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FOR RELEASE

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FST ANNOUNCES WORKSHOP OFFERINGS AT 13TH ANNUAL SARASOTA IMPROV FESTIVAL

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) is pleased to announce the workshop lineup for the **13th Annual Sarasota Improv Festival** (July 20-22, 2023). Now in its 13th year, the Sarasota Improv Festival is the premier festival of its kind in the Southeast United States, bringing together top talent in improv comedy from across the nation and around the world. In addition to 29 performances featuring over 80 artists, Festival attendees will have 16 opportunities to learn from the experts through intimate workshop offerings led by Festival artists. Workshops will cover a wide range of topics, from how to build memorable characters and applications for physical comedy to an introduction to musical improvisation and the building blocks of freestyle rap. All workshops take place Saturday, July 22, and run two hours. Workshops are now on sale for \$35 each, or \$90 for a three-workshop package at sarasotaimprovfestival.com or by calling 941.366.9000.

"The Sarasota Improv Festival allows us the very special opportunity to bring some of the best improv artists and instructors in the world right here to our local community," said FST's Director of Improvisation **Will Luera**. "While we, at the Florida Studio Theatre School, pride ourselves on offering excellent improv classes led by FST's Teaching Artists year-round, this chance to learn from some of the most exceptional artists in the industry from as far away as Los Angeles, New York, Canada, and the United Kingdom, is such an amazing treat for Sarasota area improvisers of all levels."

Troupes **Ripley** (Los Angeles, CA) and **2-MAN NO-SHOW** (Toronto, Canada) will lead workshops focused on making strong physical choices and connecting with the body and voice. Julliard alum Mary Chieffo will lead the workshop for Ripley alongside Madi Goff, who is also a member of Los Angeles' Impro Theatre and The Groundlings. In this workshop, students will explore tools to develop stage presence, enhance their relationships with fellow performers, and learn how connection, emotion, and movement are integral to improvised storytelling. 2-MAN NO-SHOW will introduce students to their signature blend of improvisation, which they call "ClownProv," combining elements of clown, mask work, and physical theatre to create hyper-physical performances.

For the musically inclined, **HERE: The (Improvised) Musical** (Columbus, OH), creators of one of the most celebrated shows in the art form, and **North Coast** (New York City, NY), one of the top hip-hop comedy troupes in the country, will each lead workshops diving into the exciting world of musical improv. In these sessions, students will learn how to create show-stopping duets, expand their use of rhythm, and make bold choices with hip hop hooks. This year's Festival headliner, **MC Hammersmith** (United Kingdom) will lead "Intro to Improvised Rap," covering the basic building blocks of freestyle rapping. Students will learn how to successfully rhyme and land punchlines in improvised songs within a relaxed and supportive environment.

Orange Tuxedo (Los Angeles, CA) will teach two workshops on Saturday, July 22, both of which are dedicated to making decisive choices onstage, gaining confidence, and helping move scenes forward. Orange Tuxedo is a husband-and-wife comedy duo comprised of Craig Cackowski and Carla Cackowski, each bringing extensive experience performing and teaching improv. Craig has appeared numerous times on Comedy Central's *Drunk History*, and had recurring characters on *Community*, *Bajillion Dollar Properties*, and *Veep*. Carla has toured all over Europe, Alaska, and the Caribbean with The Second City, America's legendary home of sketch comedy and improv. Participants who attend this workshop will receive top-notch training—Craig is the three-time winner of the Del Close Award as Teacher of the Year at iO West, which was the Western branch of Chicago's famous improv comedy center, iO Theater.

The 13th Annual Sarasota Improv Festival is produced by Florida Studio Theatre and takes place July 20, 21, and 22, 2023. A complete list of all 16 workshop offerings follows this release. Festival workshops are now on sale at sarasotaimprovfestival.com or by calling the Florida Studio Theatre Box Office at 941.366.9000. All workshops are two hours in length and can be purchased for \$35 each, or \$90 for a three-workshop package. Boxed lunches can be added to workshop packages for an additional \$14.95 and include a sandwich, potato chips, sugar cookie, and a bottle of water. Festival workshop locations are subject to change. All participants should meet in Florida Studio Theatre's Keating lobby (located at 1241 N. Palm Avenue) to be taken to workshop locations on Saturday, July 22.

13th ANNUAL SARASOTA IMPROV FESTIVAL

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Saturday, July 22

9:00 - 11:00AM WORKSHOPS

- Commitment to Character
- Be Your Own Action Hero!
- Intro to Improvised Rap
- Deft Theft: Character Archetypes
- The Wonder of Silence in Improv
- Acting Chops for Improv
- ClownProv

11:30AM - 1:30PM WORKSHOPS

- Dr. Cacky's Improv Cleansing
- Be Here Now: Joy & Presence in Improv
- Movement for Actors & Improvisers
- Villainy: Being Bad on Stage
- Intermediate Hip Hop Improv

2:00 – 4:00PM WORKSHOPS

- Improvised Environments
- Sketch Writing
- Beginning Musical Improvisation
- Getting to Know Will (Shakespeare)

COMPLETE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Commitment to Character

Led by Ripley (Los Angeles, CA)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

Veteran improviser Laurie Jones will lead you in a workshop to help you find more commitment to your characters through groundedness and true emotion. Have you given a 6 when you were trying for a 10? Did leaning into a character feel too phony? Whatever it is that has you interested in going deeper, this workshop is for you! Laurie has performed and trained at The Second City (Chicago), iO, Impro Theatre, and is an ensemble member of Ripley Improv, Impro Theatre, and Wishbone Theatre Collective.

Be Your Own Action Hero!

Led by Orange Tuxedo (Los Angeles, CA)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

Saying "yes" isn't just agreeing to the reality your partner is creating in the scene. It's also saying yes to actively moving the scene forward. This workshop focuses on making active, fun choices so you can avoid talking about what you're doing and tackle it instead. If you have been in a rut or recently found yourself with little more to offer than being a talking head, this workshop is for you!

Intro to Improvised Rap

Led by MC Hammersmith (Festival Headliner)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

In this workshop, we'll cover the basic building blocks of improvised rap, how to find your flow, how to successfully rhyme and land punchlines in improvised songs, all while keeping things fun, stress-free, chill, and relaxed. The session involves a lot of writing with pen and paper, and not a huge amount of standing up alone and rapping on the spot. The atmosphere is always very relaxed, fun, and supportive! Rapping is one of the things

improvisers find most terrifying – this workshop will show you how to turn that fear into freedom and fun. A hugely useful skill for anyone currently improvising musicals and songs or looking to further their musical improv repertoire.

Deft Theft: Character Archetypes

Led by Parallelogramophonograph (Austin, TX)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

We are all human beings, and as humans, we love and chase compelling stories and memorable characters. But how do we make memorable characters on-the-spot in improvised theatre? One delightful tool is the archetype Rolodex! The character types you love from books, movies, and television are right at your fingertips - and actually - already in your brain! In this workshop, you'll learn to access and recognize dozens of character types and use your own body and voice to fully inhabit them. "Stealing" has never been this fun or useful!

The Wonder of Silence in Improv

Led by Kathy Rinaldi of Impromptu (Sarasota, FL)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

Ever wonder if there's room for quiet moments in improv? Have you ever wanted to try a scene that's intimate and powerful, or filled with pauses for reflection and emotion? In this workshop, we'll do exercises that push you to get in touch with vulnerability, and scene work that illustrates the ways in which you can create quiet moments in the midst of humor.

Acting Chops for Improv

Led by Available Cupholders (Austin, TX, and Los Angeles, CA)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

Wanting to add some emotion to your scene work? Some depth to your short-form games? Do you want the audience to be on the edge of their seat before you say a single word? In this workshop you will learn some method acting, Meisner, and script study techniques and how to apply those principles to your work as an improviser. Take your improv to the next level! You were always an actor before you were an improviser. Believe it and be more believable.

ClownProv

Led by 2-MAN NO-SHOW (Toronto, Canada)

Saturday, July 22 | 9-11AM

ClownProv blends elements found within clown work (physical comedy, finding "the game," and joyful play) with improv. Participants will learn to maximize joy during performance, repeat and build off their successes, and access their "inner clown" within the context of improv scene work.

Dr. Cacky's Improv Cleansing

Led by Orange Tuxedo (Los Angeles, CA)

Saturday, July 22 | 11:30AM-1:30PM

Is your scene work tired and sluggish? Are you falling back on the same tired choices and characters you always make? Do you need to get back to basics and be playful and strong again? If so, Dr. Cacky's Improv Cleansing is for you. He'll give you the improv equivalent of a high colonic, flushing the toxins of insecurity and indecision out of your system. Whether you're a veteran improviser or new to the art form, this is the perfect workshop for the performer who needs to practice owning their impulses and delivering them with confidence right away. *Good for all skill levels, recommended 6 months experience.*

Be Here Now: Joy & Presence in Improv

Led by HERE: The (Improvise) Musical (Columbus, OH)

Saturday, July 22 | 11:30AM-1:30PM

From the minds behind The Improv Retreat and The Nest Theatre, Tara & Rance (HERE: The (Improvise) Musical, iO Chicago, Second City, ComedySportz) take participants on quite the journey. Presence and perception is the name of the game. Come do some original trippy paired exercises, two-person scene work, actively listen, and find the fun. Part bohemian methodology, part scene work, this workshop is both invigorating and full of meaningful musings on connection being the name of the game.

Movement for Actors & Improvisers

Led by Ripley (Los Angeles, CA)

Saturday, July 22 | 11:30AM-1:30PM

Learn the tools for becoming a dynamic performer and creating ensembles that spin improvised adventures from absolutely nothing. Starting with the basics of Alexander technique, actors and improvisers will learn to energetically connect to the body and voice. Then, using improvisation along with select lines from Shakespeare's plays, students will explore tools for stage presence and moment-to-moment work, enhancing their connection to fellow performers and the audience. Finally, in improvised scene work, students will put it all together and discover how connection, emotion, and stage picture creates story.

Villainy: Being Bad On Stage

Led by Parallelogramophonograph (Austin, TX)

Saturday, July 22 | 11:30AM-1:30PM

Learn how fun it is to be bad. In this workshop, PGraph will teach you how to play downright evil characters on stage that the audience will love to hate. It's easy enough to play a 2-dimensional bad guy, but for true evil to shine in all its dark glory, your characters must be rooted in truth, and be unique individuals. Learn to create a fully fleshed out origin for your villain, react properly to evil actions done on stage, make your monsters more human, and treat dark moments with the respect and patience they deserve.

Intermediate Hip Hop Improv

Led by North Coast (New York City, NY)

Saturday, July 22 | 11:30AM-1:30PM

Designed for students who have taken our intro class, this workshop will continue to develop your hip hop improv skills with exercises designed to expand rhythm, polysyllabic rhymes,

and plugging into musical archetypes. Trust your instincts and make bold choices with your hooks, while nailing the fundamentals. Improvisers will continue to hone their scene work so raps are more focused on exploration and less focused on inventing new information.

Improvised Environments

Led by Ripley (Los Angeles, CA)

Saturday, July 22 | 2:00-4:00PM

Working the WHERE in Who, What, Where, and Why. In every scene we improvise, we have an opportunity to create an environment that helps us tell the story with more depth and specificity. In this class, students will learn how to activate their imaginations and engage the environment for themselves, their ensemble, and the audience. We will abandon awkward phrases like "thank you for coming to the <insert location here> with me" and "I'm so glad you invited me to the <insert location here>". And we will replace those phrases with more inspired and organic reactions to the improv coach in our minds. This class will focus on labeling specifics, space work, atmosphere, using emotion, and giving our creative mind time to create.

Sketch Writing

Led by Big Bang Improv (Boston, Sarasota, and New York City)

Saturday, July 22 | 2:00-4:00PM

Television shows that look for comedy writers often look to read packets full of original sketches. From *SNL* to late night shows to even narrative comedy, shows turn to sketch packet submissions to interview, and eventually hire, writers. This introductory sketch writing class will focus on the overall philosophy of sketch writing for packets, the anatomy of a TV packet, and how to write sketches to showcase your comedy chops with incorporating elements of improv.

Beginning Musical Improvisation

Led by HERE: The (Improvised) Musical (Columbus, OH)

Saturday, July 22 | 2:00-4:00PM

From the world-touring HERE: The (Improvised) Musical team (The Nest Theatre, iO Chicago) - This workshop is perfect for anyone looking to start their path into musical improv, or build on intermediate skills they may already have. Tara & Rance will alleviate the all-too-common fears of this specific form of art, encouraging improvisers instead to lean into relationship, earn the song, and create songs and duets fearlessly in this fun two-hour dip.

Getting to Know Will (Shakespeare)

Led by SAK Comedy Lab (Orlando, FL)

Saturday, July 22 | 2:00-4:00PM

Are you tired of just adding "th" at the end of all your words in Shakespeare scenes? Unpack the beautiful language that is Shakespeare and apply it to your short- and long-form improv! Explore key Shakespearean language devices such as allusion, alliteration and antithesis (and that's just the a's!) and see how they can add authenticity, color, and comedy to your work. No

prior Shakespearean experience needed, but a little advanced reading or YouTube bingeing couldn't hurt!

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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