FST EXTENDS COMEDIC WHODUNIT, SHEAR MADNESS, FOR A THIRD TIME

(Sarasota, FL) — Due to overwhelming audience demand, Florida Studio Theatre (FST) announces the third extension of its Summer Mainstage Series opener, Shear Madness. Critics write that FST’s production “Keeps the laughs coming” and is “A delight” (Sarasota Herald-Tribune), saying “It would be madness to miss FST’s Shear Madness” (Venice Gondolier-Sun). Written by Paul Pörtner, Shear Madness is a comedic murder mystery where the audience helps solve the crime. FST’s production of Shear Madness will now run in FST’s Gompertz Theatre through July 9, 2023. Tickets are now on sale at FloridaStudioTheatre.org or 941.366.9000.

“We are thrilled to extend Shear Madness for a third time,” said FST Managing Director Rebecca Hopkins. “It is so much fun to watch how audiences are responding to this show, whether it’s the first, or the fifth, time that they’ve seen Shear Madness. The play mixes comedy, drama, and mystery, and then gets the audience involved. On top of that, Shear Madness adds a hint of local Sarasota flavor. All of this helps make the show a truly one-of-a-kind experience.”

Audiences are raving about FST’s production of Shear Madness, calling it “Fabulously funny and quick witted,” “Delightfully hilarious,” and “The funniest show we have seen in all the years we have attended FST.” Audience member Nancy B. said of Shear Madness, “It’s a laugh-out-loud-a-minute show. Very well performed as well—no one should miss this!”

Shear Madness is set in a local Sarasota hair salon, and it seems like an ordinary day until the old lady living above the salon is mysteriously “offed.” Suddenly, everyone inside the salon becomes a suspect. Two detectives arrive at the scene and work with the audience to spot the clues, question the suspects, and identify the killer. Since the audience votes on who they believe is the true culprit and the outcome of their vote changes every night, no two performances of Shear Madness are the same. The cast also improvises certain parts of the play and constantly updates local references and jokes in the script, helping to keep the play fresh and exciting for both new and returning audiences, alike.

FST’s production of this popular whodunit features a six-person cast, including three Shear Madness veterans. Danny Bernardy (Alabama Story, 2016), Gil Brady (The Play That Goes Wrong and Laughing Matters, 2022), and Lisa McMillan (Perfect Wedding, 2012) have each been in multiple previous productions of Shear Madness. Shaun Memmel and Luis E. Rivera appeared in The Straz Center’s production of the comedy this spring and are making their FST debuts with Shear Madness. This marks Gina Milo’s first time appearing in Shear Madness and at FST. Previously, she has performed at the Engeman Theater, Drury Lane Theatre, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, and Pioneer Theater.
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).

Due to audience demand, FST’s production of *Shear Madness* has been held over by three additional weeks. This comedic whodunit will now play in FST’s Gompertz Theatre through July 9, 2023.

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 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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