



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 13, 2020

ARIZONA THEATRE COMPANY PARTNERING WITH FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE IN ITS NEWLY LAUNCHED “PLAYWRIGHTS PROJECT”

*32 of the Nation’s Top Playwrights, Sketch Comedy Writers, Musical Theatre Developers;
Daniels, FST Artistic Staff to Develop “Tampa” Following 2 Brothers Taking Different Life Paths*

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) and Artistic Director Sean Daniels will partner with Florida Studio Theatre (FST) in developing a new play, ***Tampa***, as part of The Playwrights Project, FST’s newly launched artistic initiative featuring 32 of the nation’s top playwrights, sketch comedy writers and musical theatre developers.

Tampa, which follows two brothers who, though they are bound by blood, take different paths in life, will be among the new plays brought to fruition nationwide through the project.

The Playwrights Project was “conceived within the first few days of the theatre shutting down due to COVID-19,” said FST Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins. “Three days after closing the theatre, I had a revelation about Shakespeare—he, like every good artist, instead of following the dark and writing about the plagues of his time, took the road less traveled and followed the light. He wrote, without judgment, about the wonder of humankind. Which made me think that now is the time for FST to inspire the creation of plays. To ask playwrights to write like Shakespeare and reveal humanity’s complexities without judgment.”

Daniels, who attended high school and Florida State University in The Sunshine State but fell in love with theatre growing up in Mesa and attending ATC productions, called the concept “groundbreaking in its creative possibilities,” adding that “Arizona Theatre Company is excited to partner with organizations that are creating new work that we’ll be watching for years to come. We’re dedicated to being a part of the national conversation, and we do that by working with others we respect so much.”

Among other artists partnering with FST are Thomas Gibbons (***Permanent Collection, Bee-luther-hatchee***), playwright in residence for Philadelphia’s InterAct Theatre Company, who will work with FST Associate Director At-Large Kate Alexander on a new play exploring the dilemmas that arise with the prevalence of digital manipulation; Kenneth Jones (***Alabama Story***), a New York-based playwright, librettist and lyricist, who will work with Alexander to create an original play about a family business in Southern America that is at a crossroads; Gabriel Barre, an internationally acclaimed director who directed ***Amazing Grace*** on Broadway and in Washington, D.C.; Deborah Brevoort, an award-winning author of plays, musicals and opera librettos best known for ***The Women of Lockerbie***, which is produced internationally; writer, producer and Emmy Award nominee Jason Odell Williams (***Handle With Care, Church & State***); Carole J. Bufford, one of the most in-demand young performers in New York’s cabaret and jazz scene; and actress and award-winning playwright Sandy Rustin.

Funding for the project comes from the Paycheck Protection Program with material generated to be considered for future FST Mainstage, Cabaret, Sketch Comedy and Children’s Theatre programs.

For more information about The Playwrights Project, visit www.floridastudiotheatre.org. For more information about Arizona Theatre Company, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

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About Arizona Theatre Company: Under new leadership, and now celebrating its 53rd Season, Arizona Theatre Company is truly “The State Theatre.” Our company boasts the largest subscriber base of any performing arts organization in Arizona, with more than 130,000 people each year attending performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix.

Each season of high quality productions reflects the rich variety of world theatre – from classic to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works – audiences enjoy the rich emotional experience and joy that can only be captured through live theatre. ATC is the preeminent professional theatre in the state of Arizona. Under the direction of Artistic Director Sean Daniels, Managing Director Billy Russo, and Managing Director Designee, Geri Wright, ATC operates in two cities – unlike any other League of Resident Theaters (LORT) company in the country.

ATC shares the passion of the theatre through a wide array of outreach programs, educational opportunities, access initiatives, and community events. With more than 800 Education & Engagement activities through the schools and summer programs, ATC focuses on teaching Arizona's youth about the creative power of dramatic literature and how it can enrich their own lives in multiple ways

ATC reaches far beyond the metropolitan areas of Tucson and Phoenix, enriching the theatre learning experience for current and future audiences.

About Florida Studio Theatre: Known as Sarasota's Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by artist, Jon Spelman. Starting out as a small touring company, FST traveled to places such as migrant camps and prisons. The company then acquired the former Woman's Club building, becoming the first permanent venue. Shortly after Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins arrived, the building was purchased and renamed The Keating Theatre. In the years that followed, Florida Studio Theatre established itself as a major force in American Theatre, presenting contemporary theatre in its five theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the Gompertz Theatre, the Parisian style Goldstein Cabaret and John C. Court Cabaret, and Bowne's Lab Theatre.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to a broad-based audience. FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. As FST grows and expands, it continues to provide audiences with challenging, contemporary drama, and innovative programs.