

For Immediate Release

DATE: September 2022

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***Playscape* offers a playground of imagination**

Rose Teens 'N' Theater improvisational production a delight for all ages

(Omaha, NE) The Rose Teens 'N' Theater program will present *Playscape* on Thursday, September 8 at 7 pm, Saturday, September 10 at 7 pm, and Sunday, September 11 at 4:30 pm on The Rose Theater's Hitchcock Stage.

"*Playscape* is unlike any show you've ever seen before," says Rose high school intern and student performer Eme Starbuck.

Playscape showcases The Rose's 2022-23 high school interns in an improvised production that utilizes suggestions from the audience to craft an original story on the spot, creating a unique, ambitious production that is completely new each and every time. The production is the first project the interns take on as a part of their year-long experience.

"*Playscape* is how we begin our Teens 'N' Theater season, and it's always a blast," says co-director Jay Hayden. "Our group of interns is such a brilliant ensemble of thoughtful performers, and we're so excited to share the work we've done!"

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***Playscape* at
The Rose Theater**

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In this interactive, completely improvised storytelling experience, young people join together with the audience to build a tale of adventure in the moment. Actors and audience members alike become the characters, settings and complications that make a fantastic tale come to life.

Playscape participant Charlie Dow explains, “I like this show because it’s all about imagination. You have to truly believe in the story we’re telling, which asks for a great suspension of disbelief.”

In addition to giving the interns the opportunity to perform and stretch their improvisational skills, the *Playscape* experience helps the high schoolers learn important skills they will need in their role as teaching assistants, while helping them bond as a group.

As co-director Prentiss Mathews III explains, “*Playscape* is both a production and a teacher-training program; High school interns work as assistant teachers in Rose classes, and we learn about principles of teaching artistry and pedagogy as part of the rehearsal process.”

“Nothing prepares you to teach quite like improv,” he adds.

While the idea of improvisational acting might be intimidating, the students have approached the challenge with enthusiasm. “I’ve always been scared of improv, but *Playscape* has pushed me out of my comfort zone (and given me some new theater games to share with my school’s theater program), says participant Ethan Stankus.

The student actors are all high school seniors who have spent many years participating in educational programs at The Rose Theater. They will spend the 2022-23 school year working beside professional teaching artists in Rose classrooms, leading younger students along similar paths that they once followed. Many hope to transfer the skills learned during this year to future careers as teachers, actors, playwrights, theatermakers and more -- and it all starts with *Playscape*.

“As a playwright, *Playscape* has taught me that it’s okay to let go of perfectionism, that things can be silly and goofy for the sake of being silly and goofy,” says participant Otto Fox.

The cast of *Playscape* includes Tamyia Bender (Bellevue West High School), Charlie Dow (Burke High School), Amelia Escalante (Bellevue West High School), Otto Fox (Lewis Central High School), Noemi Gilbert (Central High School), Sophia Presser (Mercy High School), Ethan Stankus (Bellevue West High School), Eme Starbuck (Bellevue West High School), and Pretzel Urwin (Central High School).

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Playscape will be presented in The Rose Theater's Hitchcock Theater on Thursday, September 8 at 7 pm, Saturday, September 10 at 7 pm, and Sunday, September 11 at 4:30 pm. Teens will be admitted for free at the Thursday night performance. Tickets are \$12 each and available at The Rose Box Office, (402) 345-4849, or at the door the day of the show.

"People should come see *Playscape* because we are all so proud of the work we've done," says participant Pretzel Urwin. "It's an amazing show!"

The Rose's Teens 'N' Theater program is open to middle and high school students who have not yet graduated. There is no cost to participate and the program is open to all interested students. This program provides teens, ages 13 to 18, opportunities to roll up their sleeves and get active in world of theater. The Rose produces four teens-only shows each season, where teen participants are given opportunities to act, direct, write, design and stage manage. Students perform fresh, thought-provoking work at The Rose's Hitchcock Theater and at The Rose Studios for Youth Artists.

For more information about Teens 'N' Theater, visit www.rosetheater.org/education/teens.

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