



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**35 NEVER BEFORE SEEN SHOWS IN ONLY 3 DAYS
THE 9TH ANNUAL SARASOTA IMPROV FESTIVAL IS HERE!**

(Sarasota, FL) —It's that time of year again when laughter takes over the entire Florida Studio Theatre campus. 23 of the top improv groups from all over come to Sarasota to take risks, get raw, and get real on stage in a variety of improv formats. The 9th Annual Improv Festival will be held on July 13, 14, and 15. Passes are now on sale; 3 day passes are \$75, 2 day passes are \$65, Friday or Saturday passes are \$49, and Thursday passes are \$20. All festival passes are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Box Office at 941-366-9000, or by going online at floridastudiotheatre.org.

The *Sarasota Improv Festival* brings together the most creative and inventive improv groups from all across the country and the world. "This is such an energizing and exciting event," said Festival Producer and FST Managing Director, Rebecca Hopkins. "For three days, attendees get the chance to see a wide range of improvisation performance styles from long form, short form, hip hop improv, musical, genre-based, and more. It's a full weekend of creative chaos that takes a lot of planning to run smoothly. It's a jam packed weekend of comic shenanigans... and every year, it's even more jam packed. I have to make myself breathe just thinking about it."

Also gearing up for these 3 days of non-stop laughter and unpredictable comedy is FST's Director of Improv, Will Luera. "Every year there is so much care taken in the curation of this festival and I'm excited to be a part of the production team for the third year in a row. We are looking forward to welcoming our headliner, the off-Broadway hit, **BLANK! The Musical**, to Sarasota in their first ever festival appearance. This ensemble features some of the best musical improvisers in the country. This year FST will be welcoming **Joe Bill**, who is considered a guru to improvisers of all levels."

Brand new to the festival this year are groups such as **Square One Improv, Brouhaha, and Joe Bill & Friends**. Festival favorites including **North Coast, Parallelogramophonograph, ImprovBoston, STACKED, Available Cupholders** and more will be returning for the festival. In addition to all of these acts, there will also be 17 workshops taught by the festival improvisers for audiences to try their hand at the world of improv.

Headlining the festival, recognized by *The Source* as "Extraordinary" and "Spectacular", **BLANK! The Musical** represents some of the best and most experienced comedy minds in the country. Creators, Michael Girts, Mike Descoteaux and T.J. Shanoff have produced, directed, performed, written for and taught at The Second City, ImprovBoston, iO, Upright Citizen's Brigade, Comedy Sportz, The Magnet Theater, Norwegian Cruise Lines and more. Including the original Off-Broadway producing team, BLANK's collective resume includes work with Tony award-winning composers, designers, Broadway musicals, and some of musical theater's biggest names.

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For the third year in a row, FST brings in laughter from across the ocean as well. "We are continuing our commitment to bringing in International Acts with **Group Complot/Escena** from Mexico City. Like many of our past International Acts, they will showcase the more theatrical aspects of comedic improvisation."

Kicking off the festival with some home grown comedy on Thursday evening are returning Florida groups **Just The Funny, Dear Aunt Gertrude, Sick Puppies, The Third Thought, Post Dinner Conversation, Villain Theatre, and FST Improv**. These comedic comrades will wrap up the first night of the festival with FAST: the Florida All-Star King of the Hill Competition.

On both Friday and Saturday night, groups will perform 40-minute sets as the laughs continue with returning favorites including, **STACKED, When X Meets Y, Dad's Garage, Available Cupholders, ImprovBoston, Parallelogramphonograph, North Coast Improv, SAK Comedy Lab**, and of course the home team of **FST Improv**.

The Improv Festival provides comedy and unpredictable fun for all ages. Another brand new show, **Just For Laughs** will be presented on Saturday, July 15 at 11am to give Festival goers a taste of FST's Children's Theatre improvised programming.

Now a staple of summer in Sarasota, last year's festival saw over 3400 attendees in just three days. The *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* calls it "Funny and inventive" with a "Diversity and depth of talent." *Sarasota Magazine* says it's, a "Comedy packed weekend" that is "Clever, well done, and evocative."

At the Sarasota Improv Festival, you never know what will happen. Attendees get the chance to see never before performed shows by the top improvisers in the field. Rounding out the festival is the always anticipated *All Play* performance on Saturday night in the Gompertz Theatre. It's the one night with every single performer in the festival on stage playing together at the same time. Anything can happen at any moment. It's creativity at its most chaotic, and it works. But don't worry the staff is there to make sense of it all. Your only job is to laugh as much and as loud as you possibly can while enjoying food and beverages.

The *Sarasota Improv Festival* only happens once a year, so don't miss it. Passes are now on sale; 3 day passes are \$75, 2 day passes are \$65, Friday or Saturday passes are \$49, and Thursday passes are \$20. All festival passes are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Box Office at 941-366-9000, or by going online at floridastudiotheatre.org.

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 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 five theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the newly renovated Gompertz Theatre, the Goldstein Cabaret, the John C. Court Cabaret, and the new 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. Under Richard Hopkins, Producing 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.

PRICING:

Three Day Pass - Thursday, Friday, AND Saturday - \$75

Two Day Pass - Friday AND Saturday - \$65

Single Day Pass - Saturday - \$49

Single Day Pass - Friday - \$49

Thursday Night Pass - \$20

Single tickets - \$10

Single tickets for Headliner - \$25

Single tickets for Just For Laughs - \$6

Workshops - \$35 each or BUY THREE for \$90

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

Thursday, July 13

7:00pm – FST Improv, Dear Aunt Gertrude, Equanimity, Just The Funny

8:30pm – When X Meets Y, Sick Puppies Comedy, The Third Thought, Square One Improv

10:00pm – FAST Florida All Star King of the Hill Competition

Friday, July 14

6:00pm – FST Improv

7:00pm – Brouhaha

7:00pm – ImprovBoston

7:00pm – Villain Theater

8:00pm – Dad’s Garage

8:00pm – Available Cupholders

8:00pm – BLANK! The Musical

8:00pm – Complot Escena (Spanish Show)*

9:00pm – STACKED

9:00pm – Joe Bill & Friends

9:00pm – Parallelogramophonograph

10:00pm – North Coast Improv

Saturday, July 15

11:00am - Just For Laughs

5:00pm – Complot Escena

5:00pm – Hawk and Wayne

6:00pm – Available Cupholders

6:00pm – Big Bang Improv

6:00pm – STACKED

7:00pm – North Coast Improv

7:00pm – Parallelogramophonograph

7:00pm – Joe Bill & Friends

8:00pm – ImprovBoston

8:00pm – Dad’s Garage

8:00pm – SAK Comedy Lab

9:00pm – BLANK! The Musical

10:30pm – All Play

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For full Group Information, please visit <https://www.floridastudiotheatre.org/2017-improv-festival>.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE – Saturday July 15

9:00- 11:00am

Fresh Squeezed-Characters Not From Concentrate.

Stories that matter!

Improvised Stand Comedy or The Comedic timing in Improvised Monologues

Red Light District

The Scene-Style Cheat Sheet

Lucid narrative: Conscience of all the basic elements of improvised stage writing

Playing with Emotion

11:30 – 1:30pm

Intro to Musical Improv

Power Improv Toolkit

Intro to Hip Hop Improv

Everything is Relevant. Nothing Matters.

Villainy: Being Bad Onstage

Committing To The First Moment Or Real Life

2:00 – 4:00pm

Reinventing ShortForm

The First 30 Seconds

Advanced Hip Hop Improv

The Devil is in the Details

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