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MEDIA ALERT

Name of Event: First Stage's 2023/24 season of the **Amplify Reading Series** continues with a play reading of **ESPERANZA RISING** adapted by **Alvaro Saar Rios**, from the popular book by **Pam Muñoz Ryan**, with original music by **Dinorah Marquez** and directed by **Michelle Lopez-Rios**.

Date, Time & Location: **Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m.**

[Milwaukee Youth Arts Center](#)

325 W. Walnut Street; Milwaukee, WI 53212

Amplify Reading Series description: The fourth season of First Stage's Amplify Reading Series continues with a reading of the inspiring play **ESPERANZA RISING** by First Stage Playwright in Residence **Alvaro Saar Rios** and with frequent collaborator and composer **Dinorah Marquez**. They combine their talents to bring a new fast-paced theatrical version of the powerful story to the stage, underscored with original music. This series is in support of First Stage's ongoing commitment to the development of new work, with an intentional focus on lifting voices of diverse playwrights and artists. To learn more about Amplify, please visit: [2023/24 Amplify Reading Series](#).

Play Description: 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. Set in the turbulent 1930s, and based on the popular book by Pam Muñoz Ryan, **ESPERANZA RISING** is a poetic tale of a young girl's triumph over adversity. *Suggested for adults, teens and children ages 7 – 9 and 10 – 12.*

Cost: These new play readings will be [Pay What You Choose](#) events held at the **Milwaukee Youth Arts Center**. Doors will open approximately one hour prior to each reading. A minimum suggested ticket price is \$10, but attendees may pay any amount they choose. Patrons are encouraged to arrive early and may pre-order tickets by phone at **(414) 267-2961**. [Learn more.](#)

Additional information: A talkback will follow each reading, allowing audiences opportunities to share their voices with the playwright and artists – helping shape the development of the plays and potential future productions at First Stage.

First Stage Artistic Director **Jeff Frank** shared some additional thoughts on this year’s Amplify Reading Series: “As we continue to expand our efforts to lift the voices of underrepresented playwrights and stories, it is especially exciting to me that all three Amplify readings this season will feature strong, young female protagonists. Our first Amplify offering, BIG CITY HARMONY, showed how Harmony navigated the transition from the reservation and the only life she had known to the big city of Milwaukee where she discovers her voice, her heritage and her destiny. Similarly, Esperanza is uprooted from her life and travels on a journey where she discovers a new depth of understanding of herself, her family and her world. Finally, Emily Song discovers her true power on her 12th birthday and uses her musical, magical powers to save the world. Collectively, we are so excited to hear feedback from our audiences on these new world premieres in process – all of which are slated to be part of our 2024/25 season at First Stage.”

Website: firststage.org

Phone: (414) 267-2961

*Please note: Titles are subject to change pending availability of rights.

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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