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**Media Contact:**

Katie Darragh, Mueller Communications

firststage@muellercommunications.com, 414-390-5500



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## **FATE, HUMOR & HEART: FIRST STAGE INVITES AUDIENCES ON A THEATRICAL ROLLER COASTER RIDE WITH RIDE THE CYCLONE (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION)**

*A roller coaster accident, a fortune teller, and a second chance at life—this acclaimed musical explores fate, storytelling, and self-discovery.*

**MILWAUKEE** — [First Stage](#) — one of the nation’s leading theaters for young people and families — invites audiences to buckle up for a funny, moving look at what makes a life well-lived in **RIDE THE CYCLONE (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION)**, a Young Company Performance Project.

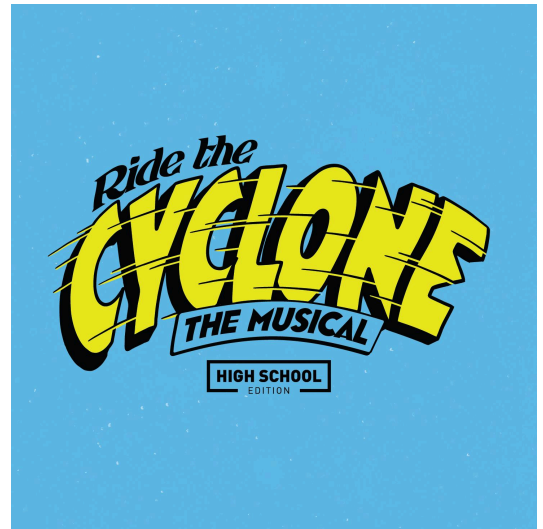
[RIDE THE CYCLONE \(HIGH SCHOOL EDITION\)](#), a [Young Company](#) Performance Project, runs **March 28 through April 13, 2025**, at the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center. **Tickets are available now on [FirstStage.org](#).**

In this hilarious and outlandish musical, the lives of six teenagers from a Canadian chamber choir are cut short in a freak accident aboard a roller coaster. When they awake in limbo, a mechanical fortune teller invites each to tell a story to win a prize like no other—the chance to return to life.

“This smash hit explores the lives of teenagers post-mortem as they narrate their own stories to influence their fates, offering them a chance at life once more. The dynamic and contemporary musical shares the powerful theme of storytelling as a means of defining oneself and impacting one’s destiny,” said Michelle LoRicco, associate artistic director at First Stage and director and choreographer of **RIDE THE CYCLONE (HIGH SCHOOL EDITION)**.

This marks LoRicco’s inaugural production as Young Company Director. “The excitement among the Young Company members was electric when this title was announced, highlighting the strong relevance and resonance of the themes interwoven through the script and music,” said LoRicco.

With music showcasing various musical genres—from glam rock to pop to rap and folk—witness as stories unfold in unexpected and thrilling ways.



*Note: Contains mature content, language and themes including discussion of untimely death and mature situations including references to sex, drugs, and violence.*

*Ride the Cyclone (High School Edition) is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing Global ([www.broadwaylicensing.com](http://www.broadwaylicensing.com)).*

*The show runs approximately 75 minutes, including a brief intermission. Recommended for families with young people ages 13-17 and theater lovers of all ages. This production's [Pay What You Choose Performance](#) is on Friday, April 4 at 7 p.m.*

#### **Creative Team**

Young Company Director ... Michelle LoRicco  
Assistant Director ... Lola Onorato  
Assistant Choreographer ... Abbie Cashman  
Music Director ... David Bonofiglio  
Assistant Music Director ... Thomas Bastardo  
Costume Coordinator ... Michelle Verbos  
Lighting Coordinator ... Marion Frank  
Sound Coordinator ... Derek Buckles  
Video & Projection Design ... Lola Onorato  
Sound Board Operator ... Alice Rivera  
Dance Captain ... Paxton Haley  
Stage Manager... Carrie Johns  
Assistant Stage Manager ... Sophia Bernhardt  
Second Assistant Stage Manager ... Silver Anderson

#### **Young Company Cast**

Karnak ... Edward Owczarski  
Virgil / Talia ... Paxton Haley  
Ocean ... Evelyn Maassen  
Constance ... Hazel Dye  
Jane Doe ... Mackenzie Wooten  
Noel ... Lio Landis  
Mischa Bachinski ... Max Larson  
Ricky ... Thomas Bastardo  
Understudy for Karnak ... Silver Anderson  
Understudy for Virgil / Talia ... Abbie Cashman  
Understudy for Ocean ... Alice Rivera  
Understudy for Noel ... Cole Sison  
Swing ... Zoah Hirano  
Swing ... Dylan Gray

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

**Don't miss out on the rest of the season productions coming soon! Find tickets and additional information at [www.firststage.org/2024-2025-Season](http://www.firststage.org/2024-2025-Season).**

- **May 2 - 18** ESPERANZA RISING
- **May 3 - 4** DOG MAN: THE MUSICAL

For additional information about the 2024-2025 season and to order tickets, please go to [firststage.org](http://firststage.org) or call (414) 267-2961.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:** [Download media assets and additional production information](#)

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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, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). For more information, visit [firststage.org](http://firststage.org).