



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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First Stage Children's Theater presents

## **THE DINOSAUR PLAY**

By Steve and Kathy Hotchner

Directed by Jeff Frank

**February 14 – March 1, 2009**

**Main Stage Hall, Milwaukee Youth Arts Center**

*This play is part of First Stage's First Steps series and is designed to introduce children ages three to six to the theater in a fun, interactive environment.*

Milwaukee, Wisconsin (January 13, 2009) – Audience participation is key in helping solve a pre-historic dilemma in First Stage Children's Theater's production of THE DINOSAUR PLAY, which runs February 14 through March 1 at Main Stage Hall in the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, 325 Walnut Street in downtown Milwaukee. The play is part of First Stage's First Steps series, specifically geared toward younger children and their families.

First Stage's THE DINOSAUR PLAY takes the young audience back to a world millions and millions of years ago into the last age of the dinosaurs. In front of the young audience is a magnificent dinosaur egg, gently tapping out a call for help. Banding together, the children work hard to interpret just what the egg is saying in an effort to help it hatch. When danger lurks, the children step in to save the hatchling, Tank the triceratops, and the young dinosaur family from a distant, but menacing tyrannosaurus rex.

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First Stage presents **THE DINOSAUR PLAY** /add one

THE DINOSAUR PLAY appeals to the adventurer and explorer in all of us, according to Jeff Frank, who directs the show. “Whether we are three or 93, we all enjoy a good mystery. In DINOSAUR we wonder, ‘What is in the giant egg?’ ‘What will happen if and when it hatches?’ Frank explains that in this production, the audience becomes part of the adventure. “The audience must help the Guide navigate through the world of this play, ultimately helping our heroes survive all of the challenges they encounter.” As part of the evolution of the First Steps series, the artistic staff at First Stage continues to explore ways to connect in even more meaningful ways with the young audience. “In this production,” explains Frank, “the audience will help with advice, cheering – and some audience members will even be asked to help out on stage as the Guide searches for clues to the mystery of the giant egg.”

This is the second successful season for the First Steps series, according to Rob Goodman, First Stage’s managing director. “In terms of ticket sales, we are delighted to be meeting our goals for the second consecutive season. More importantly, though, we continue to successfully introduce our youngest audiences to the theater through this series of fun and imaginative productions.”

**ARTISTIC STAFF**

Director / Artistic Director / Sound Designer / Scenic Designer	Jeff Frank
Costume Designer	Kristina Van Slyke
Lighting Designer	Jared Clarkin
Stage Manager	Maria Petrella

**ADULT ACTORS**

Tank	Rick Pendzich
Guide	Beth Mulkerron
Apatosaurus	Allison Forbes

First Stage presents **THE DINOSAUR PLAY** /add two

**YOUNG ACTORS**

Egg

Mari Duckler  
Mequon

Mary Nick  
Wauwatosa

**PERFORMANCE DATES**

THE DINOSAUR PLAY opens Saturday, February 14, in the Main Stage Hall at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center. The 1:00 p.m. performance on Sunday, March 1, will be interpreted for deaf and hard of hearing patrons. The full schedule of family performances is:

<b>Saturdays</b>	February 14, 21 & 28	11 a.m. & 1 p.m.
<b>Sundays</b>	February 15, 22 & March 1	11 a.m. & 1 p.m.

**TICKET INFORMATION**

Ticket prices for THE DINOSAUR PLAY are:

**Adults:** \$12

**Children (12 and under):** \$9

Tickets may be purchased by calling our Patron Services Manager at (414) 267-2961, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or online at [www.FirstStage.org](http://www.FirstStage.org).

**ARTISTIC STAFF BIOGRAPHIES**

**Jeff Frank** (Wauwatosa) – Director / Artistic Director / Sound Director / Scenic Designer  
Jeff has been First Stage’s artistic director since February 2003. Previously he had served as education director/associate artistic director. Jeff is a native Wisconsinite who earned a BFA in theater from UW–Whitewater and went on to the University of Utah, earning an MFA in child drama. Over the past eleven seasons Jeff has directed many First Stage productions. Among his favorites are: TOM SAWYER, SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, LILLY’S PURPLE PLASTIC PURSE, A LITTLE HOUSE CHRISTMAS, THE HOBBIT, A MIDNIGHT CRY, PERSEUS BAYOU, A CHRISTMAS STORY, THE GIVER, 12 DAYS – A MILWAUKEE CHRISTMAS and SLEEPING BEAUTY.

**Kristina Van Slyke** (Milwaukee) – Costume Designer

Kristina has been part of the First Stage family for the past nine seasons. She has spent eight of those seasons as manager of the costume shop. This season she is designing costumes for the *First Steps* series. Past First Stage design credits include STONES OF WISDOM, TWO DONUTS, SIDEWAYS STORIES FROM WAYSIDE SCHOOL, MUFARO’S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS and LILLY’S PURPLE PLASTIC PURSE.

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**Jared Clarkin** (Milwaukee) – Lighting Designer

Jared has recently moved to Milwaukee from New York City where he was a production manager for Jazz at Lincoln Center. While there he had the opportunity to work with a wide range of artists including: Wynton Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, Don Henley, Billy Joel among others. Other credits include: production manager for the world premiere of Sam Shepard's THE GOD OF HELL, resident lighting designer onboard the Queen Elizabeth II, lighting director for the international tour of John Jasperse's GIANT EMPTY and technical director for Basil Twist's Symphonie Fantastique in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

**Maria Petrella** (Milwaukee) - Stage Manager

Maria is excited to be stage managing her first show at First Stage. A lover of children's books, she is honored to be able to help bring one to life. She has worked at various theatres including Next Act Theatre, American Players Theatre and the Florida Repertory Theatre doing various duties from scenic painting to honorary camp counselor.

**Christine Czerwinski** (Milwaukee) – Assistant Stage Manager

Christine is thrilled to be working at First Stage for the first time. She most recently served as assistant stage manager for LA BOHEME and THE PRODUCERS at The Skylight. Christine has worked at Milwaukee Shakespeare, Great River Shakespeare, Six Flags Great America and a summer at The Santa Fe Opera. Christine obtained her BA in theatre from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

**ACTOR BIOGRAPHIES**

**Rick Pendzich (South Milwaukee) – Tank**

Rick is excited to be returning to First Stage after previously appearing in GIGGLE, GIGGLE QUACK. Since graduating from UW-Whitewater, he has worked with many of Milwaukee's theaters including Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Shakespeare, In Tandem Theatre, Bialystock & Bloom, Nevermore Theatre and American Players Theatre. Rick's favorite roles include: Charlie Brown in YOU'RE A GOOD MAN CHARLIE BROWN, Stanley in BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS and Ferdinand in THE TEMPEST.

**Beth Mulkerron (Wauwatosa) – Guide**

Beth is honored to be working with First Stage Children's Theater again after previously appearing in GIGGLE, GIGGLE QUACK and A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD. Beth studied Musical Theatre at Cincinnati's Conservatory and received her BFA from Florida State. Career highlights include New York City's Off-Broadway musical REDHOOK, performing in concert with Davis Gaines and voiceover credits that include NBC's Ed. Additionally, Beth has performed in various performances at The Skylight or as Fay in Windfall Theatre's ANYONE CAN WHISTLE.

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**Alison Mary Forbes (Milwaukee) – Apatosaurus**

Alison is delighted to return to First Stage Children's Theater after appearing in CHARLOTTE'S WEB and THE QUILTMAKER'S GIFT. Alison has performed across the Midwest in theaters such as Milwaukee Shakespeare, In Tandem, Off the Wall, the Minnesota Centennial Showboat, the Illusion Theatre and the Margolis Brown Theatre Company. Favorite roles include Mollie in THE MOUSETRAP, Perdita in THE WINTER'S TALE and Sally in YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN. Alison holds a BA in theatre from the University of Minnesota and has taught for First Stage Theater Academy

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 the Theater Communications Group, 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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