



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**First Stage's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual  
MAKE BELIEVE BALL  
Saturday, February 24, 2024**  
*-Milwaukee's premier black-tie event for the entire family-*

**Milwaukee, WI – January 18, 2024** – First Stage, one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families, will host its 30<sup>th</sup> annual **Make Believe Ball** on **Saturday, February 24, 2024** for the first time in the Grand Ballroom at Milwaukee's renowned luxury hotel **The Pfister Hotel**. This unique fundraising event welcomes attendees of all ages and offers an exciting opportunity for the entire family to get dressed up and shine their brightest. With an event theme centered around Greek mythology in conjunction with First Stage's upcoming production of [THE LIGHTNING THIEF: The Percy Jackson Musical](#), the twelve Greek deities that sit atop Mount Olympus – Zeus, Poseidon, Ares, Aphrodite, Hera, Demeter, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Hephaestus, Hermes, Dionysus – beckon First Stage families and supporters to join them at The Pfister for an unforgettable, fun-filled black-tie event.

In celebration of this special 30<sup>th</sup> Make Believe Ball anniversary, leaders from throughout First Stage's history will speak at the event including Founder **Rob Goodman**, Immediate-Past Managing Director **Betsy Corry** and new Managing Director **Daniel Grambow**. This anniversary event will be gilded in gold and feature activities for the whole family, a silent auction as large as a Titan, an enticing raffle, live auction, a 360° photo booth, nectar, ambrosia, festive dancing as well as an incredible performance by First Stage Young Performers. Attendees at the event will also have an opportunity to test their luck and honor the gods with a visit to Dionysus' Living Wall. The team at The Pfister Hotel have created a [First Stage exclusive Make Believe Ball menu](#). To make sure the evening is truly magical, chariots, (cars!), will be parked by valet.

For thirty years, First Stage has brought together families, donors, community members and artists at its annual Make Believe Ball to celebrate their three pillars – professional Theater Productions, unparalleled Theater Academy training and dynamic Theater in Education programming. These pillars define First Stage’s mission of transforming lives through theater and through them they serve more than 100,000 people annually.

**Registration:** Individual Tickets to attend this event are **\$200** each for adults, **\$100** each for teens and **\$50** each for children. **New this year:** Honor Dionysus and support the arts by sponsoring a First Stage staff member or adult actor’s attendance at the event for **\$100**.

To register for the event, please go to: [First Stage Make Believe Ball reservation](#)

*Please note: Reservation prices will increase by \$15 on January 22, 2024.*

**Family and Corporate Sponsorship Tables:** Please join First Stage on this exciting journey by becoming a sponsor of this signature event. Family and Corporate Sponsorship Tables are available for a limited time! To sponsor a table at this memorable event, please complete [this form](#), and return it to First Stage by **February 1, 2024**. For questions or additional information, please get in touch with Elizabeth Anderson at 414-267-2935 or [eanderson@firststage.org](mailto:eanderson@firststage.org).

The 2024 Make Believe Chairs are **Anne** and **Ben Swoboda**. The Committee includes: Monica Arnstein, Jennifer Burfeind, Ronda Davis, Nicole Eull, Katie Foy, Julie Gilpin, Laura Hirano, Marlee Jansen, Stacy Madson, Maggie Marks, Mary Mayne, Piper Plummer Mehigan, Meredith Pence, Melissa Radtke, Julia Westphal and Heather Whitmill.

To see photos from the 2023 Make Believe Ball, please view the Google drive below:

[drive.google.com/drive/folders/12n8jiWN-B85NbuCk\\_7myc6kb7EooeVDo](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12n8jiWN-B85NbuCk_7myc6kb7EooeVDo)

To learn more about First Stage and its 2023/24 productions, please visit: [firststage.org](http://firststage.org) or call **(414) 267-2961**.

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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 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 autistic young people. 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 ensures that all programming is not only accessible to its community but that it is reflective of the community it serves. In order to do that, First Stage relies on its community of donors. With an annual operating budget of \$5 million, more than half of First Stage's revenue comes from generous contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, government sources and the United Performing Arts Fund. Join First Stage's community of donors with [a contribution today](#) and transform lives through theater.

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)

### **The Pfister Hotel**

Built in 1893, The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee has been a hotel icon for well over a century. As one of the best hotels in Milwaukee and the Midwest, it's located near the historic Third Ward and continues to celebrate a grand tradition of gracious service and impeccable style. From the moment guests arrive they'll notice the extraordinary architecture inside and out punctuated by a welcoming ambiance from staff and fellow guests alike. [thepfisterhotel.com](http://thepfisterhotel.com)