

## For Immediate Release

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

### ***Up & Away* takes audiences on a magical journey at The Rose**

**Unique production designed for neuro-diverse audiences  
is a part of the Common Senses Festival**

(OMAHA, Nebr.) Audiences will go on a magical flight of fancy in The Rose's latest production, ***Up & Away***, an immersive production designed specifically for neuro-diverse young audiences and those on the autism spectrum. The show runs March 12 to April 4 in The Rose's Hitchcock Auditorium.

In ***Up & Away***, young people are invited to join the Fogg Family Balloon Society on their 1,000th balloon ride, a multisensory journey through the sky. The show features an immersive "in-the-round" design, with the audience seated in hot-air balloon seating units. As Rose Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick explains, "Each family unit gets put in a balloon that doesn't actually leave the ground, but does pretend to leave the ground, as we go on this magical journey up through the clouds."

Featuring puppetry, live music, and interactive play, families will become a part of the action of the play, with actors actively engaging young people as they take flight. All of the cast members have received training in working with people on the autism spectrum. Parents and caregivers are asked to fill out a questionnaire about the young people attending the performance, and actors will use this information to tailor the experience to the child's interests.

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The Rose Theater  
2001 Farnam Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

t (402) 345-4849  
f (402) 344-7255  
www.rosetheater.org



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“The kiddos that come to see that have a one-on-one relationship with an actor who understands that child’s interests and the things that that child doesn’t like and can really guide them through the experience,” says Gutschick.

As they embark on their journey through the skies, audiences will be invited to participate in gentle, fun activities as individuals and as a part of the larger group. “**Up & Away** is written to move from that one-on-one experience in relationship that the kiddo has with an actor to some group activities and it very gently moves back and forth between those group moments which often involved tactile experiences, gentle audio or light based experiences, and then back to that one on one relationship,” says Gutshick.

Originally commissioned by Lincoln Center and created by Trusty Sidekick Theater Company, **Up & Away** is a new take on the classic story “Around the World in 80 Days.” Each child in attendance is accompanied by a member of the Fogg Family who serves as a guide for the trip through the clouds. Along the way, they will find that sometimes it’s not about the destination, as much as it is the experience of the journey.

All of the actors participating in the show have training in working with neuro-diverse audiences. “The production, the actors, everybody that’s involved in the entire production from the set, and the actors themselves have significant autism training and the production itself was created intentionally for the neuro diverse community,” explains Justin Dougherty, president and CEO of Autism Action Partnership, who has partnered with The Rose to bring **Up & Away** to Omaha audiences. “The actors are really trained to facilitate the story and to play along and to allow the central character -- which is the audience member -- to determine the story that’s being told.”

The **Up & Away** flight is limited to a small group of young balloonists and their adult sidekicks. Seating is extremely limited for this highly interactive, personalized performance, which the New York Times hailed as “a compassionate embrace of human variety.”

**Up & Away** runs March 12 - April 4 at The Rose, with a variety of performance dates and times. A complete list of performances is available at [www.rosetheater.org/shows/up-away](http://www.rosetheater.org/shows/up-away).

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Families wishing to attend **Up & Away** should fill out the ticket request form available on The Rose website; a representative from The Rose will contact them with details regarding their selected show time. Parties may be comprised of a maximum of three people, including at least one child on the autism spectrum and at least one accompanying adult. Children receive free tickets to **Up & Away**; adult family members may purchase tickets for \$5 each. Contact The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 for additional information.

Masks are required for performances of **Up & Away** for all adults and audience members must show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test. 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.

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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