to work with Deborah Denenberg, who is helping produce the piece. "Deborah is a community leader, part of a family that once ran a well-loved dinner theater in Omaha, and she has experience producing the Broadway tours of major shows like *The Who's Tommy* and *A Christmas Story, The Musical*. It is a pleasure to work with her on this project," he says.

With its message about surviving during difficult times and depictions of war, The Rose recommends ***The Doll Maker's Gift*** for children ages 8 and up. The show is expected to run 75 minutes without an intermission. ***The Doll Maker's Gift*** will be presented February 22 - March 10, 2019, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, March 2. A sensory-friendly performance will be presented on Saturday, March 2 at 5 pm.

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Winnie the Pooh
March 22 - April 7, 2019

Based on the book by A.A. Milne
Dramatized by le Clanche du Rand
Music by Allan J. Friedman
Lyrics by A.A. Milne and Kristin Sergel
Additional Lyrics by le Clanche du Rand

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing, Woodstock, Illinois.



Everyone's favorite bear comes rum-tum-tumbling to The Rose in March 2019 with **Winnie the Pooh**. Based on the book by A. A. Milne, this version of the Pooh stories finds Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore and Christopher Robin enjoying their time in the Hundred Acre Wood. Winnie the Pooh spends his days searching for honey, doing his exercises, and playing with his best friends. When the group learns that a new animal will be moving into the forest, they become a bit fearful, especially when Rabbit tells them tales about the dangerous kangaroo! The group's plan to avoid this bouncy animal changes when they actually meet Kanga and her child Roo and learn just how much fun new members of the community can be.

Rose artist educator Michael Miller will direct **Winnie the Pooh**. Miller's most recent work at The Rose has been at the helm of the First Stage production, *Point A to Point B*, and the mainstage shows *Stellaluna and Other Tales*, *The Reluctant Dragon* and Leo Lionni's *Frederick*. He is a Master Teacher with the Nebraska Arts Council's Artists-in-Schools program with a focus on creative drama and design residencies. Miller has an undergraduate degree from Yale University and a Masters degree in Non-Profit Management from UNO. He has directed for The Rose's Teens 'N' Theater season, performed in *Huck Finn*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *James and the Giant Peach*, the upcoming Rose production of *Curious George & the Golden Meatball*, and the national tours of *Frog and Toad*, *Richard Scarry's BusyTown*, and *Treasure Island*.

Winnie the Pooh will be presented March 22 - April 7, 2019, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, March 30. A sensory-friendly performance will be presented on Saturday, March 30 at 5 pm. Children of all ages will delight at **Winnie the Pooh's** whimsical characters in the 45 minute show.

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Dragons Love Tacos
April 26 - May 12, 2019

Written by Ernie Nolan.
Based on the book by Adam Rubin
*Based on the Book By Adam Rubin
and Illustrated By Daniel Salmieri.
Published by Penguin Group.*

Dragons Love Tacos

Audiences will discover the unexpected dietary delights and dilemmas of dragons in the fun-filled farce, **Dragons Love Tacos**. In this adaptation of Adam Rubin's giggle-generating book, Boy and his faithful dog, Leroy, wrestle with a particularly stubborn homework problem. When Mom suggests that they take a break while she runs out to pick up dinner, a sharp-suited spokesperson on the TV suddenly draws Boy and Leroy into a documentary about dragons and their favorite food: TACOS! Before long, they are swept up into the Dos & Don'ts of serving tasty treats to big beasts of all stripes.

Dragons Love Tacos is based on the acclaimed book by Adam Rubin, and The Rose is among the first theaters to stage the production. Rubin is the New York Times best-selling author of eight critically-acclaimed picture books. **Dragons Love Tacos** is a beloved book by children and adults, with more than one million copies in print in North America. The book has spent 214 weeks as a top ten New York Times Bestseller, longer than any other book on the list.

Denise Chapman will direct the kooky culinary play. Chapman is the director of the Performing Arts Collective at the Union for Contemporary Art. Gutschick notes that Chapman brings a plethora of artistic influences and inspirations into the **Dragons Love Tacos** project. "This is a piece that really invites a director to create a clear, coherent vision. Denise is one of the most clear-eyed directors one can ask for, one with bold ideas," he says.

Dragons Love Tacos runs 45 minutes without an intermission. It will be presented April 26 - May 12, 2019, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, May 4. A sensory-friendly show will be presented on Saturday, May 4 at 5 pm.

This deliciously funny tale of new friends and the perfect snack is suited for children of all ages.

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2018-19 PREMIUM SHOWS

Elf the Musical

November 30 - December 23, 2018

Book by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin.

Music by Matthew Sklar. Lyrics by Chad Beguelin.

Based on the New Line Cinema film written by David Berenbaum.

Originally produced by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures

In association with Unique Features

Elf The Musical is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIShows.com.



In this stage musical version of the popular film, **Elf**, featuring Will Ferrell, Buddy the Elf struggles with feeling out of place. He has always been a little different, significantly taller than his elf friends and just not quite fitting in at the North Pole. When Buddy learns from Santa that he's actually a human, the enormous former elf embarks on a quest to the sparkling city of New York during the holidays to find his father. His unusually upbeat, childlike cheer has a powerful effect on everyone he encounters—with sometimes disastrous results. Buddy is determined to charm his stressed-out dad who long ago lost his seasonal spirit, even though he wants nothing to do with a son he didn't know he had.

Gutschick, who will direct **Elf the Musical**, says, "This is a fun-filled musical adaptation of the favorite holiday film. It is a stuffed stocking full of songs and dance that your family will most definitely want on your Christmas wish list."

This will be the third time Gutschick has led a holiday show at The Rose, after stints at the helm of *A Christmas Story* and the world premiere of *Prancer*. Other Rose directing credits include *The Meaning of Maggie*, *Babe the Sheep Pig*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Mary Poppins*, among others. Matthew is also the recipient of a Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Fellowship in Entrepreneurship, a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and a graduate of the School at Steppenwolf. He holds a BA in Theater from Wake Forest University and received an MFA in Theater Management from the Yale School of Drama.

Elf the Musical will bring Christmas cheer to audiences of all ages. The premium event show runs two hours with an intermission.

Elf the Musical will be presented November 30 - December 23, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, December 15. Tickets are \$27 main floor, \$22 balcony. Members receive discounted tickets.

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Roald Dahl's Matilda
June 1-23, 2019

Book by Dennis Kelly.
Music and Lyrics by Tim Minchin.

Matilda

THE MUSICAL

ROALD DAHL'S MATILDA THE MUSICAL is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIShows.com

Gutshick will also direct The Rose's second premium event show: **Roald Dahl's Matilda**. This production brings Dahl's empowering character to The Rose stage and dares children everywhere to change the course of their lives for the better. The musical's narrative centers on Matilda, a precocious 5-year-old girl with the gift of telekinesis, who loves reading, overcomes obstacles caused by her family and school, and helps her teacher to reclaim her life.

"Audiences will just fall in love with Matilda, an exceptional child with an extraordinary imagination who learns to claim her destiny. In the show, Matilda is a brilliant girl born into a challenging family who gets sent away to school at the terrible Crunchem Hall. The school is led by this mean former hammer-throwing champion, Miss Trunchbull. Along with her friends and a mentor named Miss Honey, Matilda starts a revolution to help herself and others change their story," says Gutshick.

Matilda has received widespread critical acclaim and box-office popularity, winning seven 2012 Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical—the most such awards ever won by a musical. It has also been awarded five Tony Awards, six Drama Desk Awards and the New York Drama Critics' Circle for Best Musical. The run at The Rose will mark the first time the musical has been performed in Omaha.

Featuring the hit songs "Naughty" and "When I Grow Up," Gutschick says **Matilda** will be filled with high-energy dance numbers that showcases Omaha's most talented youth.

"**Matilda** will be a joyous spectacle that will inspire the whole family," he says.

The empowering and memorable story set to a stirring musical score make **Matilda** the perfect family outing for audiences of all ages. The two-hour show will include an intermission. **Matilda** will be presented June 7-23, 2019, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation for the hearing impaired and audio description services will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, June 15. Tickets are \$27 main floor, \$22 balcony. Members receive discounted tickets.

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2018-19 FIRST STAGE SERIES SHOWS
Presented on The Rose's Hitchcock Stage

In addition to its mainstage offerings, The Rose will also present two shows on its Hitchcock Stage as a part of its First Stage series. These shows are intended specifically for very young audiences and audiences with special needs. Tickets for the First Stage shows are \$12, and Rose members receive a discount of \$2 off tickets.

Recognizing that theater has benefits for children of all ages, The Rose's First Stage series gives young theatergoers and audiences with special needs an opportunity to experience the theater arts. First Stage productions are recommended for preschoolers, children with sensory needs, children on the autism spectrum or other special needs, or others who desire a gentler theater experience.

First Stage productions are presented on The Rose's Hitchcock Stage, a smaller, black-box style performance space located on the theater's fourth floor. This theater space allows for unique seating arrangements, often with flexible seating options that change with each show, such as beanbags, floor cushions or benches arranged in the round. This allows for more one-on-one interaction with the actors; young audience members are often invited into the performance space or asked to hold props to help tell the story. First Stage productions also encourage audience members to move along with the performers and respond vocally to what is happening on stage. Periods of darkness and loud sounds are kept to a minimum -- and often not used at all -- to accommodate audience members with sensory needs.

"We make this an inviting and engaging experience that will inspire early learners to want to see even more of what theater has to offer. First Stage is more than just a child's first time in the theater; it helps them take their first steps into a lifelong appreciation of the arts," says Gutschick.

The Hitchcock stage and lobby has received an extensive makeover this year, with a new lighting system to enhance First Stage productions and innovative lobby features such as a giant magnetic wall and projector system to improve audience interactions during pre-shows. New modular seating will also be installed over the summer that will allow for even more flexibility in the space.

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WORLD PREMIERE
The Little Engine That Could
Oct 13 - Nov 4, 2018

THE *little* Engine THAT *could*

Adapted by Matthew Gutschick
Based on the Book by Watty Piper. Published by Penguin Group, Inc.

The Rose will present a new adaptation of ***The Little Engine That Could***, October 13 - November 4, 2018, in the Hitchcock Theater. The 45-minute participatory production for The Rose's youngest theatergoers brings Watty Piper's timeless tale of perseverance and positivity to fresh new life for contemporary children.

"Little Engine That Could will give audiences a ton of theater magic as the actors weave the story out of suitcases and other found object puppetry in a heavily participatory production for children ages two and up," says Gutschick.

In the show, screen-centered Watty and stuff-collecting Piper are sisters who aren't exactly on the same track. But when their train is delayed leaving them stranded in the station, the sometimes squabbling siblings must learn to work together—with lots of help from children in the station to find a way to get toys and treats to the children on the other side of the mountain.

Gutschick, who has created the new adaptation, says, "This new version of ***The Little Engine That Could*** features universal themes of finding your own confidence and believing in yourself as well as helping others. Families will relish this ride on the rails of doing the right thing."

The show will be performed select Mondays at 10 am, Saturdays at 9:30 and 11:00 am, and Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 am during its run October 13 - November 4, 2018. Tickets are \$12. Children under age one are admitted free.

Thumbelina
February 9 - March 3, 2019

Adapted by Stephanie Jacobson
Based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen



The Rose's original production of Thumbelina is back by popular demand.

Thumbelina is a flower-sized girl determined to discover the true meaning of friendship. Audiences will follow her on a magical, thumb-sized adventure that will find your child swimming with fish and flying with sparrows using inventive puppetry and innovative design.

Thumbelina is 45 minutes long and is ideal for children over age two. The show runs February 9 - March 3, 2019 on The Rose's Hitchcock stage. Public performances are offered select Mondays at 10 am, Saturdays at 9:30 and 11:00 am, and Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 am. Tickets are \$12. Children under age one are admitted free.

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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 groundbreaking original productions. A number of plays and musicals have made their world premiere on The Rose stage, including *Van Gogh & Me*, *The Meaning of Maggie*, *Pete the Cat: The Musical*, *Sherlock Holmes & the First Baker Street Irregular*, *Zen Ties*, *Leo Lionni’s Frederick*, *A Palette of Possibility*, *Thumbelina*, *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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