



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**First Stage's award-winning Young Company presents**  
**MACBETH**

*-An exploration of unbridled ambition and eerily of the moment-*

**Milwaukee, WI – March 10, 2021** – Next up for First Stage's Young Company, the Theater Academy's award-winning training program for advanced high school actors, will be **MACBETH**, Shakespeare's darkest tragedy, infamously known as the cursed Scottish play. The play will be performed in the newly renovated, theater-in-the-round Goodman Mainstage Hall at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center. Directed by First Stage Young Company faculty member **Marcella Kearns**, with fight and intimacy direction by **Christopher Elst**, MACBETH is filled with ferocious battles, supernatural horrors, famously gorgeous poetry and some of the Bard's most vivid characters. Tempted by an evil prophecy from a trio of witches and encouraged by his Lady ever deeper into his own dark ambition, Macbeth rages a bloody path to the throne of Scotland and the forces of destruction are unleashed. Sponsored by **United Performing Arts Fund**.

MACBETH runs **March 25 – April 3, 2022** at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, located at 325 W. Walnut Street in downtown Milwaukee. Tickets are \$15. Tickets are available online at [firststage.org](http://firststage.org) or through the First Stage Box Office at (414) 267-2961. *Performance runtime is approximately 2 hours plus an intermission. Suggested for families and young people ages 13+.*

Director **Marcella Kearns** had this to say about the production: "When I was a kid, my military father told me tales of the downfall of a Scottish warrior who had saved his people. I didn't realize until I was much older that *Macbeth* was how I learned to love Shakespeare – even before I knew who the playwright was.

MACBETH demands of its actors prowess with language. Strength for radical physical transformation and combat. Courage and resilience for gazing into the brightest and the murkiest aspects of the human spirit. As Young Company, the cast has brought this arsenal of tools from day one.”

Added Young Company Director **Matt Daniels**: “More than 400 years after it was written, Macbeth remains scary of the moment. This exploration of ambition and its pitfalls is one of Shakespeare’s tightest plays and will be expertly led by longtime Young Company faculty member **Marcella Kearns** with fight choreography by **Christopher Elst**. This play is fast, furious and terrifying, and a great way to welcome Young Company’s award-winning Shakespeare chops to the remodeled Goodman Mainstage Hall, where battles for the vast Scottish landscape will be right in the audience’s lap.”

Young Company Performance Projects are actor-driven presentations using elemental production values. By stripping down to a nearly bare stage, the connection of actor to audience is enhanced, and the words of the play come alive in exciting ways. These fully rehearsed studio projects allow First Stage’s award-winning students to showcase their graduate level skills with full-length material, from Shakespeare to American classics to pieces commissioned specially for them.

Young Company recently won several awards at the 2021 Utah Shakespeare Festival High School Competition, including: 1st and 2nd place monologue, 1st place duo/trio scene, 1st place Ensemble scene, the Roy Jones Award, the Barbara Barrett award, The Larry Lott Award, and the Essex Division Sweepstakes.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

**Marcella Kearns (Director)** is a Milwaukee-based multidisciplinary artist, Marcy serves as a director, actor, instructor, dramaturg and administrator. Selected directing credits include the world premieres of FIGHTING FOR HOME: STORIES OF WOMEN WHO SERVE (Carthage College) and GIRLS IN THE BOAT (First Stage); VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE, SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE CASE OF THE JERSEY LILY and FIRES IN THE MIRROR: CROWN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, AND OTHER IDENTITIES (MCT); THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR (Door Shakespeare); and LILLY’S PURPLE PLASTIC PURSE and MOCKINGBIRD (First Stage). With Young Company, her prior classical forays include THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL and THE WINTER’S TALE. She is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association, a former Fulbright Fellow (Austria) and a 2008 TCG Observership recipient. She holds an MFA in Acting from the University of South Carolina.

**Matt Daniels (Director of Young Company)** is a frequent collaborator at First Stage, as an actor (WRINKLE IN TIME, BIG RIVER, THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE, A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS, ELLA ENCHANTED, SHREK THE MUSICAL and A MIDNIGHT CRY, among others), director and movement director (ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE WE ARE IN A PLAY, Roald

Dahl's JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH, THE SNOW, RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER™: THE MUSICAL among others), and Director of Young Company, where he teaches and directs (THE MIRACLE WORKER, HENRY V, ANIMAL FARM, TXT U L8R and OUR TOWN among others). Matt's other acting credits include appearances at Milwaukee Rep, Skylight Music Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, In Tandem Theater and Milwaukee Shakespeare, as well as Forward Theater, Kentucky Rep., Lake Geneva Theater Company, several regional Shakespeare Festivals and on many independent stages in New York. In addition to First Stage, his directing work has been seen at Door Shakespeare, Marquette University, MCT's New Play Development series and in New York with his company Tyrannosaurus rep. When at home, he enjoys making music with Il Bazzone's Jumping Flea Circus. Matt is a graduate of the Juilliard School Drama Division. [mattdanielsonline.com/](http://mattdanielsonline.com/)

The Young Company cast for MACBETH includes: **Leo Madson** (West Allis) as Hecate/Malcolm; **Jonathan Edwards** (Milwaukee) as 1 Witch (Old Man)/Menteith; **Sabrina Borg** (Cedarburg) as 2 Witch (Porter)/Angus; **Maya Thomure** (Whitefish Bay) as 3 Witch (Gentlewoman)/Fleance; **Zachary Nowacek** (Wauwatosa) as Duncan/1 Murderer/Siward/Understudy for Liam Jeninga; **Elena Marking** (Franklin) as Donalbain/2 Murderer/Young Siward/Understudy Swing for Angel Rivera/Molly McVey/John Eash-Scott; **Emily Treffert** (Glendale) as Captain/Macduff's Wife/Doctor; **Liam Jeninga** (Delavan) as Macbeth; **Elisheva Scheuer** (Bayside) as Lady; **Aderyn Grace** (Milwaukee) as Banquo; **Angel Rivera** (Milwaukee) as Macduff/Macduff's Son; **Mari Garey** (Monona) Lennox/Understudy for Elisheva Scheuer; **Molly McVey** (Bayside) as Ross; **John Eash-Scott** (Wauwatosa) as Seyton/Understudy Swing for Jonathan Edwards/Zachary Nowacek/Elena Marking; **Molly Domski** (Glendale) as Understudy Swing for Mari Garey/Sabrina Borg/Emily Treffert and **Beau Murie** (Shorewood) as Understudy Swing for Maya Thomure/Leo Madson/Aderyn Grace.

The Artistic Staff for MACBETH includes: **Matt Daniels** (Director of Young Company); **Marcella Kearns** (Director); **Lucy Kuhnen-Grooms** (Assistant to the Director); **Christopher Elst** (Fight and Intimacy Director); **Amy Sue Hazel** (Scenic Coordinator); **Shane O'Neil** (Lighting Coordinator); **Derek Buckles** (Sound Coordinator); **Michelle Verbos** (Costume Coordinator) and **Megan Harris** (Stage Manager).

**Tickets are \$15** – Tickets may be purchased at [firststage.org/](http://firststage.org/) or by phone (414) 267-2961.

**COVID Protocols:** First Stage updated COVID safety protocols can be viewed here: [firststage.org/plan-your-visit/safety-security/ - performances](http://firststage.org/plan-your-visit/safety-security/-performances)

### **Special events for MACBETH and Young Company**

#### **Pay What You Choose Performance: Friday, April 1, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**

Pay What You Choose tickets are available on a first come, first served basis with a minimum suggested donation of \$5 per person. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. on the day of the performance. Patrons are encouraged to arrive early. To learn more visit: [firststage.org/events-tickets/tickets-offers/pay-what-you-choose/](http://firststage.org/events-tickets/tickets-offers/pay-what-you-choose/)

**2021 Young Company Bard-o-thon Showcase: Saturday, April 23, 2022**

The 12th annual Bard-O-Thon will be held Saturday, April 23, 2022. Stay tuned for presentation time and location. In celebration of Shakespeare's birthday, the First Stage Theater Academy presents its annual Bard-O-Thon, challenging [Young Company](#) members to stretch their artistic endurance as they perform as many memorized Shakespearean monologues in a row as possible. In 2021, 55 students performed a total of 556 monologues and through their incredible fundraising efforts, the Young Company members raised more than \$17,000 to further their mission of transforming lives through theater and help support Shakespeare programming at First Stage. To learn more, please visit: [firststage.org/events-tickets/special-events/young-company-bard-o-thon/](http://firststage.org/events-tickets/special-events/young-company-bard-o-thon/)

**FACT SHEET**

**What:** First Stage Young Company presents: MACBETH

**Location:** Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, 325 W. Walnut Street, Milwaukee

**Dates:** March 25 – April 3, 2022

**Description:** Tempted by an evil prophecy from a trio of witches and encouraged by his Lady ever deeper into his own dark ambition, Macbeth rages a bloody path to the throne of Scotland. Infamously known as the cursed Scottish play, Shakespeare's darkest tragedy is filled with ferocious battles, supernatural horrors, famously gorgeous poetry and some of the Bard's most vivid characters.

**Performances:**

- Friday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 26 at 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday, March 27 at 1:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m. – *PAY WHAT YOU CHOOSE PERFORMANCE*
- Saturday, April 2 at 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 3 at 1:00 p.m.

**Ticket and information:** Tickets are \$15. Call (414) 267-2961 or online at: [firststage.org](http://firststage.org)

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### **About First Stage**

First Stage is one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families. First Stage touches hearts, engages minds and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten and entertain. Its Theater Academy, the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people, fosters life skills through stage skills and serves nearly 2,000 students each year. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education programs promote literacy, character building and experiential learning throughout the curriculum, serving over 20,000 students each year. First Stage was selected to participate in the Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2012) and was the recipient of the *Milwaukee Business Journal*'s Eureka Award, recognizing creativity and innovation in business, education and the arts for its Next Steps program for students on the autism spectrum (2013, 2015). First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). [firststage.org](http://firststage.org)

### **About Young Company**

First Stage Young Company, the Theater Academy's award-winning training program for advanced high school actors, is open to students who want to take their work to the next level. Accepted students will complete college and graduate-level training in Acting, Voice, Movement and Shakespeare as well as electives ranging from Auditioning to Stage Combat to Dialects. Traditionally, the Young Company hosts master classes with guest artists from across the nation, produces a season of three plays and facilitates special excursions to the Utah Shakespeare Festival and American Players Theatre. To learn more, please visit: [firststage.org/theater-academy/young-company/](http://firststage.org/theater-academy/young-company/)