



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 2018 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL WINNERS ANNOUNCED

(Sarasota, FL) – **Florida Studio Theatre (FST)** is proud to announce the winning plays of this year's *Young Playwright's Festival*. For 27 years, FST has honored thousands of young playwrights from all around the world through its WRITE A PLAY (WAP) program. Over the course of the 2017-2018 season, FST received plays written by over 5,500 young playwrights between the ages of 5-18—the most submissions the program has received in a decade. This year's winning plays will be presented in *The Boy Who Liked Pulling Hair! & Other Winning Plays* and will be performed for school groups during the week from April 3 to May 18 in FST's Keating Theatre. Please contact WRITE A PLAY Coordinator Hannah Bagnall at 941-366-9797 for tickets, show times, or other questions.

*The Boy Who Liked Pulling Hair! & Other Winning Plays* will also be playing to the public on Saturdays at 11AM from April 14 to May 12 in FST's Keating Theatre as part of the Saturday Children's Series. Tickets are \$10, and are available online at [www.floridastudiotheatre.org](http://www.floridastudiotheatre.org) or by calling the FST Box Office at 941-366-9000.

In conjunction with the *Sarasota Festival of New Plays*, the *Young Playwrights Festival* includes a whimsical and innovative run of *The Boy Who Liked Pulling Hair! & Other Winning Plays*, an all-new production of 12 exemplary plays written by more than 30 children in grades K-6. Directed by FST's Associate Artist Jason Cannon and performed by a cast of FST Acting Apprentices, these original stories from children's imaginations inspire laughter, introspection, and wisdom for all of us, regardless of age.

The WRITE A PLAY (WAP) program begins each season with the first Children's Theatre production—which this year was Greg Banks' *Robin Hood*. WAP continues with the Playmakers Tour, through which selected FST Acting Apprentices travel into Sarasota and Manatee County schools to teach students the fundamentals of playwriting. Afterward, students put what they've learned into practice and can submit their own original scripts to FST for consideration. Each play is read at least twice by FST staff members and community volunteers, seeking scripts that reveal children's unique voices.

Once selected, the winning plays are produced by FST's professional staff for *The Boy Who Liked Pulling Hair! & Other Winning Plays* as well as *Seven Up*, which includes plays from winning playwrights in grades 7-12. This year's *Seven Up* winners include plays such as *Show and Tell—A Mostly True Story*, *What is Truly Significant in Our Life?*, and *Changing*.

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Writing from a place of unabashed imagination, these young playwrights create work that is both original and memorable. "The plays' themes are as varied as the playwrights themselves—plays about friendship and family, tales of overcoming obstacles, fears of not being accepted, and bullying," said FST's *Young Playwrights Festival* Coordinator and Lead Teaching Artist, Adam Ratner. "[There are] silly plays, heartfelt plays and swashbuckling plays of daring-do, and the plays represent all kinds of genres and run the emotional gamut."

From April 3 to May 18, over 12,000 Sarasota and Manatee County students will be transported to FST to see these 11 exceptional plays written by their peers. Frequently bussing is donated by Embracing Our Differences, a local non-profit that harnesses the transformative power of the arts to educate and inspire in order to create a better world, and its *Make-A-Day-Of-It* program. Through this program, students attend *The Boy Who Liked Pulling Hair! & Other Winning Plays*, and then travel to the Sarasota Bayfront to visit the Embracing Our Differences art exhibit.

On FST's *Young Playwrights Festival Day*, which will take place on May 19, the gifted young playwrights will be honored in front of their families and educators. The event inspires and invigorates everyone who attends, as Ratner shared, "You see the wonder and merriment that comes from having something shared that these playwrights created." Ratner continued, "[The plays] can change a person's view or perspective, and opens the world of theatre and arts to many that have never experienced it before."

One of WAP's vital supporters, Publix Super Markets Charities, will also be honored on *YPF Day*. Publix Super Markets Charities shared, "We are honored to be Florida Studio Theatre's Partner of the Year. Publix Charities has long supported the WRITE A PLAY Program because of its creative engagement of over 47,000 young minds around the world each year. We look forward to continuing our support of the longstanding program with such a strong impact."

This year's 11 winning plays will be presented in *The Boy Who Liked Pulling Hair! & Other Winning Plays* during the week to schools and educational groups in FST's Keating Theatre. Please contact WAP Coordinator Hannah Bagnall at 941-366-9797 for tickets, show times, or other questions.

The production will also be playing to the public on Saturdays at 11AM from April 14 to May 12 in FST's Keating Theatre as part of the Saturday Children's Series. Tickets are \$10, and are available online at [www.floridastudiotheatre.org](http://www.floridastudiotheatre.org) or by calling the FST Box Office at 941-366-9000.

#### ABOUT THE SARASOTA FESTIVAL OF NEW PLAYS

The *Sarasota Festival of New Plays* seeks to provide a forum for playwrights of all ages to develop plays that can be fruitfully produced. From our young playwrights to emerging adult playwrights and seasoned playwriting veterans, the *Sarasota Festival of New Plays* seeks to expand the breadth and depth of thought in American theatre

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by encouraging people of all ages and all perspectives to write plays. FST has presented the *Sarasota Festival of New Plays* for over 20 years.

New Play Development is the lifeblood of FST. It is a year-round activity that is fully integrated with each of the theatre's other programs. FST's approach to new play development focuses on the continued life of the work. Going beyond producing the world premiere, FST frequently provides plays with their 2nd, 3rd or 4th productions. FST has presented the regional premieres of *Butler* by Richard Strand, *Outside Mullingar* by John Patrick Shanley, and *Alabama Story* by Kenneth Jones. Most recently, FST presented the regional premieres of *The Things They Carried*, *Clever Little Lies* by Joe DiPietro, and *Rich Girl* by Victoria Stewart.

Tickets to the events, plays, and performances can be purchased through the FST Box Office by calling (941) 366-9000, or by visiting the website at [www.floridastudiotheatre.org](http://www.floridastudiotheatre.org).

The *Sarasota Festival of New Plays* is sponsored by the Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The Exchange, Inc., and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

#### ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Florida Studio Theatre (FST) is Sarasota's contemporary theatre, located in the heart of downtown. It has been in operation in Sarasota since 1973. The Florida Studio Theatre campus is a village of theatres – the historic Keating and Gompertz Theatres, the Parisian-style Goldstein and John C. Court Cabarets, and Bowne's Lab Theatre. Near the Sarasota bayfront, FST brings an energy and vitality to the downtown area. Each theatre is small in size and large in impact – providing an intimate and engaging setting for high-quality, professional performances. Hip and historical, entertaining and challenging, we are the theatre where the street meets the elite, where everyone is welcome to come and engage in the art of theatre.

During its history, FST has grown into a theatre with a budget of over \$6 million and over 30,000 subscribers a year, the third largest subscription theatre in the nation.

FST has modeled itself on the strength of creating the best in contemporary theatre at an affordable price. Overall, FST serves over 200,000 attendees per year through its major programs: the Mainstage Series, the Cabaret Series, Stage III, WRITE A PLAY, Education, and New Play Development.

#### ABOUT PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS CHARITIES

George Jenkins, founder of Publix Super Markets and affectionately known as "Mr. George" believed in giving. From the day he opened his first Publix, he made sure his associates, customers, and community were taken care of. In 1966, Mr. George established the Foundation with the vision it would continue giving long after he was gone. Under the leadership of Carol Jenkins Barnett, Mr. George's daughter, Publix Super Markets Charities remains committed to serving the communities in which Publix operates.

To learn more, visit [www.publixcharities.org](http://www.publixcharities.org).

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## **2018 UNDER SIX Winning Plays and Playwrights**

***A ‘Beary’ Big Adventure*** by Viviana Serrano  
Garden Elementary, Ms. Buckalter—4th grade

***Baseball Field*** by Leighton Paul  
Wakeland Elementary, Ms. Lyons—3rd Grade

***Case File 402: Love is Blind*** by Matrick Thorpe  
Pine View School, Mr. Vitkus—5th Grade

***Crayons*** by Juan Palma  
Fruitville Elementary, Mrs. Dendy—5th Grade

***How to Make a Milkshake*** by Joe Hagney  
Gulf Gate Elementary, Ms. Hazen—1st Grade

***Lilly Hippo Learns to ‘Fly’*** by Lilly Amen, Kendall Balon, Jonathon Bell, Dillon Carlson, Sasha Chacheva, Valentina Cole, Xavier Culver-Wollaston, Trinity Heim, Ryland Howell, Michelle Krivain, Paul LaBonte, Seth Manibusan, Abram McKinney, Andres Mejia Kleinerman, Ella Otchet, Romy Petchel, Sadie Rowley, Tess Spingola  
Laurel Nokomis Elementary, Mrs. Tweed— 2nd Grade

***Nibbles*** by A’niya Lawson, Lily Light, Lydia Rhodes, Ainsley Rice  
Phillippi Shores Elementary IB World School,  
Mrs. Kreger, Mrs. Sullivan, and Ms. Kelley— 1st Grade

***Our Imaginary Friends*** by Maggie Layman  
Island Village Montessori School, Ms. Almu and Mr. Bobby— 5th Grade

***The Kiwinut*** by Daniel Quevedo  
Laurel Nokomis School, Mrs. Wardlaw—3rd Grade

***The Mom That Couldn’t Cook*** by Reece Lanum  
Garden Elementary, Mrs. Kern—3rd Grade

***The Washer*** by Chase Caldwell  
Garden Elementary, Mrs. Kern—3rd Grade

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## **SEVEN UP Winners**

***Alex's Success Story*** By Shalev Cohen  
Shelanu School, Bar Bracha Menashe—6th Grade

***Brainstorm*** by Abigail Holdway  
Booker Middle School, Carrie Mills –8th Grade

***Changing*** by Carys Cassells and Iona Jordan  
Queen Anne High School, Ms. Malcolm and Mr. McKenory –9th Grade

***Depression: The Musical*** by Duncan Graham and Michael Rigg  
Queen Anne High School, Ms. Malcolm and Mr. McKenory –9th Grade

***Letters*** by Duncan Graham and Michael Rigg  
Queen Anne High School, Ms. Malcolm and Mr. McKenory –9th Grade

***My Special Family*** by Noga Dosh  
Nof Yaldoot Elementary School, Mrs. Idit Levent Levy—6th Grade

***Show and Tell, A Mostly True Story*** by Zander Moricz  
Pine View School, Mrs. Schell –8th Grade

***What is Truly Significant in Our Life?*** by Olga Morozova  
Humanitarian Linguistic Gymnasium #23, Tatyana Semenova – 9th Grade

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