



Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director

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**FST PRESENTS REGIONAL PREMIERE OF  
COMPELLING DRAMA, *NETWORK***

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is proud to present the Regional Premiere of ***Network***, adapted by **Lee Hall** and based on the Academy Award-winning screenplay by **Paddy Chayefsky**. *Network* is a fast-paced drama following the downward spiral of Howard Beale, a longtime news anchor who has worked at a television network, UBS, for 25 years. When Beale learns that he is being fired for poor ratings and low viewership, he unravels live on air during his final broadcast. As a result, his show's ratings soar, and Howard becomes the biggest thing on television. Seeing Howard as a new populist prophet, UBS decides to leverage Howard's newfound popularity to boost its bottom line.

*Network* begins playing January 25, 2023, in FST's Gompertz Theatre, and is part of a four-show subscription package. Also included in the Winter Mainstage subscription package is the ten-time Tony Award-nominated musical, ***Something Rotten!***, the Obie Award-winning play, ***What the Constitution Means to Me***, and the World Premiere of ***Visit Joe Whitefeather (and bring the family!)***. Subscriptions for all four Winter Mainstage shows can be purchased for as little as \$69. Single tickets to *Network* range from \$25-39. Subscriptions and single tickets are on sale at FloridaStudioTheatre.org or at 941.366.9000.

"*Network* is a crackling drama filled with conflict and a touch of humor," said **Richard Hopkins**, the show's director. "When the film came out in 1976, it had a lot to say, but the play seems even more profound today. It explores how the media—whether online, in print, or on television—shapes how we think. The play also speaks to how we consume the news and how this, in turn, influences how media outlets operate."

Lee Hall's adaptation of *Network* debuted at London's National Theatre in November 2017 to rave reviews. *The Guardian* called it "Compelling," "Dazzling," and "Impressive," and *Time Out* called the play "Thrilling" and "Electrifying." The production transferred to Broadway in late 2018, racking up numerous Drama League, Tony, and Outer Critics Circle Award nominations.

Playing the troubled Howard Beale is **Sheffield Chastain**, who was seen in last season's World Premiere of *America in One Room*. *Network* marks Chastain's ninth production at FST.

**Rod Brogan** plays Max Schumacher, Howard's best friend and the Head of News at UBS. Previously, Brogan starred in FST's productions of *My Lord*, *What a Night* (2021 Summer Mainstage) and *American Son* (2019-20 Winter Mainstage).

**Carly Zien** plays Diana Christensen, Director of Programming at UBS, who becomes a love interest for Max. Zien makes her FST debut with *Network*. She has previously performed at The Public Theatre, George Street Playhouse, and Yale Repertory Theatre.

FST's production of *Network* features twelve cast members with speaking roles as well as a non-speaking ensemble of six. The other speaking roles will be 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** (Associate Director), **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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