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FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE: FIRST STAGE PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE OF ESPERANZA RISING

Experience the journey of a young girl's strength and determination in a theatrical adaptation of a modern literary classic.

MILWAUKEE — [First Stage](#) — one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families — invites audiences to witness the world premiere of *ESPERANZA RISING*, a poetic tale of a young girl's triumph over adversity based on the popular book by [Pam Muñoz Ryan](#).

[ESPERANZA RISING](#) runs **May 2 through 18, 2025**, at the Marcus Performing Arts Center's Todd Wehr Theater. **Tickets are available now on [FirstStage.org](#).**

Set in the turbulent 1930s, two young storytellers, with the help of an ensemble of actors, take the stage and begin to weave the tale of Esperanza — a wealthy Mexican girl whose privileged existence is shattered when tragedy strikes, and she and her mother must flee to California. Forced to work in a migrant labor camp, Esperanza must learn to rise above her difficult circumstances and discover what she's truly made of.

“Our Todd Wehr season concludes with an exhilarating world premiere from our [First Stage's Amplify Reading Series](#),” said Jeff Frank, First Stage artistic director. “Playwright-in-residence [Alvaro](#)

[Saar Rios](#) has crafted a nimble version of the story with two storytellers welcoming us into the world of the modern classic novel by Pam Muñoz Ryan magically lifted by the music of composer Dinorah Marquez. The importance of hope and the power of family resonate deeply as the storytellers guide us through Esperanza's loss of her home and her journey to make a new life.”

ESPERANZA RISING is sponsored by REV Group, Inc. and is supported in part by a grant from the Milwaukee Arts Board and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

The show runs approximately 75 minutes, including a brief intermission. Recommended for families with young people ages 7-17 and theater lovers of all ages. This production's [Pay What You Choose Performance](#) is on Friday, May 9 at 7:00 p.m., the [Sensory Friendly Performance](#) is on Saturday, May 17 at 3:30 p.m., and the [Sign Language Interpreted Performance](#) is on Sunday, May 18 at 3:30 p.m.



Creative Team

Director ... Michelle Lopez-Rios
Scenic Designer ... Lisa Schlenker
Assistant Scenic Designer ... Kylee Hennes
Costume Designer ... Jazmin Aurora Madina
Lighting Designer ... Noele Stollmack
Sound Designer ... Sarah Ramos
Stage Manager ... Kelly L. Schwartz*
Assistant Stage Manager ... Beck Trumbull

Adult Performers

Mama ... Ashley Rodriguez*
Abuelita / Hortensia, Laura Crotte*
Alfonso / Papa ... David Flores
Understudy for Mama ... Elsa Scardino
Understudy for Abuelita / Hortensia ... Emily Harris
Understudy for Alfonso / Papa ... Adrian Feliciano

Young Performer Cast

Dream Cast

Esperanza ... Isabel Scardino
Miguel ... Speedy Schultz
Isabel ... Jade Herrera
Marta ... Lis Rodriguez
Storyteller 1 ... Ellie Gutierrez
Storyteller 2 ... Fiona Castillo

Young Performer Cast

Hope Cast

Esperanza ... Miranda Rose
Miguel ... Thomas Alberto Bastardo
Isabel ... Aria Martinez
Marta ... Erin E. Frailing
Storyteller 1 ... Lucia Harris
Storyteller 2 ... Eleanor Dysart

**Appearing through an Agreement between First Stage and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

Don't miss out on DOG MAN: THE MUSICAL coming soon for one weekend only, May 3 - 4! Find tickets and additional information at www.firststage.org/2024-2025-Season.

For additional information about the 2024-2025 season and to order tickets, please go to firststage.org or call (414) 267-2961.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: [Download media assets and additional production information](#)

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About First Stage

Founded in 1987, First Stage is one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families, and a driving force behind the creation of the best and most innovative plays for family audiences, theater training programs for young people, and education initiatives for its schools and community. First Stage ensures that all programming is not only accessible to its community but that it is reflective of the community it serves.

First Stage produces plays that honor the young person's point of view, include diverse and traditionally underrepresented voices, and inspire meaningful conversations. First Stage has presented more than 70 world premiere productions that address important subject matters relevant to today's youth. The Theater Academy is one of the nation's largest high-impact theater training programs for young people (3-18 years old). Through a challenging curriculum taught by professional teaching artists, the Academy nurtures life skills through stage skills and includes the Next Steps Program that tailors Theater Academy classes to the needs of young people on the autism spectrum and with other developmental disabilities. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education Programs cleverly blend theater activities with standard curriculum—allowing more than 10,000 students annually to learn traditional academic subjects through creativity and self expression.

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). For more information, visit firststage.org.