



Embargoed until April 12, 2018

DATE: April 2018

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The Rose Theater's 2018-19 season puts innovation and excitement in the spotlight

(Omaha, NE) The 2018-19 season at The Rose Theater promises to be groundbreaking. With the launch of its upcoming season, the theater shared several new improvements to Omahans' theater-going experience.

Audiences to The Rose this season will be treated with a new state-of-the-art lighting system that rivals that of area concert venues. In addition, new microphones and upgrades to the sound system will allow for an improved overall experience. Every single stage light has been replaced to utilize cutting-edge digital technology that will make The Rose the most advanced performance space in the Midwest.

In addition, new and improved microphones and sound system will make it easier for audiences to hear and understand the action taking place on stage.

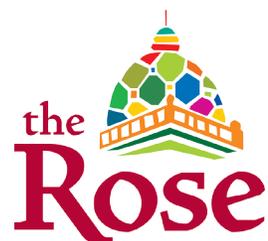
Gutschick believes that audiences will certainly be impressed with the new technological advances. "Audiences will notice more dynamic, richer color use onstage," he says. "The new lighting instruments will allow us to transition from a scene that feels small and intimate to a look that feels like a major pop concert in an arena, in just a matter of seconds."

While these new bells and whistles will add to the quality experiences audiences have come to expect from The Rose, the theater's focus will continue to providing top-notch theatrical performances for children of all ages. The Rose holds strong in its belief that theater is much more than an hour of two of entertainment; it is an important child development tool that helps children grow into compassionate citizens of the world; the shows and activities planned for the 2018-19 season support that belief.

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The theater has data to back up this philosophy. Study after study by numerous sources shows that theater has a positive influence on young people. The benefits are extensive, ranging from the intangible (such as increasing empathy) to the concrete (improved academic success.) Whether children are regularly exposed to theater as an audience member or actively participate in theater through classes or workshops, research shows that theater improves the lives of children.

For nearly 70 years, the Omaha Theater Company has been dedicated to enriching the lives of children and families through live theater and arts education. This continues to be evident as they launch the 2018-19 season with a collection of plays and musicals that inspires young audiences to be courageous as they work to influence the community around them.

“The Rose is a place where parents can bring their children and know that they will not only have a special time set aside for their family -- a time that will resonate in their memory for a lifetime -- but they will also receive a real benefit in the lessons that they will learn through the stories being told onstage,” says Matt Gutschick, artistic director of The Rose.

Gutschick has crafted a season that offers a range of shows and activities that will inspire, educate and, of course, entertain children of all ages. Whether inspiring children to think creatively, to stretch their horizons, to face the world bravely or do a little self-reflection, Gutschick hopes the topics addressed in the 2018-19 season will encourage families to see the world through new eyes, to delve further into educational topics and to enjoy the magic of the arts.

One way that The Rose helps young audience members better understand the ideas being presented on stage is through its unique audience engagement activities. The 2018-19 season will continue to offer its series of audience engagement activities designed to highlight the themes or artistic components of each show in a fun and thought-provoking way. These will consist of interactive lobby activities, on-stage contests, photo opportunities and more. In addition, families who attend on the first night of each mainstage show can continue to enjoy special activities celebrating the show’s opening. Varying by production, on opening nights at The Rose, audiences may participate in unique interactions with the shows’ directors and creators, one-night-only activities and special refreshments served to opening night audiences.

The Rose’s long-standing tradition of post-show autographs and the Q&A session that takes place from the stage will both continue, giving children the opportunity to interact directly with performers. Gutschick has been working to further enhance these experiences by including a question at the end of each performance that the actors ask to the Q&A participants. These questions encourage children to reflect on the performance they just experienced and apply the lessons and ideas to their own lives.

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As is Rose tradition, when the actors open up the floor to questions from the audience, nothing is off limits. Cast and crew take the time to explain the mechanics of theater magic, from the physics of flying across the stage to how light can be manipulated to create a specific mood. Frequently Rose cast and crew offer more detailed information about how science, technology and engineering are a part of every theater production, sparking interest in those creative and technical careers that involve both imagination and ingenuity.

A noise-proof “Restless Room” with a live video feed of the show is available in a classroom off the lobby. Free booster seats are available to ensure even the smallest audience members have a great view of the show. Concessions will be available at the premium event shows.

The Rose renews its commitment to accommodate audience members with special needs. The Rose will offer one sensory-friendly performance of each mainstage production. These shows designated as “sensory-friendly” will feature special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. American Sign Language interpreters will continue to be available for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing and audio description services for the blind during one showing of every mainstage production. Contact the Box Office for information on services for people with special needs.

The theater’s mainstage season will consist of nine main stage shows, including:

- **Judy Moody & Stink: The Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad Treasure Hunt**
- **The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites**
- **Goosebumps: The Musical: The Phantom of the Auditorium**
- **Elf: The Musical**
- **Return to Niobrara**
- **The Doll Maker’s Gift**
- **Winnie the Pooh**
- **Dragons Love Tacos**
- **Roald Dahl’s Matilda**

Seven shows are included with Rose membership; non-members may purchase tickets for regular season shows for \$20 per ticket. The Rose’s two premium event 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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In addition to the regular season shows, two shows produced specifically for preschoolers and children with special needs will be presented in The Rose's smaller Hitchcock Auditorium as a part of its First Stage series. The classic children's story gets a modern twist in *the Little Engine That Could*. A popular Rose adaptation, *Thumbelina*, returns to The Rose's First Stage in February.

"Our entire organization is focused on helping young people ask meaningful questions about the world, and we encourage that curiosity to start at a very early age," says Gutschick. "We want all our audiences, no matter their age, to ask questions, to love being curious, and to experience the transformative power of live theater."

The Rose's 2018-19 season is sponsored by Children's Hospital and Medical Center and Nebraska Furniture Mart.

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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