



Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter  
Public Relations Associate  
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338  
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org  
DATE: May 6, 2019

**11<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SARASOTA IMPROV FESTIVAL  
FULL LINEUP ANNOUNCED**

(Sarasota, FL) —**Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is thrilled to announce its lineup for the 11th Annual Sarasota Improv Festival, the premier Festival of its kind in the Southeastern United States. Founded by Rebecca Hopkins in 2009, the Festival has become a destination event, drawing thousands of people from across the state of Florida and beyond. With 20 of the best comedy troupes traveling to Sarasota from all over the country and from as far away as the United Kingdom and Canada, FST's campus will be teeming with comedy and improvisational theater for two days— July 12 and 13. Festival passes are now on sale—Weekend passes are \$75, Friday passes are \$39, and Saturday passes are \$59. All passes may be purchased by calling FST's Box Office at 941-366-9000, or at [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org).

"This year is exciting for me, because I have an opportunity to shape the artistic vision of the Festival as I have over the last few years," shared Will Luera, FST's Director of Improv and Director of this year's Sarasota Improv Festival. "And I will get to see how the Festival interacts with every part of the theater. I appreciate the trust that Rebecca [Hopkins] has in me as she hands over direction of this amazing Improv event to me."

Headlining the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Sarasota Improv Festival is **Quartet**, a group consisting of some of the country's top and most experienced improvisers. Formed by Bob Dassie in the 90s, **Quartet** has taken many forms and featured a variety of members—including Tami Sagher (Writer, *30 Rock*, *Psych*, and *How I Met Your Mother*), Stephnie Weir (*MADtv*), and Jack McBrayer (*30 Rock*). No matter who makes up **Quartet**, the group is dedicated to relationship and character-driven improvisational comedy.

The four members of **Quartet** performing at the Festival are Carla Cackowski, Craig Cackowski, Bob Dassie, and Jean Villepique, all of whom were part of the Chicago's original iO (Improv Olympics) Theater just as improv was beginning to establish itself in the United States. Carla and Craig Cackowski may look familiar— the married couple has their own improv duo, **Orange Tuxedo**, which was a favorite at last year's Festival. Dassie has performed and taught improv all over the world, and has appeared on *Monk*, *Community*, and HBO's *Funny or Die Presents*. Villepique has studied and performed at Chicago's iO and Second City theaters, and has starred on *AP Bio*, *Sharp Objects*, and *30 Rock*.

For the fifth year in a row, FST brings international improv groups to the Sarasota Improv Festival. Both making their Festival debuts, **2-MAN NO-SHOW** hails from Toronto, Canada, and **The Maydays**, one of the UK's top improv groups, are based in Brighton and London, England.

**-MORE-**

One of the most in-demand Canadian acts, **2-MAN NO-SHOW** features just two men—Ken Hall and Isaac Kessler— and is known for the pair’s daring physicality and ability to create outrageous scenarios. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Hall and Kessler “Display the kind of restless intelligence, physical curiosity, and potent vulnerability that keeps the stakes high and the gags appealing.” **2-MAN NO-SHOW** has been nominated for two Canadian Comedy Awards for Best Improv Troupe and Best Comedic Show, and was a critics’ pick at the New York, Chicago, and Toronto Comedy Festivals. “I’ve been trying for a while to get **2-MAN NO-SHOW** to the Festival,” shared Luera. “But they’ve been so busy touring and doing gigs in LA. I’m thrilled that Festival attendees will finally be able to see the hilarious characters and unconventional storylines that **2-MAN NO-SHOW** creates.”

Called “Always great...laceratingly funny, and, at times, deeply affecting” by Brighton’s *Fringe Guru*, **The Maydays** create clever scenes and songs on the spot that not only inspire laughter, but also, at times, reflection. **The Maydays** currently perform four shows with varying approaches— in *Tonight’s Top Story*, audience members cut out newspaper articles just before the show, and the group comes up with scenes and songs, inspired by a few randomly selected articles, that reflect the specific city’s spirit.

Returning for the Festival are several favorites, including **Parallelogramophonograph**, **Dad’s Garage**, **ImprovBoston**, and **Available Cupholders**. In addition to the 27 performances taking place over the course of 48 hours, 14 workshops will be held during the day on Saturday, July 12, for those who want to learn from some of improv’s top artists. The Festival concludes with the highly popular finale **All Play**, where all of the Festival artists complete a series of improvisational games together. The resulting performance is a complete surprise—audience members have no idea what they will see onstage, and improvisers are unaware of what suggestion will spark their creativity.

For the complete list of groups and bios, please visit [sarasotaimprovfestival.com](http://sarasotaimprovfestival.com) or [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org). Festival passes are now on sale—Weekend passes are \$75, Friday passes are \$39, and Saturday passes are \$59. Festival passes may be purchased by calling FST’s Box Office at 941-366-9000, or at [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org).

#### **PRICING:**

Weekend Pass - \$75

Single Day Pass - Friday - \$39

Single Day Pass - Saturday - \$59

Single tickets for Headliner - \$25

Single tickets - \$10

Single tickets for Sarasota Showcase (Free with pass) - \$8

Workshops are \$35 each for each 2-hour session, or \$90 for 3 sessions.

#### **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:**

##### **Friday, July 12**

6 PM – FST Improv (Sarasota, FL)

7 PM – Parallelogramophonograph (Austin, TX)

7 PM – Happy Karaoke Fun Time (New York City)

7 PM – Alligator Alley Comedy Hour: Just the Funny (Miami, FL) & Square One Improv (Naples, FL)

8 PM – Available Cupholders (Austin, TX)

8 PM – Dad’s Garage (Atlanta, GA)

**-MORE-**

8 PM – 2-MAN NO-SHOW (Toronto, Canada)  
9 PM – Quartet\* (Los Angeles, CA)  
9 PM – ImprovBoston (Boston, MA)  
9 PM – The Maydays (United Kingdom)  
10 PM – Festival All-Stars

### **Saturday, July 13**

11 AM – Improv Fest Family Show\*  
4 PM – Sarasota Showcase: Come What Will, BUSTED!, and Early Bird Special (Sarasota, FL)\*\*  
5 PM – Tampa Bay Improv Invasion: Dear Aunt Gertrude (Tampa, FL), The Third Thought (Tampa, FL), and Definitely Not Murderers (St. Petersburg, FL)  
5 PM – When X Meets Y (Sarasota, FL)  
5 PM – StaceJam (Chicago, IL)  
6 PM – ImprovBoston (Boston, MA)  
6 PM – Available Cupholders (Austin, TX)  
6 PM – 2-MAN NO-SHOW (Toronto, Canada)  
7 PM – The Maydays (United Kingdom)  
7 PM – Big Bang Improv (Sarasota, Boston, New York City)  
7 PM – Parallelogramophonograph (Austin, TX)  
8 PM – Happy Karaoke Fun Time (New York City)  
8 PM – SAK Comedy Lab (Orlando, FL)  
8 PM – Dad’s Garage (Atlanta, GA)  
9 PM – Quartet (Los Angeles, CA)  
10:30 PM – All-Play

\*Not included in Festival Passes; Open for Single Tickets

\*\*Free for Improv Fest Pass Holders; Single Tickets are \$8

### **WORKSHOP SCHEDULE—Saturday, July 13**

#### **9AM – 11AM**

Slow and Steady Wins the Scene – Led by The Maydays  
You're It! Creating Narrative Through Tag Outs – Led by The Third Thought  
Genre & Style Crash Course – Led by Parallelogramophonograph  
Level Up: How Deep Is Your Yes, And? - Led by Available Cupholders  
Intro to Musical Improv – Led by Stacey Smith of StaceJam  
Short-Form Remastered – Led by ImprovBoston

#### **11:30AM - 1:30PM**

Meeting Alzheimer’s with Improvisation – Led by Jade Angelica  
Going Bigger and Beyond: The Technique of Play – Led by 2-MAN NO-SHOW  
All-Form – Led by ImprovBoston  
Getting to Know Will (Shakespeare) – Led by SAK Comedy Lab  
Burn Your Fear – Led by Happy Karaoke Fun Time

#### **2-4PM**

Truth in Song – Led by Katy Schutte (The Maydays)  
Inner Game of Improv – Led by Available Cupholders  
Characters – Led by Jean Villepique (Quartet)

**-MORE-**

## **ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE**

Known as Sarasota's Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by 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 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.

###