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The Rose Theater invites families to “imagine the possibilities” in 2023-24

Local children's theater announces upcoming season

(OMAHA, NE) A mix of familiar favorites, unexpected twists and world premieres will invite families to imagine new possibilities during The Rose Theater's 2023-24 season.

“This season has a mix of familiar tales told in new and exciting ways, so the entire family from grandparents to the youngest generation can all connect with each other,” says Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick. “Imagine sharing the joy, laughter, and adventure of a long running PBS show, one of the most beloved Christmastime Claymation classics, the uplifting words of Dr. Maya Angelou, the peaceful tunes of Bob Marley, and perhaps the greatest piece of literature for children ever written in ***Charlotte's Web*** -- with some surprising new shows in between!”

The 2023-24 Rose season consists of six hour-long mainstage shows included with membership, along with two premium mainstage shows featuring larger casts, more complex staging and an overall enhanced theater experience with reserved seating and an intermission.

A common theme woven among the shows selected for the 2023-24 season is empowerment. As Gutschick explains, “Every production this season has a protagonist who finds they are far more powerful than they initially expected. Whether that's about finding hidden talents like ***Arthur*** and ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer***, overcoming fears like in ***Life Doesn't Frighten Me*** and ***Bob Marley's Three Little Birds***, or even Charlie finding that his kindness sets him apart from other kids, each protagonist makes an important discovery about their own strength.”

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The complete 2023-24 season includes:

MEMBER SHOWS:

Arthur & Friends Make a Musical (Sept. 8 - 24, 2023)

Life Doesn't Frighten Me (Oct. 6 - 22, 2023)

Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Party (Jan. 19 - Feb. 4, 2024)

Bob Marley's Three Little Birds (Feb. 23 - Mar. 10, 2024)

Red Riding Hood (Mar. 22 - Apr. 7, 2024)

Charlotte's Web (Apr. 19 - May 5, 2024)

PREMIUM SHOWS:

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (Dec. 1 - 23, 2023)

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (June 7 - 23, 2024)

The six member shows included in The Rose's mainstage line-up are free with Rose membership or \$30 per ticket for non-members. Tickets to The Rose's two premium shows, ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** and ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*** are \$37 main floor, \$32 balcony. Rose members receive discounts up to 20% off all non-member events.

Rose memberships are available now at www.rosetheater.org. Individual tickets will be available to the general public on August 1, 2023.

A number of accommodations are made for audience members with exceptionalities, including American Sign Language interpretation, audio description services for the blind and sensory-friendly performances. Visit The Rose website for specific information for each show.

Each show in the Rose season is carefully selected to present families with familiar favorites as well as innovative new stories. Productions are designed to engage young audiences and introduce them to a wide genre of artistic styles, helping them develop a lifelong love of the performing arts.

In particular, the 2023-24 season will offer audiences an unexpected journey of imagination. "Each of these productions will completely transform the stage so much between shows to fit these really different stories. Audiences are going to experience a journey full of surprises. Each time they walk through The Rose doors, audience members will be transported to a vibrant new world," says Gutschick.

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The Rose remains dedicated to its mission of inspiring young people and their families to discover the magic of theater, to find their voices and enrich their communities. Central to this mission has always been the understanding that theater has the power to transform the community by helping audiences better understand a variety of viewpoints and building empathy for others. “We believe theater is essential to helping children develop the skills they need to lead a successful, fulfilled life,” says Gutschick. “This has been a core value from our early beginnings in 1949, and it is just as true today.”

2023-24 MEMBER EVENT SHOWS

Arthur & Friends Make a Musical

Sept 8-24, 2023

Based on the “Arthur” book series created by Marc Brown, adapted for stage
Book & Lyrics by John MacLay. Music & Lyrics by Brett Ryback.
Production developed and World Premiere presented in 2022 by First Stage.
Jeff Frank, Artistic Director

Directed by Jackie Kappes



The popular PBS animated series makes its way to The Rose stage in **Arthur & Friends Make a Musical**. Big things are happening at Lakewood Elementary School. Arthur’s class is asked to write and perform a big show for the community. Everyone is excited -- everyone, except Arthur. As the big performance draws near, Arthur feels more and more nervous. With the help of his family and friends Buster, Brain, Francine, Muffy -- and even little sister D.W. -- Arthur learns the importance of being his best, unique self.

This fun musical takes audiences on a ride through the experience of putting on a show and finding the courage to stand in the spotlight. Theater aficionados will chuckle at musical quotations and inside jokes from popular shows like *Les Miserables* and *Hamilton*, while fans of the long-running PBS show will enjoy seeing these characters brought to life in Broadway-sized musical numbers on The Rose stage.

The show is based on the *Arthur* book series and subsequent animated television series, created by Marc Brown, that ran for 25 seasons on PBS. It was the longest-running children’s animated series in the United States. The series follows the life of third-grade student Arthur Read, his family and friends.

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The 60-minute production of ***Arthur & Friends Make a Musical*** will be presented Sept. 8 -24, 2023, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm.

WORLD PREMIERE

Life Doesn't Frighten Me

Oct 6 - 22, 2023

By Paige Hernandez with Music by Kris Funn

Based on "Life Doesn't Frighten Me" by Dr. Maya Angelou
from the book *And Still I Rise*

Used with permission of Caged Bird Legacy, LLC



Directed by Paige Hernandez

The Rose will bring Dr. Maya Angelou's poem, ***Life Doesn't Frighten Me***, to the stage in a world premiere production, Oct. 6 - 22, 2023. The show is part of a rolling world premiere taking part in four cities across the country, the first of which will happen at The Rose. "We are lucky to be partnering with children's theaters from across the country in cities like Madison, Charlotte, and Dallas to bring this show to life," says Gutschick.

Playwright Paige Hernandez will also direct The Rose's production. Hernandez worked directly with students in the participating communities to generate an original play based on Dr. Angelou's inspiring poem. In Omaha, Paige visited with elementary schools, Girls Inc, and Northstar to get to know local kids and how they conquer their fears.

"As the poem's title suggests, Dr. Angelou's words remind us that life is full of invitations to adventure, and while fear is a natural feeling when facing the unknown, we are each strong enough to conquer it," says Gutschick. "Kids can appreciate this message alongside adults. Dr. Angelou's words are accessible in a way that some poetry isn't, and the rhythms of her language really feel uplifting."

Hernandez has worked alongside renowned jazz composer Kris Funn to incorporate catchy tunes to go along with the script, certain to engage audiences. "When our staff listened to this music, we couldn't stop singing it," says Gutschick.

Hernandez recently appeared on The Rose stage in the self-authored and self-performed show *Havana Hop* where she had full auditoriums dancing alongside her onstage adventures. Her energy and enthusiasm onstage is transcendent and is a perfect match to the uplifting message of Dr. Angelou's poem.

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Life Doesn't Frighten Me will make its world debut on The Rose stage Oct. 6 - 22, 2023, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 5 pm.

WORLD PREMIERE

Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Story

Jan. 19 - Feb. 4, 2024

Adapted by Jackie Kappes

Based on "A Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Party"

Conceived by C+C Mini Factory

Published by Running Press Kids

Directed by Suzanne Withem



The Rose will collaborate with C+C Mini Factory to bring the children's book, ***Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Party***, to life in a world premiere production. ***Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Party*** finds a barnyard that is anything but sleepy! As the farmer drifts off to sleep, the animals get ready for the wildest party this side of the barn. A young goat named Kid is excited to attend the party for the first time and can't wait to help his farm friends get ready. From baking pies with Uncle Horse, to taking a bath as instructed by the Pigs, to deciding what to wear alongside Uncle Sheep, the audience gets to participate alongside Kid as the night culminates in a raucous dance party.

Night at the Farm is what Gutschick calls an "anti-bedtime story." "It's a piece that particularly appeals to pre-schoolers, kindergarteners, and first graders. It is the epitome of an "anti-bedtime" story, with all kinds of fun and silly audience participation to go alongside a bopping musical score by one of the best musicians our city has ever produced in Graham Ulicny," he says. Ulicny is a multi-instrumentalist and current keyboardist of Omaha-based band The Faint. His vast resume includes recording and touring with noted artists and bands and performances with many large national festivals including Lollapalooza, Austin City Limits and others. His work was last seen at The Rose in the 2016 production of *Plastic Drastic*.

Likewise, Gutschick expresses enthusiasm for the partnership with C+C Mini Factory, photographers and creators who were recently recognized as "Instagrammer of the Year" at the Shorty Awards. "Quinn Corbin is a theater superstar," he says. "Together with her collaborator Chelsea Cates, they make these delightful miniatures that totally transport the viewer to whimsical worlds that feel just like what it meant to play with toys as a child, to open up your imagination with fairly rudimentary objects."

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Adapted by Rose Education Director Jackie Kappes, ***Night at the Farm*** promises an hour of raucous laughter and family fun. Kappes brings an understanding on how to appeal to young children and a brilliant sense of humor and playfulness, according to Gutschick. "As an educator, Jackie knows how to write really fun invitations for the audience to participate in key moments of the story along with the actors," he says.

Night at the Farm: A Bedtime Party is 60 minutes long without an intermission and will be presented Jan. 19 - Feb. 4, 2024, Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm,

Bob Marley's Three Little Birds

Feb 23 - Mar 10, 2024

Based on a story by Cedella Marley

Music & Lyrics by Bob Marley

Adapted for the stage by Michael J. Bobbitt

Arrangements, Orchestrations,

Additional Music & Lyrics by John L. Cornelius, II

BOB MARLEY'S THREE LITTLE BIRDS is produced by arrangement with Concord Theatricals, www.Concordtheatricals.Com



Directed by Kathy Tyree

Bob Marley's Three Little Birds is a jammin' musical featuring the timeless music and lyrics of Bob Marley. Based on the children's book by his daughter Cedella, the show shares the legendary reggae artist's message of peace and love with a new generation.

In the story, the character Ziggy is afraid to leave the house. He is too busy worrying about tropical storms, evil spirits and the sneaky, hair-grabbing trickster Duppy. With the help of a few feathered friends, Ziggy learns that "every little things is gonna be alright!"

"This is a story about a protagonist who overcomes his fears of the outside world," says Gutschick. "I hope audiences remember to take a deep breath and notice all the goodness around them, just like a Bob Marley song would have us do."

Audiences will be transported to a Jamacian world of peace and happiness through a variety of Bob Marley songs, including "One Love," "I Shot the Sheriff," and "Jamming."

Bob Marley's Three Little Birds will be presented Feb. 23 - March 10, 2024, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. The show is expected to run approximately 60 minutes.

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Red Riding Hood

Mar 22 - Apr 7, 2024

By Allison Gregory

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing, Woodstock, Illinois



Directed by Matt Gutschick

What happens when a familiar fairy tale takes an unexpected twist? Audiences will find out when **Red Riding Hood** comes to The Rose stage. In this hilarious adaptation by Allison Gregory, two actors play every character in the classic story.

In the production, the greatest actor in the world is interrupted when a delivery person arrives with a mysterious package. Two actors take on all the roles in this furiously fast, funny, and surprising adaptation that asks what it means to bravely write your own story.

“This is is a zany take on the material, not totally unlike *The Play That Goes Wrong* in that we have comedic mishaps and redos along the way,” says Gutschick. “This is a funny and lighthearted take on the material, with none of the scary overtones of the original Grimm fairy tale. Families can expect to have a really great time.”

Red Riding Hood will bring its madcap antics to The Rose stage March 22 - April 7, 2024, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. The show is expected to run approximately 60 minutes.

Charlotte's Web

Apr 19 - May 5, 2024

Adapted from the book by E.B. White

By Joseph Robinette

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing, Woodstock, Illinois

Directed by Stephanie Jacobson

One of the world's most beloved stories returns to The Rose stage with **Charlotte's Web**. The stage adaptation of the book by E. B. White is a perennial favorite of Omaha audiences. Rose artist educator Stephanie Jacobson returns as director of the production, last seen on The Rose stage in 2015, and a show that has proven to be a favorite among families. According to Gutschick, “This was a top five show we’ve done in my decade of working at The Rose; it just left me in a puddle of happy tears. I’m thrilled Stephanie is willing to bring it to life again for Rose audiences.”

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The story, which the Children's Literature Association named the best American children's book of the past two hundred years, features all the enchanting characters readers have come to love: Wilbur, the irresistible young pig with a fear of the butcher; Fern, a girl with an innate understanding of animals; Templeton, the gluttonous rat with an underlying heart of gold; and, of course, the extraordinary spider, Charlotte, who proves to be a true friend and a good writer.

"The character relationships are so alive in this show, particularly between Charlotte and Wilbur. Their friendship is so sweet while being grounded in authenticity," says Gutschick.


Charlotte's Web will weave its web of magic for Rose audiences April 19 - May 5, 2024, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. The show is expected to run approximately 60 minutes.

"This is a show that starts off taking up a small piece of your heart as an audience member and that just grows and grows until its beautiful conclusion. It is bursting with love," says Gutschick.



Purchasing tickets to Rose Member Shows

Rose members receive free tickets to the shows listed above and may make their reservations immediately after purchasing their membership. Non-members may purchase tickets for \$30 each after August 1, 2023. Memberships are available now at www.rosetheater.org.



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2023-24 PREMIUM SHOWS

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Dec 1 - 23, 2023

Based on the animated television special "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" adapted from the story by Robert L. May and the song by Johnny Marks.

Music and Lyrics by Johnny Marks

Script Adaptation by Robert Penola

Developed by Character Arts Creations, LLC

Originally produced, directed and conceived by Jeff Frank and First Stage with scenic and puppet designs by Brandon Kirkham

Arrangements by Timothy Splain

Orchestrations by William C. White

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com.



Directed by Matt Gutschick

The world's favorite holiday classic will give the gift of Christmas cheer to Omaha audiences when ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** flies to The Rose stage this December. Based on the 1964 Rankin & Bass Claymation television special, The Rose's production will feature puppetry and other fun elements to create the characters from the Island of Misfit Toys and the Abominable Snowman, Bumble. The Rose will collaborate with the world-renowned puppet theater What If Puppets from Kansas City to create the puppet characters.

Families will enjoy the story, songs, words and characters of the beloved television special presented live on stage. Gutschick (who will be directing the production) shares that audiences can also expect to be a part of the onstage action. "We are also planning on having audience members join in the fun with Rudolph noses of their own to support our hero as they sing along to "Have a Holly Jolly Christmas" with the cast," he says.

The theatrical production draws inspiration from the television special by the same name, which is the longest continuously running Christmas TV special in the United States. The story follows the life of a young reindeer who is born with a glowing red nose. Despite his family's efforts to hide Rudolph's nose, it doesn't take long for the other reindeer to discover that he isn't like the rest of them. When Rudolph decides to run away, he discovers a variety of friends along the way who all consider themselves misfits. When Rudolph finally returns home, he discovers his family has been looking for him and now needs his help. Will the very things that make Rudolph and his friends feel like outcasts now be the tools they need to save the day?

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Audiences at ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** will be left with a true holiday gift: the important message that what makes you different can make you special.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer will fly into The Rose Dec. 1 - 23, 2023, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5:30 pm and Sundays at 2 pm. The show is 90 minutes with an intermission.

PREMIUM EVENT

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory June 7 - 23, 2024

Book by David Greig. Music by Marc Shaiman.
Lyrics by Scott Wittman & Marc Shaiman.
Based on the novel by ROALD DAHL
Songs from the Motion Picture by LESLIE BRICUSSE and ANTHONY NEWLEY.
CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY is presented through
special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). www.mtishows.com.

Directed by Kit McKay



Charlie and the Chocolate Factory presents Omaha audiences with a golden ticket to family fun, running June 7 -23, 2024, at The Rose. Based on the famous novel by Roald Dahl and the 1964 movie starring Gene Wilder, the final show of The Rose's 2023-24 season promises to open doors of pure imagination for families.

"We want to completely embrace the world of Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, with its fantastical inventions and its sometimes comically rough around the edges characters," says Gutschick.

The story begins when the world-famous Willy Wonka announces he is opening the gates to his mysterious factory to a lucky few who find golden tickets hidden in bars of chocolate. Young Charlie Bucket and four other gold ticket winners embark on a life-changing journey through Wonka's world, including chocolate waterfalls, nutty squirrels and the great glass elevator, all revealed by Wonka's army of curious Oompa-Loompas.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory features all of the major songs and memorable moments from the 1964 movie in an updated theatrical version recently produced on Broadway. The Rose will be one of the first theaters in the region to stage this retelling of Roald Dahl's story.

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“Charlie is the real hero of this story and our production will emphasize this point. We want children in our audience to live in a world that rewards kindness towards others, and that is ultimately the experience Charlie and his grandpa have,” says Gutschick.

The show will be directed by guest director Kit McKay. McKay’s work has been featured in a variety of past Rose productions, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Disney’s Tarzan*.


The over-the-top, imaginative story set to a moving musical score make ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*** the perfect family outing for audiences of all ages. ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*** will be presented June 7 - 23, 2024, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm.

Purchasing tickets to Rose Premium Events

Tickets to The Rose’s two premium shows, ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** and ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*** are \$37 main floor, \$32 balcony. Rose members may purchase their discounted premium event tickets and select their seats immediately upon the purchase of their membership. Ticket will go on sale to the general public on August 1, 2023.



***Rose Theater memberships are on sale now at www.rosetheater.org
or by calling The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849.***



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.

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 *Giraffes Can’t Dance*, *Carmela Full of Wishes*, *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.