

Contact: SCERA, (801) 225-ARTS, April Berlin (x. 1011) or Adam Robertson (x. 1014)  
For immediate release

## **“If You Give a Mouse a Cookie” Creates Comical Chaos in SCERA’s Theatre for Young Audiences Production**

(Orem, Utah) -- Veteran director Jerry Elison had a hard time suppressing giggles as he described his latest directing project for SCERA, “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie,” a Theatre for Young Audiences production that will play at the SCERA Center for the Arts March 1-19. “This is delightful, clever, and really funny,” he says. “Who would ever think that a little mouse could be the undoing of a lively little boy?”

“Laura Joffe Numeroff’s book has been adapted and expanded to make a 60-minute play for children that adults will also find charming,” he adds. “The mouse is quite a character and creates complete chaos as a cookie leads to a house full of comical adventures.”

There are weekday morning matinees for school field trips, and reservations for those shows are generally sold out. Public showings are on Monday and Friday evenings at 7:30 p.m. and reserved-seat tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children (age 3-11), seniors (age 65+) and students (w/ID). Tickets may be purchased in advance from 10am-6pm weekdays at the SCERA Center, 745 South State, Orem, by calling (801) 225-ARTS, online at [www.scera.org](http://www.scera.org) or at the door 30 minutes prior to the show.

SCERA President & CEO Adam Robertson is passionate about SCERA’s Theatre for Young Audiences program. “To combine literature and live theatre is so magical. It not only reinforces reading but it also introduces children to the arts.”

The story begins with a mouse that sees a little boy with cookies and pleads that he is so very hungry. The boy obligingly gives him a cookie, but then the mouse wants a glass of milk . . . and then a mirror to see if he has a milk moustache .... and then he wants to clean the house, and leaves an even bigger mess than when he started. And it gets worse from there, as the boy’s irrepressible furry guest starts a roller coaster of side-splitting shenanigans.

“The set, designed by Joel Farnsworth, is all oversized – the refrigerator in the kitchen is eight feet tall – to give the perspective of a little boy and a mouse. We have done everything oversized—the glasses, the straws, milk glass, Q-tips, crayons, the broom and other props, designed by Sarah Hainsworth, to exaggerate the story,” Elison explains. “There is a clever broom on a skateboard that flies across the stage. When the mouse finds a puddle of mud in the bathroom, he gets the mop and pulls on roller skates that are like scrub brushes. As he ‘cleans,’ he dances to the *Skaters’ Waltz*.”

“There are so many clever antics,” Elison says, “whether it’s the boy trying to tell the mouse a story and the mouse has to enact all the parts or whether he’s painting a picture and wants to put it on the refrigerator, and must create a mountain of cereal boxes to climb up to get it there. And of course he gets tangled in the tape. I’ve even arranged for some yodeling as he does that.”

Elison is especially pleased with his two-man cast. Ben Wille, a graduate of SCERA’s Acting Up premier performance team, plays the mouse. The energetic mouse never stops talking, and Ben says learning his fast-paced chatter was challenging. His costume includes a furry body suit, the signature overalls from the book and a mesh wire mouse head with ears, designed so the actor can see out but the audience can’t see in. SCERA’s Technical Director and puppet master Nat Reed designed the mouse head.

The boy is played by Shawn Mortensen, a veteran of the SCERA stage and a full-time staff SCERA member. Elison adds, “I hardly have to direct. Shawn and Ben are both professional and very, very funny. Shawn, at 6’4”, is a foot taller than Ben, so it gives the perception of what the height difference would be between a small boy and a little mouse.”

Jerry is sure the audience, just like he did during rehearsals, will get a serious case of the giggles.

###