



The Keating Mainstage
The Goldstein Cabaret
The Gompertz Theatre

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Florida Studio Theatre to Host 2009 Sarasota Improv Festival!

Two Days of Hilarity!

(Sarasota, FL) Florida Studio Theatre announces the 2009 Sarasota Improv Festival. A two-day event, July 10th and 11th, the festival will highlight great improvisation companies from across the United States. The festival will also feature workshops, such as *Intro to Improvisation*, Longform Improvisation, Music and more. Each workshop will be taught by the professional Improvisers attending the festival. From New York City to Los Angeles this is a must see event for anyone with a funny bone!

“We are very excited about "heating" things up this summer in Sarasota. It wasn't so long ago that improv was more of a tool than an art form in its own right. It has been thrilling to watch the change. When I first started doing improv there were very few companies, but that has shifted. Thanks to companies like *Second City*, *The Groundlings*, *I.O.*, the success of *Whose Line Is It Anyway* on TV, and groups like FST Improv it has exploded. I personally believe that is due to three simple things. First, Improv is truly theatre of the immediate. If Obama stumps his toe in the morning, we're going to amputate his leg that night. Second, it's interactive. You as an audience member get to tell me what to do. Finally, it's funny. What more do you need? FST Improv is in its 6th full season in the Goldstein Cabaret. Through the years we've made Improv a real part of the theatrical landscape of Sarasota. We want to continue expand and allow our audiences to experience first hand how diverse an artform it is. A festival is a great way to do that,” said FST Managing Director and Improv Director Rebecca Langford.

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Groups scheduled to appear are; New York City's **Audience of Two**, Austin Texas' **Available Cupholders**, New York City's **Booth and Pat**, New York City's **City Hall**, Atlanta's **Dad's Garage**, Los Angeles' **Goodbye Mailbox**, Florida Studio Theatre's **Kids Komedy Cabaret**, Sarasota's **Lazy Fairy**, Orlando's **SAK**, Los

Angeles' **Slave Leia**, Boston's **Thy Will Be Done**, Florida Studio Theatre's **Vintage Whine** and the weekend will be hosted by Sarasota's original barrel of laughs **FST Improv**.

Audience of Two recently won the People's Improv Theater's Sketch Prov Festival in December. Sam and Ben have been performing together since 2001. They commented, "The Sarasota Improv Festival is awesome and we can't wait to perform for new audiences and meet other hilarious individuals." **Available Cupholders** aspire to explore and expose an art form cloaked in natural communication, believing improv to be the theatre of everyday existence. Booth Daniels & Patrick Frankfort are the names behind **Booth and Pat**. Booth and Pat are a duo act – part sketch comedy, part song with just a touch of the off-kilter.

City Hall is a New York based sketch comedy group, started in the fall of 2005. They blend sketch comedy, music, dance and puppetry together in order to answer adult questions, in a children's show format. **Dad's Garage** produce 52 weeks per year with improv shows. Performing traditional and original formats including the improvised soap opera *Scandal*, *TheatreSports* (officially sanctioned team in the Southeast) and the Japanese-style game show *Samurai Davis Jr. and Dim Sum's Super Maga Happy Fun Time Improv Show!* **Goodbye Mailbox** is an improvisation group formed from the Los Angeles' Upright Citizens Brigade.

Florida Studio Theatre's Kids Komedy Cabaret is a mix of improvisation and sketch comedy written and performed by kids. Sarasota's **Lazy Fairy** is an ever-evolving, innovative, Sarasota-based improv troupe dedicated to entertaining, training and teaching others in the purest form of theater: IMPROVISATION. **SAK's** ensemble performs in many different forms and styles of improv shows such as *The Audition*, *SAK Request Live* and *Rub a Dub Dub*, to name just a few.

Slave Leia is an all girl group who perform their own signature improv form called the "24." The 24 is a modified "Eventé" form that starts with an audience suggestion of an event and time. All scenes are initiated with a time of day within the 24 hour period around the event, culminating in the event itself. **Thy Will Be Done** is a fully improvised story of a man and a woman struggling to find their love. Each performance the audience provides the location, some background music, and a memory to help build the story of two people chasing love. **FST's Vintage Whine** is the senior improve group. A little bit of whine and a whole lot of funny.

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As host to the festival **FST Improv** takes what is right in front of them, in the form of audience suggestions. They create characters and sketches on the spot. No one – not even the performers themselves – knows what is going to happen next. It is this element of the unknown that makes every Improv show unique – and what makes for some exciting moments onstage. Media have often recognize the skill of the FST Improv stating “*We laughed hard and often,*” said The Observer and “*bested the talents I saw at my recent visit to Chicago’s Second City,*” raved ArtsJournal.com.

FST’s Improv program has a history of rapid growth: from its humble beginnings in 2001, as a weekly class that served five students, within two years Improv opened its first performance season – which promptly sold out. Since that time, the program has grown into an annual event, running through part of FST’s winter season (from February through May), and then throughout the entire summer season (June through October). **FST Improv** has attracted young Gulf Coast audiences, spawning a youth arts culture that includes other improv troupes, performance groups, and an arts e-magazine that keeps young Sarasotans connected to arts events. This is a program that is ripe for expansion; currently FST Improv plays to sold out audiences each week, doling out equal parts fun and social commentary in short, comic sketches, a form of theatre that shares the same Greek roots as classical theatre.

The Sarasota Improv Festival is a two day event taking place July 10th and 11th at the Goldstein Cabaret. Please see the attached full schedule. Weekend passes are available at \$49.00. Friday only and Saturday only passes are available at \$25.00. Individual Tickets are \$10 per person (Kids Komedy Cabaret are \$6.00 and includes lunch and FST’s Vintage Whine are \$5.00) and may be purchased from the FST Box Office in person by phone (941) 366-9000 or online www.FloridaStudioTheatre.org. Advanced purchase of tickets is recommended.

Florida Studio Theatre is grateful to the Sarasota Improv Festival Sponsors; Air Tran, Anything Arts, the Florida Arts Council, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Hotel Indigo, Herald-Tribune Media Group, Massage Envy, National Endowment for the Arts, SRQ Media Group, Sarasota Arts Council, Sarasota County Film and Entertainment Office, Spotlight Graphics, This Week in Sarasota and Yummy Stuff.

Known as Sarasota’s Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by Jon Spelman. Starting out as a small touring company, FST traveled to places such as migrant camps and prisons. The company eventually settled down into a permanent home, acquiring the former Woman’s Club building – now renamed the Keating Theatre. In the years that followed, Florida Studio Theatre established itself as a major force in American Theatre, presenting contemporary theatre in its three theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the Goldstein Cabaret and its newest space, the Gompertz Theatre.

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Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to a broad-based audience. Under Richard Hopkins, Artistic Director and CEO, FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. As FST grows and expands, it continues to provide audiences with challenging, contemporary drama and innovative programs.

Photos Available upon Request

Groups are available for interviews as schedules permit.

2009 Sarasota Improv Festival

Performance Schedule

July 10 – 11, 2009

Goldstein Cabaret

Tickets: \$10 Individual

\$25 Evening Pass

\$49 Weekend Pass (All Access)

**Workshop details will be forthcoming.*

Friday, July 10, 2009

6:00 pm – FST Improv Opens the two days of laughs (Sarasota)

7:00 pm – Goodbye Mailbox (Los Angeles)

8:00 pm – Audience of Two (New York City)

9:00 pm – City Hall (New York City)

10:00 pm – Dad's Garage (Atlanta, GA)

11:00 pm – Improv Jam (FREE to Weekend Pass Holders/\$10.00 single tickets)

Saturday, July 11, 2009

11:00 am – FST's Kids Komedey Cabaret (Sarasota)

5:00 pm – FST's Vintage Whine (Sarasota)

6:00 pm – Slave Leia (Los Angeles)

7:00 pm – Available Cupholders (Austin, TX)

8:00 pm – Thy Will Be Done (Boston)

9:00 pm – Booth and Pat (New York City)

10:00 pm – SAK (Orlando)

11:00 pm – Lazy Fairy (Sarasota)

11:40 pm – Improv Jam (FREE to pass holders/\$10.00 single tickets)

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