



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Stage presents the triumphant return of **THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS**

-A fun, family-friendly world premiere musical about friendship, bravery and teamwork-

Milwaukee, WI – February 15, 2022 – First Stage is delighted to announce that its next mainstage production will be THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, a world premiere co-commission with **Oregon Children’s Theatre**, which originally premiered in March of 2020. The production features clever, original music from classic rock to dance pop as well as fantastical costumes, sets and puppets that will entertain the entire family. Based on the bestselling book by **Drew Daywalt** with illustrations by **Adam Rex**, First Stage Resident Playwright **John Maclay** wrote the book and lyrics and **Eric Nordin** wrote the music and lyrics. Choreography is by First Stage alum **Molly Rhode** and popular Milwaukee actor **Kelly Doherty** will direct. Kelly made her First Stage directing debut when the play premiered in 2020, but that run was cut short due to the pandemic. Kelly, along with the creative team of THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS and all of First Stage, is eager to share this delightful production and its infectious joy with audience members once again.

In THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, three fierce warriors return to the stage for a rematch after their brief battle was cut short in March 2020. From the Kingdom of Backyard came Rock, from the Empire of Mom’s Home Office came Paper, and from a messy village in the Junk Drawer Realm came Scissors. They were the strongest, smartest and fastest in all the land. Though they searched far and wide for worthy opponents, no one could beat them . . . until they met each other and a musical battle royale began to see who would come out on top! Sponsored by **Molitor Foundation**. *Performance run time is approximately 60 minutes, with no intermission. Suggested for families with young people ages 4+.*

THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS runs **March 5 – April 3, 2022** at the Marcus Center's Todd Wehr Theater, located at 929 N. Water Street in downtown Milwaukee. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased in person at the Marcus Center Box Office at 929 N. Water Street, by phone at (414) 273-7206 or online at firststage.org.

Director **Kelly Doherty** had this to say about the play: "On the surface, THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS seems to be a kooky musical about a bunch of inanimate objects singing, dancing and battling each other in some very ridiculous and over-the-top scenarios. And, it is a kooky musical about all of that, but it really is so much more. It's about friendship, bravery, teamwork and overcoming challenges. . . . My hope is that audiences will walk away from this show with a smile on their face, and the realization that it is good to surround yourself with people who not only love you for who you are, but who also challenge you to be the best version of yourself."

Artistic Director **Jeff Frank** added: "Clever, funny, raucous and joyful – just a few of the words that come to mind for this world premiere musical returning to First Stage. **John Maclay** and **Eric Nordin** combined their talents to bring the irreverent humor of author **Drew Daywalt** to the stage in glorious musical form. In their search for individual glory, our heroes discover that healthy competition and friendships are perhaps the greatest glory of all."

BIOGRAPHIES

Drew Daywalt (Author) has been creating escapist fantasy, horror and comedy since his childhood in Ohio. With a BFA in creative writing from Emerson College in Boston in 1992, Drew set off to Hollywood where he wrote for Disney and Universal on *Timon & Pumba*, *Buzz Lightyear* and *Woody Woodpecker*. He also wrote the Emmy-nominated animated series *The Wacky World of Tex Avery*. His first trip into live action landed him studio screenwriting and directing work with such Hollywood luminaries as Lawrence Bender, Tony Scott and Jerry Bruckheimer. In 2013, Daywalt's debut picture book, *The Day the Crayons Quit*, spent a year on the NYT Bestseller List at #1, and remains on the list to this day, over five years later. The sequel book, *The Day the Crayons Came Home*, also spent a year as a NYT Bestseller and his third book, *The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors* is a NYT Bestseller as well. Daywalt has also written a *Star Wars* book for LucasFilm Publishing, called *BB-8 on the Run*. His books, *Sleepy the Goodnight Buddy* and *The Epic Adventures of Huggie and Stick* have both been recently released to rave reviews and two national book tours. He has received 65 awards for his children's writing, including the coveted E.B. White Read Aloud Award and the *Time Magazine* Top 100 Best Children's Books of All Time.

John Maclay (Book and Lyrics) is a playwright who specializes in adaptation for Theatre for Young Audiences. In addition to his latest, THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS (with fabulous composer Eric Nordin), his plays and musicals include: GOOSEBUMPS THE MUSICAL: PHANTOM OF THE AUDITORIUM (with Danny Abosch); GERONIMO STILTON: MOUSE IN SPACE, JUST A LITTLE CRITTER MUSICAL (with Brett Ryback); NANCY DREW AND HER BIGGEST CASE EVER (with Jeff Frank); ANATOLE (with Lee Becker and James Valcq); a new version of ROBIN

HOOD (with Joe Foust) and NATE THE GREAT (with Brett Ryback). Upcoming projects include ANDROMEDA AND THE TRIALS OF HERCULES (with Joe Foust). Prior to leaving to pursue writing full-time, John proudly served in various leadership roles at First Stage, one of the America's largest and most respected theaters for young audiences. John has worked with First Stage in one form or other since 2000, has directed or appeared in more than 25 First Stage productions (from classics to world premieres) as well as having produced more than 50 productions for the First Stage high school programs. His work as an actor or director has also been seen at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Milwaukee Shakespeare Company, Defiant Theatre, Bunny Gumbo, Bialystock and Bloom, Skylight Music Theatre and more. He also teaches theater at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Eric Nordin (Music and Lyrics) is a multiple award-winning playwright, composer, music director and pianist and has made his artistic home in Portland, Oregon since 2004 at Oregon Children's Theatre. Recent original pieces for the theater include THE SNOWSTORM (2015) and JOHN HUGHES HIGH: THE 1980'S TEEN MUSICAL (2018). In addition to his writing credits, Eric has also had the enormous pleasure of music directing recent Oregon Children's Theatre productions such as GOOSEBUMPS: THE MUSICAL and PETE THE CAT.

Kelly Doherty (Director), a familiar face to Milwaukee audiences, moved to Milwaukee after graduating from UW-Whitewater with a BFA in Theatre Performance. Having appeared onstage as Agatha Trunchbull (Roald Dahl's MATILDA The Musical) and Deb (ELF – The Musical) at First Stage, she is filled with joy to be directing THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS once again after it was prematurely closed back in 2020. She has appeared onstage with Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Northern Sky Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Opera Theatre and Next Act Theatre. Some favorites include Bodey (LOVELY SUNDAY FOR CREVE CEUEUR), Trunchbull (MATILDA), Williamina (SILENT SKY), Gangster 2 (KISS ME, KATE) and to her knowledge she has never been cast as an ingénue. When not in the theater, she enjoys watching made-for-TV romantic comedies and singing to her cats.

Jeff Schaetzke (Music Director/Director of Artistic Operations) is grateful for a long history at First Stage as a director, teacher, music director and actor, dating back to playing Romeo in 1996. Most recently, Jeff directed the smash hit ELF – The Musical, MATILDA The Musical and THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER: THE MUSICAL. Other First Stage favorites include THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE, SPOOKLEY THE SQUARE PUMPKIN THE MUSICAL, LOVABYE DRAGON, RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER™: THE MUSICAL, ELLA ENCHANTED; BIG NATE: THE MUSICAL; BIG FISH (having also appeared as Edward Bloom); BIG, THE MUSICAL and many others. Jeff enjoys leading the Young Company trip to American Players Theatre and directing several Company Class productions. A lifelong Milwaukeean, Jeff has enjoyed working with many Milwaukee theaters, including playing Father in Skylight Music Theatre's production of VIOLET, and directing music for the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Skylight Music Theatre, Carroll University, UWM and Marquette University. Other credits: Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's THE DALY NEWS, two seasons at American Players Theatre and a 25-year relationship at Dominican High School. Jeff is a 2014 inductee into the Wisconsin Theatre Directors Hall of Fame, and a four-time Outstanding Musical Award Winner at the Overture Center's

TOMMY/JERRY Awards. He's a proud graduate of North Central College and the Professional Theatre Training Program at UW-Milwaukee. Jeff is celebrating 27 years of marriage to patient wife, Sheila, and he's a proud father to Amelia, Jeremy and Adelaide.

Molly Rhode (Choreographer) adores creating dances for John Maclay musicals and is thrilled to work with so many good friends on this production. A former Theater Academy student and young performer, Molly always loves returning to First Stage. She was last seen as Mrs. Wormwood in MATILDA The Musical. Past directing projects include 2019's THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER: THE MUSICAL, NEWSIES at Skylight Music Theatre and DAD'S SEASON TICKETS at Northern Sky Theatre, where she is also the Associate Artistic Director. Molly loves working on new plays, and she will be directing the world premiere of James DeVita's THE AMAZING LEMONADE GIRL up next in the Todd Wehr Theater.

ADULT CAST

Austin Nelson, Jr. (Paper); **Rick Pendzich**, Member of Actors' Equity Association, (Rock); **Karen Estrada**, Member of Actors' Equity Association, (Scissors); **Sydney Kirkegaard** (Clothespin/Roll of Tape in Plastic Dispenser/Printer); **Jonathon Gideon** (Understudy for Austin Nelson, Jr. and Rick Pendzich) and **Leah Gawel** (Understudy for Karen Estrada and Sydney Kirkegaard).

YOUNG PERFORMER CASTS

Young Performer roles are double cast. Young Performers in the Trail Mix Cast include: **Max Larson** (Milwaukee) as Announcer; **Aiden Toth** (Milwaukee) as Trail Mix/Printer/Ensemble; **Daisha Lafford** (Milwaukee) as Peach/Printer/Ensemble; **Rebekah Michel** (Waterford) as Chicken Nugget/Printer/Ensemble; **Costello Mylott** (Milwaukee) as Trail Mix/Printer/Ensemble; **Sailor Ames** (Brookfield) as Trail Mix/Printer/Chicken Nugget/Ensemble; **Greta Carlson** (Fox Point) as Trail Mix/Printer/Ensemble; **Vivian Madson** (West Allis) as Chicken Nugget/Printer/Ensemble and **Evie Patrick** (Whitefish Bay) as Chicken Nugget/Printer/Ensemble.

Young Performers in the Chicken Nugget Cast include: **Eloise Field** (Oconomowoc) as Announcer; **Abram Nelson** (Whitefish Bay) Trail Mix/Printer/Ensemble; **Naima Gaines** (Milwaukee) as Peach/Printer/Ensemble; **Josephine Van Slyke** (Milwaukee) as Chicken Nugget/Printer/Ensemble; **Kyra Mathias** (Oconomowoc) as Trail Mix/Printer/Ensemble; **Annie Sturtz** (Waukesha) as Trail Mix/Printer/Chicken Nugget/Ensemble; **Ryan Bennett** (Mequon) as Trail Mix/Printer/Ensemble; **Lucy Irwin** (Elm Grove) as Chicken Nugget/Printer/Ensemble and **Eloise Bejma** (Shorewood) as Chicken Nugget/Printer/Ensemble.

The Artistic Staff for **THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS** includes: **Kelly Doherty** (Director); **Molly Rhode** (Choreographer); **Jeff Schaetzke** (Music Director); **Arnold Bueso** (Scenic Designer); **Jason Fassl, USAA**, (Lighting Designer); **Matt Whitmore** (Sound Designer);

Brandon Kirkham (Costume and Puppet Designer); **Melissa L. Wanke**, Member of Actors' Equity Association, (Production Stage Manager) and **Emily Marie Wilke** (Assistant Stage Manager).

Tickets start at \$25 – Tickets may be purchased at firststage.org or through the Marcus Center Box Office, in person at 929 N. Water Street in downtown Milwaukee or by phone (414) 273-7206 or toll free at (888) 612-3500. The number for TDD (for deaf and hard of hearing patrons) is (414) 273-3080.

COVID Protocols: First Stage COVID safety protocols and updates can be viewed here: [firststage.org/covid-19-safety-protocols/ - performances](https://firststage.org/covid-19-safety-protocols/-performances)

Visual Assets: Production Photos and b-roll from First Stage's 2020 production of THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS can be found here: drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fuW9BgWC5f3Uc8QCRSxY-OPNoNm9FPd

Digital Playbill: To view the digital playbill please visit: firststage.org/about-us/media-center/playbills/. The digital playbill includes artistic/actor/designer bios and will be posted a few days before the production opens.

Special events for THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

Pay What You Choose Performance: Friday, March 11, 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/

Sensory Friendly Performance: Saturday, March 12, 2022 at 4 p.m.

A Sensory Friendly Performance with accommodations for families with children on the autism spectrum will take place on Saturday, March 12 at 4 p.m. Sensory accommodations include lower sound, house lights up, a quiet area staffed by an educator experienced with the care of students on the autism spectrum and other developmental differences, and more. Tickets for Sensory Friendly Performances are \$10. Order by phone at **(414) 267-2961**, weekdays 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. to reserve tickets. To learn more visit: firststage.org/plan-your-visit/sensory-friendly-performances/.

ASL Interpreted Performance: Sunday, April 3, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

This performance will be sign language interpreted for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Assistive listening devices are also available at the Todd Wehr Theater. To learn more visit: firststage.org/plan-your-visit/accessibility/sign-language-interpreted-performances/

FACT SHEET

About: THE LEGEND OF ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

By **Drew Daywalt**

Illustrated by **Adam Rex**

Book and Lyrics by **John Maclay**, Music and Lyrics by **Eric Nordin**

Directed by **Kelly Doherty**

Choreography by **Molly Rhode**

A world premiere co-commission with Oregon Children's Theatre

Location: Marcus Center's Todd Wehr Theater, 929 N. Water Street, Milwaukee

Live Performances: March 5 – April 3, 2022

Description: These three fierce warriors return to the stage for a rematch after their brief battle was cut short in March 2020. From the Kingdom of Backyard came Rock, from the Empire of Mom's Home Office came Paper, and from a messy village in the Junk Drawer Realm came Scissors. They were the strongest, smartest and fastest in all the land. Though they searched far and wide for worthy opponents, no one could beat them . . . until they met each other and a musical battle royale began to see who would come out on top! *Performance run time is approximately 60 minutes, with no intermission. Suggested for families with young people ages 4+.*

Performances:

- Saturday, March 5 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m. – *OPENING DAY*
- Sunday, March 6 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. – *PAY WHAT YOU CHOOSE PERFORMANCE*
- Saturday, March 12 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m. – *SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE at 4:00 p.m.*
- Sunday, March 13 at 1:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 18 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 19 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday, March 20 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 26 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday, March 27 at 1:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, April 2 at 1:00 & 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 3 at 1:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m. – *ASL INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE at 4:00 p.m.*

For more information, please visit firststage.org or call (414) 267-2961.

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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