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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**First Stage's Young Company presents a world premiere  
adaptation of Lois Lowry's GATHERING BLUE**

In collaboration with Marquette University

Based on the book by Lois Lowry  
Adapted for the stage by Eric Coble  
Script developed in partnership with Oregon Children's Theatre

Directed by Todd Denning

**Milwaukee, WI** – First Stage's Young Company presents a world premiere adaptation of Lois Lowry's GATHERING BLUE May 10 – May 19, 2013 at the Helfaer Theatre at Marquette University, located at 525 N. 13th Street, Milwaukee. This is the first fully-produced show to feature the Young Company, First Stage's advanced, pre-professional training program for high school students.

In a world where the weak are cast aside, Kira fears for her future as an orphan with a twisted leg. However, the all-powerful Council of Guardians spares her when they discover she is a gifted weaver and gives her a task that no other community member can do. While her talent keeps her alive and brings certain privileges, Kira soon realizes that she is surrounded by many mysteries and secrets. Join Kira in her quest to uncover the truth about her world and discover the places that exist beyond in this exciting production.

Director **Todd Denning** is thrilled to be back with First Stage after appearing in BIG, THE MUSICAL this season. He has acted in several other First Stage productions including PETER

PAN AND WENDY, A MIDNIGHT CRY, HOW I BECAME A PIRATE and U: BUG: ME. Todd is a theatre artist who lives and works in Milwaukee as an actor, director, teacher and fight choreographer. Todd received his M.F. A. in acting from the University of California – Irvine. Other regional acting credits include Utah Shakespeare, South Coast Repertory, Georgia Shakespeare, Tennessee Rep, PCPA Theaterfest, Willamette Rep, Optimist Theater and Milwaukee Shakespeare.

The cast Young Company cast of GATHERING BLUE includes **Jordan Horne** (as Thomas/Tender); **Rachel Kornetsky** (as Villager/Ensemble); **Gabrielle Laske** (Ragged Woman/Ensemble); **Hannah Obst** (as Vandara/Ensemble); **Andrew Oppmann** (as Chief Guardian/Singer); **Ashley Patin** (as Ragged Woman/Ensemble); **Christine Pollnow** (as Kira/Ensemble); **Ellen Sansone** (as Vandra/Ensemble); **Erin Stapleton** (as Kira/Ensemble) and **Kayla Tillisch** (as Katrina/Ensemble).

The Young Performer cast of GATHERING BLUE includes **Claire Holtebeck** (as Jo); **Isabella Lozier** (as Jo) and **Josh MacCudden** (as Matt).

The Marquette University cast of GATHERING BLUE includes **Tyler Frost** (as Jamison); **Hannah Klapperich-Mueller** (as Annabella); **Larry Lajewski** (as Christopher); **Jessica Trznadel** (as Katrina/Ensemble) and **Kyle Conner** will serve as the male understudy.

The Artistic Staff for GATHERING BLUE includes **Stephen Hudson-Mairet** (Scenic Designer); **Debra Krajec** (Costume Designer); **Ross Zentner** (Lighting Designer); **Matt Whitmore** (Sound Designer); **Kaitlyn Martin** (Assistant Stage Manager) and **Gena Davis** (Assistant Director).

The Young Company is First Stage Theater Academy's advanced, pre-professional training program. Students receive advanced actor training in the form of coursework, master classes and performance in Young Company productions and New Play Workshops. For more information visit [www.firststage.org/theateracademy](http://www.firststage.org/theateracademy)

**Tickets for GATHERING BLUE** are \$10. Tickets may be purchased at [www.firststage.org](http://www.firststage.org) or through the First Stage Box Office at (414) 267-2961. Seating is general admission.

Performances will be held in the Helfaer Theatre at Marquette University, 525 N. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Milwaukee.

**Performance dates:** GATHERING BLUE opens Friday, May 10 at 7:00 p.m.

Other performances are held: Saturday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m.; Sunday, May 12 at 3:30 p.m.;

Friday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, May 18 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 19 at 3:30 p.m.

**About First Stage**

Since 1987, First Stage touches hearts, engages minds, and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences for young people and families through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten, and entertain; unparalleled Theater Academy training that fosters life skills through stage skills; and dynamic Theater in Education programs that promote active learning in our schools and community. In 2012, First Stage was selected to participate in the Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Theatre Wisconsin, and Milwaukee Arts Partners, and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF).

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