

For Immediate Release

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EXTRA! EXTRA! *Disney's Newsies* leaps onto The Rose Theater stage

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The Rose Theater's mainstage will be transformed into the streets of turn-of-the-century New York City in a rousing tale depicting a true story of the power of young people when ***Disney's Newsies*** opens on June 1. Based on the historical newsboy strike of 1899 that shook the ivory towers of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, ***Newsies*** leaps onto the stage with soul stirring music, amazing heart, and stunning choreography. The show runs through June 17 at The Rose.

"***Newsies*** tells a story about how a band of underdogs took on the most powerful names in New York in a fight for what's right," says Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick.

Set in New York City at the turn of the century, ***Newsies*** is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly (played by Andrew Wright), a charismatic newsboy and leader of a ragged band of teenaged 'newsies,' who dreams only of a better life far from the hardship of the streets. But when publishing titan Joseph Pulitzer (Patrick Wolfe) raises distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack finds a cause to fight for and rallies newsies from across the city to strike for what's right.

"This is a show about connections," says director Jerry Jay Cranford. "***Newsies*** embodies this idea of friendship and having a close-knit group of friends that you rely on, you work with, you talk to, and you solve problems with. It's the idea of camaraderie and working together as a group. There is strength when you work together with your friends. It creates a special bond."

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Disney's Newsies at

The Rose Theater

Page 2 of 3

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While Jack and his team are organizing, they're visited by Katherine Plumber (Torisa Walker), a self-identified reporter planning to cover the newsies as they move forward with their plan. As the newsies struggle for fairness, Katherine has her own equality issues as a woman doing a "man's" job.

Newsies was inspired by the real-life "Newsboy Strike of 1899," when newsboy Kid Blink led a band of orphan and runaway newsies on a two-week-long action against Pulitzer, Hearst, and other powerful New York newspaper publishers.

The message of ***Newsies*** is especially significant for the young people who attend Rose performances. "These young newsies aren't just fighting for their own livelihood," explains Gutschick. "They are fighting for all the children working in unfair and unsafe conditions across the nation, and in the end, they made a difference that is still in effect with child labor laws today. It is an inspiring example of how young people can create change in the world around them."

The Broadway production was noted for its high-flying, dynamic choreography, and The Rose production will feature the same leaps, spins and jumps that audiences have come to expect. Choreographer Sue Gillespie Booton says, "Audiences are going to see things they have never before seen on The Rose stage. There is a lot of acrobatics, big tap numbers, flying leaps -- this is one fun show!"

The cast of ***Newsies*** will find themselves dancing high above The Rose stage on one of the largest and most complex sets ever created by the theater. Designed by Tim McMath, the set invokes a sense of industry and mechanics reminiscent of old-time printing presses. Almost every single aspect of the show moves; platforms move and spin while newsies dance on surfaces that reach to the tallest heights of the stage.

The movement on stage will be highlighted by The Rose's new lighting system, which lighting and sound designer Craig S. Moxon says will be fully implemented for the first time during *Newsies*. "The new system gives us flexibility in the looks we can generate. We can really highlight these big dance numbers in ways we have never been able to do before," he says.

Newsies was first produced as a motion picture musical in 1992, starring Christian Bale. The movie found a dedicated audience called "Fansies," who pushed for a live stage adaptation. The clamor was so strong that Disney Theatrical Productions brought the stage musical to life, with Harvey Fierstein (*La Cage aux Folles*, *Torch Song Trilogy*) writing the book, and original composers Alan Menken and Jack Feldman adding new songs. ***Newsies*** premiered in Paper

= MORE =

Disney's Newsies at

The Rose Theater

Page 3 of 3

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Mill Playhouse in 2011 before Disney Theatrical brought it to Broadway the following year. The stage version introduces seven new songs from Menken and Feldman, while keeping many of the beloved songs from the film, including "Carrying the Banner," "Seize the Day," "King of New York," and "Santa Fe."

Newsies ran on Broadway for two years. It ran for 1,005 performances and in that time garnered over 24 theatrical nominations including the Drama Desk, Outer Circle Critics Awards, and a total of eight Tony awards. It won Best Score for Alan Menken and Jack Feldman, and Best Choreography for Christopher Gattelli. The national tour brought the show to more than 2.5 million audience members in North America. A movie was made of the Broadway production that included many of the original cast members. The film was released in February 2017 for a limited three day run in theatres across the country.

"From the very beginning, the stage adaptation of **Newsies** has had an exciting and entirely unexpected journey, propelled by the show's passionate fan base," says Thomas Schumacher, president and producer, Disney Theatrical Productions.

Disney's Newsies runs at The Rose June 1-17, 2018, with performances on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. The 2 pm show of **Newsies** on Saturday, June 9 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. Contact The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 for more information.

Tickets for **Disney's Newsies** are \$27 for main floor and \$22 for balcony. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores for \$22. Members of The Rose receive discounted tickets to the production.

Disney's Newsies is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Mutual of Omaha, the Whitmore Charitable Trust, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kiewit Companies.

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