



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter  
Public Relations Associate  
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338  
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org  
DATE: September 28, 2020

### FST RECEIVES \$5,000 CARES GRANT FROM MANATEE COUNTY

(Sarasota, FL) – **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is pleased to announce that it has received \$5,000 from Manatee County as part of the **CARES** (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) **Act**, providing funding to help businesses recover from the pandemic. These funds provide crucial assistance to the arts and cultural venues, like FST, that were severely impacted by mandated closures. They will help cover unexpected costs related to PPE and implementing new health and safety procedures necessary to operate safely. With this grant support, FST will outfit all of its commercial buildings with MERV-13 air filters and purchase sanitizing and disinfecting products. Although the theatre is not geographically located in Manatee County, FST's 35,000 subscriber households extend into and beyond the County. Additionally, FST's award-winning WRITE A PLAY art-in-education program reaches over 15 schools in Manatee each year.

"As a nonprofit, live performing arts venue, we are being hit in two ways: loss of income from missing ticket revenue, and having to pay for additional safety measures," shared **Rebecca Hopkins**, FST's Managing Director. "Organizations like FST need this type of funding so that we can continue to prepare to reopen our doors—without having to assume additional financial burdens. We greatly appreciate this support—it is essential to protecting the safety and health of our employees and community."

After the theatre was forced to close its doors on March 15, FST created a health and safety task force to ensure that its employees could return to work safely once stay-at-home orders were lifted. Now FST staff, interns, and apprentices complete daily health screenings, are required to wear masks when moving between spaces, and maintain social distancing. With this funding, the theatre will install additional glass partitions in FST's Sudakoff Theatre Wing and Keating Theatre Box Office. The theatre will also outfit ventilation systems in several buildings with MERV-13 air filters, which the CDC recommends for use in schools, homes, and hospitals.

For more information on this grant from Manatee County, please contact Lydia Baxter, FST's Public Relations Associate, at (941) 366-9017 x338 or at [lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org](mailto:lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org).

## **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, Education, 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.

**###**