



Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director

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CONTACT: Lydia Baxter  
Public Relations Associate  
(941) 366-9017 ext. 338  
lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org  
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**NEW SKETCH COMEDY REVUE ROASTS TODAY'S CULTURE  
AND CURRENT EVENTS AT FST**

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre (FST)** presents ***Laughing Matters (Variant 6): Paranoia on Parade***, a new edition of the theatre's hit musical sketch comedy revue inspired by today's culture and politics. Featuring parodies of popular songs and musical theatre classics interspersed with original comedic sketches, *Laughing Matters* pokes fun at everything—from the impact of social media and the steep rise of inflation to Sarasota's rapid development and the seemingly endless COVID-19 pandemic. Created by a team of writers from across the country led by Head Writer **Rebecca Hopkins** with Musical Arrangements by **Jim Prosser**, *Laughing Matters (Variant 6)* begins playing February 9 in FST's Court Cabaret. Tickets are now on sale at [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](https://FloridaStudioTheatre.org) or at 941.366.9000.

"We've been eager to do another volume of *Laughing Matters* for a while now," said Hopkins. "So much has happened since we produced *Volume 5: Lock the Gates!* in 2016. As we started to reopen the theatre last spring, the timing just felt right. We want to give everyone the opportunity to laugh together again—to be in one room, share a moment of joy with others, and to poke fun at this crazy time we are living in."

Previous volumes of this fan-favorite have been called "Sharp" and "Vibrant" by the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* and "A grab bag of humor" by *The Observer*.

Three actors—**Nick Anastasia**, **Richie McCall**, and **William Selby**—return for the latest rendition of *Laughing Matters*. In 2016, Anastasia made his FST debut with the show's fifth installment and has since starred in FST's productions of *Burt & Me* (Summer 2017), *Unchained Melodies* (2019), and *That Amoré!* (2020). McCall returns to the Court Cabaret stage for his fourth iteration of *Laughing Matters*. He was also part of the original Broadway, Toronto, and national touring companies of *Showboat* and *Grand Hotel*. Selby last appeared at FST in the hit Mainstage production, *Bright Star* (2020), and has directed 19 productions of the hit musical revue *Forbidden Broadway*.

"I'm over the moon to be reuniting with Bill [Selby] and Richie onstage," said Nick Anastasia. "The three of us have maintained a great friendship after *Laughing Matters (Volume 5)*, so I'm grateful that we are getting another chance to work together. In this business, it is rare to be able to work with people you truly love."

**Jenna Cormey** makes her FST debut with this new edition of *Laughing Matters*. She has previously been in regional productions of *RENT*, *Hairspray*, *King John*, and *Carrie*.

FST's production of *Laughing Matters (Variant 6)* is supported, in part, by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues; by the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture and the State of Florida; and The Exchange. Thank you to our media sponsor, *SCENE Magazine*.

The health and safety of FST's patrons, staff, volunteers, and artists continue to be of the greatest importance to FST. The theatre is part of **#SafeArtsSarasota**, a coalition of professional arts organizations upholding a joint set of safety measures. The most up-to-date list of protocols the theatre is following can be found at [FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://FloridaStudioTheatre.org).

### **LAUGHING MATTERS (VARIANT 6): PARANOIA ON PARADE**

**Head Writer:** Rebecca Hopkins

**Contributing Writers:** Kevin Allen, Stephan deGhelder, Sarah Durham, Tony Hendriks, and Jim Prosser.

**Musical Arrangements:** Jim Prosser

**Director:** Richard Hopkins

**Music Director:** Minhui Lee

**Choreographer:** Ben Liebert

Runs February 9 – June 19, 2022, in FST's Court Cabaret

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

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