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Howie D: Back in the Day

Backstreet Boy to debut new musical at The Rose Theater

(OMAHA, NE) The story of his middle school life, before he was a world famous Backstreet Boy, is the story Howie Dorough shares in ***Howie D: Back in the Day***, making its world premiere at The Rose Theater, January 31 through February 16.

Band member Howie Dorough (aka Howie D) will debut a script he has co-written with Tor Hyams and Lisa St. Lou that gives a semi-biographical account of his middle school years, his first introductions to music and finding his voice. Dorough will star in The Rose's world-premiere production, which will feature new music written specifically for ***Howie D: Back in the Day***. Select songs from the production are featured on Dorough's new children's album, *Which One Am I?*, which has received high praise from People magazine, the Los Angeles Times, BuzzFeed and Entertainment Tonight.

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, Dorough was navigating Lakeview Prep, managing bullies, his big sister and his enthusiastic parents. It soon becomes clear in the play 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 on stage by Howie D. himself. The end result is a powerful and thought-provoking story that will inspire young people – and their parents – with a soundtrack that will leave families singing and dancing in the aisles.

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The Rose Theater**

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“I went through a lot of common issues that a lot of kids go through nowadays, including worrying and being shy, feeling small, being in somebody’s shadow, monsters in your head, bad dreams,” says Dorough. “I was definitely always trying to find my place and where I am and how I fit in with people. Eventually I did find my place, and I’m very proud that I stuck to my grounds of knowing that I was a true entertainer,” he explains.

Several songs from ***Howie D: Back in the Day*** have been released on Dorough’s latest album. “The Me I’m Meant to Be” takes listeners on a journey to discover their true self and is making waves with critics. Broadway World described the song as “a catchy power anthem celebrating individuality,” and Dorough’s vocals on the track prompted Digital Journal to name Howie “one of the most underrated male vocalists of our time.”

“When I started writing these songs, it became clear that together, they revealed my story,” says Dorough. “These songs are about a kid who conquers a myriad of his own fears and learns to accept himself for the unique person he really is.”

The creators of ***Howie D: Back in the Day*** explain that the show inspires children to think creatively, to stretch their horizons, to face the world bravely or do a little self-reflection. Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick hopes ***Howie D: Back in the Day*** will encourage families to see the world through new eyes, to delve further into educational topics and to enjoy the magic of the arts. And if a show inspires a new love for a certain boy band? “That’s just one more way for parents and their children to share a connection,” he says.

“There should be cooler stuff for kids,” says Dorough. “I was looking around our audience and going, ‘Man, we have a lot of fans bringing their kids to our shows now’ and it hit me -- ‘Why don’t I make something that kids can enjoy, but parents can too?’”

That special bond through theater might be one of the best reasons for parents to bring their kids to ***Howie D: Back in the Day*** at The Rose.

Howie D: Back in the Day is recommended for families with children of all ages. The original musical play is 65 minutes long without an intermission.

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Howie D: Back in the Day 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. American Sign Language interpretation and captioning services for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing will be offered at the 2 p.m. show on Saturday, February 8. Audio description services for audiences who are blind or have low vision will also be available at this performance. Contact The Rose Box Office for more information.

Tickets for ***Howie D: Back in the Day*** are available for \$25 by calling The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 or online at www.rosetheater.org. Members receive free tickets. For more information, visit www.rosetheater.org. Tickets are available now.

Audiences attending the opening night of ***Howie D: Back in the Day*** on Friday, January 31 at 7 pm are invited to come early to learn choreography from the show taught by BROADWAY at The Rose director Sue Gillespie Booton.

Howie D: Back in the Day is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

About The Rose

For 70 years, The Rose Theater has been providing Omaha-area families with the best in live theater and arts education. The Omaha Theater Company was one of the first in Omaha to offer classes in the theater arts, and today The Rose stands as a leading program and training ground for young artists interested in a career in theater.

The Rose 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. 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.