

**Florida  
studio  
theatre**

Richard Hopkins  
Producing Artistic Director

# Stage III Playbill



# EISENHOWER

## THIS PIECE OF GROUND

BY RICHARD HELLESEN

 **SHUBERT  
FOUNDATION** INC.

 **Sarasota County**  
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# EISENHOWER: THIS PIECE OF GROUND

By Richard Helleesen

## CAST

Eisenhower ..... David Sitler\*

**Directed by**  
Nancy Rominger

**Costume Designer**  
Julia Hornsby

**Lighting Designer**  
Kate Landry

**Sound & Projections Designer**  
Nicholas Ryan

**Props Designer**  
Audrey Smith

**Stage Manager**  
Passion Shaffer\*

### **Premiere Underwriters**

Gaele Barthold, Georgia Court, Wendy & Bob Grady, Dennis & Graci McGillicuddy,  
Patrick & Mary Mulva, Anne H.S. Nethercott\*, Mary Jo Reston\*

### **Co-Producer**

Susan Fromm Shimelman, Alan J. Schottenstein Foundation, Emma Joels

*Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground* was developed in association with New Los Angeles  
Repertory Company (Peter Ellenstein, Producing Artistic Director)  
and originally co-produced with and presented at Theatre West, Los Angeles, CA.

*Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground* is presented through special arrangement with  
TRW PLAYS 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036.  
[www.theatricalrights.com](http://www.theatricalrights.com)

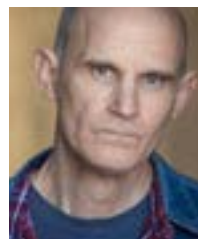
The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

★ Recognizes our Gold Circle Underwriters for their commitment to the Art of FST, establishing an endowed fund  
to support cherished programs for life.

\* Denotes member Actors' Equity Association,  
the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers  
in the United States.



# ARTIST PROFILES



### **DAVID SITLER**

(Eisenhower) is thrilled to be back at FST. He was last seen here in the one man show *The Things They Carried*, as well as *The Exonerated*

and *In The Belly of The Beast*. He has been on Broadway, National tours, and regional theaters from coast to coast in roles from Atticus to Scrooge. He has appeared in award winning Films and TV work along with music videos with Charlie Puth and Ben Platt and the game *Red Dead Redemption*. More info at [davidstitler.com](http://davidstitler.com).

### **NANCY ROMINGER**

(Director) leads new play development at Florida Studio Theatre, where she champions fresh theatrical voices while directing Mainstage and Stage III productions. She joined FST in 2024 after 12 seasons at Alabama Shakespeare Festival, serving as Associate Artistic Director and Director of the Southern Writers' Project, ASF's celebrated new play development program. There, she oversaw the development of 42 new American plays and musicals, many premiering at ASF before earning critical acclaim at regional theatres nationwide. Her FST credits include *Grandma Gatewood Took a Walk*, *Don't Dress for Dinner*, *Shedding a Skin*, and *Advice*.

### **JULIA HORNSBY**

(Costume Designer) is the Costume Intern at FST. They are a recent graduate from University of North Texas with a BFA in Fashion Design. At FST, they designed costumes for *Grandma Gatewood Took a Walk*, *Snow White*, *The Write Stuff* and

*Deck the Halls*, as well as worked on other productions like *Lucky Stiff* and *Feeling Good*.

### **KATE LANDRY**

(Lighting Designer) graduated from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she received her B.A. in Technical Theatre. She designed locally around Louisiana before coming to intern at Florida Studio Theatre. Her credits include *Snow White*, *Deck The Halls*, *Shedding A Skin*, *The Flying Penguin*, *Advice*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Deck The Halls*, *Heathers* (LSU), *Matilda the Musical* (Ascension Community Theatre), and *Steel Magnolias* (Baton Rouge Theatre). She is extremely excited to create here at FST!

### **NICHOLAS RYAN**

(Sound and Projections Designer) is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist and is currently the Sound Intern at FST. They recently graduated from Gettysburg College, where they designed shows including *Broken Mirrors*, *Eurydice*, and *The Ver\*\*zon Play*. The past two summers they've worked as the Education and Cabaret Lighting Design Apprentice at Theatre Aspen and the Assistant Sound Designer at Totem Pole Playhouse respectively. FST sound design credits: *Snow White*, *Deck The Halls* and *The Write Stuff*.

### **AUDREY SMITH**

(Props Designer) is currently the Props/Paint Intern at FST. Her FST credits include *Lucky Stiff*, *Don't Dress for Dinner* (Replacement ASM), *Peter Pan* (Props Designer), *Dorothy's Dictionary*, and *Dames at Sea*. Selected educational credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Blood Captain), *Three*

# ARTIST PROFILES

*Sisters* (Deck Crew Head), *Small Mouth Sounds* (Props Supervisor), and *The Wolves* (Props Designer). She is a proud Texas State University alum.

## PASSION SHAFFER

(Stage Manager) is excited to be returning to FST again. Passion is a Graceland University Alumni with a dual major in English and Theatre with a minor in Creative Writing and Film. FST credits: *Jersey Boys*, *Off the Charts Revival*, *Troubadour*, *The Lehman Trilogy*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Pictures from Home*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *A Comedy of Tenors*, *Reel Music*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *New York State of Mind* with The Uptown Boys, and *Jersey Tenors: Part II*. Other credits include *Avenue Q* (William Street Repertory) and *I and You* (Shawnee Theatre).

**RICHARD HELLESEN** (Playwright) is the author of numerous plays for adults and young audiences. The former include *Kingdom* (Denver Center; Stavis Award, National Theatre Conference), *Once In Arden* (South Coast Repertory; Julie Harris Award, Beverly Hills Theatre Guild), *Moonshadow* (numerous regional productions; Dennis McIntyre Award, Philadelphia Festival Theater), and several projects for Ford's Theatre in Washington DC where he is

an Associate Artist, including the full-length *Necessary Sacrifices* and the long-running one-act *One Destiny*. His solo show *Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground*, starring Tony-winner John Rubinstein, ran off-Broadway in 2023 and was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Solo Performance. With composer David De Berry he wrote the book for a widely-produced musical adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. His two dozen short plays include five finalists for the National Award for Short Playwriting, all produced at City Theatre in Miami (among others). Mr. Hellesen's plays for young audiences include a version of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (published by Samuel French), and adaptations of *The Emperor's New Clothes* and Esther Forbes' *Johnny Tremain* (B Street Theatre). With Grammy-winning composer Michael Silversher, he has written a musical adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in The Willows* (South Coast Repertory), as well as eleven Educational Touring musicals for SCR, three of which were subsequently produced at the Sundance Children's Theatre in Utah. A member of the Dramatists Guild, Mr. Hellesen has twice been playwright-in-residence at the William Inge Center for the Arts in Independence, Kansas.



## VOLUNTEER

Have extra time and a love for the arts? Join our dedicated volunteer pool and play an essential role in bringing live theatre to life.

Volunteers support front-of-house operations, special events, and more—while becoming part of the FST community.

Volunteer With Us: 941-366-9017 ext. 301 [FSTvolunteers@floridastudiotheatre.org](mailto:FSTvolunteers@floridastudiotheatre.org)

# EXECUTIVE STAFF

## RICHARD HOPKINS

(Producing Artistic Director and CEO of Florida Studio Theatre). Mr. Hopkins has fostered the development of FST's Mainstage and Cabaret productions. Mr. Hopkins serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Florida Studio Theatre. He oversees the creation and implementation of all FST programming, including Mainstage, Cabaret, Stage III, New Play Development, Education, and Touring. Since his arrival at FST in 1980, Mr. Hopkins has guided the theatre from a small touring company to a nationally recognized regional theatre, which impacts over 225,000 adults and children annually. He created the New Play Development program, the Cabaret Series, FST's award-winning WRITE A PLAY program, and has directed the design and renovation of all FST's theatres. Mr. Hopkins has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University. He has served as a Theatre Specialist for the U.S. Department of State to Cairo and Amman, and taught at the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Clown College. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Arts Leadership Award from the former Sarasota Arts Council, the Richard G. Fallon Award for Artistic Excellence from the Florida Professional Theatres Association, and the 2012 Cultural Champion Award from the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County. In 2016, Mr. Hopkins received the Luminaire Award, honoring excellence in creativity, philanthropy,

advocacy, and all elements that are key to future growth of the arts in Sarasota. In 2017, Mr. Hopkins was awarded the Florida Theatre Conference Lifetime Achievement Award for contributing to the rich cultural fabric of the Sarasota community and the state of Florida, and his dedication to developing future artists, educators, and advocates.

## REBECCA HOPKINS

(Managing Director and Chief Operations Officer). Under Ms. Hopkins' leadership, FST has grown into one of the largest regional theatres, engaging an audience of 225,000 annually. Ms. Hopkins currently serves as Vice President of the League of Resident Theatres. She is the former President of the National New Play Network and a former board member of Theatre Communications Group. She is a member of the Executive Committee for the Sarasota Cultural Alliance. Ms. Hopkins has been actively involved in the development of FST's Cabaret productions since her arrival in 1998. In addition, she is the Founder of FST Improv and the Sarasota Improv Festival. In 2012, the Arts & Cultural Alliance awarded Ms. Hopkins the Cultural Champion Award in recognition of her many years of accomplishment and growth with Florida Studio Theatre. In 2016, Ms. Hopkins received the Luminaire Award, honoring excellence in creativity, philanthropy, advocacy, and all elements that are keys to future growth of the arts in Sarasota.

# PREMIERE UNDERWRITERS

**GAELE BARTHOLD** FST is family and an integral part of my life. Its quality and diverse stage productions at affordable prices are a model of theatrical excellence. Educational programs for adults and children, community forums, and a strong commitment to New Play Development makes FST a gem that warrants our widespread financial and artistic support. I am proud to serve on FST's board and to support it financially and otherwise.

**GEORGIA COURT** I love great theatre and FST delivers that. FST is among the best theatre companies I have seen, but it is more than a theatre company. It is an organization that recognizes it is part of the greater community—and it reaches out to that community in positive, productive ways. As the owner of Bookstore1Sarasota, I have been proud to partner with FST in the creation and celebration of contemporary literary works. Having FST so accessible adds to the joy of living in the fabulous arts community that is Sarasota.

**WENDY & BOB GRADY** Now, more than ever, we need a place where people can forget, even for the moment, and enjoy the company of others while being entertained. Staffed by dedicated and caring people, staged by the most creative and talented, and committed to bringing the theatre to as many people as possible, FST fulfills the need. That's why we Underwrite all of the season programs and especially the children's programs - because the earlier they learn what the theatre teaches, the better our world will be.

★ Recognizes our Gold Circle members for their commitment to the Art of FST, establishing an endowed fund to support cherished programs for life.

**DENNIS & GRACI MCGILLICUDDY** FST is important to us because we believe so strongly in the transformative power of the arts. For more than 40 years now, we have experienced first-hand how that power works its magic in the hands of an organization that is so highly skilled in their craft. The values of the theatre and its leadership are reflected in its mission and manifested in its work. It has been and continues to be such a privilege to be supportive of FST and the meaningful & wonderful impact the theatre has on our community.

**PATRICK & MARY MULVA** FST continues to provide challenging, thought-provoking, and always entertaining performances for a wide range of audiences. We are so fortunate to have such quality theatre here in our community. We hope you enjoy this performance and many others this season.

**ANNE H.S. NETHERCOTT** ★ (1926-2019) When asked to define giving, Anne said: "My mother used to say the best way to find you is to lose yourself by focusing on the needs of others rather than on oneself." So, giving has always been an important family value, which in childhood was reinforced by the community experience of surviving The Depression. Anne was proud to be a supporter of FST.

**MARY JO RESTON** ★ (1937-2024) A devoted supporter of Florida Studio Theatre for nearly two decades, Mary believed deeply in the power of the arts to enrich community life. After retiring to Sarasota in 1999, she became a familiar face at Mainstage and Cabaret performances and quietly demonstrated her commitment through a legacy gift that will sustain the theatre's artistic excellence for generations to come.

# CO-PRODUCER

**SUSAN FROMM SHIMELMAN** Theatre provokes and evokes. Stage III never fails to challenge and question. It is theatre at its best. With minimal sets, effective use of video, simple costuming, talented actors, and challenging scripts, one never fails to leave with more questions than answers. Discussion at dinner following the performance is always lively and charged. Stage III is a gift to Sarasota, and I am privileged to support it.

**ALAN J. SCHOTTENSTEIN FOUNDATION** We are proud to support FST and lucky to

have such great theatre in Sarasota. FST reaches out to the community and provides wonderful affordable productions at the Broadway level.

**EMMA JOELS** proudly continues the legacy of her parents, Harold (1931–2016) and Valerie (1933–2025) Joels, longtime supporters of Florida Studio Theatre and the Sarasota arts community. Through her support of Florida Studio Theatre, Emma honors her parents' belief in artistic excellence and accessibility for all, helping to carry forward their lasting impact.



*Host*  
**YOUR EVENT AT FST!**

FST offers a variety of unique venues in the heart of downtown Sarasota, including our five main theatre spaces.

Whether you're hosting a professional event, private party, performance, film shoot, or photo session, we have a space to meet your needs.

Book with us at 941-366-9017 ext. 355 or email [events@floridastudiotheatre.org](mailto:events@floridastudiotheatre.org)



We encourage you to take photos before and after the show, and share to social media!

@FloridaStudioTheatre

# FST COMPANY

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President.....	Dennis McGillicuddy
Vice-President .....	Richard Hopkins
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Trustee.....	Honorable Charles Williams

## EXECUTIVE STAFF

Producing Artistic Director.....	Richard Hopkins
Managing Director.....	Rebecca Hopkins

## ARTISTIC STAFF

Associate Director At-Large .....	Kate Alexander
Resident Pianist.....	Jim Prosser
Resident Music Director.....	Nathaniel Beliveau
Associate Producer.....	Catherine Randazzo
Associate Artist.....	Ben Liebert
Associate Artist/Literary Manager.....	Nancy Rominger
Casting and Hiring Coordinator.....	Timothy L'Ecuyer
Assistant to the Artistic Director.....	Doris Lemolo
Assoc. Director of Improv/Resident Artist.....	Sarah Durham
Literary Associate.....	Kara Powell
Resident Artist.....	Dellan Short

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Director of Production .....	Ahkim Church
Associate Production Manager.....	Allison Hannon
Production Stage Manager.....	Shira Lebovich
Stage Manager.....	Emilia Ciotti Hernández
Costume Shop Manager.....	Madison Queen
Asst. Costume Shop Manager.....	Tony Toney
Lighting Supervisor.....	Andrew Gray
Technical Director.....	Andrew Patton
Assistant Technical Director.....	Casey Seiler
Properties & Paint Supervisor.....	Sarah DeSmith
Sound Supervisor.....	Nicholas Christensen
Company Manager.....	Daniel Chandler
Company Management Assistant.....	Donovan Whitley

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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General Management Assistant.....	Hayley Oakley
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Development Associate .....	Krista Hagans
Development Associate .....	Kristin Hartnett
Development Assistant.....	Rachel Wright
Grant Writer.....	Sarah Pettengill

## EDUCATION & TOURS

Director of Children's Theatre .....	Caroline Saldivar
Director of Education/Associate Artist.....	Rachel Moulton
Children's Theatre Associate .....	Kacy Jones
Teaching Artist.....	Ava Podewitz
Education Coordinator/Teaching Artist.....	David Stein
Education Administrator.....	Pamela Smith

## BOX OFFICE AND FRONT HOUSE MANAGEMENT

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Box Office Manager.....	Seth Hilbert
Asst. Box Office Manager/House Manager.....	Nicole Crivelli
Asst. Box Office Manager.....	Logan Franke
Asst. Box Office Manager.....	Austin Howeth
Asst. Box Office Manager.....	Brendan Lentini
Box Office Supervisor.....	Gigi Delpero
Box Office Assistant.....	Suzanne Ahmed
Box Office Assistant.....	Susan Cottle
Box Office Assistant.....	Jane Shureb
Box Office Assistant.....	Rebecca Singer
House Manager.....	Chiara Ortiz
House Manager.....	Jodi Sondergaard
Restaurant Manager.....	Tom Curry
Restaurant Manager.....	Karen Price
Restaurant Manager & Event Coordinator .....	Pamela Dillon
Bar Manager.....	Taylor Cummings
Mixer.....	Nyle Samuels
Kitchen Manager.....	Steve Swan

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Facilities Technician.....	Joe Clough
Facilities Technician.....	Tom Henriques
Cleaner.....	Loida Mata

## AUDIENCE ENRICHMENT GROUP

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Trevor Harvey	Charles Shaw
Gilbert King	Howard Tevlowitz
Michele D. Redwine	Honorable Charles Williams
Dr. Eddy Regnier	Rose Chapman
Renée James Gilmore	
The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee	

## OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

House Counsel.....	Michael E. Siegel
	Shutts & Bowen LLP

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Acting Apprentice.....	Christiana Allison
Acting Apprentice.....	Ray Barber
Acting Apprentice.....	Grayson Buchanan
Acting Apprentice.....	Maya Carpentiere
Acting Apprentice.....	Walter Steven Dagley
Acting Apprentice.....	Ryan Dugan
Acting Apprentice.....	Amanda González
Acting Apprentice.....	Jillian Hurley
Acting Apprentice.....	Flynn Nolen
Acting Apprentice.....	Vanessa Smith
Acting Apprentice.....	Sheila Wallis
Casting & Hiring Fellow.....	Lexy Hatch
Company Management Intern.....	AnnaLee Lujan
Costume Intern.....	Julia Hornsby
Education Intern.....	Kira Manuel
Lighting Fellow.....	Kate Landry
Literary Intern.....	Geneva Barker
Literary Intern.....	Breanna Jones
Literary Intern.....	Chloe Kummer
Literary Intern.....	Mo de Poortere
Production Fellow.....	Nathaniel Avery
Props & Paint Intern.....	Audrey Smith
Sound Intern.....	Nyle Samuels
Stage Management Fellow.....	Tori Martinson
Stage Management Intern.....	Carissa Ater
Stage Management Intern.....	Sage Brown
Stage Management Intern.....	Kate Johnson
Stage Management Intern.....	Ashley Nolt
Stage Management Intern.....	Mariana Villarreal
Stage Management Intern.....	Leigh Womack