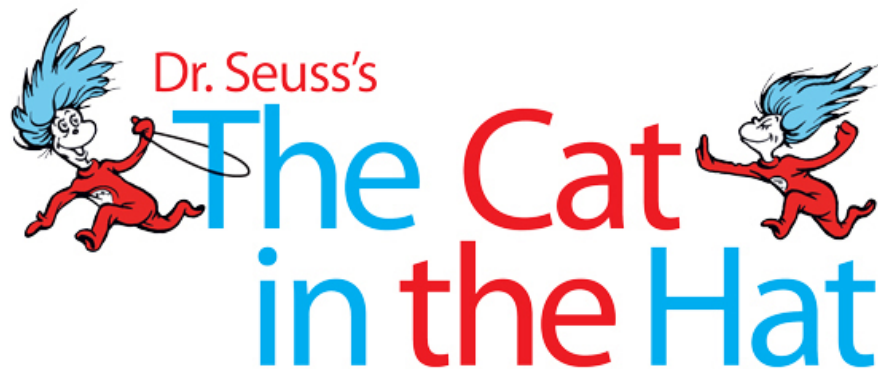


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The wacky world of *The Cat in the Hat* returns to the stage at The Rose Theater

Dr. Seuss' classic story is a wild and wacky introduction to theater

(OMAHA, Nebr.) When a fun-loving cat wearing a red-and-white-striped hat steps through the door, one thing is certain: wild, wacky fun is about to ensue. ***The Cat in the Hat*** brings Dr. Seuss' classic tale vividly to life at The Rose Theater, Sept. 27 - Oct 13, 2019. This energetic adaptation of the iconic children's book (which The Rose previously staged in 2014) weaves all the silliness and charm of the original story into a playful production that will delight the entire family.

Bringing a beloved classic story like ***The Cat in the Hat*** to life involves juggling quite a few theatrical balls (and a fish, and a cake, and a rake) in the air - a job that director Kevin Ehrhart accomplishes with ease. Ehrhart acknowledges that ***The Cat in the Hat*** has inspired generations of young readers, many of whom can recite the story from memory. Ehrhart, who also directed The Rose's production in 2014, wanted to build on Dr. Seuss' story, illustrations and hijinks to create a dynamic world of imagination where anything can happen.

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“I love ***The Cat in the Hat***,” says Ehrhart. “One of the biggest reasons I love this show -- you can’t do psychotherapy on children, but Theodore Geisel was able to do that with the 200 words he used in ***The Cat in the Hat***. If you are familiar with Sigmund Freud’s model of the psyche, you know that the Id is something that just wants to do what it wants whenever it wants, and it has to do battle with the Superego that wants to stop that from happening. And then, of course, you have the Ego trying to make a decision between the two. That is exactly what is happening in this story.”

The Cat in the Hat begins with what would seem to be an ordinary day. The curtain rises on two children, Conrad and Sally, watching the rain fall outside their window, expecting yet another average day. When **The Cat in the Hat** enters, the crazy creature transforms the children’s world from drab and dreary to wacky, wild and wonderful.

The title role of **The Cat in the Hat** will be played by frequent Rose performer, Lauren Krupski. Krupski was a member of the 2014 cast, where she delighted audiences as the Fish. Krupski says she is excited to take on the challenges of the leading role. “Who would have thought five years later I would be doing this show again, and this time playing the Cat? I’m so excited for this challenge and am truly having all the fun,” says Krupski.

One of the key challenges of ***The Cat in the Hat*** was how to transform a book that takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to read into a 45-minute show. (In fact, the stage play uses only the original 200 words from the book within the script.) To help tell the story on stage, Ehrhart has worked closely with choreographer Sue Gillespie Booton to create energetic movement that closely resembles dance in a technique he calls “choreo-blocking.” “Sue’s dance and my staging are combined in a way I don’t think any other theater would invent on their own. It is our way of celebrating important events in the show,” he says.

The Cat presents a wide variety of interesting activities to Conrad and Sally, and eventually introduces them to some new friends: Thing 1 and Thing 2. The Things know no boundaries and quickly make a mess of Conrad and Sally’s house, much to their dismay.

“The entrance of Thing 1 and Thing 2 is probably my favorite part of the production. Everything gets insane and crazy,” says Ehrhart. “In fact, when the Things destroy the house, a bathtub falls from the second floor, and the whole light fixture will come crashing down.”

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Ehrhart feels it is this sense of chaos that keeps generations of children interested in the story of ***The Cat in the Hat*** and keeps the book relevant to a modern audience. As a parent, he feels a deep connection to the story and views The Cat's spirit as a mechanism for helping children develop confidence when facing challenging situations.

"This is a story that seems simple on the surface, but has a much deeper meaning," says Ehrhart. "It is a story about resilience. In life, things get crazy and then come out the other side. You just have to approach chaos with flexibility and joy. If you can have a little bit of fun during the wild ride, all the better."

The highlight of the show comes as Conrad and Sally stand amid the mess created by the Things and their mother can be heard approaching the house. As the children fear the incredible amount of trouble they will be in, The Cat appears once more to save the day.

"It will definitely be one of the highlights of the show, when the mess made by the Things needs to be cleaned up," says Ehrhart. "Sue and I have choreo-blocked the clean-up to some energetic music, and we expect the audience will find this to be one of the most enjoyable scenes."

Props mistress Devon Denn-Young has been tasked with the challenge of creating the magical clean-up machine. She explains that while the 2014 production used a giant, three-wheeled bike as the base for the machine, this version's fix-it machine is built off a motorized shopping cart on loan from Hy-Vee, with working hands and a broom attachment to help the Cat clean up the mess created during playtime with the Things.

Lighting designer Craig S. Moxon, who also worked on the 2014 production, explains that even though this is a remounting of a show The Rose has previously done, audiences can expect a fresh production full of fun and whimsy. "It is a whole new work, a whole new idea, a whole new way of thinking about this piece, that that makes this show a really exciting project," he says.

By the end of the show, The Cat restores Conrad and Sally's house to its original state just in time for the return of their mother, leaving the children (and the audience) to wonder about whether the story really happened, or was simply a figment of their imagination on a rainy afternoon.

"I think the moral of the story is this: even when you are faced with a gloomy day, don't let it get in the way of having a joyful life," says Ehrhart. "As The Cat says, 'Even though the sun is not sunny, we can have lots of good fun that is funny.'"

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The Cat in the Hat is recommended for families with younger children and is 45 minutes long without an intermission.

The Cat in the Hat runs Sept. 27 to Oct. 13, with performances on Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. American Sign Language interpretation and captioning services for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing will be offered at the 2 p.m. show on Saturday, Oct. 5. Audio description services for audiences who are blind or have low vision will also be available at this performance. A sensory-friendly performance will be presented at the 5 pm performance on Saturday, Oct. 5.

Tickets for ***The Cat in the Hat*** are available for \$20 by calling The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 or online at www.rosetheater.org. Rose members receive free tickets to the production.

The Cat in the Hat is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

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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