



Media Contact:
Andrea Klohn
aklohn@firststage.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIRST STAGE OPENS 40TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH *GO DOG GO! / VE PERRO ¡VE!*

Fast, funny, and full of dogs, this bilingual musical adventure brings the beloved children's book to life at First Stage

MILWAUKEE (August 24, 2026) — First Stage launches its 40th anniversary season with *Go Dog Go! / Ve Perro ¡Ve!*, a joyful, high-energy musical adventure designed to get young audiences laughing, moving, and discovering the magic of live theater. The production runs October 3 - November 1, 2026 at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center's Goodman Mainstage Hall.

Based on P.D. Eastman's beloved children's book, *Go Dog Go! / Ve Perro ¡Ve!* bounds from page to stage with roller-skating, bicycle-riding, and car-driving dogs with silly hats, fun music, and plenty of surprises.

Performed in both English and Spanish, the production uses the rhythm, repetition, and visual storytelling of Eastman's original book to make the story welcoming and accessible to audiences regardless of the languages they speak. With a playful First Stage twist, the production celebrates curiosity, connection, and the joy of reading while creating an ideal introduction to theater for young children—and plenty of fun for the grown-ups who join them.

The production is directed by First Stage Associate Artistic Director Michelle LoRicco (*The Pigeon Gets A Big Time Holiday Extravaganza!*), with movement direction by Samantha D. Montgomery and assistant direction by Brinn Hill. Sarah Zapiain* (*Emily Song and the Queen of the Night, Elephant & Piggie's "We Are In A Play!"*) leads the pack as MC Dog, joined by 12 young performers appearing in two alternating casts of six. [Full cast and creative team information is available here.](#)

"We have young performers in this production who speak Spanish as the primary language in their homes, and I know how meaningful it is for them to share that language onstage with their community," shares Director Michelle LoRicco. "I hope they feel a deep sense of pride seeing their language and culture celebrated at First Stage. That is the kind of experience we want to create for every young person who walks through our doors."

The experience begins before audiences even enter the theater. Starting 30 minutes before every performance, families can enjoy free, hands-on lobby activities inspired by the world of *Go Dog Go! / Ve Perro ¡Ve!*.

Select performances will also feature special opportunities to extend the experience:

Tech Talk — Sunday, October 11 at 1 p.m.

Following the performance, audiences are invited to stay for an extended conversation with a member of the creative team and discover how First Stage brings a story from page to stage.

Girl Scout Day — Sunday, October 18 at 1 p.m.

Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie troops are invited to attend the performance and participate in a post-show Mechanical Engineering Badge Workshop.

First Stage is proud to partner with [Humane Animal Welfare Society \(HAWS\)](#) to support their mission and offer audiences a special discount on select HAWS education programs and events.

Go Dog Go! / Ve Perro ¡Ve! is recommended for ages 3 and up and runs approximately 60 minutes with no intermission. Tickets start at \$27.

A [Sensory Friendly Performance](#) will take place Saturday, October 17 at 11 a.m. A [Sign Language Interpreted Performance](#) will take place Sunday, November 1 at 1 p.m.

Tickets and additional information are available at firststage.org.

###

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 ensures that all programming is not only accessible to its community but that it is reflective of the community it serves.

First Stage creates theater that honors young people's perspectives and sparks meaningful conversation. The company has produced more than 70 world premiere plays addressing issues relevant to today's youth. Its nationally recognized Theater Academy serves students ages 3–18, building life skills through stage skills, including the Next Steps Program for neurodivergent students. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education, First Stage's Theater in Education Programs reach more than 10,000 students each year by blending theater with classroom learning.

First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, Milwaukee Theater District, Milwaukee Arts Partners, and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). For more information, visit firststage.org.

About Michelle LoRicco (Director)

Michelle is a passionate educator, director, and playwright who loves to create stories on stage and in the classroom with people of all ages. She graduated from the University of Central Florida with her MFA, specializing in Theater for Young Audiences, and received her Bachelor's in Theater, specializing in Musical Theater, at Palm Beach Atlantic University. Michelle has worked in the Education Departments at American Repertory Theatre, Mill Mountain Theatre, The Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, Orlando Family Stage, and other non-profit organizations. Some of her directing credits include *Elephant & Piggie's "We Are In A Play!"*, *Emily Song and the Queen of the Night*, *Ride the Cyclone*, and *The Pigeon Gets A Big Time Holiday Extravaganza!* (First Stage), *Luchadora* and *When Pigs Fly* (Orlando Family Stage), *Marvelous Corenlius*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *Orphan Sea* (Hollins University), *A Peter Rabbit's Tale* and *Tomás and the Library Lady* (Mill Mountain Theatre). This is Michelle's fourth full season as the Associate Artistic Director, and she could not be more grateful to serve the Milwaukee community alongside the incredible creatives at First Stage.

About Sarah Zapiain* (MC Dog)

Sarah Zapiain is a Milwaukee-based actor and director as well as the full-time Arts Education Manager at the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Sarah has worked with many professional theatres in Milwaukee such as Skylight Music Theatre (*Evita*, *SuperYou*), First Stage (*Emily Song and the Queen of the Night*), Next Act Theatre (*Boswell*, *Laundry and Bourbon*), The Constructivists (*In the Canyon*), and Forte Theatre Company (*Little Women*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Secret Garden*). Sarah is honored to be the Artistic Director of Summit Players Theatre, whose mission is to bring free, accessible Shakespeare to the Wisconsin State Parks.

VE PERRO ¡VE! Received its world premiere production at Chicago Children's Theatre under Jacqueline Russel, Artistic Director. Produced by special arrangement with Plays for New Audiences. Illustrations by P.D. Eastman from the book *Go, Dog. Go!* Copyright © 1961 by P.D. Eastman, copyright renewed © 1989 by Mary L. Eastman. All rights reserved.

* Appearing through an Agreement between First Stage and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States