

**The Rose Theater builds on a 70 year legacy  
of providing outstanding entertainment for the entire family**

(Omaha, NE) Three-year-old Emma is already a theater veteran, thanks to her experience as a member of The Rose Theater.

“That place is fun,” she says when learning she would be seeing new plays at The Rose.

Lucy’s grandmother, Linda Meyers, says a Rose membership was something she always knew she wanted to do for – and with – her grandchild.

“I am passionate about her learning to enjoy the arts,” says Meyers. “But best of all, we truly bond over these shows. We read the children’s book in advance and several times afterward and talk about how the book and the play compare to each other. It is a special time together.”

Meyers has fond memories of the theater from her son’s early years. “We always made a point to see shows at the children’s theater when my son was little, so now it is a special experience for me to be able to take my granddaughter Emma to The Rose. It’s like our own special date together,” she says.

During the 2019-20 season, The Rose celebrates 70 years of children’s theater in Omaha. The upcoming season hopes to inspire young people to find their own voice through stories like *The Cat in the Hat*, *Ella Enchanted*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and more. From the tunnels of mole rats to the antics of dogs on the go, from WWII Holland to a department store in New York City, a ticket to The Rose promises to take Omaha families on an awe-inspiring journey of discovery, entertainment and exploration.

Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick believes the shared experience of seeing live theater has the power to bring families closer and build lasting memories. “I remember being seven years old. My first memory of seeing a play includes seeing my grandmother and mother laughing so hard that tears spilled from their eyes,” he says. “Years after my grandmother’s passing, that image is one of my most cherished – seeing people I love happy spending time together. This is the unique gift you share with your loved ones when you bring them to The Rose.”

Gutschick has crafted a season that offers a range of shows and activities that will engage children of all ages and open the lines of conversation for the entire family. Children will immediately recognize many of the characters on stage from their favorite storybooks, all with important life lessons to impart. Whether inspiring children to think creatively, to stretch their horizons, to face the world bravely or do a little self-reflection, Gutschick hopes the topics addressed in the 2019-20 season will encourage families to engage in thoughtful – and fun – discussions about the important issues children encounter on a daily basis.

“Theater for young audiences provides an opportunity to share values, desires and goals within a family by offering a chance to discuss concepts that may not be addressed every day, but, in fact, take place every day,” he says.

This is the spirit which Emmy Gifford envisioned from the early days of the theater. Gifford founded the Omaha Junior Theater in 1949. The theater was later renamed in her honor and was known as the Emmy Gifford Children’s Theater until it moved to its downtown location, the Rose Blumkin Performing Arts Center (affectionately known as simply, The Rose).

“You know, in the beginning, the concept of children’s theater was considered a little odd,” Gifford told the Omaha World-Herald in a 1990 interview. “We were pioneers in that area. Looking back over it all, it just gradually happened. We didn’t think we’d get to this point, I suppose, but we went on with our dedication to it. I’ve seen all the changes over the years, and I’m quite proud of it all.”

The theater’s season will consist of eleven shows, offering something for every age group from preschool to high school.

A Rose membership includes four tickets to six mainstage shows throughout the year for just \$105. This season’s membership offerings include:

- 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*)

In addition, three shows will be presented on The Rose mainstage as special or premium events at prices that range from \$22-\$27. These include:

- PREMIUM EVENT - Elf the Musical (*Nov. 29 – Dec. 22, 2019*)
- PREMIUM EVENT - The Sound of Music (*June 5 – 21, 2020*)
- SPECIAL EVENT – Howie D: Back in the Day (*Jan. 31 – Feb. 16, 2020*)

For the first time, a special package is available for families with very young children. This First Stage+ Package allows families to see two shows in The Rose’s smaller Hitchcock Stage, specifically designed with preschoolers in mind. After experiencing these shows for young audiences, First Stage+ package-holders graduate to the mainstage, where they will receive four tickets to *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*. The 2019-20 First Stage productions include:

- A Bucket of Blessings (*Oct. 12 – Nov. 3, 2019*)
- The Little Engine That Could (*Feb. 15 – Mar. 8, 2020*)

“From 70 years of experience, we know that theater inspires your child to dream big dreams about the kind of friend, student, citizen and leader that they want to be. Our entire organization is focused on helping young people ask meaningful questions about the world, and we encourage that curiosity to start at a very early age, so they can achieve those dreams,” says Gutschick. “We want all our audiences, no matter their age, to ask questions, to love being curious, and to experience the transformative power of live theater.”

For little Emma and her grandmother – and families like theirs throughout the Omaha area – the season promises to be yet another positive and memorable experience that both will cherish for a lifetime. “I have yet to see a presentation at The Rose that I would call less than wonderful! The kids love them all,” said Meyers.