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FST IMPROV MIXES IT UP THIS SPRING

(Sarasota, FL) –Florida Studio Theatre (FST) announces its Spring Improv Season, which includes brand new performances every Friday and Saturday, and a special, one-night-only performance celebrating April Fool’s Day. The season kicks off on April 13 with *FST Improv Presents: Tournament of Fools*, its annual epic, “survival of the fittest” competition. Cast members will compete in a series of games, songs, and scenes to capture the audience’s support in order to win the noteworthy title of “Champion of Fools.” In this knockdown, drag-out comedy battle royale, FST improvisers earn points from the audience based on their performances. After each round, the improviser with the least points is eliminated.

Playing every Friday in FST’s Bowne’s Lab Theatre starting April 19 is *FST Improv Presents: Life’s a Beach*, a short-form, revue-style show that has become an audience favorite over the years. *FST Improv Presents: Life’s a Beach* celebrates and satirizes what makes Sarasota one-of-a-kind: red tide, the plethora of roundabouts, and its constantly changing population. “All of our locals and snowbirds love *Life’s a Beach* and its lighthearted look at our wonderful city,” explained Will Luera, FST’s Director of Improv. “It’s such a popular show that we want to extend its run to continue playing on Friday nights. The extension will feature new games as well as Sarasota-centric sketches written by FST Improv’s new sketch team.”

Continuing the fun and spontaneity every Saturday is *FST Comedy Freestyle*, a free-form improv show that removes the prescribed format and rules of other types of improv. Starting April 20, *FST Comedy Freestyle* challenges cast members to “follow the funny” and initiate a new scene or storyline whenever inspiration strikes. “This show keeps both the audience and performers on their feet throughout the show,” said Luera. “Unlike most of our shows, which have at least some sort of framework or theme in place, *FST Comedy Freestyle* has no road map and the cast makes up the show on the spot with help and feedback from the audience.” Everything that takes place on stage is connected, no matter what unpredictable route the show takes. This fresh, fast-fast moving form of improv was created by FST’s Director of Improv, Will Luera, while he was the Artistic Director of ImprovBoston, a group that has performed several times at the Sarasota Improv Festival.

Back for another season of laughter are returning cast members: Will Luera, Christine Alexander, Jason Cannon, Chris Friday, Joey James, Darryl Knapp, Emily Levin, Denee Lortz, Elise Rodriguez, Anna Weatherwax, Sergei Glushonkov, Mikal Mancini, and Jim Prosser.

Tournament of Fools plays in FST’s Bowne’s Lab Theatre on April 13 for one-night-only. *Life’s a Beach* runs every Friday from April 19 to June 28, and *FST Comedy Freestyle* runs every Saturday from April 20 to June 29 in FST’s Bowne’s Lab Theatre. All performances take place at 7:30 pm with doors opening one hour before show time. Full menu and bar are available. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased from the FST Box Office in person, by calling (941) 366-9000, or online at floridastudiotheatre.org.

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ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Known as Sarasota's Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by Artist Jon Spelman. Starting out as a small touring company, FST traveled to places such as migrant camps and prisons. The company eventually settled down into a permanent home, acquiring the former Woman's Club building – now 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 Goldstein Cabaret, the 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. Under Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins, 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.

ABOUT FST IMPROV

Now in its 18th year, FST Improv was founded in 2001 by Rebecca Hopkins, who had the vision of growing the art form in Sarasota. FST Improv is part of FST's Stage III Series dedicated to presenting work that is challenging in content and unique in form. FST is also home to the Annual Sarasota Improv Festival, which brings the top improv troupes from all over the world to Sarasota for a whirlwind weekend of laughter. The 11th Annual Sarasota Improv Festival is scheduled to take place July 2019. In 2014, former ImprovBoston Artistic Director Will Luera was hired as FST's Director of Improvisation, and currently leads its artistic and education programs.

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