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MARCH 2019

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Seattle Children's Theatre
2018-2019 SEASON

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BALLOONACY

BY BARRY KORNHAUSER

DIRECTED BY RITA GIOMI

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BALLOONACY

BY BARRY KORNHAUSER

DIRECTED BY RITA GIOMI

THE CAST

Todd Jefferson Moore*	<i>The Old Man</i>
Red B. Loon	<i>Balloon</i>
Vickielee Wohlbach*	<i>Understudy</i>
Evan Barrett	<i>Musician</i>

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Rita Giomi	<i>Director</i>
Michael B. Paul*	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Emma Pihl	<i>Production Assistant</i>
Andrea Bryn Bush	<i>Scenic Designer</i>
Sarah Burch Gordon	<i>Costume Designer</i>
Chris R. Walker	<i>Composer & Sound Designer</i>
Thorn Michaels	<i>Lighting Designer</i>

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A NOTE FROM COURTNEY SALE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fifth show of our 44th season: *Balloonacy* written by Barry Kornhauser. This production is sure to inspire whether you are 3 or 103. At its heart, *Balloonacy* asks us to move toward our most playful instincts, especially as we grow older. Barry Kornhauser enjoys a long history of crafting works for young audiences that make us laugh, feel, and consider our world with fresh perspectives. One of the ideas that drew me to *Balloonacy* was its ability to lift up the differences between loneliness and being alone. How fortunate we are to share a conversation with our children on the important distinction between those feelings and offer ways in which imagination and play counter loneliness.

We are overjoyed to have Todd Jefferson Moore play the lead role in this wildly physical and non-verbal production. The acumen, skill, and courage required to perform a solo show are rare qualities. Todd brings those attributes with great heart. We celebrate his tremendous spirit and are happy to share it with you.

This production is an important threshold moment for SCT. Artistic Associate Rita Giomi leads this magical team, and this production marks her last at SCT in that role as she retires this summer. Rita has served SCT for 38 years directing memorable productions such as *Animal Farm*, *Hamlet*, *Into the West* (16-17), *Brooklyn Bridge*, and many others. She has inspired countless laughter and moments of deep empathy from our audiences. We thank her for her incredible contribution and service. SCT audiences will hold her artistry in their hearts and souls for years to come.

We thank you for joining us today. Enjoy the show!

Sincerely,



Artistic Director



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Seattle Children's Theatre and Microsoft share a passion for creativity, learning and excellence. Year after year, Seattle Children's Theatre delivers high quality entertainment that captivates the imaginations of young people and their families, throughout the Pacific Northwest. That's why Microsoft Philanthropies is proud to sponsor the 2018-2019 Season.

Community involvement is an integral part of our culture at Microsoft. We support the work of local nonprofits and encourage employee investment and volunteerism. Our employees respond in an incredible way, volunteering thousands of hours and contributing more than \$60 million each year to local nonprofits, including Seattle Children's Theatre.

A thriving arts and cultural scene, a network of human services providers, and a world class education system are critical to the continued vitality and attractiveness of the Puget Sound region. Through partnerships with organizations such as Seattle Children's Theatre, we aim to create an environment where the arts will thrive for generations to come.

On behalf of Microsoft and our employees in the Puget Sound area, we thank Seattle Children's Theatre for enriching our community.

Enjoy the show!

Mary Snapp

Corporate Vice President
Microsoft Philanthropies



SYNOPSIS

Be warned: this synopsis has spoilers.

An old man enters his small apartment in Paris, carrying a shopping bag. He places a plate of spaghetti in the microwave. While he waits, he runs his finger over today's date circled on the calendar marking his birthday. Reaching into the shopping bag, he pulls out items including a birthday party hat, a noise maker, and a birthday card. The microwave dings.

The spaghetti is now too hot. While waiting for it to cool he hums the song "Happy Birthday" to himself and puts on the party hat. He smells a small flower in a vase causing him to sneeze and knock his hat off into the plate of spaghetti. He discards the bag of items and the hat. Just as he is about to take a bite of spaghetti, a red balloon peeks into the room through a window. Sensing something, the man turns to look, but the balloon has disappeared. As he returns to his plate, the balloon sails into the room.

He takes the balloon by the string and tosses it out the window. The balloon re-enters. Grabbing the balloon, he thrusts it out the window again and shuts the window, accidentally hitting his finger. In pain, he puts a bandage on it. As he opens the trash can to discard the rubbish, out pops the balloon. He decides to keep the sneaky balloon close, but as the man tries to eat his dinner, the balloon continually interrupts. He moves the balloon across the room, but it follows him back to his chair. Determined, he walks to the door and places the balloon outside with a deliberate shut.

The doorbell rings. He finds a gift box just outside the door. He opens the box to find the balloon once again, now wearing a party hat. Inside the box there is a new party hat for him. He also finds the game of Pin the Tail on the Donkey. The man plays the game, then plays leapfrog with the balloon, until it mysteriously disappears. The microwave dings again and when the man opens the door, out comes the balloon. They play a game of Hide-and-Seek.

The two move on to a new game where they dance with one another. The dance ends with the man near the flower and he lets out another large sneeze. Then they become a marching band moving around the room, until the man inadvertently stabs the balloon. The balloon starts to deflate. He puts his finger on a hole to stop the leak of air. Finally, the balloon completely empties.

The man is stricken. He administers the breath of life to the balloon and patches it with the bandage from his finger, managing to heal the balloon. He hugs and kisses it. Looking back inside the birthday box they discover a frosted birthday treat with a lit candle. Distracted by more balloon antics, the

SYNOPSIS CONTINUED

man almost sits on the treat. He manages to save it, but the balloon tries to make a move to eat the treat and finally smushes it in the man's face. He is angry, jumps up and pushes the balloon away, then without thinking, he sits on the treat.

His pants are ruined. He blames the balloon, banishing it out the window for good. He decides to finish his meal. As he picks up a meatball, he is reminded of the red balloon and realizes he misses his friend.

He looks out the window for it with no luck. He draws a heart on a piece of paper and holds it out the window to signal to the balloon. He folds the paper into an airplane and tosses it out the window in hope that it will reach the balloon wherever it may be. Just as he gives up, the balloon returns riding the paper airplane. The two joyously dance around the room. We see them leave the apartment and float away above the city of Paris.



THEATRE ETIQUETTE

In order to make each SCT experience remarkable, we politely request the following:

- Please completely turn off all electronic devices, or anything that makes noise, so as to not distract the patrons or actors from the amazing work taking place on stage.
- Photos with friends and family in the lobby areas are highly encouraged and we love it when you share photos on social media using #SCTseattle. However, taking photos or audio and video recording is strictly prohibited during a performance.
- If you have to use the restroom or exit the theatre during the performance, please exit the back of the theatre to avoid walking directly in front of the stage.
- If you have questions about your theatre experience, please see an SCT staff member located in the lobby.

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ARTISTIC & PRODUCTION

RITA GIOMI (Director)

Rita has close to 40 years of experience in professional theatre locally and across the country. Recent SCT credits: *The Lamp is the Moon*, *Into the West*, *Brooklyn Bridge*, *The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi*, *Pippi Longstocking*, and *Crash*. She has been directing at SCT steadily since 1981, so the full list is long and varied, and includes: *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *The Borrowers*, *Getting Near to Baby*, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *I Was a Rat!*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Hamlet*. Other Seattle-area credits include work with Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Public Theatre, Seattle Rep,

ACT, The Empty Space, Village Theatre, TAG, Theater Schmeater, Center Stage, Unexpected Productions, and Stark/Raving Theatre. Ms. Giomi is the Artistic Associate at SCT, and from 1993 to 2007, she served as the Artistic Director of SCT's Young Actor Institute.



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MICHAEL B. PAUL* (Stage Manager)

Michael arrived in Seattle in 1980, directly after two seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He then began stage managing at Seattle's Skid Road Theatre, where he first worked with Linda Hartzell in *Grease*. That same year he worked with Rita Giomi on *Delusions of Reference*. Mr. Paul has stage managed locally at the Seattle Repertory Theatre (most recently *In the Heights*), ACT, Intiman, and the 5th Avenue Theatre. National credits include The Guthrie; Shakespeare Theatre in DC; Oregon Shakespeare Theatre; Milwaukee Repertory Theatre; Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Humana Festival; La Jolla Playhouse; Baltimore's Center Stage; Manhattan Theatre Club and the late Alaska Repertory Theatre. For Seattle Children's Theatre: *Addy*, *An American Girl Story*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Cat in the Hat*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *Dick Whittington and his Cat*, *Elephant and Piggy - We Are In A Play!* and, most recently, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*.

EMMA PIHL (Production Assistant)

Emma is happy to return to Seattle Children's Theatre, having previously worked on *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience* and *Elephant and Piggie's "We are in a Play!"*. Emma most recently stage managed *All's Well That Ends Well* with Seattle Shakespeare Company. Around town, Emma has also worked with Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, ACT, 5th Avenue Theatre, Village Theatre, and New Century Theatre Company.

ANDREA BRYN BUSH (Scenic Designer)

Andrea is a scenic designer who works with many companies across town, including Village Theatre, Intiman Theater, NCTC, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Seattle Public Theater, Contemporary Classics, Azeotrope, and Cornish College of the Arts. She was formerly an Ensemble member and resident designer at Washington Ensemble Theatre. Andrea is an MFA graduate from UW where she is currently on staff in the Scene Shop. She received the 2010 Gregory Award for outstanding scenic design.

THORN MICHAELS (Lighting Designer)

Thorn Michaels is a Seattle-based lighting designer for theatre, dance, and opera. Her recent designs include: *O+E*, *The Tender Land*, and *Robin Hood* with Seattle Opera; *I Do! I Do!* with Village Theatre; *Fire Season*, *Hand to God*, and *Ironbound* (Gregory Award Nominee for Outstanding Lighting Design, 2018) with Seattle Public Theater; *Brooklyn Bridge* with Seattle Children's Theatre; *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and *Jane Eyre* with Book-It Repertory Theatre; *Strictly Seattle*, *Next Fest Northwest*, and *The Bridge Project* with Velocity Dance Center; and *The Two-Character Play* with Civic Rep (Gregory nominee, Lighting Design). As the 2016-2017 Hemsley intern, Thorn served as Assistant Lighting Designer and Assistant Lighting Supervisor for New York City Ballet, Lincoln Center Festival, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and San Francisco Opera. She holds an MFA in Lighting Design from University of Washington (2016). For more about her work, please visit www.thornmichaels.com.

* Indicates members of the Actors' Equity Association

SARAH BURCH GORDON (Costume Designer)

Sarah is excited to be costume designing her first show at SCT. She has been designing costumes for over 20 years at theatres across the country. Favorite Seattle credits include *Persuasion*, *Dracula*, *Silent Sky* (Gregory Award Nominated), and *Jane Eyre* at Taproot Theatre Company. Regionally she has designed at Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre, The Brick Playhouse, Venture Theatre (Barrymore nominee), and Stagewest Theatre. Sarah has taught costume design at Mars Hill College in North Carolina, and earned her MFA in Costume Design from Temple University. She is in her second year as the Costume Shop Manager here at Seattle Children's Theatre.

CHRIS R. WALKER (Composer & Sound Designer)

Mr. Walker is very happy to be in his 18th year of designing sound for SCT. In Seattle, he has designed at Seattle Repertory Theatre, ACT, Intiman, and The 5th Avenue. In California, he's designed at The Old Globe Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, the Mark Taper Forum, the Geffen Playhouse, and ACT (San Francisco). He spent seven seasons as the resident designer at the American Repertory Theatre in Boston, designing over forty productions while there. He has also designed in New York, Houston, Philadelphia, Princeton, Chicago, Washington D.C., and Phoenix, as well as internationally in Singapore, Taiwan, and Moscow. Commercially, he has designed for Intel, Harvard University, Starbucks, and Popcap Games. He holds a degree in Classical Piano performance from Cornish College of the Arts.



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THE CAST



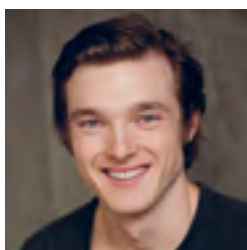
TODD JEFFERSON MOORE * – *The Old Man*

Mr. Moore is again delighted to return to SCT, where he first performed 36 years ago. Your parents may have seen him at SCT when they were children. The role of Old Man in *Balloonacy* adds to a long list of SCT characters that include, among others, a frog, a lion, a rat, a bear, a dog, an owl, a tiger, a donkey, a classy lady, Santa Claus, several friends, many fathers and uncles, and Cyrano. Todd occasionally performs for adults as well. But right now, he is helping to build a house for his two wonderful grandsons, Diego and Nico, and their parents. Soon there will be enough room so that Todd's granddaughter, Lucia, and her parents, can come and visit. That makes Todd very happy.



VICKIELEE WOHLBACH * – *Understudy*

Vickielee is absolutely buoyant to be in the company of *Balloonacy*! She has been seen frequently at Seattle Children's Theatre, and favorites include *Good Night Moon*, *Go Dog Go*, *James & the Giant Peach*, *Dot & Ziggy*, *Frog & Toad*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *Stellaluna*, and most recently *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*. Vickielee has toured extensively throughout the US, Japan, Canada, and Europe. Favorite stage roles include Kate (*Taming of the Shrew*), Annie Sullivan (*The Miracle Worker*), Brunnhilde (*Das Barbecue*), and *Menopause the Musical* (Housewife). When not playing with balloons, she regularly rocks out with cover band *The Usual Suspects*, and raises money for kids' causes.



EVAN BARRETT – *The Musician*

Evan is a Montana-born performer, musician, and lifelong learner who is delighted to make his Seattle Children's Theatre debut. He recently played Isaac in ArtsWest's production of *HIR*, and composed and music directed *Journey West! The Legend of Lewis & Clark* at Theatre Off Jackson. When he's not engaging directly with the arts, you'll find him in the mountains, waters, and forests of the northwest. He holds a BFA in Acting from Cornish College of the Arts, where he now works as a piano accompanist.



RED B. LOON – *The Balloon*

Red is floating on air to be debuting at SCT, always having dreamt of stardom but never expecting to be bestowed with such an honor. Though some may wonder if this experience has gone to Red's head, be assured that Red vows to stay grounded. When not on stage, Red enjoys making new friends and playing games, and hopes to grow up to be a hot air balloon.

* Indicates members of the Actors' Equity Association

SPECIAL THANKS _____



Seattle Children's Theatre is a member of TTA/USA, the national center of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People.



SCT is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the nonprofit professional theatre.



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ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 50,000 professional actors and stage managers. Equity endeavors to advance the careers of its members by negotiating wages, working conditions, and providing a wide range of benefits (health and pension included). Member: AFL-CIO, FIA. #EquityWorks.



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Above: *The Three Stooges*

BEYOND WORDS

We are taught at a young age that words are powerful — words can hurt and words can lift up; words describe and words express. And yet, if “a picture is worth a thousand words,” what is the value of body language, movement, and a facial expression? How much do we really rely on words?

Users of American Sign Language (ASL) know this better than anyone. While signs represent words, phrases, or ideas, the majority of ASL is what is referred to as Non-Manual Markers, or NMMs such as: facial expression, eye gaze, head tilting, and body movements. Furthermore, these NMMs communicate grammar and semantics, such as adverbials of time or tone. However, if you see a conversation between two people signing, you will most likely observe them looking at each other’s faces rather than fixing their attention on each other’s hands.

Just as in spoken language, in ASL it’s usually not what you sign but the way you sign it. Researchers and linguists have studied spoken languages as well as sign languages and discovered that because spoken language is a fine motor activity (using the smaller muscles in our mouths, such as our tongue, lips, cheeks, and vocal chords), we are only able to produce sounds that form words which can only be done one at a time. This is perceived by the complex, small-in-size system that makes a journey through our ears to our brain, transforming from sound waves, to mechanical energy as it travels through the three smallest bones in our bodies, then to hydraulic energy throughout the inner ear’s cochlea, and finally from the auditory nerve, electric energy sends the message to the brain. On the other hand, sign language uses gross muscle movements (hands, arms, shoulders, etc.). So, the researchers found

that our eyes are able to perceive complex messages simultaneously through taking in the whole picture that includes all those NMMS.

In order to visualize this, think about when you ask how someone is and the response is “fine.” Firstly, if this is in a text, you could infer several emotions for this word. If you hear their voice when they say this, you might be able to understand how they’re feeling. But if you can see them say “fine,” you’re receiving the clearest response with clues from their eyebrows, eyes, mouth, and posture.

This might be why the loudest audience laughs in comedies tend to be physical humor. Babies laugh when their caregiver makes a funny face. Kids belly laugh at an actor who knows how to seamlessly trip across an entire stage. Even the most sophisticated adult can appreciate an arched eyebrow at the perfect time in a scene.

Can an entire play be done without words? Even though famous bards have been known for their eloquent and verbose plays, the physical notes of a script are one of the most important jobs of a director.



Throughout history, artists have entertained audiences without their words, most notably seen in famous actors such as Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and the duo Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. And while television came about after the age of silent movies, The Three Stooges still relied on their physical comedy as a major part of a story’s dialogue, conflict, and resolution.

In 1956, a French film entitled *Le Ballon Rouge* (*The Red Balloon*) was released. The entire movie uses no words (including captions), to tell the story about the adventures a little boy has after finding a red balloon. Only background music can be heard throughout the movie.

Balloonacy brings the non-verbal story and the seemingly lifeless red balloon to stage. However, it is no longer a young, spry boy meandering through the streets of Paris. Now an old man sits lonely in his home until the red balloon makes its appearance.

Balloonacy gives young audience members a unique opportunity to put their own words to an experience. Since they can’t repeat what they heard the characters say, they get to process and interpret their own meaning from what unfolds in this comedy. Not only are children able to produce their own language around *Balloonacy*, but vocabulary can be taught in an experiential way. How did the actor walk? Did he saunter? Did he meander? How was the Old Man’s face when he first saw the red balloon? Was he surprised? Anxious? Unnerved?

Children can share their ideas uninhibited, while language can be developed through new vocabulary and reasoning that is visually-based, helping students understand the idea of cause and effect, for example. In addition, the red balloon is a perfect character study in personification. While the balloon itself is not a puppet or mechanical, it will most certainly have a life of its own. You will see this done through timing, placement, movement, and props. When? Why?

How does one know when the balloon might be feeling certain emotions?

Children might be able to recognize what a face looks like when it's happy, sad, or mad. However, naming specific parts of a face and what it does is building a child's awareness to more complex emotions, such as frustration, indifference, and mischievousness. What do the Old Man's eyebrows do? How does his mouth move? Where are his eyes looking and how does his head move? On a bigger level, how does the Old Man move? How is his posture? Tall and proud? Or hunched and ashamed? Are his hands stiff because he's scared? Or perhaps behind his back because he's being sneaky?

Furthermore, for children who have a harder time inferring emotions from facial expressions, *Balloonacy* offers a way to provide context for conversations about what emotions can look like on one's face. This can be utilized as a teaching tool where the affective filter, which inhibits one's learning through raised anxiety, is lowered. Through a shared experience, such as a play, children can talk about what they observed the characters feeling, rather than having the pressure of answering self-reflective questions about their own emotions.

On top of the importance of developing vocabulary around one's emotions, as well as building emotional intelligence, there is an inanimate object that provides story in *Balloonacy*. The red balloon is a fantastic approach to teaching children about other ways you can physically communicate because they can't rely on words or even a facial expression with a character that is a balloon! Communicating physically has been recorded throughout human history — from signaling danger for survival to distinguishing a particular culture or religion. For example, where your hands should be at a dinner

table varies from culture to culture. In one part of the world, pointing to your nose might mean you're indicating someone has the right idea, while in another part of the world expressing your request to not participate. What does shrugging your shoulders mean to you? Now ask someone around you to shrug their shoulders and ask what it means to them. Were your answers similar? Did you add different facial expressions with it?

In *Balloonacy*, audiences young and old will get to experience human beings' oldest form of communication and comedy — physical expression. Children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can experience it first-hand without the need of someone else's interpretation. Even children who are English Learners don't have the added challenge of getting tripped up on language or lost in translation. Audience members can access and understand *Balloonacy* in an intimate setting with their own personal direct connection to the storytelling.

Content from SCT's Active Audience Guide

Right: Buster Keaton & Virginia Fox
in the film *Electric House*, 1922



FLOAT AWAY WITH A BOOK!

FOR CHILDREN

Bird, Balloon, Bear

Il Sung Na

Skunk on a String

Thao Lam

A Birthday for Bear

Bonny Becker

Mr. Putter & Tabby Make a Wish

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Soleil Moon Frye

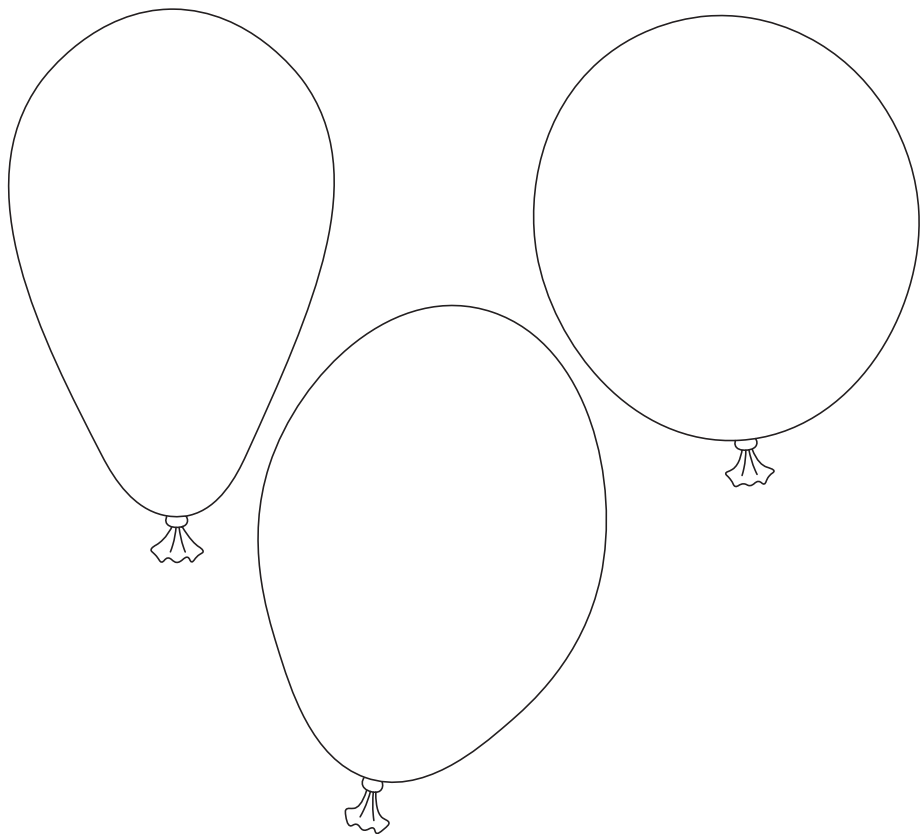
*Birthdays: Beyond Cake and
Ice Cream*

Nikki Tate & Dani Tate-Stratton



FEELING COLORFUL

Draw a string from each balloon to a different emoji at the bottom of the page.
Color the balloons and draw faces on them to match the feeling of their emoji.
You can use more than one color on each balloon.



Encore's Encore

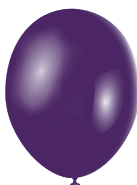


Can you match the balloons?

Draw a solid line between balloons of the same color.

Draw a dotted line between balloons of the same shape.

A



B



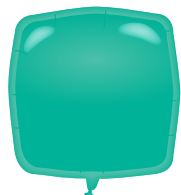
C



D



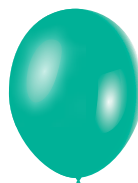
E



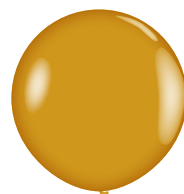
1



2



3



4



5

COLORS: A2, B4, C5, D1, E3;
SHAPES: A3, B5, C2, D4, E1

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