



Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter  
Public Relations Manager  
(941) 366-9017 ext. 338  
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org  
DATE: January 17, 2023

## FST ANNOUNCES SPELMAN AWARD RECIPIENT

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is proud to announce that the theatre will present its esteemed **Spelman Award** to **Ed and Susan Maier** at its annual fundraising event on Monday, February 6. Named in honor of FST's founding Artistic Director, Jon Spelman, this award is presented to an institution or individual who has demonstrated extraordinary leadership by providing FST with counsel, financial backing, and/or in-kind support.

Ed and Susan Maier have supported Sarasota's Contemporary Theatre since 2015, expanding FST's reach in the community by introducing numerous colleagues and friends to the theatre and its mission. In 2016, FST partnered with Ed and Susan Maier to bring Auguste Moreau's well-known sculpture, "The Butterfly Lady"—currently located on the terrace outside FST's Keating Theatre—back to Sarasota's performing arts district, as the sculpture's original owner intended. The couple has also financially supported FST's efforts to provide first-rate, convenient housing for its guest artists.

"Ed recently said to me, 'I am truly humbled that you chose us to receive this award, because there are so many people who have done so much more for FST than us, but I assure you, there is no one who loves FST more than we do,'" shared **Richard Hopkins**, FST's Producing Artistic Director. "I like a person who can speak from the heart. Ed brings strength and humility to everything he touches, which is complemented by Susan's lightness of spirit and keen intelligence. Together, Ed and Susan are prime examples of the kind of people who so graciously and generously support Florida Studio Theatre. I am full of gratitude for their friendship and support."

"Since we moved to Sarasota more than a decade ago, we have been impressed by the caliber and professionalism of the productions at FST," said Ed and Susan Maier. "Richard Hopkins and Rebecca Hopkins do a marvelous job managing their five theatres, though we are especially fond of the Cabarets. FST contributes so much to the Sarasota community, and we are happy to support them in their artistic endeavors."

Ed and Susan Maier will be presented with the 2023 Spelman Award at the theatre's biggest fundraiser of the year, **The 70s Shindig**, on Monday, February 6. Attendees are invited to don their favorite '70s apparel for the event, which will feature exclusive live performances

by some of FST's beloved artists and a three-course plated dinner by **Michael's On East**. Special thanks to **Gulf Coast Community Foundation**, the lead sponsor of The 70s Shindig.

Tickets to The 70s Shindig are \$300 per person. To reserve a seat, please contact **Kristin Hartnett**, Development Associate, at [KHartnett@FloridaStudioTheatre.org](mailto:KHartnett@FloridaStudioTheatre.org) or 941.366.9017 ext. 316. Funds raised during the event will support **FST's Playwrights Collective**, a select group of American playwrights who are developing new work for the FST stage. Collective members include **Deborah Brevoort** (*My Lord, What A Night*), **Kenneth Jones** (*Alabama Story*), **Sandy Rustin** (*The Cottage*), and **Mark St. Germain** (*Freud's Last Session*).

### **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, we are where everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

###