

## For Immediate Release

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**Ezra Colón**  
*Vincent Van Gogh*



**Anna Jordan**  
*Adeline Ravoux*



**Nils Haaland**  
*Arthur Ravoux*



**Stephanie Jacobson**  
*Louise Ravoux*

## The Rose Theater announces the cast of *Van Gogh & Me*

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The Rose Theater is pleased to announce the cast of its upcoming production, ***Van Gogh & Me***, a world premiere play written by Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick. The show will run November 3-12, 2017 on The Rose mainstage. The show is being directed by guest director John Hardy.

Based on factual events, ***Van Gogh & Me*** shares the story of famed artist Vincent Van Gogh. After a colorful and sometimes challenging creative career, the weary artist finds himself retreating to an out-of-the-way French town where he takes up residence in the Auberge Ravoux. During his stay at the lodge, Van Gogh created more than 80 paintings and 64 sketches before his death in 1890.

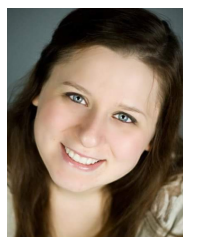
Ezra Colón will take on the title role of Vincent Van Gogh. This is Colón's debut on The Rose stage. A frequent performer with Nebraska Shakespeare On The Green, Colón has recently been seen in *King Lear*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Macbeth*. Colón lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico where he is a company member with Duke City Preperatory Theatre. His past productions include *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Twelfth Night*, *Death and the Maiden*, *Julius Caesar*, *The 39 Steps*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Oedipus the King*. Colón began his career at Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, and has a BFA in Theatre Performance from Columbus State University.



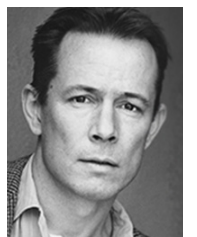
**Tyrone Beasley**  
*Martinez De Valdivielse*



**Robby Stone**  
*Rene Secretan*



**Mallory Freilich**  
*Cecile Demey*



**John Hardy**  
*Director*

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While the picturesque village has its fair share of artists, the citizens of the French town are not sure what to make of Van Gogh and his unusual painting style. A girl named Adeline -- the daughter of a local innkeeper -- strikes up a gentle friendship with the mysterious and misunderstood painter.

Anna Jordan will play Adeline. Jordan is returning to The Rose stage after appearing in *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*, *Prancer* and *Plastic Drastic*. Jordan received her BA in acting and directing from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, where she directed a studio production of *The Vagina Monologues*, played Logainne Schwartzandgrubinerre in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and the titular role in *Hedda Gabler*, (Irene Ryan semi-finalist, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival). She has appeared in Nebraska Shakespeare On The Green for multiple seasons, as well as the regional tours of *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She served as an actor-educator with RESPECT, a touring educational theater company that teaches students about healthy relationships, and is currently a teaching artists for the Disney Musicals in Schools program with Omaha Performing Arts.

Adeline's parents, Arthur and Louise, give Vincent a room in their small inn, but worry about their tenant while struggling to keep their fledgling business afloat. At the same time, they emphasize the importance of treating people with kindness. Veteran Rose actors Nils Haaland and Stephanie Jacobson will bring their considerable experience to the roles.

Haaland received his BFA from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase and his MFA from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. A founding member of Omaha's Blue Barn Theatre, Haaland has frequently performed on The Rose stage and has worked for the theater in many capacities. Most recently, Haaland was seen as John in the world premiere of *Prancer*. Haaland's resume is as diverse as the roles he has performed – he has done voice over work at the national level, directed animated television programs, worked as a staff educator and actor at The Rose Theater, performed the role of Ebenezer Scrooge for Nebraska Theater Caravan and more. Nils has acted in speaking roles with Opera Omaha and taught workshops for the Omaha Community Playhouse and with Shakespeare Unbound – the University of Nebraska at Omaha's touring company, and is the recipient of numerous acting awards, including The Theater Arts Guild Award for Best Actor in A Drama playing Ludwig Von Beethoven in Blue Barn's production of *33 Variations* by Moises Kaufman. Haaland currently works with Why Arts? and with the Ollie Webb Center.

Jacobson is a full time Teaching Artist and the Director of Youth Productions at The Rose Theater. She previously directed *George and Martha*, *Charlotte's Web*, *A Child's Garden of Verses* and The Rose's world premiere of *The Grocer's Goblin* and *The Little Mermaid* as well as *The Misfits*, and *Thumbelina: A New Friend's Journey* (which she wrote and directed). She will be directing *Curious George* and *The Golden Meatball* on The Rose Mainstage this spring. She appeared on stage as the Mother in *Pinkalicious*, and Arrietty in *The Borrowers*, Frog in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Gina in *Big Nate*, Irma Cody in *Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band*, Nancy in *Ivy & Bean*, Ida in *Honk*, and Kaa in *The Jungle Book*. Jacobson has her MFA in Acting from the University of

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Iowa, participated in the Diavolo Project: Nebraska, is a Dance Company Member of The UNO Moving Company and is a trained puppeteer specializing in shadow puppetry and Bunraku. She has presented and led workshops for Opera Omaha, UNO College of Education/Celebration of The Young Child, The Nebraska State Education Continuing Education Department, Creighton University and the National LGBTQA College Conference. Before moving to Omaha, she lived in NYC where she worked with Liz Swados, Lee Bruer's Mabou Mines, Taylor Mac and The Jim Henson Company.

Rounding out the cast of *Van Gogh & Me* are the townspeople of the village Auvers-Sur-Ois. Tyrone Beasley plays the Cuban artist Martinez De Valdivielse who has also come to live and paint in the French province. As a classically trained artist, he does not understand or respect Van Gogh's self-taught techniques and vibrant use of color.

Tyrone Beasley is The Rose Theater's Artistic Associate – Director of Outbound Programming. No stranger to the stage Tyrone has worked with acclaimed directors: Peter Sellars, Claude Purdy, Charles Marowitz, David Wheeler, and Antonio Banderas, among others. He has performed in many theaters around the globe including The Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, and The Royal Shakespeare Company. His experience includes work both in front and behind the camera in film and television projects for Disney, Fox, Sony, VH1, TriStar Pictures and the BBC. An Omaha Benson High School graduate, Tyrone earned a BFA in studio arts from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He attended California State University, Long Beach for graduate study in theater arts, taught acting classes there as a teaching associate and was an ensemble member of California Repertory Company. Tyrone served as the Artistic Director at The John Beasley Theater (JBT) in Omaha for ten years, he managed and taught the theater's workshop programs that were a part of JBT's mission of community outreach and developing a local pool of trained actors. He also acted in and directed numerous plays at the JBT.

Town bullies Rene Secretan (Robby Stone) and Cecile Demey (Mallory Freilich) tease and torment Vincent mercilessly during his time in the town, taunting him because of his rumored struggles with mental illness and his out-of-the-ordinary behaviors. They spread lies and falsehoods about the painter, who wants only to create his art in relative peace.

Robby Stone was most recently seen on The Rose stage in *Babe the Sheep Pig* as Farmer Hogget. Other Rose credits include *Shrek The Musical* as Shrek, *Big Nate* as Nate Wright, *Jackie and Me* as Joey Stoshack, *Cat in the Hat* as The Boy, *Peter and the Starcatcher* as Mack, and more.

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***Van Gogh & Me*** is Mallory Freilich's first production at The Rose. After getting her BFA in Theatre from Creighton University and Master's from UNO, she has appeared in a number of productions with Nebraska Shakespeare. Some of her favorite roles include Laertes in *Hamlet* and Montanto in *Othello*.

The ***Van Gogh & Me*** team is being led by guest director John Hardy of Abingdon, Virginia. Hardy is an associate artist with The Barter Theatre who has worked around the country as a playwright, actor and director for more than 30 years. He previously directed *The Jungle Book* during The Rose's 2016-17 season and *Jackie & Me* at The Rose in 2014, and has been featured in his one-man show at Joslyn Castle. Over the course of his career, Hardy has directed more than 100 professional productions, including *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo And Juliet*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, *Tartuffe*, *Oedipus The King*, *Man Of La Mancha* and others. As an actor, Hardy has played many of the great roles including Hamlet, MacBeth, Tom Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Teach in *American Buffalo* and many others. Hardy recently returned from a national tour, playing George in *Of Mice And Men*. As an playwright he has had over forty productions of fifteen plays produced across the country and overseas. He recently received the Sara Spencer Award for lifetime achievement from the Southeastern Theatre Conference.

***Van Gogh & Me*** is written by Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick who has felt a strong connection to the artist since experiencing a traveling exhibit of his work as a youth. His recent directing credits at The Rose include *Babe the Sheep Pig*, *Prancer*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Peter & The Starcatcher*, *A Christmas Story*, *Mary Poppins*, *Robin Hood* and *Ramona Quimby*. Other directing credits include *Cyrano* with Parallel 45, *The Sparrow*, *Twelfth Night* and *Anon(ymous)* at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, *Wuthering Heights* at the Mint Theatre in New York, and *Whacked Fairy Tales* at Twin City Stage. His plays have been workshopped/produced by Wordsmyth Theatre Company, Horse Trade Theater Group (NYC), Reverie Productions (NYC), Tri Sate Actors' Theatre, and Magic Chicago. His work for MagicMouth Theatre won a New Horizons Playwriting Award and the company premiered a new magic-theatre piece, *A Christmas Carol In Prose* with Parallel 45 in Traverse City, MI. He is the former artistic director of the Children's Theatre of Winston-Salem and completed a fellowship with the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis under the mentorship of Peter Brosius. Gutschick assisted Peter Brosius on productions of *500 Hats of Bartholemew Cubbins* and *A Christmas Story*. He is a former Managing Director of the Yale Cabaret where he produced over 14 world premieres. He 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.

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Based on actual events, *Van Gogh & Me* presents a moody atmospheric story of the power of art and simple friendship that give a new appreciation of the artist and his beautiful post-impressionistic works. The show is recommended for children ages 10 and up.

*Van Gogh & Me* runs November 3-12, 2017, with performances on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, Sundays at 2 pm, and a bonus performance on Sunday, November 12 at 5 pm. The 2 pm show on Saturday, November 11 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, November 11 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 *Van Gogh & Me* 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.

*Van Gogh & Me* is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Security National Bank, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. This project is also supported by the Jetton Charitable Fund through the Omaha Community Foundation. Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kiewit Companies.

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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 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.