

**Embargoed until April 11, 2019**

DATE: April 2019

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## **The Rose Theater: 70 years young**

***Banner anniversary season for Rose Theater fulfills Emmy Gifford's vision of revolutionary children's theater for Omaha families***

(OMAHA, NE) Emmy Gifford, the passionate artist who championed the idea of children's theater in Omaha, once said in an interview with the Omaha World-Herald, "In the beginning, the concept of children's theater was considered a little odd. We were pioneers in that area." This year, the theater that has evolved from her original efforts, The Rose, celebrates 70 years of children's theater in Omaha with a season that blends audience favorites with world premieres and celebrity appearances.

The theater has come a long way from the Omaha Junior Theater days, when the company struggled to find a performance venue. "In the early years, we went around to the schools with our productions...in those days, we had no music and nothing like the production values of today." The Omaha Junior Theater would eventually bear the name Emmy Gifford Children's Theater, before taking the moniker of The Rose when it moved to its current location in downtown Omaha.

Although Gifford passed away in 1997, her vision lives on in the work being done at The Rose. In the 2019-20 season, the theater's mainstage and First Stage productions will focus on stories that inspire young people to find their own voice, their own inner strength and their own sense of self. The Rose's new season brings audiences along on journeys with characters who push beyond their own limits, challenge the world around them, face their fears and succeed despite adversity.

"This season finds us following along with a wide range of characters as they attempt to find their place in the community, mustering their courage to overcome obstacles," says Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick.

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**2019-20 Season Announced at  
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The 2019-20 Rose season consists of six hour-long mainstage shows included with membership, along with two premium mainstage shows that will run approximately two hours with an intermission. New this year is a special event show featuring a celebrity guest, Howie D. from the Backstreet Boys. The Rose's First Stage program for very young children returns with two interactive shows performed on the theater's smaller Hitchcock Stage, but with an added perk for young families: a three-show ticket package with the opportunity to see both First Stage shows and one mainstage show.

Among the shows returning to The Rose stage is ***Elf the Musical***, which will again feature the talents of actor Dan Chevalier as Buddy the Elf. Other returning shows in the 2019-20 season include ***Go, Dog. Go!***; ***The Cat in the Hat***; ***Howie D: Back in the Day***; ***The Diary of Anne Frank***; and ***The Sound of Music***. Shows rounding out the season include ***Ella Enchanted***; ***Howie D: Back in the Day***; ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience***; and ***Corduroy***.

Two productions written specifically for very young children -- ***A Bucket of Blessings*** and ***The Little Engine That Could*** -- will introduce children to the world of theater through The Rose's First Stage series.

The complete 2019-20 season includes:

**MEMBER SHOWS:**

***Go, Dog. Go!*** (Aug. 30 - Sept. 15, 2019)

***The Cat in the Hat*** (Sept. 27 - Oct. 13, 2019)

***Ella Enchanted*** (Oct. 25 - Nov. 10, 2019)

***The Diary of Anne Frank*** (Feb. 28 - Mar. 15, 2020)

***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*** (Mar. 27 - Apr. 11, 2020)

***Corduroy*** (Apr. 24 - May 10, 2020)

**PREMIUM SHOWS:**

***Elf: The Musical*** (Nov. 29 - Dec. 22, 2019)

***The Sound of Music*** (June 5 - 21, 2020)

**SPECIAL EVENT SHOW:**

***Howie D: Back in the Day*** (Jan. 31 - Feb. 16, 2020)

**FIRST STAGE SHOWS:**

***A Bucket of Blessings*** (Oct. 12 - Nov. 3, 2019)

***The Little Engine That Could*** (Feb. 15 - Mar. 8, 2020)

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The Rose remains dedicated to its mission of enriching the lives of children and families through live theater and arts education. 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.”

Six of The Rose’s mainstage shows are free with Rose membership or \$20 per ticket for non-members. Tickets for the FIRST STAGE series shows held on The Rose’s Hitchcock Stage are \$12. Tickets to The Rose’s two premium shows, ***Elf the Musical*** and ***The Sound of Music*** are \$27 main floor, \$22 balcony. New this year, The Rose will offer a special event, ***Howie D.: Back in the Day***, with reserved seating tickets available for \$25. Rose members discounts ranging from \$2 to \$13 off all non-member events.

#### 2019-20 MEMBER EVENT SHOWS

**Go, Dog. Go!**  
August 30 - September 15, 2019

Adapted by Allison Gregory and Steven Dietz.  
Composed by Michael Koerner.  
Based on the story by P.D. Eastman.



The season opens August 30 with a Rose favorite: ***Go, Dog. Go!*** For almost six decades P.D. Eastman’s pedal-pushing pups have been entertaining early readers and teaching young people about a world of prepositions and per-PET-ual motion! Audiences are invited to climb onboard with some car-driving canines as they demonstrate directional differences -- like in and out, up and down, and over and under -- on their way to a treetop Dog Party. The spectacularly silly story returns to the Rose Theater stage in an all-new production that offers the perfect production for young theatergoers to start the season.

Guest director Jess Jung will lead the Go, Dog. Go! production. Jung teaches acting and directing for the North Dakota State University Department of Theatre Arts. She has served as Associate Producer of the Source Festival (a new play festival in Washington DC), Associate

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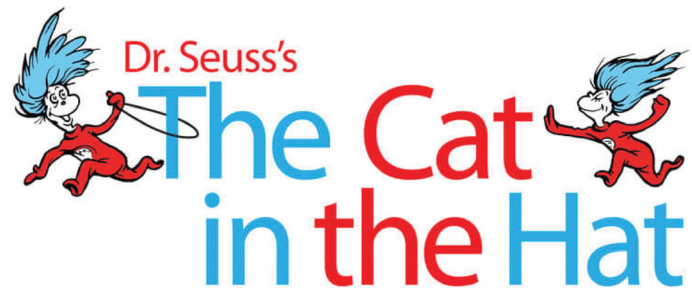
Education Director for the Actors Theatre of Louisville, and as a teaching artist for several theatres including Shakespeare Theatre Company, Imagination Stage, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and Young Playwrights' Theatre. Jung created a specialized directing intensive for the Drama League, The Great Directors: Brecht & Grotowski, and is also a recipient of the Drama League's Directors Project Fellowship. Directing credits include the Hangar Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Forum Theatre, Adventure Theatre MTC, the Mead Theatre Lab, the Inkwell, and Walden Theatre. Dramaturgy credits include Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Young Playwrights' Theatre. Jung is an ensemble member of Forum Theatre and a company member of Young Playwrights' Theatre.

The 65-minute production of **Go, Dog. Go!** will be presented on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for guests who are deaf and hard of hearing and audio description services for blind audiences will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, September 7. The 5 pm performance on Saturday, September 7 is designated as sensory friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. The show is appropriate for children of all ages, especially younger audiences.

### Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat

September 27 - October 13, 2019

Based on the book by Dr. Seuss  
Originally produced by  
the National Theatre of Great Britain  
Adapted and originally directed  
by Katie Mitchell.



When a tall, lanky cat wearing a red-and-white-striped hat steps through the door, one thing is certain: wild, wacky fun is about to ensue. **The Cat in the Hat** brings Dr. Seuss' classic tale vividly to life at The Rose Theater, September 27 - October 13, 2019. This energetic adaptation of the iconic children's book weaves all the silliness and charm of the original story into a playful production that will delight the entire family.

Bringing a beloved classic story like **The Cat in the Hat** to life involves juggling quite a few theatrical balls (and a fish, and a cake, and a rake) in the air - a job that director Kevin Ehrhart accomplishes with ease. Ehrhart acknowledges that **The Cat in the Hat** has inspired generations of young readers, many of whom can recite the story from memory. Ehrhart (who directed The Rose's 2014 production of **The Cat in the Hat**) plans to build on Dr. Seuss' story, illustrations and hijinks to create a dynamic world of imagination where anything can happen.

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***The Cat in the Hat*** is 45 minutes long without an intermission and is appropriate for all ages, but will be especially entertaining for younger audiences.

***The Cat in the Hat*** will be presented on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, October 5. The 5 pm performance on Saturday, October 5 is designated as sensory-friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. Contact The Rose Box Office for information on the resources available for families.

**Ella Enchanted**  
October 25 - November 10, 2019

By Karen Zacarias.  
Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma.  
Adapted from the book by Gail Carson Levine.



***Ella Enchanted*** is a twist on the classic fairy tale. Ella enjoys an enchanted but complicated life in the kingdom of Frell. When her well-meaning—but self-centered—fairy godmother, Lucinda, bestows a “gift” of obedience on Ella, she fails to consider the complicated consequences. Ella’s mother warns her to never tell others of her “gift,” but when her mother is gone, her often absent father, Sir Peter, remarries. Soon Ella finds herself shipped off to finishing school and at the mercy of self-serving stepsisters who sniff-out her secret. Will Ella’s true talent for learning languages—and a developing friendship with Prince Charmont—allow her to curtail the curse of her unwanted gift and live a life not controlled by others? This brand-new musical adaptation of a modern fairytale favorite offers a tried-and-true kind of storytelling with a tart, and thought-provoking, twist!

***Ella Enchanted*** is a musical adaptation of the Newbery Honor book by Gail Carson Levine, published in 1997. The book was made into a motion picture starring Anne Hathaway in 2004.

Leading the cast of ***Ella Enchanted*** will be Nik Whitcomb. Whitcomb returns to The Rose where he participated in the theater’s educational programming as a student, an intern, teaching artist and performer. A graduate of Creighton University, Whitcomb has been working in the Chicago area as a casting associate with Paskal Rudnicke Casting and the Northlight Theatre.

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***Ella Enchanted*** will be presented October 25 - November 10, 2019, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm & 5 pm and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, November 2. A sensory-friendly performance will be offered on Saturday, November 2 at 5 pm.

**The Diary of Anne Frank**  
February 28 - March 15, 2020

Adapted by Wendy Kesselman,  
Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett

THE DIARY OF  
*Anne Frank*

In this powerful new adaptation by Wendy Kesselman, Anne Frank emerges from history a living, lyrical, intensely gifted young girl, who confronts her rapidly changing life and the increasing horror of her time with astonishing honesty, wit, and determination. Newly discovered writings from the diary of Anne Frank, as well as survivor accounts, are interwoven to create a story of the lives of people persecuted under Nazi rule.

***The Diary of Anne Frank*** is an impassioned drama about the lives of eight people hiding from the Nazis in a concealed storage attic. The show captures the claustrophobic realities of their daily existence—their fears, their hopes, their laughter, their grief. Despite their daily horrors, Anne’s voice shines through: “When I write I shake off all my cares. But I want to achieve more than that. I want to be useful and bring enjoyment to all people, even those I’ve never met. I want to go on living even after my death!”

The new adaptation has been met with critical acclaim. A few of these reviews:

“Undeniably moving. It shatters the heart. The evening never lets us forget the inhuman darkness waiting to claim its incandescently human heroine.” —NY Times.

“An extraordinary theatrical adventure! Go and remember.” —NY Post.

“...new DIARY is chillingly honest about the Holocaust. Wendy Kesselman’s work has restored the terror.” —NY Daily News.

“Wendy Kesselman’s finely textured new DIARY tells a deeper story. A sensitive, stirring and thoroughly engaging new adaptation.” —NY Newsday.

“A powerful new version that moves the audience to gasp, then tears.” —Associated Press.

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***The Diary of Anne Frank*** will be directed by guest artist Kit McKay. McKay returns to The Rose after directing Disney's *Tarzan the Musical* in the 2013-2014 season and *A Wrinkle in Time* in the 2014-15 season. She is the co-founder of Paralell 45 Theatre in Traverse City, Michigan, where she has directed *Our Town*, *Metamorphoses*, *A Christmas Carol in Prose*, *Shakespeare's R&J*, 30 Neo-futurist Plays from "Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind" (30 Plays in 60 Minutes), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. McKay attended Interlochen Arts Academy, Sarah Lawrence College, and Northwestern University's Master of Fine Arts directing program, where she worked closely with such artists as Anna D. Shapiro, Mary Zimmerman and Jessica Thebus at Steppenwolf Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Upon her master's graduation, she studied at the Yale School of Drama masters program in theatre management and worked as a Yale Fellow at Seattle Repertory Theatre. From 2010-2017, she was a curator and producer at LUMBERYARD Contemporary Performing Arts, a New York City producing organization, where she helped herald the Incubator program, a late-stage technical residency for choreographers and performance artists. Her recent two stage productions at The Rose Theater have been nominated for 10 OEO awards, including Best Direction for *Tarzan*.

***The Diary of Anne Frank*** was last produced by the Omaha Theater Company during the 1996-1997 season.

***The Diary of Anne Frank*** will run February 28 through March 15. The 90-minute show is recommended for children ages 8 and up. Shows are Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Services for audiences with special needs, including interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired, audio description services and sensory-friendly accommodations, will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, March 7.

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**Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed:  
The Rock Experience**  
March 27 - April 11, 2020

Written by Mo Willems.  
Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma.  
Based on the picture book: *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed* by Mo Willems.  
Originally performed at The Seattle Children's Theater.

Fans of three-time Caldecott Honoree Mo Willems' books, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and the *Elephant & Piggie* stories, are sure to love the author's latest theatrical creation: ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience***.



***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*** is the story of when rat met hat. Wilbur, a naked mole rat, is just like all the other naked mole rats -- naked! But when an ordinary hat falls into his tunnel, Wilbur dares to try it on and the moment is life-changing. His au naturel friends think he is crazy and pressure him to give up his clothes-wearing ways. ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*** is a cheeky musical about the importance of individualism.

Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick says, "This is a heartwarming story and an empowering homage to the power of being different, wrapped in a rock-and-roll concert."

Rose artist educator Michael Miller will direct ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed***. Miller's most recent directorial work at The Rose was highlighted in the 2018-19 season's production of *Winnie the Pooh*. Miller was also at the helm of the First Stage production, *Point A to Point B*, and the mainstage shows *Stellaluna and Other Tales*, *The Reluctant Dragon* and Leo Lionni's *Frederick*. He is a Master Teacher with the Nebraska Arts Council's Artists-in-Schools program with a focus on creative drama and design residencies. Miller has an undergraduate degree from Yale University and a Masters degree in Non-Profit Management from UNO. He has directed for The Rose's Teens 'N' Theater season, performed in *The Little Engine That Could*, *Curious George*, *Huck Finn*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *James and the Giant Peach*, the upcoming Rose production of *Curious George & the Golden Meatball*, and the national tours of *Frog and Toad*, *Richard Scarry's BusyTown*, and *Treasure Island*.

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***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*** will have families of all ages rockin' in the aisles. The show is expected to run 60 minutes without an intermission. ***Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*** will be presented March 27 - April 11, 2020, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, April 4. A sensory-friendly performance will be presented on Saturday, April 4 at 5 pm.

**Corduroy**  
April 24 - May 10, 2020

Based on the *Corduroy* and  
*A Pocket for Corduroy* books  
by Don Freeman.

Licensed by CBS Consumer Products.

Adapted for the stage by Barry Kornhauser.



Based on the 1968 children's book written and illustrated by Don Freeman, ***Corduroy*** shares the story of a toy bear in a department store and the little girl who wishes she could buy him. When the store comes to a close, Corduroy goes on a delightfully destructive chase through every section of the department store in search of his missing button, while across the city, little Lisa tries to convince her mother to let her give the bear a home.

Stephanie Jacobson will direct *Corduroy*. Jacobson is a full time Teaching Artist and the Director of Youth Productions at The Rose Theater. She previously directed *The Little Engine That Could*, *Curious George and the Golden Meatball*, *George and Martha*, *Charlotte's Web*, *A Child's Garden of Verses* and The Rose's world premiere of *The Grocer's Goblin* and *The Little Mermaid* as well as *The Misfits*, and *Thumbelina: A New Friend's Journey* (which she wrote and directed). She appeared on stage as the Mother in *Pinkalicious*, and Arrietty in *The Borrowers*, Frog in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Gina in *Big Nate*, Irma Cody in *Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band*, Nancy in *Ivy & Bean*, Ida in *Honk*, and Kaa in *The Jungle Book*. Jacobson has her MFA in Acting from the University of Iowa. She is a trained puppeteer specializing in shadow puppetry and Bunraku. She has presented and led workshops for Opera Omaha, UNO College of Education/ Celebration of The Young Child, The Nebraska State Education Continuing Education Department, Creighton University and the National LGBTQA College Conference. Before moving to Omaha, she lived in NYC where she worked with Liz Swados, Lee Bruer's Mabou Mines, Taylor Mac and The Jim Henson Company.

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**Corduroy** will be presented April 24 - May 10, 2020, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, May 2. A sensory-friendly performance will be presented on Saturday, May 2 at 5 pm. Children of all ages will delight at **Corduroy's** antics in the 75 minute show.

### 2019-20 PREMIUM SHOWS

#### **Elf the Musical**

November 29 - December 22, 2019

Book by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin.  
Music by Matthew Sklar. Lyrics by Chad Beguelin.  
*Based on the New Line Cinema film written by David Berenbaum.  
Originally produced by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures  
In association with Unique Features*

The show that proved to be the hit of the 2018 holiday season, **Elf the Musical** return to The Rose stage in 2019. Dan Chevalier reprises his role as Buddy the Elf in the show that had Omaha spreading Christmas cheer and singing loud for all to hear.



In this stage musical version of the popular film, **Elf**, featuring Will Ferrell, Buddy the Elf struggles with feeling out of place. He has always been a little different, significantly taller than his elf friends and just not quite fitting in at the North Pole. When Buddy learns from Santa that he's actually a human, the enormous former elf embarks on a quest to the sparkling city of New York during the holidays to find his father. His unusually upbeat, childlike cheer has a powerful effect on everyone he encounters—with sometimes disastrous results. Buddy is determined to charm his stressed-out dad who long ago lost his seasonal spirit, even though he wants nothing to do with a son he didn't know he had.

Gutschick, who will once again direct **Elf the Musical**, says, "This is a fun-filled musical adaptation of the favorite holiday film. It is a stuffed stocking full of songs and dance that your family will most definitely want on your Christmas wish list."

This will be the fourth time Gutschick has led a holiday show at The Rose, after stints at the helm of *A Christmas Story* and the world premiere of *Prancer*. Other Rose directing credits include *The Meaning of Maggie*, *Babe the Sheep Pig*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Mary Poppins*, among

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others. Gutschick 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.

***Elf the Musical*** will bring Christmas cheer to audiences of all ages. The premium event show runs two hours with an intermission.

***Elf the Musical*** will be presented November 29 - December 22, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, December 14. Tickets are \$27 main floor, \$22 balcony. Members receive discounted tickets.

### **The Sound of Music** June 5-21, 2020

Music by Richard Rodgers.  
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II.  
Book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse.  
Suggested by "The Trapp Family Singers"  
by Maria Augusta Trapp.



The world's most beloved musical bursts onto The Rose stage, alive with ***The Sound of Music***. Most recently staged by The Rose in 2011, ***The Sound of Music*** tells the spirited romantic musical story of Maria and the von Trapp Family. The popular musical features award-winning music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstien II, including "My Favority Things," "Do-Re-Mi," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "Edelweiss," and the title song, "The Sound of Music."

The Sound of Music was the final collaboration of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and has won the hearts of audiences worldwide. When Maria is dispatched from the convent to serve as governess to the seven children of the von Trapp family, her arrival is met with resistance. But Maria's soaring spirit and love for music is a winning combination that helps the family unite as they face the threat of a Nazi-occupied Austria.

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The enduring story set to a stirring musical score make ***The Sound of Music*** the perfect family outing for audiences of all ages. The 2-1/2 hour show will include an intermission. ***The Sound of Music*** will be presented June 5-21, 2020, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, June 13. Tickets are \$27 main floor, \$22 balcony. Members receive discounted tickets.

2019-20 SPECIAL EVENT SHOW

**Howie D.: Back in the Day**  
January 31 - February 16, 2020

Book, Music and Lyrics by  
Tor Hyams, Lisa St. Jou, and Howard Dorough



The Rose is excited to offer a star-studded special event for Omaha audiences in 2020:

***Howie D.: Back in the Day.*** In the new year, Backstreet Boy Howard Dorough (known to fans as Howie D.) will grace The Rose stage in the world premiere of his semi-autobiographical musical and his playwriting debut.

***Howie D.: Back in the Day*** follows the life of a middle-school Howie, long before he was a member of the Backstreet Boys. In those days, he was navigating Lakeview Prep, managing bullies, his big sister and his enthusiastic parents. It soon becomes clear that Howie must separate what others want for him from his own hopes and dreams. Audiences will join Howie on a journey through musical forms and middle school norms in this brand new show full of vibrant characters and hummable never-before-heard-music performed live by Howie D. himself.

Patron members of The Rose will receive free tickets to ***Howie D.: Back in the Day***, along with a meet-and-greet experience with Howie D.

***Howie D.: Back in the Day*** has an expected run time of 65 minutes without an intermission. It will be presented January 31 - February 16, 2020, with performances Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, February 8. Tickets are \$25 with reserved seating. Members receive discounted tickets.

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2019-20 FIRST STAGE SERIES SHOWS  
Presented on The Rose's Hitchcock Stage

In addition to its mainstage offerings, The Rose will also present two shows on its Hitchcock Stage as a part of its First Stage series. These shows are intended specifically for very young audiences and audiences with special needs. Tickets for the First Stage shows are \$12, and Rose members receive a discount of \$2 off tickets.

Recognizing that theater has benefits for children of all ages, The Rose's First Stage series gives young theatergoers and audiences with special needs an opportunity to experience the theater arts. First Stage productions are recommended for preschoolers, children with sensory needs, children on the autism spectrum or other special needs, or others who desire a gentler theater experience.

First Stage productions are presented on The Rose's Hitchcock Stage, a smaller, black-box style performance space located on the theater's fourth floor. This theater space allows for unique seating arrangements, often with flexible seating options that change with each show, such as beanbags, floor cushions or benches arranged in the round. This allows for more one-on-one interaction with the actors; young audience members are often invited into the performance space or asked to hold props to help tell the story. First Stage productions also encourage audience members to move along with the performers and respond vocally to what is happening on stage. Periods of darkness and loud sounds are kept to a minimum -- and often not used at all -- to accommodate audience members with sensory needs.

"We make this an inviting and engaging experience that will inspire early learners to want to see even more of what theater has to offer. First Stage is more than just a child's first time in the theater; it helps them take their first steps into a lifelong appreciation of the arts," says Gutschick.

The Hitchcock stage, lobby and stairwell received an extensive makeover during the 2018-19 season. New modular seating has been installed that allows for even more flexibility in the space than in the past.

New for the 2019-20 season, families may now purchase a three-show First Stage+ Package that includes four tickets to the two First Stage shows, plus four tickets to the mainstage show, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*. Package-holders also have the opportunity to attend two sample dance and drama classes at The Rose. Cost of the First Stage+ Package is \$75 for a family of four.

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**A Bucket of Blessings**

October 12 - November 3, 2019

By Madhuri Shekar.

Adapted from the book "A Bucket of Blessings" by  
Surishtha and Kabir Sehgal.



A beautiful myth from India comes to life for young audiences in A Bucket of Blessings. Based on the New York Times bestselling picture book, A Bucket of Blessings tells the tale of a little Monkey living near a majestic mountain in a vast jungle with many mango trees. When it hasn't rained for many weeks and the village well and the pond have run dry, Monkey and her friends look everywhere for water, but have no luck. Monkey's mother tells her of a legend that a dancing peacock can bring the rains. But when Monkey and her friend Baby Elephant try dancing to no avail, she decides she must go on a quest to find the magical Peacock and return water to the jungle.

A Bucket of Blessings offers The Rose's youngest members a lovely legend of play and perseverance as an introduction to theater and the rich beauty of Southeastern Asia.

**A Bucket of Blessings** is 30 minutes long and is ideal for children over age one. The show runs October 12 - November 3, 2019 on The Rose's Hitchcock stage. Public performances are offered Saturdays at 9:30 and 11:00 am, and Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 am. Tickets are \$12. Children under age one are admitted free.

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**The Little Engine That Could**  
February 15 - March 8, 2020

Adapted by Matthew Gutschick  
*Based on the Book by Watty Piper.*  
*Published by Penguin Group, Inc.*



The Rose will reprise its adaptation of ***The Little Engine That Could***, February 15 - March 8, 2020, in the Hitchcock Theater. The 45-minute participatory production for The Rose's youngest theatergoers brings Watty Piper's timeless tale of perseverance and positivity to fresh new life for contemporary children.

***"Little Engine That Could"*** will give audiences a ton of theater magic as the actors weave the story out of suitcases and other found object puppetry in a heavily participatory production for children ages two and up," says Gutschick.

In the show, screen-centered Watty and stuff-collecting Piper aren't exactly on the same track. But when their train is delayed leaving them stranded in the station, they must learn to work together—with lots of help from children in the station to find a way to get toys and treats to the children on the other side of the mountain.

Gutschick, who created the adaptation, says, "This version of ***The Little Engine That Could*** features universal themes of finding your own confidence and believing in yourself as well as helping others. Families will relish this ride on the rails of doing the right thing."

The show will be performed select Mondays at 10 am, Saturdays at 9:30 and 11:00 am, and Sundays at 9:30 and 11:00 am during its run February 15 - March 8, 2020. Tickets are \$12. Children under age one are admitted free.

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**2019-20 Season Announced at  
The Rose Theater  
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Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**

### **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 groundbreaking 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.

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