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Rose Theater to open 27,000-square-foot educational studio space for young performing artists

(OMAHA, Nebr.) Young aspiring performers and theater technicians will have a new space to hone their craft, thanks to a major expansion to The Rose Theater’s educational facilities. The Rose will open a new 27,000-square-foot facility to be known as The Rose Studios for Youth Artists near 120th & Center Streets in March 2020.

“The Studios for Youth Artists pave a path for more productions made by young people to occur alongside vastly expanded instruction in acting, dance, voice, design and creative drama,” says Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick. “With this project, our city will have a world class facility dedicated solely to the development of youth theater artists. They will be able to learn and practice in an incredible environment that supports their creative journey from preschool all the way through high school. This is a game changer in theater education.”



Renovations will begin immediately on the former Gordman’s building located at 12100½ West Center Rd. The Rose currently occupies a 5,000-square-foot space with four classrooms in Bel Air Plaza, just yards from where the new facility will be located. The new space will feature a total of eleven rehearsal spaces for Omaha youth to engage in theatrical disciplines, including:

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- Five full-size studios on the main floor, most equipped with floor-to-ceiling mirrors, sprung floors with marley coverings, ballet barres, and state-of-the-art sound equipment.
- Four classrooms dedicated for acting classes and private and group voice lessons, all equipped with professional caliber keyboards.
- A separate studio that will house the theater's "Art of Theater Design" classes, introducing students as young as nine years old to the principles of technical theater: set, costume and prop design, with plans to add options for students to learn about lighting and sound.
- A full-size studio in the building's lower level for additional rehearsal space for both students and the theater's professional acting company.

The building will also include a 200-seat performance space to be used for student productions, mini-recitals, concerts and class sharings. The auditorium will feature flexible seating similar to The Rose's black box-style Hitchcock Stage at its downtown location.

Parents waiting for their students' classes will enjoy a large public lobby with comfortable seating and digital displays highlighting information about upcoming events. The building will have a secure entry for families and digital student check-in, as well as ample free parking. Between classes and during summer camps, students can lounge in a 100-seat break room that will include areas for eating and doing homework. An abundance of cubbies and coat hooks will help students keep their belongings well-organized, and outside of the rehearsal space.

The increased facility size will allow the theater to add more than 100 new classes and camps for area youth, in addition to the 130+ classes The Rose currently offers during the school year and 75+ camps provided during the summer months. In addition, The Rose hopes to provide opportunities for more students to participate in its competitive and showcase companies: The Rose Brigade musical theater troupe and The Dance Lab at The Rose competitive dance team. Students have long requested training in technical theater, which The Rose plans to incorporate into future class offerings.

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The Rose's education programs will continue to be led by Sue Gillespie Booton and Brian Guehring. Booton will lend her expertise to The Rose's musical theater and dance program, with Guehring leading the theater's creative drama and summer camp programs. Classes will be taught by professional teaching artists working in the field of dance and drama, giving students real-world insight into the world of theater.

The Rose's program has steadily grown in the number of classes and overall enrollment over the past years. More than 800 students enrolled in 150+ Rose classes and camps during the 2018-19 season.

"Seven years ago when we started the musical theater and dance education program at The Rose, we held classes in one studio and had about 40 students. What a delight to have reached so many young people in the Omaha and surrounding areas and have grown this much," says Booton. "It is a joy to have the facilities and opportunity to share our love and skills in musical theater, drama and dance with the young people of Omaha and beyond."

The Rose Studios for Youth Artists is expected to open on March 1, 2020. Students enrolled in classes for the school year will transfer to the new space at that time, and a limited number of additional classes will be added for the spring. The Rose Studios will host a variety of public open house events leading up to the March opening, including sample classes, master classes, hard hat tours and more. Additional information will be available on The Rose website, www.rosetheater.org, in Fall 2019.

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Concept rendering of Rose Studios for Youth Artists exterior

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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 pursuing a career in theater.

Students enrolled in classes at The Rose learn from some of the best educators in the region. Rose teachers include professional actors, accomplished dancers, award-winning playwrights, highly-decorated directors, renowned choreographers and more. Rose classes encourage creativity and imagination while enriching the understanding and enjoyment of theater. Many classes offer performance opportunities, and all classes promote ensemble work and skill development. Dance, acting and voice classes emphasize technique and professionalism, giving students the tools they need to succeed in the classroom, their schools, in the community, and on stages around the world.

Onstage, 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.

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