



Richard Hopkins
Producing Artistic Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Manager
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
LBaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
DATE: September 20, 2022

FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE APPOINTS SEAN DANIELS AS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR & DIRECTOR OF RECOVERY PROJECT

(Sarasota, FL) - **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is proud to announce the appointment of **Sean Daniels** as Associate Director and Director of **The Recovery Project**. He comes to FST from **Arizona Theatre Company**, one of the leading professional theatres in the Southwest, where he has served as Artistic Director (CO-CEO) since 2019.

In addition to being the Artistic Director at Arizona Theatre Company, Daniels also served as Artistic Director of **Merrimack Repertory Theatre** and **Dad's Garage** (which he co-founded), and Associate Artistic Director at **California Shakespeare Theater** and **Actors Theatre of Louisville**.

"We are very excited to have Sean join the FST team," said **Richard Hopkins**, FST's Producing Artistic Director. "Mr. Daniels will be an excellent addition to our creative core. He brings three decades of professional experience and excellent proven skills as a director, playwright, play developer and fundraiser. He knows how to lead; he knows how to follow; and most importantly, he knows how to collaborate. *These* are the attributes that define FST's creative ensemble. *These* are the attributes of FST's successful artists of the past and *these* are the attributes that will carry Florida Studio Theatre into a robust future."

In this new senior leadership position, Daniels will oversee Florida Studio Theatre's New Play Development program, its Stage III Series, and lead the kickoff of the theatre's newest endeavor: The Recovery Project. He will also serve as a resident director for all five of FST's stages.

New Play Development has been part of the lifeblood of Florida Studio Theatre and one of its core programs since the theatre was founded in 1973.

"Over the last several years, FST has strengthened its commitment to bringing new work to the stage with the creation of our Playwrights Collective and a commitment to a broad collection of new play commissions," said Hopkins. "These efforts have led to a significant rise in the number of New Play Development workshops, residencies, and festivals we hold each year. We need someone with Sean's experience and energy to take our program to the next

level. Sean is ideally suited to take leadership in this work, not only as an experienced director and producer, but as a successful playwright himself. His play, *The White Chip*, has been produced across the country and Off-Broadway. In addition, he has played a significant role in New Play Development at numerous theatres across the country, including The Kennedy Center and the Humana Festival of New American Plays.”

With Daniels’ arrival, FST will launch **The Recovery Project**, a newly pioneered initiative working to heal the stigma of addiction and recovery through the development of new plays, theatre education programs, and outreach. The Recovery Project will serve both theatre artists and the public, focusing on those who need support and those who create the stories that expand our understanding of the world.

“As a person in long-term recovery and an arts leader, I know that telling stories, changing hearts and minds, and creating empathy is what our art form does best,” said Sean Daniels. “It’s time to use all of these tools to change the narrative around a disease that kills someone every five minutes. *This* is where I want to be spending my time.”

“Hands down, Florida Studio Theatre is one of the great theatres of our country, and Richard Hopkins is one of the great architects of the regional theatre movement,” added Daniels. “Richard’s offer to not only invest in a community, but to create new work that will address the public health crisis of addiction was a once in a lifetime opportunity to do everything I love. It takes real leadership to make room for more leaders on your team.”

Daniels will begin his tenure full-time in Spring 2023 and will be relocating with his wife, actor Veronika Duerr, and daughter, Vivien, from Arizona to Sarasota.

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 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 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 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.

SEAN DANIELS

A graduate of the Benjamin School in Palm Beach Gardens and Florida State University, Sean is delighted to be returning to one of his home states.

He is an internationally known theater director, writer, and Artistic Director, known for new work and innovative community-based leadership. He's been a *New York Times* Critic's Pick as a director and a writer.

His work has been seen in Scotland (Traverse, Tron, Necessary Space, Mossedge Village, Pace), the United Kingdom (St. James, Southwark Playhouse), and was the first American director asked to direct at the Baltic American Playwrights Conference in Hiiumaa, Estonia.

In the United States, his work has been seen at Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Lion*, Drama Desk Award & Theatre World Award, nominated for Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle), 59E59 (*I and You*, nominated for Outer Critics Circle), Lynn Redgrave Theater (NYC), The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), St. James Theatre (London - *The Lion*, Winner of Best New Musical), and at many wonderful regional theatres (The Old Globe, ACT, Geffen Playhouse, Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Repertory, Long Wharf Theatre, Alliance Theatre, and The Neo-Futurists in Chicago).

In addition, Sean has been an Artistic Director at Arizona Theatre Company, Merrimack Repertory, and Dad's Garage (which he co-founded), and an Associate Artistic Director at California Shakespeare Theater and Actors Theatre of Louisville.

Sean has been named "one of the top fifteen up & coming artists in the U.S., whose work will be transforming America's stages for decades to come" & "One Of 7 People Reshaping and Revitalizing The American Musical" by *American Theatre Magazine*.

As a playwright, his work has been produced in multiple theatres over the country, including a commercial Off-Broadway run of his sober dark comedy *The White Chip*, which was produced by Tony Award-winner Tom Kirdahy and Arizona Theatre Company. It is currently being adapted for a book and a movie, with productions planned around the globe.

###