

For Immediate Release

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***A Palette of Possibility* opens world of theater for children with autism and preschoolers at The Rose Theater**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) An interactive adventure designed with children on the autism spectrum in mind, ***A Palette of Possibility*** promises to deliver an inventive exploration of color in all its various forms. The show, perfect for preschoolers, as well as children with autism, will be presented Oct. 26 - Nov. 14 on The Rose Theater's Hitchcock Stage.

Guest director Gretta Berghammer brings her considerable expertise in creating theater for children on the autism spectrum to this unique project. A professor at the University of Northern Iowa (where she received the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence), Berghammer has focused her work on creating drama experiences that best support the development of pretend play, social interaction and non-verbal communication.

"For children on the spectrum, language is a challenge, so for this piece, we are working to pare down the essence of what is needed to communicate the idea," Berghammer explains. "This work starts with images. It is low language and highly visual. It involves a lot of movement, using the body to communicate what is going on as clearly and concisely as possible."

A Palette of Possibility uses the three primary colors of red, blue and yellow to highlight the many places color is found in our world - from firetrucks to the ocean to sunlight. Audience members are encouraged to interact with the actors, to get up on stage and actually become a part of the performance, in a production that Berghammer calls "sensory rich."

"This is a show that will utilize four of the five senses: sight, hearing, touch and smell," she says. "At the same time, it is sensory-friendly. There is nothing jarring, nothing loud. There are no sudden changes and no blackouts."

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Audience facilitators will help model what audiences can do and will help children access the experience on stage. At times, that may mean passing out props to audience members, showing them different ways of movement, or encouraging them to make sound effects. The space is a shush-free zone designed for audience members to move, wiggle and respond any way they need to in order to fully experience the production.

Even the seating for the production varies from the norm. The Rose's black box Hitchcock Stage has been transformed. Its traditional seating is draped and audience members will be encourage to sit in the round. While chairs are available, audiences can also choose to sit on bean bags, on carpet squares, on stools, or other types of seating.

"It is really all about making an environment that is safe and comfortable for children and their parents," says Berghammer. "This show is a place where the child is safe and feels safe, and parents feel safe taking them, whatever their abilities."

A Palette of Possibility is recommended for families with children ages 3 and up, and is 45 minutes long without an intermission.

A Palette of Possibility runs Oct. 26 - Nov. 14, 2015. Public performances will be held Monday, Oct. 26 at 9:30 am; Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 11 am; Wednesday, Oct. 28 at 11 am; Thursday, Oct. 29 at 9:30 am; Saturday, Nov. 7 at 9:30 am; Saturday, Nov. 7 at 11 am; Saturday, Nov. 14 at 9:30 am and Saturday, Nov. 14 at 11 am.

Tickets are \$12 per person. Rose members receive a \$2 discount.

A Palette of Possibility is funded in part by a grant from the Children's Theatre Foundation of America.

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. For additional information, visit www.rosetheater.org.

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