



CHILDREN'S THEATER • INSCHOOL EDUCATION • THEATER ACADEMY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**First Stage Children's Theater brings Eleanor Estes' award-winning children's novel to life on stage in THE HUNDRED DRESSES starting March 25**

Based on the award-winning children's novel by Eleanor Estes

Adapted by Mary Hall Surface

Directed by John Maclay

**Todd Wehr Theater, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts  
March 25 – April 16, 2011**

This play is most appreciated by adults, teens and children ages seven and older.

Milwaukee, Wis. (January 26, 2011) – First Stage presents THE HUNDRED DRESSES, based on the award-winning children's novel by Eleanor Estes. THE HUNDRED DRESSES runs March 25 through April 16, 2011 at the Todd Wehr Theater in the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St. in downtown Milwaukee. Tickets can be purchased in person at the Marcus Center Box Office at 929 N. Water St., by phone at (414) 273-7206 or online at [www.FirstStage.org](http://www.FirstStage.org).

Set in the 1930s, Wanda Petronski, a young Polish immigrant has just moved to a new town only to face a multitude of obstacles. Trying to fit in with the other girls, Wanda proclaims she has one hundred dresses, and the teasing begins. Maddie, fearing ridicule herself, fails to defend the new girl in school. When she finds out the truth, Maddie recognizes the consequences of bullying and finds an unlikely friend.

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“This play is fun and exceptionally energized, but most of all it is truly important,” said John Maclay, First Stage’s associate artistic director and director of this production.

“THE HUNDRED DRESSES has a message that I think every young person should see and hear. The story, filled with intrigue and mystery, takes us on one girl’s journey toward discovering the truth about Wanda Petronski – herself, and the importance of actively doing the right thing,” Maclay continued.

**Director John Maclay** has been working with First Stage in one form or other since 2000 and has had his current position since 2003. Most recently, John directed AESOP’S FABLES, JUNIE B. JONES AND A LITTLE MONKEY BUSINESS, HOW I BECAME A PIRATE, WITNESS, FERDINAND THE BULL, GREEN GABLES and THE SHAKESPEARE STEALER. John has also directed productions for the Young Company, First Stage’s pre-professional training program for high school students, including ROMEO AND JULIET, MACBETH, PETER AND THE WOLF, THE BODY OF CHRISTOPHER CREED and A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM. As an actor, John has appeared at First Stage in MY SON PINOCCHIO, A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD, THE QUILTMAKER’S GIFT, PERSEUS BAYOU, HOLES and MIKE MULLIGAN AND HIS STEAM SHOVEL. In addition to working at First Stage, John serves as an adjunct assistant professor of theatre with the Carthage College.

**Author Eleanor Estes** (May 9, 1906 – July 15, 1988) was an American children’s author born in West Haven, Conn., and worked as a children’s librarian in New Haven, Conn. and New York. Estes’ writing career began following a case of tuberculosis. Bedridden while recovering, Estes began writing down some of her childhood memories, which would later turn into full-length children’s books. Estes’ book “Ginger Pye” (1951) won the Newbery Medal, and three of her other books (“The Middle Moffat,” “Rufus M.,” and

**First Stage brings THE HUNDRED DRESSES from page to stage March 25/add two**

“The Hundred Dresses”) were chosen as Newbery Honor books. She also received the Certificate of Award for Outstanding Contribution to Children’s Literature and was nominated for the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. By the time of her death at age 82, Estes had written 19 children's books and one novel for adults.

The adult actor cast of THE HUNDRED DRESSES includes **Mary MacDonald Kerr** (member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers, as Shelley Reeves), **Bo Johnson** (member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers, as Mr. Petronski/Mr. Svenson) and **Sheri Williams-Pannel** (as Miss Mason).

Young performer roles are double-cast. The young performers in the “Flash Gordon” cast of THE HUNDRED DRESSES are **Ben Braun** (as Willie) from Franklin; **Kendal Briscoe** (as Peggy) from Waukesha; **Max Mullen** (as Jacob) from Muskego; **Emily Newmark** (as Maddie) from Janesville; **Katherine Pollnow** (as Wanda) from Kewaskum; **Sebastian Weigman** (as Jack) from Oconomowoc; and **Kendall White** (as Cecile) from Cedarburg.

The young performers in the “Buck Rogers” cast of THE HUNDRED DRESSES are **Elliott Brotherhood** (as Willie) and **Hannah Engel** (as Cecile) from Mequon; **Benjamin Cohn** (as Jack) from Bayside; **Marion Frank** (as Maddie) from Wauwatosa; **Andrew Kluck** (as Jacob) from Brookfield; **Lizzie Porter** (as Peggy) from Milwaukee; and **Jelena Vorkapich** (as Wanda) from Greendale.

The Artistic Staff for THE HUNDRED DRESSES includes: **Steve Barnes** (Scenic

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Designer), **Pam Rehberg** (Costume Designer), **Jason Fassl, USAA** (Lighting Designer), **Joshua Horvath** (Sound Designer), **Sarah Deming-Henes** (Stage Manager, member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers) and **Hannah Binish** (Assistant Stage Manager).

**Tickets for THE HUNDRED DRESSES** start at \$11.50. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.FirstStage.org](http://www.FirstStage.org) or through the Marcus Center box office, in person at 929 N. Water St. 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.

**Performance dates:** THE HUNDRED DRESSES opens Friday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m. Other performances are held: Saturday, March 26 at 7:00 p.m.; Sunday, March 27 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 2 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Sunday, April 10 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.; Saturday, April 16 at 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.

### **Special events for THE HUNDRED DRESSES**

**Friday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m.:** Following the opening night performance, First Stage invites all patrons to attend the Opening Night Reception at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, 325 W. Walnut St., approximately one mile from the Marcus Center. Patrons will have the opportunity to meet and mingle with the cast and crew of THE HUNDRED DRESSES while enjoying refreshments, courtesy of First Stage.

**Opening weekend: Friday, March 25 through Sunday, March 27:** Immediately

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**First Stage brings THE HUNDRED DRESSES from page to stage March 25/add four**

following our opening weekend performances, a drawing for a \$20 gift certificate to Rainbow Booksellers will be held. Gift certificates may be redeemed for a book purchase at the First Stage merchandise counter in the lobby during the show, or at the Rainbow Booksellers location at 5704 West Vliet St. in Milwaukee. One winner at each performance will be selected.

**FACT SHEET**

**Theater:** Todd Wehr Theater, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St., downtown Milwaukee

**Dates:** Friday, March 25 through Sunday, April 16, 2011

**Description:** Would you have the courage to stand up for someone even if it meant you might be picked on, too? That's the question Maddie Reeves faces when Wanda Petronski moves to town and is teased for claiming to have 100 beautiful dresses at home...despite wearing the same one to school every day. Follow Maddie's personal journey to see if she can muster the strength to defend her new friend, and maybe even find out what's really in Wanda's closet.

**Performances:**

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Saturday, April 2 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.  
Sunday, April 10 at 1:00 & 3:30 p.m.  
Saturday, April 16 at 3:30 & 7:00 p.m.

**Ticket prices:** Start at \$11.50.

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**First Stage brings THE HUNDRED DRESSES from page to stage March 25/add  
five**

**Tickets and information:** Call (414) 273-7206 or online at [www.FirstStage.org](http://www.FirstStage.org).

First Stage Children's Theater is Milwaukee's premier, professional family theater. Founded in 1987, the mission of the company is to provide professional theater productions for young people and their families that engage, enlighten and entertain, Theater Academy training that fosters life skills through stage skills and dynamic in-school education programs that provide learning through theater. First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education and Americans for the Arts, as well as Theatre Wisconsin and Milwaukee Arts Partners, and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF).

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