

For Immediate Release

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A gift of nostalgic holiday fun for Omaha audiences

Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer flies onto The Rose stage

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The world's favorite holiday classic will give the gift of Christmas cheer to Omaha audiences when ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** flies onto The Rose stage, Dec. 1 - 23, 2023. 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 North Pole, the Island of Misfit Toys and the Abominable Snowman, Bumble.

Families will enjoy the story, songs, words and characters of the beloved television special presented live on stage. "This is a colorful, music packed show with some of the most classic Christmas songs we hear each year on the radio," says Rose Artistic Director Matt Gutschick, who is directing the production. ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** is filled with songs that epitomize the holiday season: "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," "We're a Couple of Misfits," "Holly Jolly Christmas," "Silver and Gold," and, of course, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

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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 named Rudolph (played by DeVon Richards II) 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.

Eventually Rudolph decides to run away. Along his journey, he discovers a variety of friends along the way who all consider themselves misfits, including Hermey, an elf who wishes to be a dentist (played by Jay Hayden); prospector Yukon Cornelius (played by Karl Houser); and an entire island filled with misfit toys who believe they aren't wanted by any children. Pursued by a terrifying abominable snowman called Bumble, Rudolph discovers true worth is found from within.

When Rudolph finally returns home, he discovers his family loves him and has been looking for him – and now they need his help. When a storm threatens to cancel Christmas, Santa (played by Patrick Wolfe) looks to the little reindeer for a solution. In the end, the very things that make Rudolph and his friends feel like outcasts may just be the tools they need to save the day.

The Rose has collaborated with the world-renowned puppet theater What If Puppets from Kansas City to create puppet characters with the same emotional appeal as something created by Jim Henson. "I am just enamored of the puppets we created in partnership with What If Puppets out of Kansas City. They are some of the best puppet designers in the country," says Gutschick. "

The puppets used in the production are directly inspired by the television special and will evoke happy memories for everyone who has seen the Christmas classic. "They look like the classic Rankin and Bass movie is coming to life before your very eyes," says Gutschick. "The highlight, of course, is our 10-foot-tall abominable snowman, otherwise lovingly called Bumble."

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The Rose's production of ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** builds on the nostalgia of the classic production with interactive moments where audience members can become a part of the action. "We want the audience to feel embraced by the experience of this," says Gutschick. "We have a few participatory moments where some kids will help pack Santa's sleigh, and we're giving everyone their own Rudolph nose to sing along with the cast at the end of the show."

At just 90 minutes with an intermission, ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** is a perfect family outing for young and old alike. "This show packs quite a bit of visual spectacle and dance into its condensed run time. This isn't the kind of holiday fare that is going to eat your entire afternoon, but it's going to feel really packed with memorable moments," say Gutschick.

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. As Gutschick explains, "Rudolph teaches us to be ourselves even if those around us are not always accepting. Rudolph and Hermey behave with integrity and kindness throughout – it ends up being their community that needs to change as the play progresses."

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. (There will be no 5:30 pm performance on Saturday, Dec. 23.) The show is 90 minutes with an intermission. The theater recommends that guests arrive at least 30 minutes before the performance start time to allow for parking and seating. ASL interpretation for the Deaf and audio description services will be available at the 2 pm show on Saturday, December 16. This showing will also be offered as a sensory-friendly performance; see The Rose website at www.rosetheater.org for information.

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Tickets for ***Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*** are priced at \$37 for the main floor and \$32 for the balcony. Rose members will receive discounted tickets. Discounted tickets are also available at all area Hy-Vee stores. Groups of 10 or more should contact The Rose Box Office for information on group rates.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer is sponsored by Children's Nebraska, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Omaha Steaks, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Kiewit Companies is the Opening Night sponsor.

For more information, cast bios and tickets, visit www.rosetheater.org.

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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