

## For Immediate Release

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### The Rose Theater announces the cast of world premiere production of *Prancer*

(OMAHA, Nebr.) Making its world debut on The Rose stage, ***Prancer***, a stage play based on the cherished holiday film, features a heartwarming story and breathtaking puppetry to bring light to the holiday season. The show will run at The Rose, Nov. 25 through Dec. 18, 2016.

The play, ***Prancer***, which was first produced as a motion picture by Raffaella De Laurentiis, was adapted for the stage by the original screenwriter, Greg Taylor. The Rose is the first theater to present the stage adaptation.

The cast of ***Prancer*** features adult and child actors as characters inhabiting the rural town of Three Oaks. In the show, Chloe Irwin (*A Wrinkle in Time*, *Ramona Quimby*) plays Jessica Riggs, a young girl whose family has fallen on hard times after the death of her mother. As the holidays approach, Jessica maintains her belief in Santa Claus, despite the urgings of her schoolmates. As she starts to question her idea that there are miracles in the world, she finds an injured reindeer -- and instantly believes it to be Santa's reindeer, Prancer. While she nurses the animal back to health, she interacts with various members of the Three Oaks community, sharing her infectious joy, and changing lives with her holiday spirit. Eventually the entire town learns about Prancer, causing some big problems for Jessica as she tries to return the reindeer home to Santa.

In ***Prancer***, Jessica's father, John, played by Nils Haaland (*Jackie & Me*) and her brother, Steve, played by Grant Mannschreck (*Shrek The Musical*) are struggling through the Christmas season; Jessica's mother has recently passed away, leaving John alone to care for the two children and a farm. Times are hard and John is having a hard time making ends meet while still making time for Jessica and Steve. Aunt Sarah, played by Louisa Foster (*Narnia*), hopes to help the family manage through the hard times -- and possibly bring Jessica home to live with her, with the intention of helping John through his rough patch.

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the  
**Rose**  
Performing Arts  
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Page 2 of 5

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Jessica's best friend, Carol, played by Ashley Fitl (*Shrek The Musical*, *Honk*), isn't sure what to think of her friend's sudden obsession with the reindeer, but promises to keep Jessica's secret.

Jessica and Carol find themselves in the sights of one of the town's grumpiest citizens when they dare to sled down McFarland's hill. Moira Mangiameli plays the mysterious Mrs. McFarland, a grouchy old woman who keeps to herself in her large old house on the hill, but is hiding a secret only Jessica can uncover.

Several actors help bring *Prancer's* community of Three Oaks to life. Jessica's school teacher, Miss Fairburn, played by Kim Clark-Kaczmarek, has her hands full with a classroom full of students preparing for the annual Christmas pageant. Kind-hearted policewoman Dora Benedetti is played by Rose artist-educator Katy Kepler (*Mouse on the Move*, *Elephant & Piggie*). Patrick Wolfe (*Peter & The Starcatcher*, *Narnia*) plays veterinarian Dr. Benton, who reluctantly helps Jessica nurse Prancer back to health. Other townspeople include Pastor Williams, played by Lauren Krupski (*Shrek The Musical*, *A Christmas Story*, *The Cat in the Hat*), newspaper reporter Tom Stewart, played by Christopher Scott, and butcher Herb Drier, played by Robby Stone (*Shrek The Musical*, *Honk*, *Big Nate*, *Jackie & Me*).

No town would be complete without its youngest citizens, and the on-stage community of Three Oaks is no different. The following student actors round out the cast: Austin Lempke (*Charlotte's Web*, *Honk*, *Shrek The Musical*) as Ryan; Elliot Kerkhofs as Gavin; Belle Rangel (*Shrek The Musical*) as Nita; Kaylee Lempke as Riley; Brooke Vogel as Emma; Zoey Dittmer (*Honk*) as Lizz; Skyler Radloff as Harold; Winston Schneider as Sammy; and Trentin McLaughlin as Tommy.

The reindeer Prancer will be brought to life through a life-sized puppet operated by Caulene Hudson, Shannon Wade and Anna Jordan.

*Prancer* is being directed by Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick. His recent directing credits at The Rose include *The Little Mermaid*, *Peter & The Starcatcher*, *A Christmas Story*, *Mary Poppins*, *Robin Hood* and *Ramona Quimby*. Other directing credits include *Cyrano* with Parallel 45, *The Sparrow*, *Twelfth Night* and *Anon(ymous)* at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, *Wuthering Heights* at the Mint Theatre in New York, and *Whacked Fairy Tales* at Twin City Stage. His plays have been workshopped/produced by Wordsmyth Theatre Company, Horse Trade Theater Group (NYC), Reverie Productions (NYC), Tri Sate Actors' Theatre, and Magic Chicago. His work for MagicMouth Theatre won a New Horizons Playwriting Award and the company premiered a new magic-theatre piece, *A Christmas Carol In Prose* with Parallel 45 in Traverse City, MI. He is the former artistic director of the Children's Theatre of Winston-Salem and completed a fellowship with

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Page 3 of 5

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the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis under the mentorship of Peter Brosius. Gutschick assisted Peter Brosius on productions of *500 Hats of Bartholemew Cubbins* and *A Christmas Story*. He is a former Managing Director of the Yale Cabaret where he produced over 14 world premieres. He is also the recipient of a Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Fellowship in Entrepreneurship, a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and a graduate of the School at Steppenwolf. He holds a BA in Theater from Wake Forest University and received an MFA in Theater Management from the Yale School of Drama. Gutschick is in his fifth season as artistic director of The Rose.

The complete cast of The Rose's production of *Prancer* consists of:

Jessica .....	Chloe Irwin*
John .....	Nils Haaland
Steve .....	Grant Mannschreck
Aunt Sarah .....	Louisa Foster
Carol.....	Ashley Fitl*
Dr. Benton .....	Patrick Wolfe
Tom Stewart.....	Christopher Scott
Mrs. McFarland .....	Moira Mangiameli
Pastor Williams .....	Lauren Krupski
Dora Benedetti .....	Katy Kepler
Herb Drier.....	Robby Stone
Ryan .....	Austin Lempke*
Gavin.....	Elliot Kerkhofs*
Nita.....	Belle Rangel
Riley .....	Kaylee Lempke*
Emma.....	Brooke Vogel*
Lizz.....	Zoey Dittmer*
Harold .....	Skyler Radloff*
Sammy.....	Winston Schneider*
Tommy .....	Trentin McLaughlin
Puppeteers.....	Caulene Hudson
	Shannon Wade
	Anna Jordan

\*denotes BROADWAY and/or DRAMA at The Rose students

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Page 4 of 5

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***Prancer*** is recommended for families of children ages seven and up. The show runs Nov. 25 through Dec. 18, 2016, with performances on Fridays at 7 pm, and Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. The show is approximately two hours long with an intermission. On Saturday, Dec. 3, the performance will be interpreted for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Saturday, Dec. 17 performance will feature audio description for audience members who are blind, but arrangements must be made at least two weeks prior to the show date. Call (402) 502-4637 for information on audio description services.

Tickets for ***Prancer*** are \$27 Main Floor and \$22 Balcony. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores through a purchase of a Kid Cuisine product. Members of The Rose receive discounted tickets to the production.

***Prancer*** is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Kid Cuisine, Hy-Vee, Nebraska Life Magazine, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Special opening night activities, including live reindeer at the theater on Nov. 25, are sponsored by Kiewit Companies.

For additional information, or to purchase tickets, visit [www.rosetheater.org](http://www.rosetheater.org) or call The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849.

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### ***About The Rose***

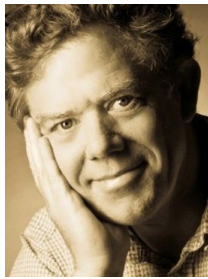
The Rose Theater is one of the largest and most accomplished children's theaters in the nation, with a reputation for enriching the lives of children and families through top-quality professional productions and arts education. In 2016, *American Theatre* magazine named The Rose one of the 20 top children's 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 *Pete the Cat: The Musical*, *Sherlock Holmes & the First Baker Street Irregular*, *Zen Ties*, *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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**Chloe Irwin**  
*Jessica*



**Nils Haaland**  
*John*



**Grant Mannschreck**  
*Steve*



**Louisa Foster**  
*Aunt Sarah*



**Ashley Fitl**  
*Carol Weatherby*



**Patrick Wolfe**  
*Dr. Benton*



**Moira Mangiameli**  
*Mrs. McFarland*



**Lauren Krupski**  
*Pastor Williams*



**Katy Kepler**  
*Dora Benedetti*



**Robby Stone**  
*Herb Drier*



**Kim Clark-Kaczmarek**  
*Miss Fairburn*



**Austin Lempke**  
*Ryan*



**Elliot Kerkhofs**  
*Gavin*



**Kaylee Lempke**  
*Riley*



**Brooke Vogel**  
*Emma*



**Skyler Radloff**  
*Harold*



**Winston Schneider**  
*Sammy*



**Zoey Dittmer**  
*Lizz*



**Caulene Hudson**  
*Puppeteer*



**Shannon Wade**  
*Puppeteer*



**Anna Jordan**  
*Puppeteer*



**Matthew Gutschick**  
*Director*

**Photos Not Available:** Trentin McLaughlin - Tommy; Belle Rangel - Nita; Christopher Scott - Tom Stewart