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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE ANNOUNCES  
23 COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN MILESTONE SUFFRAGIST PROJECT**

(Sarasota, FL) —**Florida Studio Theatre (FST)** is proud to announce that it will be producing **The Suffragist Project**, a bi-county artistic commemoration of the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (August 20, 2020) – the woman’s right to vote. Over 20 organizations are involved in creating this regional celebration, organizing events—including plays, performances, art exhibits, panel discussions, educational offerings, and more—that will take place throughout Sarasota and Manatee counties over the next 16 months. In the summer of 2020, **The Suffragist Project** will culminate with the production of a new play at FST consisting of the best work created for the project. To participate, email Meg Gilbert, Assistant Director of **The Suffragist Project**, at [mgilbert@floridastudiotheatre.org](mailto:mgilbert@floridastudiotheatre.org).

“The Centennial offers us a rare opportunity. This moment beckons us to not only celebrate our forbearers’ achievements, but asks us to pause and reflect on the work yet to be done,” shared Kate Alexander, FST’s Associate Director At-Large and Director of **The Suffragist Project**. “This bi-county initiative gives us the unique opportunity to collaborate with our friends, colleagues, and constituents, and to cross-pollinate the immense talent in this community. We are all energized by each other, and in doing so, create lasting community bonds in the long march of equality for humanity.”

**CONFIRMED PROJECT PARTNERS**

**ABC 7**

Throughout July 2020, ABC7 will run PSAs on its channel promoting **The Suffragist Project** and its events.

**American Association of University Women – Sarasota Chapter**

This chapter of the AAUW will highlight **The Suffragist Project** by organizing marchers, dressed in white in honor of the white clothing worn by suffragettes, to take part in the annual Sarasota holiday parade. The group will also hold a special keynote luncheon with guest speakers.

**American Association of University Women – Venice Chapter**

This chapter of the AAUW will create a digital presentation focusing on women’s voting participation in the electorate, education, and pay differentials. The presentation will then be available for outside groups to use for their own meetings.

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**Booker High School**

This local high school will take part in FST's **Historically Speaking** program, and is planning a year-round, student-driven program in honor of this significant historical moment that will utilize the talents of its arts students.

**Bookstore 1 Sarasota**

This downtown Sarasota staple will host lectures and conversations about the history of women's suffrage, gender equality, and other related topics.

**Eileen Fisher**

This women's clothing store will produce a visual showcase to promote **The Suffragist Project**.

**Embracing Our Differences**

Selected artworks from the Embracing Our Differences' annual public art exhibit in Bayfront Park will focus on the Woman's voice. Over 250,000 people see this artwork, including schools and diverse community groups. The organization will also partner with FST's **Historically Speaking** program as part of FST's award-winning arts-in-education initiative, WRITE A PLAY, to help more children have access to shows presented as part of the Project.

**Female Journalists of Sarasota and Manatee Counties**

This group of women journalists will share their personal stories and insights at a panel discussion dedicated to exploring the trajectory of the feminist movement as seen through their eyes.

**Florida Maritime Museum**

The museum will hold a lecture in 2020.

**Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee**

The Federation will host a women's freedom celebration event.

**League of Women Voters**

The League will conduct voting registration at events throughout Project's span, and will help organize project participation in the downtown holiday Sarasota parade featuring hundreds of white-wearing participants.

**Manatee Village Historical Park**

This group will host themed teas and luncheons with trivia related to women's history and discussions on the role that tea rooms played in the women's suffrage movement.

**New College of Florida**

New College will host a lecture series titled *How the Suffragist Movement Betrayed Black Women*, and will present a theatrical production titled *Fiery Women: The Words of African American Suffragists*, which utilizes primary historical sources.

**Ringling Museum**

The Ringling will host an art exhibit highlighting female photographers.

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### **Sarasota Contemporary Dance Company**

As part of the **SCDC's** contribution to the Project, **Dancing in the Moment**, an intergenerational improvisational dance group, will create a dance improv performance inspired by the women's suffrage movement. In a separate dance theatre piece, the company will perform a concert that blends modern dance and speeches from suffragists throughout history.

### **Sarasota County Library System**

The Library System will name a book for the year 2020 in honor of women's suffrage, and will host exhibits and panels at libraries across the county.

### **Sarasota Magazine**

This magazine will host its annual "Women of Influence" event as a component of the Project.

### **Sarasota Retired Lawyers Association**

This group will hold a panel event on women's voting rights or associated topics.

### **Sarasota County Bar Association: Sarasota Women's Lawyers Association**

In conjunction with FST's **Historically Speaking** program, members of this association will lead comprehensive student dialogues in area schools about voting rights and how they impact today's marginalized voters.

### **Tom Tryon**

Op-Ed Editor of the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, Tom Tryon, will facilitate a panel on the topic of #MenToo, which will examine the changing status of men in the #MeToo movement.

### **US National Committee for UN Women – Gulf Coast Chapter**

This organization will create a special presentation to take place on March 8, 2020, in honor of International Women's Day.

### **U.S. Trust Bank of America**

At restaurant happy hours throughout Sarasota, this group will help organize discussions about the women's suffrage movement, voting rights, and other related topics. These events will take place over the 16-month span of the Project.

### **Women's Legal Association**

In conjunction with FST's **Historically Speaking** program as part of its award-winning arts-in-education initiative, WRITE A PLAY, members of this association will lead comprehensive discussions with middle and high school students about voting rights and how they impact today's marginalized voters.

Anchoring **The Suffragist Project**, **Florida Studio Theatre** will engage a diverse group of some of its own most-popular artists to gather speeches from throughout history on women's suffrage, female empowerment, and social change. **Kate Alexander** will then use this source material to craft an original one-act play. A shortened version of this play will then tour middle schools and high schools in Sarasota and Manatee counties as part of FST's **Historically Speaking** program, an educational 3-day in-school residency inspiring local students to write their own plays about women's suffrage and the fight for equal rights. **Historically Speaking** is presented as part of FST's award-winning arts-in-education initiative, WRITE A PLAY.

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**FST** has also commissioned nine playwrights from across the country to craft their own scenes, monologues, and 10-minute plays inspired by the women's suffrage movement and their own personal experiences. To conclude **The Suffragist Project**, Kate Alexander will select the finest theatrical material created over the Project's span to be used in a brand new play produced by **FST** in the summer of 2020.

Pop-up women's suffrage-inspired theatre pieces will also be performed throughout the Sarasota area, including performances by **FST Improv**.

A full schedule of events will be announced in the fall of 2019. For more information, or to learn how you can engage with **The Suffragist Project**, contact Meg Gilbert at [mgilbert@floridastudiotheatre.org](mailto:mgilbert@floridastudiotheatre.org).

### **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 then acquired the former Woman's Club building, becoming the first permanent venue. Shortly after Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins arrived, the building was purchased and 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 Parisian style Goldstein Cabaret and 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. 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.

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