

## For Immediate Release

DATE: September 2021

CONTACT: Kori Radloff, [korir@rosetheater.org](mailto:korir@rosetheater.org), 402-502-4641

### ***Disney's Descendants* cast creates magic at The Rose** ***Rose Theater announces cast for Disney's Descendants***

(OMAHA, Nebr.) The cast of ***Disney's Descendants*** will weave a magical tale of good versus evil in a musical based on the popular Disney Channel films. The show will run at The Rose, September 10 to October 10, 2021.

***Disney's Descendants*** introduces audiences to The Isle of the Lost, home to the daughters and sons of the world's worst villains, about as far from a Fairy Tale as you can get. But for Mal, Evie, Jay and Carlos—the children of Maleficent, The Evil Queen, Jafar, and Cruella De Vil, it is home! These Villains' Kids have learned to survive on the challenging streets of the island to which their families have been banished for all time. Meanwhile, in the nearby shimmering kingdom of Auradon, the children of the most regal of royals from a Who's Who of famous fairy tales enjoy a life of privilege and prestige. But when Ben, the son of Belle and her Beast (and soon-to-be heir to the Auradon throne) optimistically decides to open the barrier and invite exchange to students to join Auradon Prep School, will it usher in a new era of acceptance, or spell certain disaster? Based on the runaway-hit Disney Channel Original Movie musical, this spectacular NEW stage production will feature many of your favorite showstoppers...AND some of The Rose's — and Omaha's — most talented teens showcasing their song & dance skills LIVE! on stage!

The cast of The Rose Theater's production of ***Disney's Descendants*** includes:



#### **Roni Shelley Perez -Mal**

Roni Shelley Perez was recently seen in The Rose Theater production of *Misunderstood: Heroes & Villains*. Favorite credits include: Soonja Ma (u/s Goeun Kim) in New York City's Off-Broadway production of *Comfort Women: A New Musical* and Veronica Sawyer in a regional premiere of *Heathers: the Musical*. Perez graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

**= MORE =**

The Rose Theater  
2001 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

t (402) 345-4849  
f (402) 344-7255  
[www.rosetheater.org](http://www.rosetheater.org)

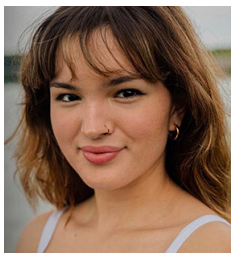


## **Disney's Descendants - Cast Announcement**

**The Rose Theater**

**Page 2 of 9**

**Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**



### **Briana Nash - Evie**

Briana is over the moon to be playing the role of Evie in *Disney's Descendants!* Originally from Colorado, she grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska and has been involved in the performing arts since the age of 6. This is her second time performing on the Rose stage, her first as an ensemble member in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* in 2017. Currently, she is a senior at Burke High School, where she serves as president of theatre, soprano section leader of choir and a State Thespian Officer. After high school, Briana plans to attend college to earn a degree in acting.



### **Summer Hurtienne - Jay**

Summer is excited to return to The Rose Theater and performing in front of audiences again! Summer made her debut on The Rose's mainstage in 2019 as Hortensia in *Matilda The Musical*. Originally from Elk Grove, California, she starred in her first role in Toby Johnson Middle School's production of *James and the Giant Peach, Jr.* (2017). After moving to Omaha, she has been a part of plays at Elkhorn Valley View Middle School and Elkhorn South High School. When not on stage, Summer loves reading books like Wildwood, listening to Will Wood, and playing video games on her Nintendo Switch. She can also be found in your local Barnes and Noble.



### **Dina Saltzman - Carlos**

Dina Saltzman is thrilled to return to The Rose Theater after appearing in *The Dollmaker's Gift* in 2019 and *Newsies* in 2018. Other credits include *The Secret Garden* (Mary Lennox) at the UNO Theater and *West Side Story* at Stagedoor Manor, NY (SDM Award for Best Featured Actress). Dina was a member of the Senior Rose Brigade for three years and is currently in her second season with the Rose Dance Project. A senior at Omaha Central High School, Dina is active in student government and National Honor Society. She plans to pursue the performing arts in college.



### **Trey Mendlik - Ben**

TREY MENDLIK (Ben) is ecstatic to be part of *Disney's Descendants!* His love for Disney Channel Original Movies could not be more R-I-D-I-C-U-L-O-U-S! Recently, Trey was seen as Peter Cratchit on the national tour of *A Christmas Carol*. His favorite credits include Seymour in *Little Shop Of Horrors* and Marcellus in *The Music Man* (Post Playhouse). Other credits include *Oklahoma* (Black Hills Playhouse), *Singin' In The Rain* (Circa '21) *Misunderstood: Heroes & Villains* (Rose Theater) *Sister Act*, and *Mary Poppins* (Post Playhouse). Trey recently wrapped his first independent film with Spoltz Productions, LLC., where he was fortunate enough to play Trevor Pearson in *Good Enough: The Musical*. Upcoming, you can see Trey in *Rock Of Ages* at Paramount Theatre in Chicago, IL. Keep up with Trey by following his journey on Instagram: @trey.mendlik

**= MORE =**

## **Disney's Descendants - Cast Announcement**

**The Rose Theater**

**Page 3 of 9**

**Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**



### **Taylor Adams - Chad**

Taylor is a current teaching fellow for the Rose Theater. They have been in many production at the Rose, credits including Bob the Party Penguin (*Penguin Problems*), the Maternity Doctor (*Matilda*), Oscar Delancey (*Newsies*), Tubby Ted (*Peter & the Starcatcher*), Skut Farkus (*A Christmas Story*). They graduated from Creighton University with a BFA in Acting Performance and Direction. While there, they were seen as Bobby (*Company*), Chuck (*She Kills Monsters*), Warner Huntington III (*Legally Blonde*), Andrei Prozorav (*Three Sisters*). They were also a part of the award winning production of *Riot, Repeat* as scenic designer and ensemble member. They have also been seen around town in various productions including Shelterbelt: Ricky Lee (*Catherland*), SNAP!: Freddie the Photographer (*Carrie: The Musical*), PLVCT: Scarecrow (*Wizard of Oz*). They hope to keep creating art spaces that foster connection and inclusion within the queer and trans community. Give them a follow on instagram: Taylor.the.Painter



### **Natalie Hanson - Audrey / Dance Captain**

Natalie is a Chicago and Omaha based performer from Seattle. A Creighton alum, she is ecstatic to be back in Omaha again. She was last seen as Pollyanna D. in the world premier of *Howie D: Back in the Day, It's a Wonderful Life*, and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* with the Rose Theater. Other noted Omaha credits include *Peter Pan* (Tigerlily) and *Newsies* (Tommyboy) with the Rose Theater, and *Heathers the Musical* (ensemble) with the BlueBarn Theatre. In Chicago, she was last seen in *Hope: Part 2 of a Mexican Trilogy* (Betty U/S) with Teatro Vista Theatre. During quarantine, Natalie began writing and producing her own music. Her self produced EP Likewise is on Spotify and Apple Music under the artist name Facade Queen. Natalie also produced a collaborative EP Sigh, Sigh, Kiss! with her sister, Emilie and their duo "Court the Muse" in the winter of 2020. Other artistic endeavors include work with TBD Dance Collective where she choreographed, directed, and produced a piece to an original song for TBD Dance Collective's Making Space 2020 virtual event. To keep up with Natalie's artistic endeavors, her instagram is @facadequeen.



### **Brooke Vogel - Jane / Understudy Mal & Evie**

This will be Brooke's fourth production at The Rose Theater (Anna/Mary, *Sherlock Holmes and the First Baker Street Irregular*, Stacy, *Prancer*, Ensemble, *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*). Brooke attends Burke High School and is currently the Historian on the Thespian Board. Other favorite roles include: Little Red Riding Hood in *Into the Woods* (Burke High School) and Agnes in *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* (Burke High School).

**= MORE =**

## **Disney's Descendants - Cast Announcement**

**The Rose Theater**

**Page 4 of 9**

**Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**



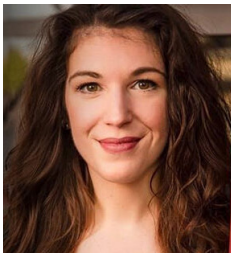
### **Carson Bishop - Doug**

Carson is very excited to be portraying Doug in this production of Descendants. This is his fifth time participating in a main stage production at The Rose Theater. Carson first appeared at The Rose as Tootles, one of the Lost Boys, in *Peter Pan*. He is proud to be a six-year member of the Rose Brigade and is currently a junior at Millard North High School.



### **Leanne Hill Carlson - Maleficent**

Leanne is very excited to return to The Rose and play the Disney Villain after last being seen as Mary Poppins in *Mary Poppins*. Some of her other favorite roles include *Grounded* (The Pilot), *Indecent* (Halina/The Prime), *Murder Ballad* (Sara), *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle), *Uncle Vanya* (Elena), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Stella), *The Last Five Years* (Cathy), *Little Women* (Meg), Opera Omaha's *The Mikado* (Pitti-Sing), and *Legally Blonde* (Elle Woods). She is also passionate about new, local theatre and has been involved in many projects locally including the Great Plains Theatre Conference, *One Way to Mars*, *The Break*, and *The Octopus Play*. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre from Sam Houston State University and her Master's Degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She is a Physician Assistant and co-owner of Finesse Advanced Medical Aesthetics and proud mom of Henry and Nora.



### **Lauren Krupski - Fairy Godmother**

Lauren is so excited to perform in her 22nd show at The Rose Theater. Some notable roles at The Rose include Princess Fiona in *Shrek the Musical*, Miss Shields in *A Christmas Story*, Lucinda in *Ella Enchanted*, and Julia in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. She also was a part of three world premiere productions at the Rose: *Prancer*, *Back in the Day* and *Pete the Cat*. Lauren has also performed many times with the Omaha Symphony in their family and educational shows. She has been seen in their educational program Mission Imagination for two years, performing in *The Misadventures of Melvin the Explorer* and *The Symphonic School Bus*. She has also been seen in educational concerts with the Sarasota Symphony, Rochester Symphony, and Lima Orchestra.



### **Andrew Hedin - Royal Page**

Andrew Hedin is very excited to make his Rose Theater debut in the musical *Descendants*! Andrew has most recently appeared in productions at the Bellevue Little Theatre in *Tuck Everlasting* and *Our Town*. His other appearances include: *A Christmas Carol*, *Shrek the Musical*, and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* at the Omaha Community Playhouse. Andrew is currently a sophomore at Bellevue West High School where he enjoys participating in their show choir, select choir and theatre. He loves to paint, cook, and play the piano.

**= MORE =**



## Disney's Descendants - Cast Announcement

The Rose Theater

Page 5 of 9

Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641



### Maddie Smith - Snow White / Understudy Jane

Maddie is excited to return to The Rose Theater after playing Actor 9/Janie last Christmas in *It's A Wonderful Life*. Her other Rose credits include Shawanda in *Elf the Musical* in December 2019; Matilda in *Matilda the Musical* in June 2019; and Nora in *The Dollmaker's Gift* in February of the same year. She is a sophomore at Marian High School where she participates in Speech and played Gretchen in Marian's production of *Freaky Friday*. Her previous theater credits include productions at the Omaha Community Playhouse: Little Fiona in *Shrek The Musical* (2018), James Trotter in *James and the Giant Peach* (2018), Chip in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and *A Christmas Carol* (2015 – 2018) playing the roles of Girl with Sled, Belinda Cratchit and Fan. In her spare time, Maddie loves to read, play her guitar, listen to her favorite music on Spotify, and spend time with her beloved dog, Mori.



### Joshua Orsi -Jafar / Beast

Joshua Orsi graduated from Doane University with a BA in Theatre. A current resident of Omaha, Joshua enjoys doing comedic improv. You can catch him at Dinner Detective at the Hilton Double Tree or in shows at The Backline. He has two fluffy boys who are the love of his life (besides his girlfriend) and is always up for showing pics! Previous credits include: *Gumbo the Musical* (Ponytail, Lied Center for Performing Arts), *Red* (Ken Apollon Art Space), *Forbidden Frontier* (Digger, Cedar Point Amusement Park), *Twelfth Night* (Valentine/Priest, North Dakota Shakespeare), *Romeo & Juliet* (Friar Lawrence, Samuel-Lancaster Productions), *Spamalot* (Ensemble, Omaha Community Playhouse).



### Sue Gillespie Booton - Maurice / Coach / Choreographer

Sue Gillespie Booton's national tour credits include *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Beehive*, and *Grease*. Most recent credits include *Penguin Problems*, *Elf* (Sam/Mrs. Santa), World Premiere of *The Dollmaker's Gift*, (Pola/Rebecca), *Rocky Horror* (Columbia), *Ring of Fire* (Ensemble) and *Always, Patsy Cline* (Louise). She was an original cast member in Omaha's longest running musical, *Beehive* (Brenda Lee, Petula Clark, Janis Joplin), and appeared in shows on Royal Caribbean, Carnival, Royal Viking and Europe's Sally Cruise Lines. Other Rose stage appearances include *Madagascar* (Gloria), *Cinderella* (Fairy Godmother) and *Cat in the Hat* (Thing #1). Choreographic credits include *Elf The Musical*, *Matilda*, *Newsies*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, *Madagascar*, *Mary Poppins*, *A Christmas Story*, *Tarzan*, *Narnia*, *Peter Pan*, *HONK!* and *Annie*. She won the 2019 Omaha Entertainment Award for Outstanding Choreography for *Newsies* and was the 2020 nominee for *Elf* and *Matilda*. She was inducted into the Nebraska Music Hall of Fame summer, 2019 and is the 2014 recipient of the National Freddy G Award given to outstanding musical theater educators as well as the 2014 Theater Arts Guild Education Award winner. Sue is The Rose Theater's Resident Choreographer and Director of BROADWAY at The Rose, which includes The Rose Brigade and The Rose Dance Project.

= MORE =



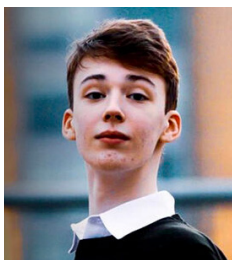
**Zhomontee Watson - Cruella de Vil / Belle**

Zhomontee Watson is an established actress, singer, and full time mental health therapist at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and UNMC. You may recognize Zhomontee from a recent Rose production of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive The Bus* in her role of the Little old lady. Zhomontee was also played Deloris Van Catier in *Sister* at the Omaha Community Playhouse, Medda Larkin in *Newsies* at The Rose, and Uncle Billy in The Rose's production of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Zhomontee has recieved multiple awards to include an OEAA for Best Female Actress in a Musical in 2017.



**Bailey Carlson - Grimhilde**

Bailey is thrilled to join The Rose for a little wicked fun! She was recently in *The Last Five Years* at the Omaha Playhouse and the Blue Barn's *Sunset to Starlight* cabaret. Before COVID, she was traveling the world on Holland America Line, touring with the B.B. King All Star Band and YouTube sensation Post Modern Jukebox (PMJ). Bailey has been based out of New York for the past four years where she studied with The Barrow Group and the Growing Studio, and recently relocated back to Omaha due to the pandemic. In Bailey's free time, you can find her either walking her Borgi, Willie (a Corgi-Border Collie), knitting, or watching every single David Attenborough documentary. Past productions in Omaha include *All Shook Up*, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *Footloose*, *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Reefer Madness*, *Hedwig & the Angry Inch*, *Urinetown: The Musical*, *Quilters*, and the 2006 production of *Ragtime*. [www.itsbaileycarlson.com](http://www.itsbaileycarlson.com)



**Grant Petersen Jensen - Guard / Understudy Doug**

Grant is 14 years old and has been dancing/acting for 3 years. He is involved in the Rose Brigade at the Rose and in show choir at his high school. He loves doing art like painting and drawing. Grant says that the class that was most beneficial for him was Boys Athletic Dance taught by Michael James because it has really taught him how to be a great male dancer.



**Stella Clark-Kaczmarek- Ensemble / Understudy Royal Page & Snow White**

Stella Clark-Kaczmarek is a sophomore at Burke High School. She has been seen at the Rose in *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Elf* and *Wonderland: Alice's Rock and Roll Musical*. Stella is very active in the Omaha theatre community and has worked with the Omaha Community Playhouse, Nebraska Shakespeare, Opera Omaha, Papillon Community Theatre, Great Plains Theatre Conference and Burke High School. Recent roles include: Jack's Mom in *Into the Woods*, Siobhan in *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, and Tilly in *She Kill's Monsters*. Stella was recognized by OCP and OEA as an outstanding youth performer for her role as Annie in *Annie*. In her spare time, she loves to travel, swim and spend time with her friends.

## **Disney's Descendants - Cast Announcement**

**The Rose Theater**

**Page 7 of 9**

**Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**



### **Artie Shaw - Ensemble**

Artie is excited to be joining the Rose Theater for another another musical. His first was show there was *Matilda*, and he played Eric. He has also performed in shows at his church and schools. He is now a Sophomore at Central High School. He enjoys watching shows and movies, drawing, listening to music, making people laugh, and cooking.



### **Sophia Presser - Ensemble**

Sophia is thrilled to make her Rose Theater debut! Previous to performing in *Descendants*, Sophia was a part of *The World Goes Round* at Mercy High School where she is currently a junior. She is a student actor at the Rose and has participated in Senior Rose Brigade in the past. Besides theater, she loves tap dance, art, and school.



### **Callahan Hernandez - Ensemble**

Callahan has been involved in theater since he was ten years old. For three years, Cal was in the children's ensemble and played the role of Ebby in the Omaha Community Playhouse production of *A Christmas Carol*. He also attends many acting and singing classes in the Omaha area. *Descendants* is Cal's first production at The Rose and he is excited for the opportunity. Cal is a student at Central High School where he plays Sousaphone and many brass instruments in the Marching Band and Trombone in the Jazz Band. Cal enjoys live theater, singing, and baking for his bakery Instagram account.



### **Katherine M. Carter - Director**

Katherine M. Carter (she/her) is a stage director of theatre & opera. She is happy to be back at the Rose after directing *Misunderstood* this spring. Katherine recently directed the new musical *Far From Canterbury* at the Barnstormers Theatre in NH. Previous: Rice University Opera, Mad Cow Theatre, On Site Opera, Carnegie Mellon University, Santa Fe Opera, Parallel 45 Theatre, Canadian Opera Company, Houston Grand Opera. New School for Drama, Joe's Pub, Westport Country Playhouse, Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre, NYMF, 3LD, NYU, and Wolf Trap. Fellowships: New Georges, The Drama League, and Playwrights Horizons. 2019 Honored Finalist for Women in the Arts & Media Coalition with playwright Jacqueline Goldfinger. Katherine is currently training to become a certified Intimacy Director with IDC. Upcoming: Guest Faculty at The New School Mannes Opera, *L'enfant/Cendrillon* (Carnegie Mellon, Opera) [KatherineMCCarter.com](http://KatherineMCCarter.com)

**= MORE =**

## Disney's Descendants - Cast Announcement

The Rose Theater

Page 8 of 9

Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641

The complete cast of The Rose's production of **Disney's Descendants** consists of:

Mal.....	Roni Shelley Perez
Evie.....	Briana Nash
Jay.....	Summer Hurtienne
Carlos .....	Dina Saltzman*
Ben .....	Trey Mendlik**
Chad .....	Taylor Adams**
Audrey / Dance Captain.....	Natalie Hanson**
Jane / Understudy Mal & Evie .....	Brooke Vogel*
Doug.....	Carson Bishop*
Maleficent.....	Leanne Hill Carlson
Fairy Godmother .....	Lauren Krupski
Royal Page.....	Andrew Hedin
Snow White / Understudy Jane. ....	Maddie Smith*
Jafar / Beast.....	Joshua Orsi
Maurice / Coach.....	Sue Gillespie Booton**
Cruella de Vil / Belle .....	Zhomontee Watson
Grimhilde.....	Bailey Carlson
Guard / Understudy Doug .....	Grant Petersen Jensen*
Ensemble / Understudy Royal Page & Snow White .....	Stella Clark-Kaczmarek*
Ensemble	Artie Shaw*, Sophia Presser*, Callahan Hernandez

\*denotes Rose students

\*\* denotes Rose instructors

**Disney's Descendants** is recommended for all ages. The show runs September 10 through October 10, 2021, 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, September 25, the performance will be interpreted in American Sign Language for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Tickets for **Disney's Descendants** are \$27 Main Floor and \$22 Balcony. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores. Members of The Rose receive discounted tickets to the production.

= MORE =



## ***Disney's Descendants* - Cast Announcement**

**The Rose Theater**

**Page 9 of 9**

**Contact: Kori Radloff, 402-502-4641**

***Disney's Descendants*** is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Hy-Vee, Mutual of Omaha, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kiewit Companies Foundation.

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.

---

### **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.

###