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**FST OPENS THE STAGE III SEASON WITH
*HOW TO USE A KNIFE***

(Sarasota, FL) – FST’s Stage III series opens with *How To Use A Knife*, by Will Snider. Set in the heart of a fast-paced New York kitchen, this gritty drama is the first production in Florida Studio Theatre’s Stage III Series, running from January 17 through February 11, 2018. A subscription to all three Stage III shows may be purchased for as little as \$39. Tickets can be purchased online at www.floridastudiotheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at (941) 366-9000.

In the chaotic hustle and bustle of a Wall Street restaurant, Chef George gets a fresh start when he takes over this melting pot of a kitchen. Two rowdy Guatemalan line cooks, a wet-behind-the-ears busboy and a reserved African dishwasher serve up drama nightly. The heat really turns up when the authorities arrive, looking for a wanted man. *How to Use a Knife* explores both the personal and moral questions that arise when the ugliness of the past boils over.

Critics have weighed in on this emotional and thought-provoking play. *Talkin’ Broadway* says it “Surges with non-stop energy.” *Broadway World* says it is filled with “Authenticity and intelligence.” *Philadelphia Magazine* agrees calling it “Riveting” and a “Marvelous production.”

Taking on the role of Chef George, is FST veteran Sam Mossler. No stranger to FST, Mossler first began his FST career as a participant of FST’s Summer Camp in 1985. A decade later he then went on to become a winning playwright in FST’s Inaugural Young Playwright’s Festival. Now making his Stage III debut, Mossler reflects on his journey with FST. “When I was a kid FST was bringing really mind blowing plays to the community. They were new plays, edgy plays, even dangerous plays,” says Mossler. “Some plays were too bawdy for my parents to take me to. A lot of the plays explored the darkest aspects of humanity. I became keenly aware that theatre wasn’t just about entertainment. It was engaging and communal. The theatre is about truth, be it ugly or beautiful or funny or sad. Now I have the opportunity to come home and work on this gorgeously brutal new piece with such an apt and timely message. It’s everything FST taught me to seek in my artistic journey.”

Mossler is also joined by another familiar face to the FST stage. Michael Fraser, currently an Acting Apprentice at the theatre, plays the character of Jack. Fraser was most recently seen on stage in performance with *FST Improv* and also in FST’s Children’s Theatre productions, *Robin Hood* and *Deck The Halls: 'Tis the Season*.

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"*How to Use a Knife* is a deeply introspective play, filled with brutal honesty and self-doubt," says Fraser. "Its themes are very relatable to anyone fresh out of college, preparing to start a career. While preparing to play Jack, I realized just how many of the character's experiences mirror my own since moving to Sarasota; Jumping head first into a new, fast paced world and learning as much as I can from the professionals we're lucky enough to be surrounded by. I couldn't be happier, or more grateful for the opportunity to work on a play like this."

Joining Mossler and Fraser and all making their FST debuts are fellow cast members: Cedric Cannon, Alfredo De Quesada, Alexis Hyatt, Omar Pelaez, and Chris Tipp. Cannon's previous credits include *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner* and *Camelot*. De Quesada has appeared in *Little Shop of Horrors* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Hyatt's credits include *Boeing, Boeing* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Pelaez has performed in *The Secret* and *Death of A Salesman*. Tipp's credits include *Hamlet* and *Spellbound*.

According to Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins, "It's a rough and tumble drama, just like a real New York kitchen. This production engages the audience's imagination with minimal set and spectacle. Each audience member will fill in the blanks of the kitchen on stage. Themes of immigration and human morality are strongly present in this story. It's funny, riveting, and in your face."

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ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Known as Sarasota's Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by Artist Jon Spelman. Starting out as a small touring company, FST traveled to places such as migrant camps and prisons. The company then acquired the former Woman's Club building, becoming the first permanent venue. Shortly after Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins arrived, the building was purchased and 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 five theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the Gompertz Theatre, the Parisian style Goldstein Cabaret and John C. Court Cabaret, and Bowne's Lab Theatre.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to a broad-based audience. 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.

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