

For Immediate Release

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

Rose Theater's *Giraffes Can't Dance* finds its own beat in world premiere production

Adaptation of popular book entertains at The Rose Theater

(OMAHA, Nebr.) When the date of the big dance arrives, Gerald the Giraffe realizes he has a problem: giraffes can't dance. Based on the bestselling picture book by Giles Andreae and illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees, *Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical* is a brand new musical with original songs that will transport families to Africa and introduce them to a comic cast of characters. The world premiere show runs April 8 to May 1, 2022, at Omaha's Rose Theater.

"When Gerald realizes that the other members of the community think he can't dance very well, he tries to figure out how they can still participate in the moment," says Rose Theater Artistic Director Matthew Gutschick. "It rather beautifully moves into place where the giraffe discovers that they all need to dance to the music in their hearts. It is this cool metaphor for how do we embrace the differences that we all bring to the table? How do we embrace the way that we each contribute to our community, to our classroom, to our family -- despite of and because of those differences?"

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The Rose Theater
2001 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68102

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



Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical

at The Rose Theater

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Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical is a script that has been in development with The Rose for several years, and the show will be making its world premiere on The Rose stage. "The music is actually inspired by some Afro pop genres," explains Gutschick. "It is written by Elton Bradman who is a wonderful San Francisco Bay-area based composer. The script is by Gloria Bond Clunie, who is a legendary playwright based in Chicago. Gloria was really interested in making sure that the story was honoring a bit of geographic specificity because the picture book sets the story in Africa. She wanted to get really, really granular and make sure that we were being very accurate about our depiction of cultures that are not Omaha-based. So that's something we are really excited about with this project."

Community leader Denise Chapman will direct ***Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical***. Chapman's talents were last seen on The Rose stage in its popular production of *Dragons Love Tacos*. Chapman is the director of theater at the Union for Contemporary Art whose directorial skills have been shared with theaters throughout Omaha. "Denise is just a wonderful leader who brings immense creativity to her projects," says Gutschick.

Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical will run Apr. 8 to May 1, 2022. The 60-minute show is appropriate for all audiences. Shows are Fridays at 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 and 5 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Services for audiences with special needs, including interpretation and captioning for the hearing impaired, audio description services will be offered at the 2 pm show on Saturday, April 23. A sensory-friendly performance will be offered on Saturday, Apr. 23 at 5 pm.

Tickets for ***Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical*** are available for \$20 by calling The Rose Box Office at (402) 345-4849 or online at www.rosetheater.org. Rose members receive four free tickets to the production. Discount ticket vouchers are available with purchase at area Runza stores.

Giraffes Can't Dance: The Musical is sponsored by Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Nebraska Furniture Mart, Runza, Wells Fargo, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

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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. It is The Rose's goal to inspire young people to discover the magic of theater, to find their voices and enrich their communities.

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