



Media Contact:
Andrea Klohn
aklohn@firststage.org

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YOUNG COMPANY PRESENTS SHAKESPEARE'S MASTERFUL TRAGEDY, *JULIUS CAESAR*

Emerging Performers Showcase Professional-Level Shakespeare Skills

MILWAUKEE (February 23, 2026)—First Stage Young Company, the organization's award-winning training program for advanced high school actors, presents William Shakespeare's [*Julius Caesar*](#), a performance project that highlights the artistry and discipline of pre-professional young performers working at a collegiate level.

Julius Caesar invites audiences to witness what highly trained young artists can accomplish when given the tools, trust, and expectations of professional practice. Shakespeare's gripping thriller cuts to the heart of ambition, honor, and choices that can't be undone.

Comprised of students selected through a competitive audition process, First Stage Young Company is known for producing bold, ensemble-driven work. *Julius Caesar* serves as a capstone-style performance project, challenging actors to engage deeply with Shakespeare's language, complexity, and emotional stakes with a focus on clarity of storytelling, ensemble precision, and a sophisticated understanding of the text.

The production is directed by Ken Miller, a Milwaukee-based actor, teacher, and director with extensive experience in both professional theater and arts education—including First Stage Theater Academy. Miller has performed with companies including Next Act Theatre and Door Shakespeare, and is currently an understudy for Captain Hook in First Stage's production of *Peter Pan and Wendy*.

"Our Young Company is perhaps one of the best-kept secrets in Milwaukee theater," shared First Stage Executive Artistic Director Jeff Frank. "You are really seeing the future of theater when you come see these amazing young performers do their work."

Beyond the stage, Young Company students have the unique opportunity to gain hands-on, behind-the-scenes experience, collaborating with adult theater professionals in directing, stage management, stage combat, marketing, and more.

The production features Young Company students Edward Owczarski as Julius Caesar, Ben Nowacek as Brutus, Paxton Haley as Marc Antony, Natalie Ottman as Cassius, and more. [[Full cast and creative team available here.](#)]

Julius Caesar is recommended for audiences ages 14 and up. The production runs approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, plus a brief intermission.

Tickets are \$28, with a "[Pay What You Choose](#)" performance on Friday, March 20 at 7 p.m. Tickets available at www.firststage.org.

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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 produces plays that honor the young person's point of view, include diverse and traditionally underrepresented voices, and inspire meaningful conversations. First Stage has presented more than 70 world premiere productions that address important subject matters relevant to today's youth. The Theater Academy is one of the nation's largest high-impact theater training programs for young people (3-18 years old). Through a challenging curriculum taught by professional teaching artists, the Academy nurtures life skills through stage skills and includes the Next Steps Program that tailors Theater Academy classes to the needs of young people on the autism spectrum and with other developmental disabilities. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education Programs cleverly blend theater activities with standard curriculum—allowing more than 10,000 students annually to learn traditional academic subjects through creativity and self-expression.

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