

## For Immediate Release

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### ***It's a Wonderful Life* returns for the 2021 holiday season at The Rose**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) ***It's a Wonderful Life*** will return to The Rose stage for the 2021 holiday season. This beautiful homage to a cinematic classic has made specifically for our time, reminding audiences that it sometimes takes seeing things from the perspective of a young person to realize that it really is a wonderful life. Featuring a virtuosic cast playing multiple roles, this production is the perfect homage to the power of community.

***It's a Wonderful Life*** is a beautiful homage to a cinematic classic, made specifically for our time, according to Rose artistic director Matthew Gutschick. The show introduces audiences to George Bailey, whose teenage guardian angel has to descend on Christmas Eve to save him from despair.

***It's a Wonderful Life*** was the first show presented when the Omaha Theater Company moved into The Rose Blumkin Performing Arts Center in 1995; however the script has been newly adapted by Omahan Sarah Brown. This version of the show was originally staged in December 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and even though the show had to be presented entirely online, Gutschick notes that audiences responded strongly to the show and its message of hope.

“This is a piece that has a smaller cast and each of the actors play multiple roles. These actors come out into the audience and speak directly to the audience about why we tell certain stories over and over and over again,” he says.

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## ***It's a Wonderful Life* at**

### **The Rose Theater**

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The show has been adapted specifically for The Rose and its young audience members. “This production takes the added step of making the piece more kid-friendly,” Gutschick explains. “It is a lot shorter than the movie, but it doesn’t lose any of the key moments that people will remember. But maybe most importantly, we try to think about our work at The Rose as being about helping kids see themselves in the stories that we are telling. So this interpretation of ***It’s a Wonderful Life*** has the angels Clarence and Joseph played by youth artists.”

The resulting story changes the perspective of the audience, giving a youthful innocence to the experience. “When we are watching the things that happen to George Bailey, we are watching them through the eyes of a child, and the characters are asking the questions that kids ask when they watch the film. We also found that kids in the audience root for Clarence because they are identifying with that character in a new way. It’s just a really, really fun and uniquely Rose take on a classic story,” says Gutschick.

#### **TICKET INFORMATION**

***It’s a Wonderful Life*** brings its message of holiday cheer to The Rose, December 3-19, 2021, with performances on Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 5:30 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired and audio description services for the blind will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, Dec. 11. The 5 pm performance on Saturday, Dec. 11 is designated as sensory-friendly, with special accommodations made for families attending with a child on the autism spectrum or with other special needs. Contact The Rose Box Office for information on the resources available for families.

Tickets for ***It’s a Wonderful Life*** are \$20 with general admission seating. Members of The Rose receive free tickets to the production.

#### **INFO ABOUT COVID PRECAUTIONS AT THE ROSE THEATER**

Masks are required at The Rose Theater for all audience members, visitors and Rose staff, regardless of vaccination status, for the safety of young audience members and others who are not yet able to be full vaccinated. The theater is thoroughly cleaned before and after performances. The ventilation system at The Rose has been completely updated to greatly improve indoor air quality. Audience members are asked to self-screen for a fever and symptoms of illness prior to arriving at The Rose. Those with fever or other symptoms may exchange their ticket at no cost.

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***It's a Wonderful Life*** is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Hy-Vee, Omaha Steaks, the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

For additional information, including tickets, show photos, cast bios and more, please visit [www.rosetheater.org](http://www.rosetheater.org) or call The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849.

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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.

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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