

## '26-27 SEASON | YOUNG PERFORMER CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Our 2026-27 season will include the following titles, production dates and young performer casting needs:

### **Amplify New Play Readings**

*A part of World Premiere Wisconsin*

Indian Community School (ICS)/ Goodman

Staged readings of two new plays in process

Funded by a Grant from Forest County Potawatomi Foundation

Rehearsal Dates: TBA

Performance Dates: TBA

### **BIG CITY HARMONY**

By Ty Defoe

Directed by Johamy Morales

Harmony, a young Anishinaabe girl, moves from the reservation to the big city with her family, learning valuable lessons in her own culture as she navigates adventures while trying to make friends at a new school. Taking place in the future, Harmony shares the ability to shapeshift with her Grandmother Hazel and learns to speak the language of wolves aiming to release her own voice into the wild!

### **THE BARREN GROUNDS**

By Jeff Frank and Sharon McCune from the book by David A. Robertson

Directed by Johamy Morales

Morgan and Eli, two Indigenous children are brought together in a foster home in Winnipeg, Canada. Though their backgrounds are different, their struggles to adjust at their new home and school are similar. In an old attic under renovation, they discover a portal to another world where it is perpetual winter. They are befriended by Ochek, a leader of Misewa. Together with the help of a sassy squirrel, they embark on an adventure to retrieve the birds of spring and save Askí. Combines the fantasy of books like the Narnia series with the best of contemporary fiction for young adults.

**Rehearsal Dates:** TBA - Aiming from somewhere between July-October 2026

**Performance Dates:** TBA - Aiming from somewhere between July-October 2026

**Casting Needs: 6-7 Young Performers per cast (10-11 Young Performers Total)**

*Big City Harmony Casting Needs*

*NOTE: Harmony and her family are Anishinaabe, and we especially welcome performers with a connection to Anishinaabe or related nations. However, we warmly encourage young actors who identify as Indigenous from any tribal affiliation to audition.*

**HARMONY:** (8-12, female-identifying, Indigenous) A mischievous, curious, and fearless girl. Harmony loves skateboarding and climbing trees and deeply cares about taking care of the earth. She makes lots of mistakes, but that doesn't stop her from learning and having fun along the way. Harmony talks a little too much and loves her animals and family—especially her Grandma Hazel, with whom she shares the ability to shapeshift.

**FORREST:** (12-18, Male-identifying, Indigenous) Harmony's older brother. He loves his guitar, video games, and pizza. He doesn't say much but when he does, it's very deep.

**MAC:** (8-12, Any gender) Harmony's next-door neighbor. A bit on the nerdy-side. Admires Harmony and PB & J. Afraid of heights, water-bugs, and all things outdoors.

**SONG:** (8-12, Any gender) Harmony's classmate, genuinely curious about Harmony and her culture, but is also friends with Ashanti.

**ASHANTI:** (8-12, Any gender) Harmony's classmate, who seems to be intimidated by Harmony. Turns her ignorance into micro-aggressions and has a lot to learn.

*Barren Grounds Casting Needs*

*NOTE: We are prioritizing Indigenous representation for the roles of Morgan and Eli. We especially encourage youth who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, or who have lived experience within Indigenous communities, to audition. For characters where a specific nation is relevant to the story (e.g. Cree), we welcome actors from those or related communities, but all Indigenous youth are invited to consider these roles.*

**MORGAN:** (10-16, Female-identifying, Indigenous) Sharp-witted, independent, and guarded. A Cree girl who has been through multiple foster placements, Morgan is slow to trust, but fiercely loyal once she lets someone in. She's a deep thinker and strong observer, often expressing frustration or sarcasm as armor.

**ELI:** (8-13, Male-identifying, Indigenous) Quiet, artistic, and gentle. New to foster care, Eli is more optimistic than Morgan and copes through drawing. He's imaginative and open-hearted and sees the best in people—even when they're not showing it.

Goodman Theater

## **GO, DOG, GO! ¡VE PERRO ¡VE!**

Adapted for the stage by Allison Gregory and Steven Dietz

Based on the Classic Book "Go, Dog!" by P.D. Eastman

Music Composed by Michael Koerner

Spanish Translations by Ana Maria Campoy

"Do You Like My Hat?" Lyrics by Michael Koerner

Originally commissioned by Seattle Children's Theatre

¡VE PERRO VE! Received its world premiere production at Chicago Children's Theatre under Jacqueline Russel, Artistic Director

Directed by Michelle LoRicco

P. D. Eastman's classic book lands onstage with roller-skating, bike-riding, and scoot-scooting dogs! Over here a dog plays baseball; over there a dog prances about in a funny hat; everywhere dogs swim underwater, drive race cars to fiestas en los árboles, and speak - in both Spanish and English! Soon, you'll be singing along with this bilingual spectacle that makes no sense (and TOTAL sense), all at the same time!

**Rehearsal Dates:** Sept.8 - Oct. 2, 2026

Tues-Fri 4-8:30pm

Sat 12:30-8:30pm

Sun 10-6pm

\*Weekend rehearsals will be split into two rehearsal blocks-one for each cast of young performers

**Performance Dates:** Oct. 3 - Nov. 1, 2026

\*There will be two casts of young performers performing on alternating dates Tuesday through Sunday.

**Casting Needs: 5 Young Performers per Cast (10 young performers total)**

**GREEN DOG / BLACK & WHITE DOG:** (10+, any gender) Slow and steady wins the race. Things tend to go their way as the story goes along.

**RED DOG / BLACK & WHITE DOG:** (10+, any gender) Red dog doesn't know how to use a salt-shaker, but they are really good at catching baseballs!

**BLUE DOG / BLACK & WHITE DOG:** (10+, any gender) Imaginative. Brings the books to life—literally. Bonus with ukelele or banjo skills.

**YELLOW DOG / BLACK & WHITE DOG:** (10+, any gender) Yellow dog does not have a tree. They continue to be without a tree no matter how hard they try. But they get to hold up the sun! This actor should be good at physical comedy.

**HATTIE / SPOTTED DOG:** (10+, any gender) Hattie is a Pink Poodle wearing a lovely little Hat. She really wants to know if the audience likes her hat. Dance experience appreciated.

Todd Wehr Theater

## **DR. SEUSS'S HOW THE GRINCH WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS!**

Book and Lyrics by Timothy Mason

Music by Mel Marvin

Additional Music and Lyrics by Albert Hague, Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

Directed by Jeff Frank

For decades, the story of the mean, green Mister Grinch discovering the joy of Christmas has delighted both readers and viewers. And now, you have the opportunity to bring Dr. Seuss' adored classic to your stage.

Based on the iconic animated film and beloved children's book, Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas! features a book and lyrics by Timothy Mason and music by Mel Marvin. This duo expands on the timeless story, adding new songs that are bound to have everyone tapping their feet.

With a heart "two sizes too small," the Grinch despises the annual Christmas festivities of Who-ville from a solitary distance. Fed up, he carries out a plan to stop them once and for all, only to learn a lesson about opening his heart to the real meaning of Christmas.

**Rehearsal Dates:** Oct. 24 - Nov. 20, 2026

Tues-Fri 4-8:30pm

Sat 12:30-8:30pm

Sun 10-6pm

\*Weekend rehearsals will be split into two rehearsal blocks-one for each cast of young performers

**Performance Dates:** Nov. 21 - Dec. 27, 2026

\*There will be two casts of young performers performing on alternating dates Tuesday through Sunday.

**Casting Needs: 13 Young Performers per Cast (26 young performers total)**

**YOUNG MAX:** (12-18, Male-identifying) The younger version of the Grinch's faithful dog. Where Old Max remembers cynicism, Young Max lives in joy. Loyal, energetic, and impossibly optimistic, Young Max refuses to be brought down by the Grinch's gloom. He's full of physical humor and charm. **Vocal range top: F#4 | Vocal range bottom: Bb2**

**CINDY-LOU WHO:** (8-13, Female-identifying) The youngest member of the central Who family. Cindy-Lou has a gentle spirit, a big heart, and a strong sense of empathy. She sees through the Grinch's anger and connects with the goodness beneath. She should have a natural, unaffected presence and excellent vocal control. Excellent singer with clarity and warmth. Strong emotional connection and sincerity **Vocal range top: F5 | Vocal range bottom: A3**

**WHO YOUTH & ENSEMBLE ROLES:** (Ages 8-18, All and any gender) This joyful, high-energy ensemble plays the children and teens of Whoville, creating the colorful, whimsical world of Dr. Seuss. All ensemble members should be strong singers and movers, comfortable with stylized choreography and storytelling through character. Some performers will be assigned named or featured roles, such as:

**WHO CHILDREN - ANNIE, PUNKY, PHYLLIS, DANNY, SCALLOPS, BOO HOO:** (8-13) Playful, curious, and expressive children of Whoville. These characters help bring to life the bustling world of Christmas cheer. Featured solos and moments of comedy or pathos may be assigned during rehearsal.

**WHO TEENS -TRIXIE, AUNTIE WHO, RENO, TIMEY, BUZZ, PALM SPRINGS:** (13-18) These are stylized teen Who-characters with strong personalities and energy. Some may double as dance captains, featured singers, or comic scene partners. These roles often help transition between scenes and underscore group numbers with strong presence.

Todd Wehr Theater

## **WINNIE-THE-POOH: FOREVER FRIENDS**

Book by SCOTT SEIDL

Music by ALAN STEIN

Lyrics by SCOTT SEIDL, ALAN STEIN, and A.A. MILNE

Creative Development Associate: ROBERT PENOLA

Additional material by JEFF FRANK and MICHELLE LORICCO

From the stories of A.A. MILNE

Directed by Michelle LoRicco

### BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CHILDHOOD WONDER AND TIMELESS VALUES

WINNIE-THE-POOH: FOREVER FRIENDS is inspired by the beloved characters who, for generations, have helped us laugh, imagine, and grow. Rooted in the timeless stories of A. A. Milne and set in the heart of the Hundred Acre Wood, this new, playful, funny, and heart-warming musical invites audiences of all ages to rediscover Winnie-the-Pooh, Christopher Robin, and their favorite friends—through a fresh, intergenerational lens.

This adaptation follows a newly retired Christopher Robin, who has moved back into his childhood home to be closer to his family. While caring for his grandchild Alex, Christopher Robin must relearn how to “do nothing”—to pause, to play, and to imagine again. When an old box is opened, the Hundred Acre Wood springs back to life, and Pooh and his friends return, reminding Christopher Robin (and Alex) that imagination is not something we outgrow—it is something we carry forward.

**Rehearsal Dates:** Jan. 2 - 28, 2027

Tues-Fri 4-8:30pm

Sat 12:30-8:30pm

Sun 10-6pm

\*Weekend rehearsals will be split into two rehearsal blocks-one for each cast of young performers

**Performance Dates:** Jan. 29 - Feb. 28, 2027 (TBA March 2-7, 2027)

\*There will be two casts of young performers performing on alternating dates Tuesday through Sunday.

**Casting Needs: 8-10 Young Performers per Cast (16-20 young performers total)**

**ALEXANDRIA 'ALEX':** (8-12, Any gender) is curious, observant, and quietly self-assured. They are at an age where imagination and independence coexist—still open to play, but keenly aware of who they are and how they want to be known. Grounded performer; clear speaker; comfortable with movement and ensemble work; singing role with warmth and sincerity. **Vocal range top: E5 | Vocal range bottom: C4**

**TIGGER:** (13-18, Any gender) is a bouncy, larger-than-life, energetic tiger who loves to have fun! Tigger is an extrovert, always looking for someone to play with and share constant enthusiasm. Tigger loves to be the center of attention and often gets carried away with their own energy, but deep down, just wants to be loved and accepted. Physical comedic role, so athleticism is a plus. **Vocal range top: F5 | Vocal range bottom: B<sup>b</sup>4**

**PIGLET:** (8-13, Any gender) is a timid but lovable young pig who lives in fear of almost everything. Piglet is always anxious about what might happen next and often gets overwhelmed by big decisions or new situations. Piglet is fiercely loyal to their friends and will do anything to help them out. **Vocal range top: C4 | Vocal range bottom: F5**

**THE BLUSTERY WIND ENSEMBLE:** (8-18, All and any gender) a group of actors who shift the story. They act as change, time, and instability. They can activate moments through movement, puppetry, and memory shifting. The wind is what happens when the wood breathes

Wilson Theater at Vogel Hall

**THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE**

From the story by CS Lewis

Dramatized by LE CLANCHÉ DU RAND

Updates by Jeff Frank

Directed by Jeff Frank

Step through the wardrobe and into the magical world of Narnia in this inventive and theatrical retelling of C.S. Lewis' beloved classic. With the White Witch's icy grip keeping the land in eternal winter, Lucy, Peter, Susan, and Edmund must join forces with the great lion Aslan and the creatures of Narnia to restore warmth and hope. This imaginative small cast adaptation invites you into the adventure as the actors utilize quick changes, puppetry, masks and more to bring the epic battle of good versus evil to life with creativity, heart and the enduring themes of courage, faith, and friendship. An epic journey for audiences of all ages, this production proves that even the smallest among us can change the world.

**Rehearsal Dates:** March 6-April 1, 2027

Tues-Fri 4-8:30pm

Sat 12:30-8:30pm

Sun 10-6pm

\*Weekend rehearsals will be split into two rehearsal blocks-one for each cast of young performers

**Performance Dates:** Apr. 2 - May 2, 2027 (TBA May 4-8, 2027)

\*There will be two casts of young performers performing on alternating dates Tuesday through Sunday.

**Casting Needs: 4 Young Performers per Cast (8 young performers total)**

**Young Lucy** (8-12, female identifying) the youngest of the Pevensie siblings, clever, trusting, and kind.

**Young Peter** (13-17, male identifying) the oldest of the Pevensie siblings, protective and more mature than his siblings.

**Young Susan** (12-16, female identifying) the second oldest Pevensie sibling, gentle, and tender-hearted.

**Young Edmund** (9-13, male identifying) the second youngest Pevensie sibling, mean-spirited and selfish at the beginning of the story.

Goodman Theater

Academy Production Lab

## **THE SNOW**

Written by Finegan Kruckemeyer

Commissioned by First Stage Milwaukee Inc, Milwaukee WI, Oregon Children's Theater, Portland OR, The Magik Theater, San Antonio TX

First produced in February 2016 By First Stage Milwaukee Inc, At the Todd Wehr Theater, Milwaukee WI

First directed by Jeff Frank

When an epic snowfall imprisons the residents of the tiny village of Kishka, young Theodore Sutton proposes the villagers build a catapult to fling him and six of the village's bravest and strongest out in search of a solution. The catapult hastily assembled; Theodore and the heroes are launched over the snow and into the grandest of adventures. Whimsical and humorous, dark and mysterious, heartfelt and sincere, this play weaves a fantastical Grimmsian tale for the entire family.

**Rehearsal Dates:** January 11-February 11, 2027

Monday-Friday 4-8:30pm

**Performance Dates:** February 12-February 21, 2027

### **Casting Needs: 15-20 Young Performers Total**

#### **Note on Casting & Style:**

*The Snow* is not naturalistic. Characters function as storytellers, witnesses, and embodiments of ideas as much as individuals. Roles may overlap, shift, or be shared depending on the needs of the production. We are seeking strong actor-storytellers who are comfortable with heightened language, ensemble listening, and imaginative play. All roles are open to performers of any race, ethnicity, gender identity, and ability unless otherwise specified.

**The Man** - A solitary figure living in a place where it never snows. Quiet, longing, and deeply hopeful, The Man yearns for something he cannot fully name. His desire for snow becomes the emotional engine of the story, revealing tenderness, obsession, and vulnerability beneath his still exterior.

**The Woman** - Grounded, compassionate, and practical. The Woman loves The Man and cares for him deeply, even when she does not fully understand his longing. She represents steadiness, care, and the emotional weight of loving someone who is always reaching for more.

**The Child** - Curious, observant, and imaginative. The Child asks questions others avoid and approaches the world with openness and wonder. They act as a bridge between the audience and the story, representing possibility, imagination, and the future.

**Ensemble / The World** - A flexible ensemble that creates the world of the play—neighbors, voices, weather, time, wind, snow, and shared thought. Ensemble members function as storytellers and witnesses, shaping the environment through movement, choral text, and imaginative play.

Wilson Theater at Vogel Hall

First Stage Theater Academy Presents:

### **Broadway Junior Revue: Pure Imagination**

Celebrate 40 years of First Stage as YOU share your stories and the story of First Stage.

Join the incredible young performers from our Theater Academy as they celebrate 40 years of First Stage with the brand-new Revue-Pure Imagination! Featuring songs from Broadway musicals like *Seussical* and *Shrek the Musical* to Disney favorites like *Beauty and the Beast* and *Frozen*, *Pure Imagination* honors the power of creativity and collaboration that has been a hallmark of our work at First Stage from our beginning in 1987.

Directed by our Education & Academy Team, featuring choreography, monologues, and musical moments created in collaboration with our students.

**Rehearsal Dates:** April 20 - May 13, 2027

Tues-Fri 4-8:30pm

Sat 12:30-8:30pm

Sun 10-6pm

**Performance Dates:** May 14-May 23, 2027

**Casting Needs: 15-20 Young Performers Total (One Cast)**

NOTE: This revue is not about playing traditional characters—it's about playing ourselves while celebrating the joy of performance. Whether you're singing a solo, dancing in an ensemble, or sharing a story from your First Stage journey, we are looking for young artists ready to collaborate, contribute, and shine together.

We are seeking a diverse, dynamic ensemble of young performers (ages 8-18) who are strong in singing, acting, and movement/dance. This revue is built to highlight

individual strengths while celebrating ensemble collaboration and First Stage's mission of storytelling through **your** voices. All roles are open to performers of any race, ethnicity, gender identity, and ability.

*For featured performers, we are looking specifically for...*

### **Strong Vocalists**

- Confident singers with healthy vocal technique and expressiveness
- Ability to sing in harmony and hold parts
- Featured solos may include songs from *Frozen*, *Shrek*, *Seussical*, *High School Musical*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and more

### **Dynamic Actors**

- Performers who can bring authenticity and imagination to short monologues and narrative transitions
- Ability to connect personally to material and represent the history and heart of First Stage
- Students comfortable speaking directly to the audience or sharing devised text

### **Expressive Movers & Dancers**

- Confident dancers and strong movers who can quickly learn stylized choreography
- Various musical theatre styles (from joyful to lyrical)
- Featured dancers may be pulled for choreographed sequences or visual storytelling moments

## **CASTING PERSONNEL**

Artistic Director: Jeff Frank

Associate Artistic Director: Michelle LoRicco

Education Director: Brinn Hill

Academy Manager: Chris Orth

Academy K-4 and Next Steps Manager: Hannah Esch

Teaching Artist: Caitlyn Nettesheim

Teaching Artist: Chloe Tower

Artistic Intern: Silver Anderson