

For Immediate Release

DATE: September 2018

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***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* eats its way into the hearts of audiences at The Rose Theater**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) Back by popular demand, A hungry little caterpillar, curious cloud and clever chameleon eat, float and crawl their way into audiences' hearts at The Rose Theater in ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites***, playing Sept. 28 - Oct. 14. Featuring brightly colored puppets and stunning black light visual effects, ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** blends together three popular children's books into a spectacular visual display that will delight the entire family.

"We are very excited to bring this show back to Omaha," says Rose artistic director Matt Gutschick. "The imagery in the show is simply amazing. Audiences for this show will feel like Eric Carle's drawings are magically coming to life all around them"

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites is being presented courtesy of the renowned Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. Known for adapting children's literary classics with its unique blend of innovative puppetry, striking scenic effects, evocative original music and spellbinding storytelling, the Mermaid Theatre comes to Omaha after presenting the show on several continents. To date, more than 3500 performances have been presented in thirteen countries and several languages, including Dutch, English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, French and Mandarin.

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“We are giving our audience a show done by the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia that normally plays big Broadway touring houses,” says Gutschick. “The piece uses innovative blacklight puppetry to bring one of the best-selling children’s books of all time to life. I would say this puppetry is on par with *Disney’s The Lion King*; it is truly unforgettable.”

Adapted, designed and directed by Jim Morrow (one of Canada’s most esteemed puppetry creators), with music by Steven Naylor and narration by Gordon Pinsent, this hour-long production of ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** was a hit among Rose audiences when it first visited Omaha in 2014, and The Rose is thrilled to once again welcome the production to its mainstage. The triple-bill show will be enjoyed by families of all ages, especially those with very young children who are familiar with the original books by Eric Carle.

Morrow believes ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** is a perfect introduction to the theater for young children. He calls the production a “no-shushing” show. “The ‘no-shushing’ thing was my idea,” he explains. “I think it’s important to let children engage and interact with the performance. You don’t usually get that in the theatre; you’re always told to be quiet.”

The play weaves together three Eric Carle classic stories: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Little Cloud* and *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* follows the adventures of a very tiny and very hungry caterpillar as he eats his way through an amazing variety of foods on his path to becoming a beautiful butterfly. High up in the sky, Little Cloud playfully transforms himself into various creatures, including a sheep, an airplane, a shark and more. The Mixed-Up Chameleon is bored with his life, sitting about predictably changing color all day. Following a trip to the zoo, he attempts to emulate the beautiful animals he sees, but eventually concludes that there is value in his own unique self.

“Each of these stories imparts an important message to the audience,” says Gutschick. “These are stories about characters who are trying to figure out who they are in the world. The gentle journeys they are on parallel those of children today in the audience who are trying to figure out how to be the best possible son or daughter or sibling or classmate or friend.”

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites is 45 minutes long without an intermission. Tickets are \$20 per person. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores for \$16 each. Members of The Rose receive four free tickets to the production.

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The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites runs Sept. 23 - Oct. 14, 2018, with performances on Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Interpretation for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing will be offered at the 2 p.m. show on Saturday, Oct. 6. Audio description services for audiences who are blind or have low vision will also be available at this performance. A sensory-friendly performance will be presented at the 5 pm performance on Saturday, Oct. 6.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kiewit Companies.

About Eric Carle, Author & Illustrator

Eric Carle, internationally acclaimed author and designer, has written and illustrated more than seventy books for young children. Born in Syracuse, NY, he spent his youth in Germany where he studied fine art in Stuttgart prior to returning to the US in 1952 to work as a graphic designer for The New York Times and later as art director of an international advertising agency. His delightful books, which combine stunning collage artwork with an imaginative approach to learning, have sold more than 110 million copies worldwide. In 2002, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art opened to the public in Amherst, MA. For more information, visit eric-carle.com and carlemuseum.org.

About Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

Founded in 1972, Mermaid Theatre's unique adaptations of children's literature have delighted more than five million young people in 16 countries on four continents. Based in Windsor, a small rural town in Nova Scotia's Avon Region, the company performs for more than 300,000 spectators annually, and currently ranks among North America's most active touring organizations. Closer to home, Mermaid offers instruction at all levels through its Institute of Puppetry Arts, welcomes artists-in-residence through its Theatre Loft, provides a unique outreach program for adolescents through the Youtheatre, and offers a vibrant performing arts series at the Mermaid Imperial Performing Arts Centre.

About Jim Morrow, Director/Production Designer

Jim creates puppets for stage, television and film. He has directed numerous shows for Mermaid Theatre, including *Very Eric Carle*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, *I Love My Little Storybook*, *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, *Inch By Inch*, *Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny*, and more. A gifted performer, Jim has toured extensively in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. He serves as director of puppetry for Symphony Nova Scotia's production of *The Nutcracker* and frequently conducts master classes in puppetry in North America and abroad. Morrow serves as Mermaid Theatre's Artistic Director.

Steven Naylor, Composer

Steven Naylor has created the music for more than a dozen Mermaid Theatre shows, including *Very Eric Carle*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, *I Love My Little Storybook*, *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, *Inch By Inch*, *Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny*. His many other professional activities include original film and television scores, contemporary music and 'musique actuelle' performance, university teaching and curriculum development, and a long-term international involvement with electroacoustic concert music. Naylor is Mermaid Theatre's Artistic Consultant for Music and Sound Design.

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Gordon Pinsent, Narrator

Born in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, Gordon Pinsent is an actor, director, writer and singer of great versatility, and one of Canada's most beloved artists. His work for more than three decades in theater, film, radio and television has earned him international recognition, as well as honorary doctorates from three universities. In 1999, Pinsent was named a Companion of the Order of Canada, the country's highest award of merit.

About The Rose Theater

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 *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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