INTERACTIVE COMEDIC MURDER MYSTERY, SHEAR MADNESS, OPENS FST’S 2023 SUMMER MAINSTAGE SERIES

(Sarasota, FL) —Florida Studio Theatre (FST) opens its 2023 Summer Mainstage Series with Shear Madness, an interactive comedic whodunit where the audience gets to solve the crime. Called “Downright hilarious” by Huffington Post and “Comic perfection” by the Boston Herald, Shear Madness is the longest running play in American history and has been seen by more than 12.5 million people around the world. Full of up-to-the-minute, spontaneous humor, Shear Madness will run in FST’s Gompertz Theatre starting Wednesday, May 31, 2023.

Shear Madness is part of a three-show subscription package. Also included in the Summer Mainstage subscription package is Black Pearl Sings!, an uplifting play about the human need for hope and healing, and Ken Ludwig’s A Comedy of Tenors, a fast-paced comedy of mistaken identities and madcap delight,. Subscriptions for all three Summer Mainstage shows can be purchased for as little as $49. Single tickets for Shear Madness range from $29–49. Subscriptions and single tickets are now on sale at FloridaStudioTheatre.org or at 941.366.9000.

“It’s a delightful comedy, and a wonderful, heartwarming piece of theatre,” said FST’s Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins, of Shear Madness. “When we produced the show in 2010 and 2011, it was a huge hit! I always knew that I wanted to present the show again. The question was just when.”

Shear Madness is set in a local Sarasota hair salon, which becomes the scene of a strange scissor-stabbing homicide. Two detectives arrive and work with the audience to spot the clues, question the suspects, and ultimately, determine the identity of the killer. Since the audience changes every night and a significant part of Shear Madness is improvised, no two performances are the same.

FST’s production of this crowd-pleasing murder mystery features a six-person cast, many of whom have performed in previous productions of Shear Madness.

Last seen in FST’s Mainstage production of The Play That Goes Wrong, Jordan Ahnquist plays Tony Whitcomb, the flamboyant salon owner and musical theatre aficionado. Gil Brady, who starred in last season’s productions of The Play That Goes Wrong and Laughing Matters: Variant 6, will play Nick O’Brien, a hardworking detective who works with the audience to solve the murder. Lisa McMillan returns to FST after 12 years to reprise her role
as Mrs. Shubert, a cultured socialite who comes to the salon because stylist Barbara DeMarco (played by Gina Milo) knows how to do her hair perfectly. This production marks Milo’s FST debut. Shaun Memmel plays Mikey Thomas, an energetic young man who comes to the hair salon for a shave. Luis Rivera plays Eddie Lawrence, a mysterious antiques dealer. Both Memmel and Rivera make their FST debuts with Shear Madness.

The production’s creative team includes Bruce Jordan (Director), Gil Brady (Assistant Director), Isabel A. Curley-Clay and Moriah Curley-Clay (Scenic Design), Suzie Sajec (Costume Coordination), Andrew Gray (Lighting Design), and Thom Korp (Sound Design).

FST’s production of Shear Madness 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 the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues. Thank you to our media sponsor, Herald-Tribune Media Group.

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 II, 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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