Thank you for joining us for the spring session! You are a part of the First Stage family and we enjoy seeing your children in each class they take. We are also incredibly proud to see the growth that comes with a commitment to theater training the First Stage way.

We believe that studying theater is a life-long process. Every class you take, audition you go to, or role you play helps develop the skills of an actor. The body, voice, and imagination get a work out each week here in the Academy as students improve storytelling skills, vocal and dance technique, and connecting to and creating characters. No matter what class they are in, students are taking steps towards becoming a thoughtful skilled performer.

With our commitment to teaching life skills through stage skills, students get more than excellent theater instruction. Our students gain a sense of belonging and acceptance, which we believe should also be a life-long process. The more often young people are surrounded by an expectation that they will take risks, be leaders, empathize with others, and work as a team, the more natural it will become.

We hope you will continue to join us session after session and see the benefits of continued commitment to the arts and to building a better community one young person at a time. Each one makes a mark on our program and we hope to see them again and again.

— Jennifer Adams and Katie Cummings

...read more inside...
to explore story structure, characters, dialogue, and setting. These young playwrights are sure to impress even the greatest detectives with their mystery solving skills!

1st-2nd Grade Playmakers with Lori Hartman-Keiser
Get out your magnifying glasses and your disguises and get ready to solve some mysteries. This session of Playmakers focuses on detectives. We will start by exploring a specific setting and then write, direct, and perform our own short plays inspired by that setting. Students will be able to understand basic story elements, create obstacles and objectives, and bring the characters to life by creating their own dialogue. Look out, Nancy Drew; here come the first and second grade detectives!

1st-2nd Grade Story Drama Dance with Allie Bonesho
Throughout this class, we will explore various ways to be inspired and work with our instincts. We will challenge ourselves to bring life to characters using voice, body, and imagination. By calling on the music from FANTASIA, poetry, and various styles of music we will create and discover the many ways in which we can express ourselves on stage.

2nd-3rd Grade Playmakers with Brenna Kempf
The Saturday 2nd-3rd grade Playmakers class of the spring session will use the ultimate super-sleuth, Nancy Drew, as inspiration for our Detectives theme! Get out your magnifying glasses and your disguises! These young playwrights are sure to impress even the greatest detectives with their mystery solving skills!

3rd-4th Grade Musical Theater with Allie Bonesho
We will be exploring the style and sound of classic Broadway shows like DAMN YANKIES and WEST SIDE STORY! In this class, we will work on and develop our acting, singing, and dancing skills individually and as an ensemble. We will also learn proper breathing techniques, articulations, and character development. Combining all of these skills we will come together to present a group musical number!

4th-6th Grade Improvisation with James Boland
Throughout this class, we will explore the rules of improv and learn to make choices for our characters and settings. We will work on the basics, such asarrival and agreement, advancing and making your partner look good. Students will learn how to use their own interests, ideas, and creativity to develop a theme for our unit and present a one-of-a-kind theatrical performance. This class serves as a bridge between Playmakers and Scene Study, and a stepping stone between Playmakers and Super Script. As we enhance skills in both acting and playwriting, we always put our focus on sharing the story to the best of our ability.

3rd-4th Grade Intro to Acting with Jason Knop
In Introduction to Acting this spring, we will start with the basics. We will start by looking at giving, understanding, and following stage directions and then moving on to scenes from one of First Stage's last two productions of this season. We will explore the scenes using the ROOT (Relationship, Objective, Obstacle, Tactics) method, and make choices for our characters based on the text we are given. Using the scenes we will work together in pairs or small groups to create the short section of the play we were given.

3rd-4th Grade Advance Study with Brenna Kempf
The Advanced Playmakers class is a new and unique offering here at the Academy! Throughout our eight weeks together, we will build an ensemble of actors that double as scriptwriters. These young artists will use their own interests, ideas, and creativity to develop a theme for our unit and present a one-of-a-kind theatrical performance. This class serves as a bridge between Playmakers and Scene Study, and a stepping stone between Playmakers and Super Script. As we enhance skill in both and acting and playwriting, we always put our focus on sharing the story to the best of our ability.

4th-6th Grade Auditioning with Michael Cotey
In Auditioning, students will prepare a brand new audition monologue by learning what to look for as an actor and how to utilize the information to make the performance compelling and specific. They will receive ample practice being up in front of their peers with classroom activities, mock audition scenarios, and cold readings. In the end the goal is to demystify the audition experience, highlighting both what you can prepare for, what is out of your control, how to set yourself apart from others through professionalism, and, yes, even how NOT to audition. Not only will
WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE CLASSROOMS? (CONTINUED)

5th-8th Grade Musical Theater with Kristen DiNnino
This class will focus on the development of each student as an artist through music, dance, and acting. Students will learn about various musicals that will be the focus of each class. Fundamentals of dancing and singing will be covered. Students will broaden their creativity through the exploration of developing choreography, learning songs, and learning choreographed segments. Each student will be encouraged to start thinking as a soloist, as well as an ensemble. Time will be set aside for personalized coaching in song, dance, or acting to encourage individuality through music and dance.

5th-8th Grade Acting with Karl Iglesias
Our Acting class this spring is dedicated to discovering and embracing the tools we will need to support our craft as actors. The body and voice are our instruments in storytelling which can be explored and sharpened to help us transform and translate text into performance. We will explore the art of projection and awareness (both self and spatial) in order to bring characters to life through physical discipline and crafty creative choices.

5th-8th Grade Performance Workshop with Katie Cummings and Kristen DiNnino
This session the Performance Workshop will culminate in SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE! JR, Kristen and Katie are excited to work with the students as we explore creating character from within, breath support for proper vocal technique and exploring movement to accentuate text. Each week we will delve into a new theme that will help build creativity and confidence which is sure to result in a musical unique to the members in our class. We can’t wait to get started!

9th-12th Grade Acting with Nate Press
The spring session Acting class will focus on training the voice and body. We will be using voice techniques developed by voice guru, Kristin Linklater. Ms. Linklater is known throughout the theatre world and her voice techniques are taught at the majority of universities and professional theatre training institutions. Our movement work will concentrate on how body movement informs character choices and vice versa. We will study stock characters both ancient and modern.

WEDNESDAYS AT MYAC

K4-K5 Story Drama with Brenna Kempf, Jason Knop, and Katie Behrend
Our small detectives will work together to build a crime-stopping team! We will create our very own detective characters and work through a mystery, finding new clues and developing our predictions week by week. We will focus on the importance of working together to solve all problems that come our way - big and small!

1st-2nd Grade Story Drama Dance with Ashley Wlekliński and Liz Faraglia
In Story Drama Dance this session, we will explore the question of how we can make ordinary words extraordinary with movement and rhythm. We will explore the natural rhythm found in the poetry of Lewis Carroll, Merritt Malloy, and Rumi. We will use words to establish beats and create original, devised interpretive and modern dances that connect emotionally to the text. We will explore the concepts of the chorus and ensemble to bring vocal variety to ordinary language.

3rd-4th Grade Making Movies with Jennifer Adams and Nate Press
Our spring Movie Makers will tap into their creative muscles by writing their own script, creating the storyboards, and rehearsing and filming! Students will learn to work as an ensemble, using everyone’s ideas to build an exciting story based on classic story archetypes. Students will scout locations, cast the film, and operate the cameras utilizing their skills in responsibility, problem solving, and creative thinking. Get ready for a world premiere film in May!

5th-8th Grade Acting with Karl Iglesias and Mary Kelly
Our Acting class this spring is dedicated to discovering and embracing the tools we will need to support our craft as actors. The body and voice are our instruments in storytelling which can be explored and sharpened to help us transform and translate text into performance. We will explore the art of projection and awareness (both self and spatial) in order to bring characters to life through physical discipline and crafty creative choices.

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS AT THE SHARON LYNN WILSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

K4-K5 Story Drama with Jason Knop
This spring in Story Drama we will be exploring the theme of detectives. We will be creating our own characters and world within our theme. Using teamwork, problem solving skills, improvisation, and our imaginations we will create our own mystery story for our class to act out and solve.

SATURDAYS AT THE OCONEOMOWOC ARTS CENTER

3rd-5th Grade Intro to Acting with Bridgette Well
In Introduction to Acting this spring, we will start with the basics. We will start by looking at giving, understanding, and following stage directions and then moving on to scenes from one of First Stage’s last two productions of this season. We will explore the scenes using the ROOT (Relationship, Objective, Obstacle, Tactics) method, and make choices for our characters based on the text we are given. Using the scenes we will work together in pairs or small groups to create the short section of the play we were given.

1st-2nd Grade Playmakers with Jason Knop
This spring in Playmakers we will be exploring the theme of detectives. We will be creating our own characters and world within our theme. Using teamwork, problem solving skills, improvisation, and our imaginations we will create our own mystery story for our class to act out and solve.

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5th-8th Grade Acting with Nate Press
This spring in Acting class will focus on training the voice and body. We will be using voice techniques developed by voice guru, Kristin Linklater. Ms. Linklater is known throughout the theatre world and her voice techniques are taught at the majority of universities and professional theatre training institutions. Our movement work will concentrate on how body movement informs character choices and vice versa. We will study stock characters both ancient and modern.

3rd-4th Grade Story Drama Dance with Mary Kelly
In Story Drama Dance this session, we will explore the theme of detectives. Using a variety of children’s stories like “Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase,” “Detective Blue,” & “What Really Happened to Humphry?” we will look for clues as we read and make predictions based on those clues in the stories. We will also explore the characters in the stories and how they interact with the world around them. We will work together to retell some of the stories, and bring the characters to life in our classroom.

In Focus

Photo by Lindsey Abendschein
**In Focus**

**FROM THE FIRST STAGE BLOG: GUEST ARTISTS TAKE OVER ACADEMY CLASSES**

Over the last couple weeks, First Stage Academy classes have gotten some extra help from seasoned professionals, from TV actors and Broadway stars to local stars.

The Young Company class was recently treated to some audition coaching from Breaking Bad star Betsy Brandt. She helped them with audition monologues and participated in a Q&A about working as a professional actor and answered their questions about acting in television and film.

“Betsy was incredibly generous with our students and was repeatedly complimentary of their work,” said First Stage Associate Artistic Director and Director of the Young Company John Maclay. “Our faculty is made up of actors who currently spend their lives on stage in the Midwest so it was great to get that first-hand perspective of life in television and film in L.A. and New York. She is also just very smart, funny, kind and real so it was quite a treat to have her visit.”

Young Company was also visited by Broadway performer Geoffrey Goldberg. He did a dance workshop with Young Company as part of auditions for the Open Jar Institute program in NYC. Goldberg is a NYC-based theater artist, performer, choreographer, writer, director and educator. He has performed in MARY POPPINS on Broadway as well as national and regional productions of MARY POPPINS, CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, FOREVER PLAID, GREASE, ON THE TOWN and more.

“He is a spectacular dancer himself and he really, I thought, gave an indication as to what skills are required in a big time professional dance audition,” said John Maclay.

Young Company was not the only class that has received some advice from guest artists. The Advanced Musical Theater class was visited by Milwaukee Rep Associate Artist Angela Iannone, IN THE HEIGHTS cast member Christina Aranda, and Danceworks artists Tina Wozniak and Amy Brinkman.

Angela taught a Laban workshop to help the students figure out how to use movement to help them on stage and with their characters.

Angela taught us that a performer never has any excuse to lose their balance on stage. Ever! You always have to know where your body and your balance is and you have to be in control of it,” said Rachel T., one of the academy students. “It was definitely helpful advice for the rest of my life and career.”

Christina also helped the students by hosting a Finding Character workshop. She has been playing Abuela Claudia in Skylight Music Theatre’s production of IN THE HEIGHTS. Many students have seen the production and were very excited to meet and work with her.

“Her acting was amazing and I was so excited to see what she had to teach us. She taught us many exercises. She gave us a piece of music and with a partner we had to come up with what each sentence meant,” said Academy Student Meaghan B.

The Academy has also been partnering with Danceworks to continue to work on jazz, tap and musical theatre dance to help further the student’s skills and give them advice for future performances.

Camara S. was one of the students who enjoyed these guests. “Appreciate your passion and what you have; know what you want. I learned all this wonderful and helpful information that I know for a fact will help me in the near future.”

**MEET THE FACULTY & STAFF**

Visit www.FirstStage.org to read more about all of our staff members!

| Jennifer Adams, Academy Director | Katie Behrend | James Boland | Alie Bonesho | Michael Cady | Hayley Cotton | Katie Cummings, Academy Director |
| Marcela Kearns | Mary Kelly | Brenna Kempf | Jason Knop, Lead Teacher | John Maclay, Associate Artistic Director | Karl Miller | Brian Myers |
| Tommy Novak | Nate Press | Patrick Schley, Academy Services Mgr. | Patrick Schmitz | Malika Stampley, Community Partnership Coordinator | Bridgette Weil | Ashlea Wielinski |

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Teaching life skills through stage skills in the nation’s largest theater training program for young people

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