

For Immediate Release

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***Honk!* is a beautiful re-telling of the Ugly Duckling at The Rose Theater**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) In a twist on the classic story of The Ugly Duckling, the Theater for Young Audiences version of ***Honk!***, playing at The Rose Theater March 25 to April 10, leads audiences on a journey of self-discovery. This heart-warming celebration of being different is sure to delight audiences of all ages with its sparkling wit and memorable score.

Honk! is a musical retelling of the Hans Christian Andersen fable of The Ugly Duckling, filled with a bouncy score, upbeat songs and quirky characters. The story opens on a glorious summer day in a barnyard with mother duck Ida (played by Rose artist educator Stephanie Jacobson) sitting on her nest of eggs. When late-hatcher Ugly (played by Dan Chevalier) peers out of the nest, it is clear that he isn't like his fluffy yellow siblings -- a point that isn't lost on the other animals on the farm. While Ugly's father Drake (Rose veteran Zach Kloppenborg) rejects his awkward fledgling, mother Ida sees something more in the little duck.

Director Cynthia Gendrich describes the story as a journey of uniqueness. "***Honk!*** is a story about difference and about accepting your difference. And it is about understanding the beauty as well as the difficulty in being different," she says.

Feeling rather foul about himself, the little fowl finds himself on an adventure of self-discovery, all the while unknowingly outwitting a very hungry cat (played by Rose artist educator Nik Whitcomb). Along the way, Ugly meets a whole flock of unique characters and finds out being different is not a bad thing to be.

"A major theme of this show is about finding your way through awkward stages and how it sometimes isn't easy growing up, especially as an adolescent," says Gendrich. "It can be incredibly challenging to make it through that time of life with some sense of self."

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the
Rose
Performing Arts
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Ugly journeys from the barnyard to a pond, to a cat's lair and beyond. Gendrich had a clear vision for the set from the beginning of the production process. "From the very beginning we felt that the scale of the poultry was very important. The sets are beautiful and whimsical and just larger than life. It is all very folk art inspired," she says. Scenic designer Jeff Stander has created a whimsical, larger-than-life marshland and farm yard that envelopes the characters and gives life to the world of ***Honk!*** Giant cattails and a ten-foot-wide nest are just a few of the visual delights families can expect at the show.

Likewise, costumes by Sherri Geerdes are whimsical and fun, building on research about each individual species. "They all have these little touches here and there that establish their 'animal-ness,'" says Gendrich.

The script of ***Honk!*** is set to a bouncy, but complex, musical score. "I think the music is absolutely delightful," says Gendrich. "It is a show that is just filled with delight. Even in the midst of these trials, the music is so incredibly buoyant and the harmonies are just incredibly uplifting. It's got this sweetness and it is just filled with love."

After a hard winter and some near-death adventures, Ugly eventually comes to a place of self-acceptance as he turns into a strong and confident swan.

"In the end, I think this is a story about the incredible power of perseverance, about the power of love and resilience," says Gendrich.

Since it first hatched in 1993, George Stiles and Anthony Drewe's musical ***Honk!*** has winged it way around the world in over 8000 productions and in many different languages. It has been the winner of multiple awards, including the 2000 Olivier Award for Best Musical.

Honk!'s message of tolerance and love and the acceptance of our differences will be best enjoyed by families of children ages five and up.

Honk! TYA runs March 25 - April 10, with performances on Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. There will be no show on Easter Sunday (March 27), but an additional show will be performed on Sunday, April 3 at 5 pm. Interpretation for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing will be offered at the 2 p.m. show on Saturday, April 2. The show is 70 minutes long without an intermission.

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Tickets for ***Honk!*** are \$18 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.

Honk! is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, First National Bank, 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. 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. For additional information, visit www.rosetheater.org.

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