



Richard Hopkins
Producing Artistic Director

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CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Manager
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
LBaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
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FST ANNOUNCES ITS 2023 STAGE III SERIES LINEUP

(Sarasota, FL) - **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is proud to announce the lineup for its 2023 Stage III Series, dedicated to presenting edgy new work that is challenging in both content and form. The 2022-2023 Winter Season marks the first time in three years that FST has been able to present its three-show Stage III Series for Sarasota audiences. FST's 2023 Stage III Series lineup features three premieres of contemporary plays penned by award-winning American writers.

"As a theatre, our goal is to ask questions, not provide answers," said **Richard Hopkins**, FST's Producing Artistic Director. "And the plays in our Stage III Series do exactly that. *Babel* asks us, 'How far are we willing to go when playing God?' *The Last Match* examines the lengths we will go to in order to feel relevant, important, and alive. *Paralyzed* is a powerful story about the mystery of human nature and the serendipity of life."

The Series begins January 18 with *Babel*, a dark comedy by **Jacqueline Goldfinger** and winner of the 2017 Smith Prize for Political Theatre. Called "Bitingly clever" by *Talkin' Broadway* and "A startling collision between the goofy and the deadly serious" by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, this intriguing new play probes the world of modern eugenics. In *Babel's* version of the future, expectant parents learn within the first few weeks of pregnancy which traits their child will have and what behaviors it is likely to exhibit. If they learn that their future child doesn't have the purest genetic traits, parents are encouraged to terminate the pregnancy and start over. *Babel* follows the extreme lengths two couples go to in order to have a baby, and poses the question, "What we are willing to risk for love?"

FST has been essential to the development of *Babel*, nominating the comedy for the Smith Prize for Political Theatre and holding several public and private readings of the play. FST is also the sixth—and final—stop in the play's **National New Play Network's (NNPN) Rolling World Premiere**. Other theatres that participated in the NNPN Rolling World Premiere of *Babel* include **Unicorn Theatre** (Kansas City, MO), **Theatre Exile** (Philadelphia, PA), **Good Company Theatre** (Ogden, UT), **Passage Theatre** (Trenton, NJ), and the **Contemporary American Theatre Festival** (Shepherdstown, WV).

"I'm thrilled that *Babel* has finally found its way to the FST stage!" said Jacqueline Goldfinger, an award-winning playwright. "This play would not exist without Florida Studio Theatre. They supported me and nurtured the work over a two-year developmental process. It was a

formative experience for me as a writer, and I am excited to share our work with FST audiences!"

Next up is the **Regional Premiere** of *The Last Match* by **Anna Ziegler**, a fast-paced drama that delves into the world of professional tennis. At the semifinals of the U.S. Open, Sergei Sergeyev, an up-and-coming Russian phenom, and Tim Porter, a great American superstar in the twilight of his career, go head-to-head in the game of their lives. Called "Gripping" and "A nail-biter" by *The New York Times*, *The Last Match* journeys into the minds of Sergei and Tim as they consider the shots they didn't take, the sacrifices they made for success, and the legacy they will leave behind. *The Last Match* begins playing February 22 in FST's Bowne's Lab.

FST's 2023 Stage III Series concludes with the much-anticipated **World Premiere** production of *Paralyzed* by Etan Frankel. This dramatic new play follows Leigh and Lee, two strangers with little in common besides their names. She is a Type A statistician reaching 40, while he is an aggressive former athlete just over half her age. The discovery of a mysterious suicide note in a Georgia hotel bathroom sets their lives on unexpected paths that go anywhere but according to plan. Beginning March 29 in FST's Bowne's Lab, *Paralyzed* tells an arresting story of fate, personal responsibility, and the power of forgiveness.

FST was about to start technical rehearsals for *Paralyzed* in March 2020, but the arrival of COVID-19 prevented the production from opening. The two original actors cast in the production—**Rachel Moulton** and **Alexander Stuart**—will return to the stage this season to finally give the play its World Premiere after three years.

"*Paralyzed* is going to ring a lot of bells for people, especially after the isolation and uncertainty we've all collectively experienced," said **Moulton**, who will play Leigh in FST's production.

With its mission to "produce theatre that challenges with as much gusto as it entertains," and to "make theatre accessible to the broadest possible audience," FST offers all three Stage III productions for as little as \$49. Subscriptions are now on sale at FloridaStudioTheatre.org or through the Box Office at (941) 366-9000.

FST's Stage III Series is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The production is also supported by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues, the Shubert Foundation, and the National New Play Network.

SERIES AT A GLANCE

***Babel* by Jacqueline Goldfinger | January 18 – February 10, 2023**

In this version of the future, expectant parents learn within the first few weeks of pregnancy which traits their child will have and what behaviors it is likely to exhibit. This intriguing new play follows the extreme lengths two couples go to in order to have a baby. *Babel* probes the world of modern eugenics, explores the societal value of a baby, and asks us what we are willing to risk for love. NNPN Rolling World Premiere.

***The Last Match* by Anna Ziegler | February 22 – March 17, 2023**

REGIONAL PREMIERE. It's the semifinals of the U.S. Open. Sergei Sergeyev, an up-and-coming Russian phenom, and Tim Porter, a great American superstar in the twilight of his career, go head-to-head under the lights of the tennis court. Journey into the minds of these two extraordinary players as they consider the shots they didn't take, the sacrifices they made for success, and the legacy they may leave behind. By match point, much more has been won and lost than a game of tennis.

***Paralyzed* by Etan Frankel | March 29 – April 21, 2023**

WORLD PREMIERE. Leigh and Lee are two strangers who have little in common besides their names—she is a Type A statistician and he is an aggressive former athlete. But the discovery of a mysterious suicide note in a hotel bathroom sets their lives on unexpected paths that go anywhere but according to plan. *Paralyzed* tells a striking story of guilt, personal responsibility, and the power of forgiveness.

ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Florida Studio Theatre (FST) is Sarasota's contemporary theatre. Founded in 1973, FST has grown to a village of five theatres located in the heart of downtown Sarasota. Each theatre is small in size and large in impact— providing intimate and engaging settings for high-quality, professional performances.

Today, FST has established itself as a major force in American Theatre. FST is the largest subscription theatre in the state of Florida and among the largest in the country, serving more than 200,000 live attendees each year across its diverse programs: Mainstage, Cabaret, Stage III, Children's Theatre, The FST School, New Play Development, and FST Improv.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to as many people as possible. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins, FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. Hip and historical, entertaining and challenging, here everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

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