

## For Immediate Release

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CONTACT: Kori Radloff, korir@rosetheater.org, 402-502-4641

## ***The SpongeBob Musical* promises ‘the best day ever’ at The Rose Theater**

### **Adaptation of popular animated series come to the stage**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The Rose Theater’s 2022-23 season will open August 26 with the cartoon-turned-musical smash, ***The SpongeBob Musical***, which finds the irreverently square sponge on an adventure to save the world. The show will run August 26 through September 18 at Omaha’s Rose Theater.

The stakes are higher than ever in this dynamic stage musical, as SpongeBob and all of Bikini Bottom face the total annihilation of their undersea world. Chaos erupts. Lives hang in the balance. And just when all hope seems lost, a most unexpected hero rises up and takes center stage. The power of optimism really can save the world!

“I could not be more excited to kick off the Rose season with this. It’s just such a joyful experience, and a piece we’ve been excited about for a really, really long time,” says Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick.

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The Rose Theater  
2001 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

t (402) 345-4849  
f (402) 344-7255  
www.rosetheater.org



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**at The Rose Theater**

**Page 2 of 5**

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***The SpongeBob Musical*** opens in undersea city of Bikini Bottom, a community on the ocean floor inhabited by the happy-go-lucky yellow sea sponge SpongeBob SquarePants and his equally quirky circle of friends and neighbors. SpongeBob's pleasant life is abruptly interrupted when he learns that Mount Humongous, a nearby volcano, will erupt within the next 48 hours and completely obliterate Bikini Bottom. SpongeBob, trying to prove to himself and the world that he is not "just a simple sponge," resolves to save the day (with the help of his friends Patrick and Sandy) when everybody else has given up all hope.

"It is a story about a couple of unlikely heroes who set out to save the world," says Gutschick. "That's a thing that we want to encourage in young people. There's something about the transformation of community that is really powerful, delivered in this really funny vehicle of the SpongeBob universe."

***The SpongeBob Musical*** is based on the beloved animated series created by Stephen Hillenburg and features a book by Kyle Jarrow. A who's who of musical talent has contributed to the show's musical score, which features original songs by Yolanda Adams, Steven Tyler and Joe Perry of Aerosmith, Sara Bareilles, Jonathan Coulton, Alexander Ebert of Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros, The Flaming Lips, Lady A, Cyndi Lauper, John Legend, Panic! At the Disco, Plain White T's, They Might Be Giants and T.I., and songs by David Bowie, Tom Kenny and Andy Paley. Additional lyrics are by Jonathan Coulton, with additional music by Tom Kitt. The musical production was conceived by Tina Landau.

Guest director Carrie Smith Lewis is excited to bring ***The SpongeBob Musical*** to The Rose stage. "I love this play. I love this story. There are these amazing themes of trusting your friends, finding courage in yourself, and believing in yourself. I think that every kid and adult who comes to this play is going to be changed by it," she says."

**= MORE =**

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**Page 3 of 5**

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Rose members receive free tickets to ***The SpongeBob Musical***, as well as the other shows included in the membership package. “This is practically a Broadway show experience, but we’re including it in the membership. We are really excited to be able to offer this to our members,” says Gutschick.

Rose audiences will be treated with creative costume, set design and projections that bring the world of SpongeBob to life on The Rose stage. Costume designer Zachary Kloppenborg has drawn on 70s fashion, including leisure suits, athletic wear and disco, to create tongue-in-cheek adaptations of the beloved animated characters, all with a healthy dose of sparkle and sequins. From a Gloria Gaynor-inspired costume for the squirrel Sandy Cheeks, to Squidward with his unique costume featuring four legs, to a costume with surprising quick-changes and special effects for the characters of Mrs. Puff and Perch Perkins, to a chorus of singing and dancing sea anemones bedecked in rainbow colors, ***The SpongeBob Musical*** promises to be a visual delight.

Tim McMath has created the scenic world of ***The SpongeBob Musical***, drawing on inspiration from tiki bars and disco life. Audiences will see all the familiar sights of Bikini Bottom, including the homes of SpongeBob, Patrick and Squidward, as well as the Krusty Krab. The overall set gives a sense of being underwater through the use of large blue tarps stenciled with prints inspired by island prints. The set decorations extend beyond the proscenium and into the house, inviting the audience into the action on stage. Moveable platforms adjust and change to become different environments and add to the theater magic of the show.

“Bikini Bottom is colorful. It is alive. There are disco balls and globes and bubbles and strings of light. There are platforms and ladders and climbable structures that are used in a variety of ways. This is going to be a spiffy-looking show, y’all,” says McMath.

**= MORE =**

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**at The Rose Theater**

**Page 4 of 5**

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Since its launch on July 17, 1999, *SpongeBob SquarePants* has reigned as the number one kids' animated series on TV for the last 17 years, while generating a universe of beloved characters, pop culture catchphrases and memes, theatrical releases, consumer products, a Tony award-winning Broadway musical and a global fan base. *SpongeBob SquarePants* is the most widely distributed property in Viacom International Media Networks history, seen in more than 170 countries, translated in 30+ languages, and averaging more than 140 million total viewers every quarter. *SpongeBob SquarePants* is created by Stephen Hillenburg and produced by Nickelodeon in Burbank, Calif. The character-driven cartoon chronicles the nautical and sometimes nonsensical adventures of SpongeBob, an incurably optimist and earnest sea sponge, and his undersea friends.

The Broadway production of ***The SpongeBob Musical*** earned its place on 2017's "Best of Broadway" lists including Broadway.com, BuzzFeed, The Chicago Tribune, The Daily Beast, Deadline, ET Online, Forbes, Time Out New York and Variety. ***The SpongeBob Musical*** was named Best Musical by the Drama Desk Awards and Outer Critics Circle and earned 12 Tony Award nominations – the most nominated musical of the 2017-2018 theatre season – winning for Best Scenic Design of a Musical (David Zinn).

***The SpongeBob Musical*** will run August 26 - September 18, 2022. The 70-minute show is appropriate for all audiences. Shows are Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5:30 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. (There will not be performances on Friday, September 2 or Saturday, September 3.) Services for audiences with special needs, including interpretation for the hard of hearing and audio description services will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, September 10. A sensory-friendly performance will be offered on Saturday, September 10 at 5:30 pm.

Tickets for ***The SpongeBob Musical*** are available for \$25 by calling The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 or online at [www.rosetheater.org](http://www.rosetheater.org). Rose members receive four free tickets to the production. Discount ticket vouchers are available at area Hy-Vee stores.

**= MORE =**

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**Page 5 of 5**

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***The SpongeBob Musical*** is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, 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 *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. It is The Rose's goal to inspire young people to discover the magic of theater, to find their voices and enrich their communities.

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