



Richard Hopkins
Producing Artistic Director

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FST EXTENDS RUN OF CAPTIVATING DRAMA, *NETWORK*

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) proudly announces the extension of its Regional Premiere production of ***Network***, a fast-paced play based on the Academy Award-winning screenplay by **Paddy Chayefsky**. Adapted for the stage by **Lee Hall**, *Network* follows the downward spiral of Howard Beale, a longtime news anchor who is being let go due to poor ratings. Critics call the production “Gripping” (*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*) and “Chilling” (*Sarasota Magazine*). Due to audience demand, *Network* is being held over and will now run through March 26, 2023, in FST’s Gompertz Theatre. Single tickets range from \$25-39 and are now on sale at FloridaStudioTheatre.org or at 941.366.9000.

“I’m thrilled to see the audience’s response to *Network*,” said **Richard Hopkins**, the show’s director. “They seem to love the show as much as I do. The cast is wonderful, the technical aspects of the show are top notch, and the play speaks to timely issues with both humor and drama.”

Network is centered on Howard Beale, a veteran anchor who is being fired for not pulling in the viewers. In his final broadcast, Howard unravels live on air—which makes his show’s ratings skyrocket. Overnight Howard becomes the biggest thing in television, and his recent success catches the interest of the network’s corporate executives, who are eager to capitalize on Beale’s newfound popularity.

FST’s production of *Network* has been a hit with audiences and critics, alike. *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* wrote that the show “Grabs you from the first scenes and keeps you wondering through the explosive finale” and described *Network* as “Fast-paced, scary, disturbing, and twisted.” *The Bradenton Times* called the production “Stellar,” “Outstanding,” and “Captivating.”

Audiences have called the FST’s production of *Network* “Powerful,” “Fantastic,” “All around outstanding,” and “Excellent.” Dorothy F. said, “*Network* exceeded my expectations. I actually felt like saying [the famous line] out loud, ‘I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore’ when I left the theatre. This was an excellent production and one of my all-time favorites.”

Sheffield Chastain plays Howard Beale in what critics are calling “One of his strongest performances” (*Sarasota Magazine*). *Network* marks Chastain’s ninth production at FST. **Rod Brogan** plays Max Schumacher, the Head of News at UBS who disagrees with how network

executives are using his friend, Howard, to boost their bottom line. **Carly Zien** plays Diana Christensen, Director of Programming at UBS, who convinces the network's leaders to keep Howard Beale on the air once he's become a "latter-day prophet."

FST's production of *Network* features nine other cast members with speaking roles as well as a non-speaking ensemble of six. Other speaking roles are played by **John Anderson, Lawrence Evans, Alan Gillespie, Rebecka Jones, Sean Phillips, Jason Pintar, Simone Stadler, Roy Stanton, and Alex Teicheira**. The ensemble features **Ben Brandt, Scott Ehrenpreis, Anakin Garner, Jeric Gutierrez, Joe Storti, and Gemma Vodacek**.

The production's creative team includes **Kate Alexander** and **Sean Daniels** (Additional Artistic Support), **Ellie Mooney** (Intimacy Coordinator), **Isabel A. and Moriah Curley-Clay** (Scenic Design), **April Andrew Carswell** (Costume Design), **Ben Rawson** (Lighting Design), **Thom Korp** (Sound Design), and **Nathan W. Scheuer** (Projection and Video Design).

FST's production of *Network* is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The production is also supported by Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues, and the Shubert Foundation. Thank you to our media sponsors, *SCENE Magazine* and *SNN*.

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 200,000 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 where everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

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