

**Florida  
Studio  
Theatre**

Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director

# WRITE A PLAY Playbill



**THE  
LAST ACORN**  
& OTHER WINNING PLAYS  
BY YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS

# WRITE A PLAY

## THE LAST ACORN & OTHER WINNING PLAYS BY YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS

### CAST

**Benjamin Brandt**  
**Marissa Gast**

**Jerric Gutierrez**  
**Athena Jean-Étienne**

**Storm Tracy**  
**Gemma Vodacek**

Director & Choreographer  
**Ellie Mooney**

Associate Director  
**Shelby Lynhall**

Additional Direction  
**Sean Daniels**

Assistant Director & Choreographer **Sydney Scott**  
Original Music by **Jim Prosser**

**Scenic Designer**  
Clint Wright

**Costume Designer**  
Annie Watson

**Lighting Designer**  
Joe Storti

**Sound Designer**  
Anakin Garner

**Stage Manager**  
Katie Chabot

*"This anthology of plays takes us on a journey and gives us a glimpse into the creative minds of our children – their heartfelt stories share themes of acceptance, bravery, resilience, love, learning, and laughter. Young people are not afraid to write about anything; they do not edit their imaginations. These plays reaffirm our belief in what childhood is: a world of purity, beauty, heart and sometimes truths we all need to hear."*  
- Caroline Saldivar, Director of Children's Theatre

# ARTIST PROFILES



**BENJAMIN BRANDT** is an Acting Apprentice at FST. His stage credits include *Charlotte's Web* (Homer, Sheep) and *Network*. He was also a Tennis Consultant for FST's Stage III production of *The Last Match*. He graduated from the University of Florida.



**MARISSA GAST** is a 2022-2023 FST Acting Apprentice. In the fall, she could be found hanging from aerial silks and flying on the Spanish web in *Charlotte's Web* (Charlotte). Gast recently finished performing on FST's Mainstage in *What the Constitution Means to Me* (Debater). She is originally from NH where she graduated from UNH with degrees in Theatre and Biology. Other favorite children's theatre credits: *Momotaro: Peach Boy Hero* (*Momotaro*) and *Sally Jackson/Silena Beauregard* (*The Lightning Thief*).



**JERRIC GUTIERREZ** graduated from the Claire Trevor School of the Arts at UC Irvine with a BA in Drama. You may have seen him in FST's production of *Charlotte's Web* (Wilbur) or in *Network* (Wardrobe/PA). He is ecstatic to be a part of something that brings out his inner child again. Find out more at [jericg.com](http://jericg.com)



**ATHENA JEAN-ÉTIENNE** is an Orlando native, and a recent graduate of the University of Central Florida. Her FST credits include *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (Lucy) and *Deck the Halls* (Candy). Her understudy credits include *Something Rotten* (Woman 1/Portia U/S), and *The Last Match* (Mallory U/S). Some of her favorite past credits include *Ragtime* (Sarah), *Clybourne Park* (Francine/Lena), *Blood at the Root* (Raylynn), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Beatrice).



**STORM TRACY** is originally from Sarasota, FL, and is excited to be back, rediscovering all this town has to offer. He is a graduate from the University of Florida, where he received his BFA in Theatre Performance. Storm is currently an Acting Apprentice at FST, where he also appeared in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe; Deck the Halls;* and several performances of *Something Rotten!*. Previous credits include: *A Little Night Music* (Carl Magnus), *Pippin* (Lewis), and *White Guy on The Bus* (Christopher).



**GEMMA VODACEK** is a Rochester, NY native and currently an Acting Apprentice at Florida Studio Theatre. FST credits:

# ARTIST PROFILES

*Off the Charts!*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Network*, and select performances of *Something Rotten!*. Previously: *Little Women*, *The Wolves*, *The Normal Heart*. gemmavodacek.com

**ELLIE MOONEY** (Director & Choreographer) is an FST Associate Artist with over 25 years of professional experience as a director, choreographer, performer, and teaching artist. Select FST credits: *Reel Music* (Choreographer), *Something Rotten!* (Director/Choreographer), *Charlotte's Web* (Director), as well as *Network* and *Maytag Virgin* (Intimacy Coordinator). After 15 years in NYC, working nationally and internationally, Ellie made an artistic home in Philadelphia, working at Walnut Street Theatre on over 30 productions. In addition to teaching at Rutgers University, Ellie recently returned to school full-time to enrich her EDI, Intimacy Direction, and Gender Study training at the University of the Arts.

**SHELBY LYNHALL** (Associate Director) is a theatre professional originally from New Hampshire. She received her BA from University of Denver where she nurtured her passion for acting, directing, and writing. She started her journey with Florida Studio Theatre as the General Management Intern, and quickly rose to begin managing FST's Education and WRITE A PLAY programs. Shelby is incredibly grateful to work somewhere where she can strengthen her administrative and leadership skills while simultaneously fueling her inner artist.

**SEAN DANIELS** (Additional Direction) is FST's Associate Director and Director of the

Recovery Project. International: Scotland (Traverse, Tron, Necessary Space, Edinburgh Fringe Festival) United Kingdom St. James (*The Lion*, winner of Best New Musical), Southwark Playhouse and first American director to direct at the Baltic American Playwrights Conference in Hiiumaa, Estonia. Off-Broadway: Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Lion*, Drama Desk Award & Theatre World Award) 59e59, and Lynn Redgrave. Regional: The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Old Globe, ACT, Geffen, Cleveland Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep., Arizona Theatre Company, Merrimack Repertory, California Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Long Wharf, Alliance, The Neo-Futurists, and Dad's Garage Theatre Company (which he co-founded).

**SYDNEY SCOTT** (Assistant Director/Choreographer) A St. Louis native, Sydney is a recent graduate of Stephens College, where she received her BFA in Theatre Arts with an Acting Emphasis. Some of her favorite roles include Countess Andrenyi in *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express*, director of *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom*, and *Iris in Living on Love*. She is thrilled to be at FST for another year as the Artistic Fellow!

**KATIE CHABOT** (Stage Manager) is originally from Los Angeles and recently graduated from Vanderbilt University with degrees in Theatre and Elementary Education. Notable credits include: *Dogfight*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, and *A Little Night Music*.

# ARTIST PROFILES

Most recently, Katie stage managed FST's *Playmakers Tour*, *Deck the Halls*, and served as the rehearsal ASM for *Babel*. Katie is so excited and thankful to be a part of Florida Studio Theatre's 2022-23 Season and has had so much fun so far!

**CLINT WRIGHT** (Scenic Designer) The 2022-2023 Season marks Clint's first Season as FST's Technical Director. Before joining FST's production staff, Clint was the Broadcast Studio Managing Engineer for Communication Studies at Longwood University for six years. He has worked at several regional summer theatres, including the Post Playhouse (Crawford, NE), Timber Lake Playhouse (Mt. Carroll, IL), and Shawnee Summer Theatre (Bloomfield, IN). Favorite shows he's worked on include *Godspell* (multiple theatres), *The Underpants* by Steve Martin (Longwood University), and *What the Constitution Means to Me* (FST). MFA from Full Sail University.

**ANNIE WATSON** (Costume Designer) is a recent graduate of Miami University, OH with a Theatre Major and Creative Writing Minor. They have been working at Florida Studio Theatre as a Costume Intern since August of 2022. *The Last Acorn & Other Winning Plays* marks Annie's first costume design realized on a professional stage.

**JOE STORTI** (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to join FST's production of *The Last Acorn & Other Winning Plays!* Joe graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a BFA in Music Theatre. He currently works

as FST's Lighting Intern and as a Camera Operator in FST's production of *Network*. He recently designed the lighting for FST's Children's Theatre production of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Joe is honored to be helping the next generation of playwrights bring their creations to life onstage.

**ANAKIN GARNER** (Sound Designer) grew up in the town of Yukon, Oklahoma. He recently graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree while studying sound design and technology. His recent sound design credits include *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (FST) and *Sister Act* (UCO School of Music). Other sound credits include board operator for *Something Rotten* (FST), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Jewel Box Theatre, OKC), and *A2 for Network* (FST).

**JIM PROSSER** (Original Music) This season marks Jim's 27th season as FST's Resident Pianist. He recently appeared in *Reel Music*, *The 70's: More than a Decade*, *Laughing Matters*, *The Wanderers*, *Sophie Tucker: The Last of the Red Hot Mamas*, and *Vintage POP!*. He has arranged and co-developed over 50 Cabarets at FST including: *Laughing Matters*, *The Wanderers*, *Three Pianos*, *Light My Fire*, *Outlaws and Angels*, *That's Amoré!*, *The Wonder Years*, *Unchained Melodies*, and more. He has served as Composer/Music Director for The FST School, writing numerous scores for children's shows.

The WRITE A PLAY Program would not be possible without the valuable and generous support of the following individuals and organizations:

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Cordelia Lee Beattie Foundation  
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***"In the creative eyes of a child, a story comes to life through the WRITE A PLAY program held by FST!"***

- Jodie Austin, Toledo Blade Elementary Teacher

***"What an important, exciting program. Important for young playwrights to channel their imagination into the magic of theater. Exciting for participating theatres to remember the first sparks that started us on fire to do what we do."***

- Mark St. Germain, Playwright

***"I have been honored to participate in WRITE A PLAY for the past twelve years. There truly is nothing like this program in our county and it's a tradition I am proud to support. Students lives are impacted by being motivated to think and problem solve creatively. Students never forget working with the teaching artists and some may grow up to become teaching artists too. THANK YOU FST!!"***

- Freda Williams, Pineview School Teacher and 2016 WAP Educator of the Year

***"On behalf of the City of Sarasota Commission and the citizens of the community, we would like to congratulate Florida Studio Theatre on the WRITE A PLAY program. The City of Sarasota celebrates and encourages a wide variety of art forms and commends the efforts of Florida Studio Theatre to encourage the unique form of creative writing, which is playwrighting. Florida Studio Theatre has brought bright, young playwrights from around the world to a theatre where their work can be staged and enjoyed by the community, students, families, and actors. Congratulations!"***

- Willie Charles Shaw, City of Sarasota Commissioner

# FST COMPANY

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