



Richard Hopkins
Producing Artistic Director

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**FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE WELCOMES J PAUL NICHOLAS
AS NEW ASSOCIATE ARTIST**

(Sarasota, FL) — Florida Studio Theatre (FST) is pleased to announce that award-winning actor, director, teacher, and fight choreographer **J Paul Nicholas** will join its Artistic Team beginning March 1, 2021. As an Associate Artist, Nicholas will bring his talent to FST's stages as an actor and director, will help advance FST's robust New Play Development program, and will lead classes at the FST School.

"Paul is a triple threat: he is an actor, director, and manager rolled into one," said **Richard Hopkins**, FST's Producing Artistic Director. "He is a Renaissance man. He's an excellent actor—as FST's audiences witnessed with his performance in our World Premiere production of *Honor Killing* in 2018—an experienced director, and has a Master's Degree in Business. He truly understands multiple sides of the theatre industry. Paul will be a wonderful addition to FST's Artistic Team, and I look forward to seeing what we'll be able to achieve together."

Nicholas brings over 15 years of directing and acting experience to FST. He has performed at over a dozen regional theatres across the country, including Seattle Rep, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Woolly Mammoth, and was part of the national tour of the Broadway hit, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. He made his FST debut in 2018, playing four characters in the theatre's World Premiere production of *Honor Killing* by Sarah Bierstock. Nicholas has also directed productions of plays and staged readings at theatres along the East Coast, in addition to providing dramaturgical support for playwrights like **John Anastasi** (*I Forgive You, Ronald Reagan*) and **Corinna Manetto** (*You Must Be Mine*). His experience onstage and in the director's chair will be vital to his work at FST, collaborating with members of FST's Playwright Collective to develop new work for the theatre's stages.

"It is difficult to express how honored I am to have this opportunity," shared **J Paul Nicholas**. "I am thrilled that, as a member of FST's Artistic Team, I will be supporting playwrights during their creative process and helping guide actors to their most truthful portrayal of characters."

In addition to his artistic background, Nicholas is also an accomplished teacher and fight director. As a Teaching Artist, he has worked extensively with youth, guiding students through the worlds of Improvisation, Stage Combat, Shakespeare, and Acting. Nicholas has

served as Fight Choreographer for ten productions, including *That Pretty Pretty; or The Rape Play* at Theatre Exile (Philadelphia, PA) to *Flyin' West* at Alliance Theater (Atlanta, GA).

“Not only is this position my dream job—to be involved in all aspects of making theatre—but it is also with an organization that I truly admire,” said Nicholas. “FST has been a beacon of social and fiscal responsibility, while always maintaining the highest standards of entertainment and enlightenment.”

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 230,000 live attendees each year across its six core programs: Mainstage, Cabaret, Stage III, Children’s Theatre, The FST School, and New Play Development.

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 the theatre where the street meets the elite — where everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

ABOUT J PAUL NICHOLAS

J Paul Nicholas has been around the theatre since he was five-years-old, following his actor mother to rehearsals and performances, and has been acting himself since the age of 10. After a brief and unsatisfying career in banking and finance, Paul could no longer resist his natural calling; he quit the corporate life in 1999 and moved to NYC to be a professional actor. Since then, he earned an MFA from George Washington University’s Academy for Classical Acting, appeared in over 30 productions at over 20 theaters nationwide, and won 2 Barrymore awards for excellence in acting. In 2018, he was in the World Premiere of *Honor Killing* at Florida Studio Theatre. Before that, he was on the national tour of the Broadway sensation *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Paul has also been seen on several TV series, and for eight seasons was the defense attorney Linden Delroy on *Law & Order: SVU*. He claims Miami as his hometown and had made Philadelphia his home since 2016.

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