

## For Immediate Release

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CONTACT: Kori Radloff, korir@rosetheater.org, 402-502-4641

### **THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR** **eats its way into the hearts of audiences** **at The Rose Theater**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) A hungry little caterpillar, curious cloud and clever chameleon eats their way into audiences' hearts in the season opener of The Rose Theater in ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites***, playing Sept. 5-21. Featuring brightly colored puppets and stunning black light visual effects, ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** blends together three popular children's books into a spectacular visual display that will delight the entire family.

"We are very excited to bring this show to Omaha," says Rose artistic director Matt Gutschick. "The imagery in the show is simply amazing. The puppets and scenery stay true to Eric Carle's original illustration. You can't help but fall in love with every character as you journey along with them on their adventures."

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** marks the first time The Rose has invited a guest theater company to perform as a part of its regular season. The show is being presented courtesy of the renowned Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. for adapting children's literary classics with its unique blend of innovative puppetry, striking scenic effects, evocative original music and spellbinding storytelling, the Mermaid Theatre comes to Omaha after presenting the show in thirteen countries and several languages, including Dutch, English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean and French.

"We are giving our audience a show done by the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia that normally plays big Broadway touring houses," says Gutschick. "The piece uses innovative blacklight puppetry to bring one of the best-selling children's books of all time to life."

Adapted, designed and directed by Jim Morrow (one of Canada's most esteemed puppetry creators), with music by Steven Naylor and narration by Gordon Pinsent, this hour-long production of ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** is recommended for ages three and up.

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The Rose  
2001 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

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



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### **The Rose Theater**

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Morrow believes ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** is a perfect introduction to the theater for young children. He calls the production a “no-shushing” show. “The ‘no-shushing’ thing was my idea,” he explains. “I think it’s important to let children engage and interact with the performance. You don’t usually get that in the theatre; you’re always told to be quiet.”

The play weaves together three Eric Carle classic stories: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Little Cloud* and *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* follows the adventures of a very tiny and very hungry caterpillar as he eats his way through an amazing variety of foods on his path to becoming a beautiful butterfly. High up in the sky, Little Cloud playfully transforms himself into various creatures, including a sheep, an airplane, a shark and more. The Mixed-Up Chameleon is bored with his life, sitting about predictably changing color all day. Following a trip to the zoo, he attempts to emulate the beautiful animals he sees, but eventually concludes that there is value in his own unique self.

“Each of these stories imparts an important message to the audience,” says Gutschick. “Each one involves a transformation of some sort or another. Whether it is Little Cloud transforming into endless shapes before merging with his elder clouds to create a rain cloud, the Mixed-Up Chameleon becoming a fantastical mish-mash of a creature, or the Hungry Caterpillar evolving into a beautiful butterfly, each story challenges young and old to look inside themselves and decide who they want to be.”

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** is recommended for families with children ages 3 and up, and is 60 minutes long without an intermission.

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** runs Sept. 5 - 21, 2014, with performances on Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Interpretation for the hearing impaired will be offered at the 2 p.m. show on Saturday, Sept. 13. Tickets are \$18 per person. Discount ticket vouchers are available at all area Hy-Vee stores for \$14 each. Members of The Rose receive four free tickets to the production.

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*** is sponsored by Children’s Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Special opening night activities are sponsored by Kids Love Stickers, Powered by MediBadge.

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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. 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.

#### **About Eric Carle, Author & Illustrator**

Eric Carle has written and illustrated more than 70 books for young children, which combine collage artwork with an imaginative approach to learning, and has sold more than 25 million copies worldwide. Of The Mermaid Theatre's production of ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites***, he writes, "Your performance is stunningly beautiful! You've captured and enhanced what I am trying to do. I was mesmerized by the tempo, colors, voice, movements, music."

As his best-known work, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* has eaten its way into the hearts of literally millions of children all over the world and has been translated into more than 47 languages and sold over 29 million copies. Since it was published in 1969, Eric Carle has illustrated more than 70 books – many best sellers – most of which he also wrote, and more than 88 million copies of his books have sold around the world.

#### **About Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia**

Founded in 1972, Mermaid Theatre's unique adaptations of children's literature have delighted more than five million young people in 16 countries on four continents. Based in Windsor, a small rural town in Nova Scotia's Avon Region, the company performs for more than 300,000 spectators annually, and currently ranks among North America's most active touring organizations. Closer to home, Mermaid offers instruction at all levels through its Institute of Puppetry Arts, welcomes artists-in-residence through its Theatre Loft, provides a unique outreach program for adolescents through the Youtheatre, and offers a vibrant performing arts series at the Mermaid Imperial Performing Arts Centre.

#### **About Jim Morrow, Director/Production Designer**

Jim creates puppets for stage, television and film. He has directed numerous shows for Mermaid Theatre, including *Very Eric Carle*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, *I Love My Little Storybook*, *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, *Inch By Inch*, *Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny*, and more. A gifted performer, Jim has toured extensively in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. He serves as director of puppetry for Symphony Nova Scotia's production of *The Nutcracker* and frequently conducts master classes in puppetry in North America and abroad. Morrow serves as Mermaid Theatre's Artistic Director.

#### **Steven Naylor, Composer**

Steven Naylor has created the music for more than a dozen Mermaid Theatre shows, including *Very Eric Carle*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*, *Guess How Much I Love You*, *I Love My Little Storybook*, *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, *Inch By Inch*, *Goodnight Moon & The Runaway Bunny*. His many other professional activities include original film and television scores, contemporary music and 'musique actuelle' performance, university teaching and curriculum development, and a long-term international involvement with electroacoustic concert music. Naylor is Mermaid Theatre's Artistic Consultant for Music and Sound Design.

#### **Gordon Pinsent, Narrator**

Born in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, Gordon Pinsent is an actor, director, writer and singer of great versatility, and one of Canada's most beloved artists. His work for more than three decades in theater, film, radio and television has earned him international recognition, as well as honorary doctorates from three universities. In 1999, Pinsent was named a Companion of the Order of Canada, the country's highest award of merit.

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