

For Immediate Release

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Classic *Goodnight Moon* is energetic season opener at The Rose

(OMAHA, Nebr.) A classic bedtime story is transformed into an energetic musical about the struggle to go to sleep in ***Goodnight Moon***, playing Sept. 2-18, 2016 at The Rose Theater. Featuring energetic music, acrobatic movement and a story cherished by generations, ***Goodnight Moon*** will have families reveling with Bunny in the fun of jumping cows, dancing bears and a room that springs to life.

“***Goodnight Moon*** is part fable, part circus act, part dream ballet, part vaudeville -- and LOTS of pandemonium,” says Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick.

Adapted for the stage by Chad Henry (who also composed the music), ***Goodnight Moon***, follows the bedtime routine of a little boy who wishes he could go inside a book he loves. He is transformed into a bunny as objects and characters from his book come to life, giving him a different way to look at things that alleviate his fears. This hour-long production of ***Goodnight Moon*** is recommended for ages five and up. It is directed by Susann Suprenant, who has led production of several popular shows at The Rose, including *James and the Giant Peach*, *Knuffle Bunny* and most recently, *Ivy + Bean: The Musical*.

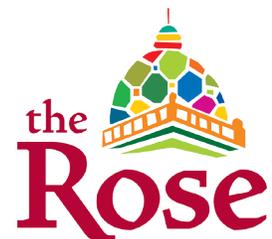
Goodnight Moon audiences will discover the iconic room from the book has been perfectly recreated on The Rose stage in a set designed by Bill Van Deest. It features a robust palette of color, with bold primary hues that radiate from the stage and costumes. Costume designer Sherri Geerdes has pieced together fabrics to create garments that perfectly mimic the patterns and color schemes used in the original illustrations.

“It is virtually as if a giant book has been laid out on end right on the stage,” says Rose Technical Director Greg Rishoi.

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The original story might be one that parents use to lull their children to sleep, but the stage version of **Goodnight Moon** is anything but sleepy. The show incorporates a variety of puppetry techniques to bring the big green room itself to life. During the course of the show, paintings, stuffed animals, clocks, a dancing cow and more become animate objects doing their best to keep Bunny from going to sleep.

“We really journey into the book in this show. The stage comes alive and creates a true spectacle,” says Rose Sound Designer Craig Moxon. “It’s like magic.”

The music adds a charming flair to the book, perfectly augmenting the classic feel of the show. As actress Wendy Eaton explains, “The book was written in the tin pin alley days, and the songs remind me of that -- a vaudeville sound from days gone by.”

Goodnight Moon is recommended for families with children ages 5 and up, and is 60 minutes long without an intermission.

Goodnight Moon runs Sept. 2 - 18, 2015, with performances on Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m., and select Sundays at 5 pm (Sept. 11 and 18). Interpretation for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing will be offered at the 2 p.m. show on Saturday, Sept. 10.

Tickets are \$20 per person. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores for \$14 each. Members of The Rose receive four free tickets to the production.

Rose Theater memberships are still available, but are expected to sell out soon. A family membership, which includes four free tickets to each regular season show (including **Goodnight Moon**) is \$105. Options for larger families are available as well. Visit The Rose website at www.rosetheater.org or call The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 for information.

Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kiewit Companies Foundation. For **Goodnight Moon**, children attending the Friday, Sept. 2 performance are encouraged to come dressed in bedtime attire for a giant pajama party.

Goodnight Moon is sponsored by Children’s Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Wells Fargo, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

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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 *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.

About the Book

Goodnight Moon, a deceptively simple children's book that falls somewhere between a going-to-sleep narrative and a lullaby, remains one of the most universal cultural references decades after its original publication in 1947. *Goodnight Moon* represented a new kind of children's literature when it was first published. At the time, most children's literature was still firmly stuck in the 19th century, and consisted of moralizing fables or fairytales set in faraway lands and distant ages. Then, "here-and-now" stories became popular, which featured modern, urban settings and stories that would reflect a child's actual existence. It was believed that, for young children, daily routines were still new and exciting and in need of further exploration. *Goodnight Moon* deals explicitly with the "here and now" of a child's bedtime—all the physical items that make up a bedroom from telephones to socks with a focus on the single, simple act of saying "goodnight."

Margaret Wise Brown's close friend and frequent collaborator, Clement Hurd—who also illustrated her classic *Runaway Bunny*—is responsible for the stark, saturated, and slightly absurdist illustrations in *Goodnight Moon*. When Brown first sent the manuscript to Hurd, she included very few instructions, but did enclose a copy of Goya's *Boy in Red* for inspiration. Without much direction, it took Hurd three attempts to get the outlandish size and flatness of the room just as Brown imagined it. And still, there were a number of last-minute alterations: A framed photo on the great green room's wall was altered to depict a scene from *The Runaway Bunny*; the Cow Jumping Over the Moon's udder was made less anatomical to avoid offending librarians; and the child and the old lady are cast as bunnies simply because Hurd proved to be better at drawing bunnies than humans.

Goodnight Moon sold more than 6000 copies in its first year on the shelves, but in the years that followed, sales averaged just 1500 copies annually. Then, in the early 1950s, the book enjoyed a sudden and dramatic resurgence, selling 4000 in 1955, 8000 in 1960, and 20,000 in 1970. By 2000, total sales topped out at more than 11 million. Currently, the book sells about 800,000 copies annually. A syndicated parental-advice column called "Child Behavior" that appeared in newspapers across the U.S. in 1953, praised the book, saying, "It captures the two-year-old so completely that it seems almost unlawful that you can hypnotize a child off to sleep as easily as you can by reading this small classic."

In the years since it debuted, *Goodnight Moon* has never been out of the press long. In 1986, Baltimore's *The Sun* included it on a list of the best bedtime stories, and in 1997, the *Chicago Tribune* called it "one of the most enduring in children's literature." In 2009, a writer for *The Oregonian* published an op-ed, "Why I loathe *Goodnight Moon*"—because his kids wouldn't stop asking him to read it over and over. The *New York Times's* Opinion Pages published an ode to the book extolling not just how effectively it soothes sleep into restless children, but also the subtle and searing literary value—how it "subverts its own rules even as it follows them."

The book was adapted into a play in 2007, with book, music, and lyrics by Chad Henry; it was first performed by the Seattle Children's Theatre.

Source: [Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened By the Moon](#)

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About Margaret Wise Brown, Book Author

Margaret Wise Brown was a prolific and influential author of more than 100 children's books. Brown was born in New York City on May 23, 1910. In the 1930s, she studied at the Bureau of Educational Experiments in New York and became interested in writing for children. Today, many of the children's books she wrote are considered classics. They include *The Runaway Bunny* (1941), *Little Lost Lamb* (1945), *The Little Island* (1946), and *Goodnight Moon* (1947). She passed away on Nov. 13, 1952.

About Clement Hurd, Book Illustrator

Clement Hurd (1908–1988) is best known for illustrating *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*, the classic picture books by Margaret Wise Brown. He studied painting in Paris with Fernand Leger and others in the early 1930s. After his return to the United States in 1935, he began to work in children's books. He illustrated more than one hundred books, many of them with his wife, Edith Thacher Hurd, including the *Johnny Lion* books, *The Day the Sun Danced*, and *The Merry Chase*. A native of New York City, he lived most of his life in Vermont and California.

About Susann Suprenant, Director

Susann Suprenant has been directing, performing, playwriting, songwriting, teaching, and facilitating ensemble-based performance for the past 30 years and has been based in Omaha for the past 13 years. Her work includes original scripted plays, stage adaptations, devised theater and site-specific performance.

Suprenant's physical theater work as a director and teacher grows out of the tradition of Meyerhold, Grotowski, Laban, and Michael Chekhov influenced by postmodern dance improvisation. Over nearly 20 years, Suprenant has developed collaborative techniques from the movement training approach of Viewpoints and the Critical Response Process. She has trained with a variety of theater and movement artists including Kevin Kuhlke (NYU Experimental Theatre Wing), Leon Ingulsrud (SITI Co.), Liz Lerman (Dance Exchange), and Shinichi Iova-Koga (InkBoat).

She has been a frequent guest director, playwright, and dramaturg at Omaha area theaters including The Rose, Blue Barn, Brownville, The Shelterbelt and Metropolitan Community College. Her works have been performed at University of Nebraska at Omaha, The Kaneko, The Bemis, Omaha Healing Arts Center, and have toured Omaha area schools. She has received awards and nominations from TAG and OEAA for Best Ensemble, Best Director, Best Dramatic Play, Best Performance for a Young Audience, and Best Original Script.

Suprenant has served as a catalyst for devised theater and cross-disciplinary arts collaboration in Omaha, as the founder/advisor for Blue Barn's Witching Hour and in her current role as Artistic Director of ætherplough: a tool for cultivating performance. Working with the newly arrived president of MCC, Suprenant developed the nationally recognized Great Plains Theatre Conference to honor outstanding American playwrights and foster the work of new playwrights and highlight the accomplishments of Omaha-area theatre artists. Suprenant teaches workshops and collaborates with local artists and musicians including Kent Bellows Studio, Les Femmes Folles, loom, Union for Contemporary Art, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, and the Omaha Community Playhouse.

In addition to her professional stage work, she has taught Drama at the secondary level and has led devised theater programs for at-risk youth. She has served as a mentor drama-in-education instructor, training teachers in elementary school faculty development programs.

Susann Suprenant came to Omaha in 2000 to serve as Head of Directing for the Theatre Department, University of Nebraska at Omaha. She developed the Education and Community Involvement programs for the newly formed Omaha Performing Arts, served as the Dean of Communications and Humanities at Metropolitan Community College through 2012-13, and currently manages an arts consulting service. She holds a B.A. in Communications from San Francisco State University, an M.A. in English from University of Nevada, Reno and a Ph.D. in Theatre from University of Oregon.

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