Compiled by Rachel Liff, Administration/Education Intern

Music by Carole King
Book and Lyrics by Maurice Sendak

Director: Tim Fort
Choreographer: Felicity Stiverson
Music Director: Kent Baker
Scenic Design: Brian Dudkiewicz
Lighting Design: Jeffrey E. Salzberg
Costume Design: Sydney Gallas

June 22 – July 9
SHOW NOTES

SYNOPSIS
In this up-beat and imaginative musical, Rosie, the self-proclaimed sassiest kid on the block, entertains her friends by producing an imaginary movie based on the exciting, dramatic, and (slightly) exaggerated story of her life.

ABOUT THE BOOKS

*Really Rosie* is based on a series of children’s books written by Maurice Sendak (“Where the Wild Things Are,” “In the Night Kitchen”). The characters originated in “Chicken Soup with Rice,” “Pierre,” “One was Johnny,” and “Alligators All Around,” all of which were featured in the Nutshell Library. Sendak published this collection in 1962¹. *Rosie* is also an adaptation of *The Sign on Rosie’s Door*, which appeared on television as an animated special in 1975 and Off Broadway in 1980².

ABOUT MAURICE SENDAK

Maurice Sendak (1928-2012) was born in raised in Brooklyn, New York. Largely considered one of the most influential children’s books authors of the 20th century, his work explored the entire range of human emotion. Sendak was not one to stray away from dark or melancholic themes. His ability to capture fear, sadness, and grief broke the mold in an industry that was, at the time, rigorously sanitized. Many of his characters drifted from the pristine and polished architypes of early 20th century children’s books. Instead, he crafted imperfect, rowdy, emotionally complex young people who learned to navigate life through struggle and failure.

¹ Harper Collins
² NY Times
Although most well-known for his picture books, Sendak also worked in the theater as a writer and set designer. Along with *The Sign on Rosie’s Door* and *Really Rosie*, he collaborated with playwright Tony Kushner in adapting the picture book/opera “Brundibar” into a modern stage production. *Brundibar* was originally performed by the children in the Theresienstadt concentration camp and written by Hans Krasa, who later died in Auschwitz.

Sendak’s work was greatly influenced by his own childhood, which he said was “a world of looming terrors: the Depression; World War II; the Holocaust, in which many of his European relatives perished...a seemingly infinite vulnerability of children to danger.” As he grew into an adolescence, Sendak also had to learn how to navigate an unforgiving America as a gay, lower class, Jewish man. His felt he experienced life very much in the margins of society, a feeling that resonates in all of his work—from Max in “Where the Wild Things Are,” who retreats to a world where he can express his frustration, anger, and pain, to “We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy,” a parallel of homeless children during the AIDS epidemic.

Throughout his career, Sendak was awarded the Hans Christian Anderson Award for Illustration, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, the National Medal of the Arts, two *New York Time’s* Bes Illustrated Book of the Year Awards, and the Caldecott Medal. He died in Connecticut in 2012.

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/09/books/maurice-sendak-childrens-author-dies-at-83.html

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**ABOUT CAROLE KING**

Carole King (b. 1942, Manhattan) has a career that spans across the stage, screen, and airwaves. She launched her career at 17-years-old with the song “Will You Love Me Tomorrow,” written with her then-husband and longtime writing partner, Gerry Goffin. Throughout the 1960s, she wrote dozens of songs, released by artists such as Bobby Vee, The Drifters, The Beatles, The Chiffons, The Animals, and Aretha Franklin.
As she grew into her 20s, King became recognized as a solo artist as well as a songwriter. Her 1962 demo of “it Might As Well Rain until September” quickly became one of the Top 25 Songs in the United States and was the Number 3 Song in the UK. Her 1971 album, *Tapestry*, won four GRAMMY awards and stood as the best-selling album by a woman for 25 years. It was inducted into the GRAMMY Hall of Fame in 1998.

Over a decade later, after year after year of success, King recorded songs for the TV production of *Really Rosie*. Since then, she has written music for film, television, and the stage. In the 1980s and 90s, she acted on and off Broadway as well as internationally. In 2014, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* opened on Broadway to audiences captivated by her life story and body of work.

In recent years, King has slowed down in terms of performance. Still an internationally recognized star, King has begun to focus on writing and activism. She released her memoir, *A Natural Woman*, in 2012. She has campaigned for various Democratic political candidates and is a strong advocate for environmental justice.

Carole King is the recipient of multiple GRAMMY awards, the 2012 Gershwin Prize from the Library of Congress (first female recipient), has been induced into the Rock and Roll Hall of fame, and received a 2010 Kennedy Center Honor.


**OUR WESTON PRODUCTION**

The Weston Production of *Really Rosie* stars our Young Company. The Weston Playhouse Young Company is composed of six or seven Non-Equity actor/singer/dancers who are either attending or no more than one year beyond graduation or departure from a conservatory or undergraduate training program. The Young Company program is aimed at providing performance opportunities for young artists as well as offering a forum for sharing the expertise of Weston-related
theatre professionals through a series of workshops, discussions, and interactive exercises.

Selections from *Really Rosie* were also used in the Weston EarlyStages Program this spring. This program introduces pre-school and elementary school students to theater making and culminates in Playdate at the Playhouse, where the students and their families come together to play, celebrate, and perform. The Young Company also performs selections at The Little School (pre-kindergarten) in Weston each year.

Costume renderings, courtesy of designer Sydney Gallas.

Set research images and design sketch, courtesy of designer Brian Dudkiewicz.
THE YOUNG COMPANY
Meet our Young Company! In the spirit of Really Rosie, we asked the Young Company: when you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? They may be acting students now, but once upon a time they aspired to be...

Allie Seibold, Rosie
“When I was little I wanted to be an author and write romance novels. I was a hopeless romantic in kindergarten.”

Marissa Hecker, Kathy
“I wanted to be a storyboard artist for Pixar and/or create my own animated series.”

Claire Mercier, Guitarist
“I wanted to be a performer when I grew up. I have been doing musical theatre for as long as I can remember.”

Matthew Pitts, Alligator
“When I was a kid I always wanted to be an architect. I guess it’s because I grew up as a Boy Scout and I was really into planning and drawing.”

Paul Watt-Morse, Johnny
“When I was a kid I wanted to be Doctor, just like my mom.”

Gideon Chickos, Pierre
“When I was a kid I wanted to be an actor! I always knew, even when I was 8 years old that I wanted to perform.”

Jonathan Gomolka, Chicken Soup
“I wanted to be a professional ballet dancer.”

Megumi Nakamura, Mother
“When I was a kid, I wanted to be a ballet dancer when I grew up.”
AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR TIM FORT

RACHEL LIFF: What excites you most about working on this project?

TIM FORT: I have been a Carole King fan since the 1960’s and loved Maurice Sendak’s work for almost as long. The opportunity to work on a joint creation by two of my creative heroes seemed almost too good to be true. Add to that, it is the chance to work with the new Young Company, right at the start of their introduction to Weston. We are all just naturally excited and energized.

RL: There is a great deal of preparation that goes into a production. How do you like to work with your design team?

TF: Because my design team are all very good working professionals, they are usually (as in this case) scattered across North America during pre-production. We use e-mails, Skype, drop boxes and conferencing for months before we all meet together. I remember one design conversation sitting in my car in Memphis, connecting by blue tooth to Montreal and New York. It’s great (I guess) to be living in the digital age – far from the more innocent era when the play is set.

RL: Do you approach working with the YoCo differently than you do an equity cast?

TF: No, I try to work professionally with every cast – since all actors want to be included in the process in a meaningful way.

RL: What are Opening Nights like for you?

TF: I am just rooting for everyone (including the audience) to feel engaged by the event. I always watch the audience as much as the scene on stage during openings. Fortunately, Really Rosie opens in the afternoon – so there is more lightness about the whole process.
Really Rosie Word Search

Movie Star
Avenue P
Rosie
Imagination

Alligator
Producer
Chicken Soup
Vampire

Dreams
Lion
Brooklyn
Family