

About First Stage

Since 1987, First Stage has grown to become one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families, and is the second largest theater company in Milwaukee. First Stage's mission is to touch hearts, engage minds and transform lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences for young people and families through:

- **Professional Theater** productions that inspire, enlighten and entertain;
- Unparalleled **Theater Academy** training that fosters life skills through stage skills, the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people;
- Dynamic **Theater in Education** programs that promote active learning in our schools and community, working with students and teachers to apply theater techniques to enrich literacy skills and enhance learning across the curriculum.

In the 2014-15 season,

OUR THEATER PRODUCTIONS ENGAGED

115,025

audience members

among

390 total performances.

OUR THEATER ACADEMY SERVED

2,230 students

and granted

709 scholarship awards.

Our school year and summer Theater Academy program includes *Next Steps*, a year-round program for young people on the autism spectrum.

In the 2014-15 school year,

OUR THEATER IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS SERVED

20,695 students

in

726 classrooms

with

2,504 workshops,

&

584 teachers

received professional development
through First Stage.

In addition, First Stage has developed a *Bully Ban* workshop for schools, as well as a *Nurturing through Drama* program with Meta House, a parenting workshop for mothers recovering from substance or alcohol abuse; both of which have demonstrated measurable success.

IN SEPTEMBER 2015,

First Stage became the only arts organization in the state of Wisconsin to receive a Community Learning Center (CLC) contract by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction at Kluge Elementary School, 5760 N. 67th Street. Through this robust after-school partnership, students have access to acting classes, arts-integrated literacy programs and character development workshops, teaching social-emotional skills through stage skills.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.FIRSTSTAGE.ORG



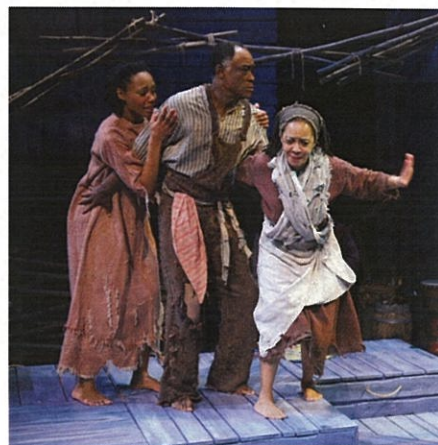
Don't Tell Me I Can't Fly, 2011. Matthew Wade and Ashley Nord (front), Chinai Hardy, Chauncy Thomas, Tiffany Yvonne Cox (back). Photo by Mark Frohna.



Luchadora!, 2015. Jamie Mercado and David Flores. Photo by Paul Ruffolo.



To The Promised Land, 2013. Lonnae Hickman and Marvette Knight. Photo by Mark Frohna.



A Midnight Cry, 2014. Malkia Stampley, Michael Torrey, Marvette Knight. Photo by Paul Ruffolo.

FIRST STAGE'S WISCONSIN CYCLE:

Welcome to Bronzeville

For the past five seasons with **The Wisconsin Cycle**, First Stage has brought a series of plays that celebrate Wisconsin and Milwaukee, and our rich and complex history and people. Through these world premieres we have discovered new stories and made new friends.

As we prepare to share *Welcome to Bronzeville*, the final play in the series, we are seeking partners to help us make this production a true community celebration through gatherings, discussions, art exhibits, shared meals and conversations, and more.



Old Walnut Street - charcoal drawing by Sylvester Sims, based on a photograph taken in 1947.

THE PLAY

WELCOME TO BRONZEVILLE

An original world premiere play by Sheri Williams Pannell

First Stage's final installment of **The Wisconsin Cycle** has been years in the making. With input from Bronzeville community elders, local playwright Sheri Williams Pannell has crafted a touching homage to the historic and revered Bronzeville. Through the eyes of Michael Jr., the heart of Bronzeville is revealed in this humorous and touching tale of growing up in a truly special place and time.

PLAY SYNOPSIS

1957. The heart of Milwaukee's Bronzeville pulses to the beat of jazz and blues. Yet Michael Jr., who prefers to be called Mike, is troubled. Everyone expects him to be a deacon, like his father, but who is he truly meant to be? The local talent show, a famous visitor, and the wisdom and guidance of a community seeking to lift up their young people, help Mike find the path to the man he will become. Join us for this latest installment of **The Wisconsin Cycle** developed with the input and support of the elders in our community! Suggested for ages 8-16 and their families.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

January 13 – February 5, 2017

PUBLIC AND SCHOOL SHOWS at the Todd Wehr Theater, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

COMMUNITY EVENTS at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center and other Bronzeville locations.

TENTATIVE PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

Public performances:

Friday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.

Saturdays, January 14, 21, 28,
February 4, 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.

Sundays, January 15, 22, 29,
February 5, 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 p.m.
Pay What You Choose

School shows and Senior Center opportunities:

Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:00 a.m.
and noon, select dates

Potential Martin Luther King, Jr. Day performance & discussion/workshop:

Monday, January 16, 2017, 3:30 p.m.

