

Summary of Florida Studio Theatre's Strategic Business & Long Range Plan

ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY

The artistic philosophy of Florida Studio Theatre is reflected in the words of James Joyce:

*"I go for the millionth time to forge in the smithy of my soul
the uncreated conscience of the race."*

These words are the spirit and cornerstone of Florida Studio Theatre's Artistic Mission. It is our aim "to create the uncreated conscience of the race." Our purpose in producing plays is to bring to life the hibernating conscience of our audience; to bring to surface those "truths" that lie hidden, forgotten, or lost in us all; to articulate the unarticulated. Thus, together, audience and artist forge our common humanity.

It is our purpose:

*To know what we, the human race, are thinking and feeling; to know
what is in the collective heart.*

*To know that the heart is often unspoken, to know that when the artist
speaks the unspoken, then the uncreated has been created. And to know
that that is art.*

- *To be in love with the audience.*
- *To be at war with the audience.*
- *To find the light in the audience to find the dark.*
- *To find the thing we have in common today.*
- *To find the thing we fear tomorrow.*
- *To find the spirit we love today.*
- *To find the laugh we share at night.*
- *To find the heart of the human race.*

*And to realize that, once found, it is at once lost because it is like moonlight.
You cannot hold it in your hands.*

The artistic philosophy of Florida Studio Theatre permeates every function and department of the organization, from the choice of plays and artists, to the box office operation, to the way we as artists ultimately measure our success and ourselves.

MISSION

Florida Studio Theatre's mission is inspired from the wellspring of the creators of theatre, the ancient Greeks. They saw Theatre as a communal forum where we come together as a society to explore what it means to be alive, to be human. The Greeks believe that the purpose of theatre is to explore:

- Man's relationship to God (Nature)
- Man's relationship to man
- Man's relationship to "self"

Although times have changed and now the word "Man" includes woman, it is through the theatre that we investigate and celebrate the extraordinary and subtle interplay of these relationships described by the ancient Greeks. And in doing so, we come to learn a little more about the human condition.

Florida Studio Theatre holds the following Mission:

- To make theatre affordable and accessible to as many people as possible.
- To present theatre that challenges with as much gusto as it entertains.
- To create a public forum for the issues of our day that will foster positive change in our community and beyond.
- To operate within and for the public trust

Core Values

- Clarity
- Integrity
- Effectiveness

From its modest beginnings of 100 subscribers in 1980, to today with over 215,000 attendees, Florida Studio Theatre has seen unprecedented growth. During its history, FST has grown into a theatre with a budget of over \$7.6 million and over 36,000 subscribers a year, the third largest subscription theatre in the nation. From the finest contemporary plays on the Mainstage, to the heart of the American musical in the Cabaret, to the challenging content and form of Stage III - FST has achieved a strong artistic balance by offering diverse plays and quality educational programming that truly serves a wide range of audience members.

The primary objective for the 2017-2022 plan is to strengthen the theatre's core programming while expanding its audience base and artistry. In this way, the future is insured, and Florida Studio Theatre will continue to be a vital artistic company that operates in the black.

To that end, Florida Studio Theatre's Artistic and Administrative staff developed the 2017-2022 Strategic Business & Long Range Plan with the support of the Board of Trustees. This plan, based upon research and benchmarking information published by arts and nonprofit resources, exists as a tool to execute the theatre's artistic mission and to maintain the financial support structure.

To meet the theatre's objectives, the Strategic Business & Long Range Plan has been organized to preserve the best aspects of Florida Studio Theatre's past successes, while stimulating future growth and the organized completion of our goals.

- Goal 1:** To produce the best in contemporary theatre by presenting plays that speak to a living, evolving & dynamically changing world.
- Goal 2:** To build a broad-based inclusive audience that is reflective of the world, so that we can put the world on the stage and reflect it back to our audience.
- Goal 3:** To explore new theatre forms and in doing so create new audiences.
- Goal 4:** To cause the creation of new plays by established and emerging writers.
- Goal 5:** To deepen our relationship with artists and organizations on the local & national scene.
- Goal 6:** To ensure a vital, affordable, accessible theatre that reflects the concerns of a diverse society.
- Goal 7:** To provide excellent theatre for children and to train them in the language and thought of the theatre.
- Goal 8:** To maintain a thriving, supportive, equitable, diverse and inclusive working environment for artists and staff in which they can grow and flourish.
- Goal 9:** To renovate and construct new facilities; to remain at the forefront of integrating technology accelerators into the operation of the theatre.
- Goal 10:** To be accountable to our audiences and donors by operating with fiscal responsibility.

<p style="text-align: center;">FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE STRATEGIC BUSINESS & LONG RANGE PLAN 2017 – 2022</p>
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Goal 1: To produce the best in contemporary theatre by presenting plays that speak to a living, evolving & dynamically changing world.

- A. Expand and enhance artistic staff to meet future growth and ensure quality and excellence in all artistic programs.
 - 1. Hire an Associate Artist to oversee the creation, production, and running of Cabaret productions through their 17-19 week runs (2019).
 - 2. Hire an Associate Artist to oversee the FST Conservatory (2019).
 - 3. Hire a Director of Artistic Operations to manage the day-to-day of the artistic offices including the Literary, Casting, and Production departments and their interaction with the Administrative staff (2018). (complete)
- B. Expand production department to meet growth and initiate higher quality standards.
 - 1. Hire a Lighting and Projection Designer who can build on the theatre's projection capabilities (2019).
- C. Continue to provide secure careers in theatre.
 - 1. Continue to enhance salary and benefits above the national average as determined by benchmarking surveys by national and local arts/nonprofit service organizations (2017-2022).
 - 2. Increase the average on guest artist salaries by 30% to bring them to LORT B standards (2017-2019).
 - 3. Expand professional development from one to at least three opportunities a year for non-executive staff to attend trainings and conferences (2018). (complete)
 - 4. Continue to fill 10-20% of full-time, permanent staff positions from our intern pool (2017-2022).
- D. Develop and grow the professional skills of young theatre artists.
 - 1. Continue to provide professional training and experience to emerging theatre artists through a strong intern program that includes housing (2017-2022).
 - 2. Expand the Apprentice and Internship program from 36 to 40 (2020).
 - 3. Create new opportunities for Interns such as Playwriting and Directing (2018). (complete)
 - 4. Create Equity, Diversity, and Inclusive recruitment programs for FST's Internship and Apprentice Programs to increase the number of diverse applicants by 40% (2017-2022).
- E. Utilize every space at Florida Studio Theatre the best way possible.
 - 1. Finish updating projection capabilities in the theatre's five spaces. (2018-2020)
 - 2. Continue to upgrade the theatres as new technology develops (2017-2022).

Goal 2: To build a broad-based audience that is reflective of the world, so that we can put the world on the stage and reflect it back to our audience.

- A. Expand Mainstage audience by 20% in five years to over 95,000 attendees. (2015-2020)
- B. Expand Cabaret audience by 15% in five years by increasing offerings in the Cabaret to its maximum capacity of 66,000 attendees. (2015-2020)
- C. Expand the Stage III audience by 50% in five years to over 12,000 attendees. (2016-2021)
- D. Expand the variety of FST Improv offerings thus increasing attendance for FST Improv performances by 100% (2020).
- E. Expand FST's Improv Programming to include political and social satire. (2020).
- F. Expand the Children's Theatre program.
 - 1. Grow FST's Mainstage for High School Students Program to reach 1,000 students a year (2018). Stabilize the program to continue reaching over 1,000 students a year (2020).
 - 2. Expand the WRITE A PLAY three-play subscription by 20% (2021).
 - i. Stabilize the touring component of WRITE A PLAY through touring a show in the fall and *Under Six* in the spring to students who cannot get transportation to FST (2018).
 - ii. Expand WAP's reach in Manatee County to match Sarasota's reach (2019).
 - iii. Expand WAP's reach by offering the 3rd Show of the Family Series as an additional option for the WAP touring program. (2018) (complete)
 - 3. Stabilize the Saturday Children's Theatre Family Program
 - i. Grow relationships with other Children's Programs in the area such as the Boys and Girls Club by having these groups attend Children's Theatre productions (2018-2019).
 - ii. Double the audience for the Children's Theatre Single-Ticket Summer Show (2019).
 - iii. Double the subscription base for the Children's Theatre Family Series (2019).
 - iv. Maximize on the potential of the two new Children's Theatre productions by touring the plays to various groups and schools in the area (2018-2019)
 - v. Grow the Christmas show to a Family Event for the entire community (2020).
- G. Expand the Florida Studio Theatre School
 - 1. Increase the participation in FST's Labs for Adults by 100 students (2018).
 - i. Grow the Corporate Training Program by 20% in two years, and then by another 20% (2022).

- ii. Double the Summer Improv Intensive participation. This is a program where FST students have the opportunity to learn under national-level improvisers for a week (2019).
 - iii. Continue to expand program offerings (2018-2019).
 - iv. Continue to expand program offerings for specialized programs such as Improv for Caregivers. (2018-2022).
- H. Strengthen the theatre's emphasis on the continued life of FST's original Mainstage and Cabaret productions.
 - 1. Increase the national profile of the musical revues developed at FST by moving at least two shows to other regional theatres (2018-2021)
 - 2. Commission at least one new play to be written every year (2018-2022).
- I. Continue to deepen the artistic experience for the audience through FST Forums. This is FST's audience enrichment initiative that places each production in its historical, social, and cultural context.
 - 1. Continue to publish a series of literary articles for each play as researched and written by FST's existing literary staff, as well as solicited articles from guest artists (2017-2022).
 - 2. Continue to conduct a series of pre- and post-show discussion forums led by existing artistic and administrative personnel, local community leaders, as well as guest artists and guest speakers (2017-2022).
 - 3. Expand forum discussions to off-site locations that reach deeper into the community. (2017-2022).
 - 4. Continue to expand the Forum Leadership Committee to create additional activities that increase community wide engagement on the issues within the plays. (2017-2022).
 - 5. Expand forum reach through new formats such as METV and Website Opportunities (2019).
 - 6. Create a guide for other theatres to create an audience enrichment program modeled off of FST's. (2019).
 - 7. Continue to partner with area schools with performance opportunities paired with educational materials and student talk backs. (2017-2022)

Goal 3: To explore new theatre forms and in doing so create new audiences.

- A. Continue to discover/present challenging, cutting-edge plays in our Stage III Subscription Series (2017-2022)
- B. Continue to premiere political and social sketch satire on FST's stages, as written by resident and guest artists (2017-2022).
- C. Develop sketch writers and improvisational performers to create topical and frequently changing material (2017-2022).
- D. Secure our ability to foster and develop new plays by children by continuing to bring the WRITE A PLAY program to schools throughout the region and state through the FST In-The-Schools Endowment. (2017-2022).
- E. Continue to include at least one international act a year in the Sarasota Improv Festival. (2017-2022).

- F. Create a Flying Solo Festival that will feature one man shows in the Bowne's Lab Theatre. (2020).

Goal 4: To cause the creation of new plays by established and emerging writers.

- A. Continue to produce the Sarasota Festival of New Plays, with its two major components: the New Play Festival and the Young Playwrights Festival.
 - 1. Continue to produce the New Play Festival, consisting of one premiere production on the Mainstage, one premiere production in the Cabaret, one premiere production for Stage III, as well as the Richard and Betty Burdick New Play Reading Series.
 - i. Continue to ensure the continued life of new works by providing full productions for the best and most well-developed plays from the reading series (2017-2022).
 - ii. Expand the Sarasota Festival of New Plays to include the *Women in Playwriting Festival* (2019).
 - 2. Continue to produce the Young Playwrights Festival by utilizing staff, interns and volunteers to select exemplary student-written plays for production. Continue to utilize staff and interns to produce the *Under Six* anthology of plays and the Young Playwrights Festival Day Ceremony, as funded by earned income, foundations, and corporations.
 - i. Bring in special guests such as Pulitzer-Prize Winning Playwrights to speak at the festival every year (2019-2022).
- B. Increase New Play Development activities
 - 1. Continue to seek funding from the National New Play Network to support emerging playwrights and the production of new plays (2017-2022).
 - 2. Continue to produce at least one premiere each year (2017-2022).
 - 3. Produce at least one more National New Play Network rolling world premiere. (2020)
 - 4. Commission at least one new play to be written every year (2017-2022).
 - 5. Develop two children's shows per year (2017-2022).
 - 6. Continue to foster new plays written by resident FST artists as supported by Associate Artists and the Literary Department (2017-2022).
- C. Formalize the Playwrights Collective. Grow collective of 10 playwrights that work with FST on a continuing basis. This new initiative will take FST's new play development to the next level creating an on-going collaborative environment for playwrights to work in Sarasota writing plays that speak to FST's diverse audience. (2018-2022).
- D. Expand the number of writers FST uses on a regular basis. (2017-2022).
- E. Create an on-line catalog of Musical Revues developed at FST and available for licensing. Begin marketing and licensing these shows to theatres across the US. (2019-2020)

- F. Expand the offerings in the Education Department's FST Labs/ sketch comedy, screen writing, and play writing program through classes led by a combination of resident and guest artists. (2017-2022)
- G. Expand the offering in FST Labs to include musical revue development to teach the successful methodologies developed at FST to others. (2019)
- H. Expand the corporate video production including script creation by FST Improv. (2017-2022).
- I. Grow playwright residencies to at least three a year (2017-2022).

Goal 5: To deepen our relationship with artists and organizations on the local and national scene.

- A. Continue to produce NNPN Rolling World Premieres (2017-2022).
- B. Enhance mutually beneficial relationships with national and international theatre organizations. For example, in 2017 FST co-hosted the LORT Conference and in 2015, FST hosted the Annual NNPN Showcase. In addition, FST's Managing Director is currently on the board of LORT, TCG, NNPN, and the Sarasota Arts & Cultural Alliance. (Examples of organizations FST has relationships with- League of Resident Theatres, The National New Play Network, Theatre Communications Group, Actors Equity Association, Society of Directors & Choreographers, United Scenic Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists), government and civic agencies (e.g. the Sarasota County Tourist Development Council, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, Florida State Division of Cultural Affairs), educational institutions and school boards (e.g. Ringling College of Arts and Design, Sarasota and Manatee County School Boards) and local non-profit agencies (e.g. Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, Boys & Girls Clubs, NAACP). (2017-2022)
- C. Continue to expand the Forum Leadership Committee to more community partners to increase community wide engagement on the issues within the plays. (There are currently over 25 partners including: the City of Sarasota Mayor's Office, City of Sarasota Redevelopment Office, Embracing Our Differences, Political Strategist Ed James III, Florida Veterans for Common Sense, Pulitzer Prize Winning Author Gilbert King, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Housing Authority of Sarasota, Manatee Educational Television, New College of Florida, Ringling Museum of Art, Boys and Girls Club at Newtown, Sarasota Bar Association, Sarasota/Manatee Democratic Black Caucus of Florida, Sarasota County Public Libraries, Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Sarasota Ministerial Association, and WWSB ABC 7 News.) (2017-2022).
- D. Continue to expand the FST Extended Company of artists (artists who return to the theatre for multiple productions). Each year, at least 25% of all guest artists employed by FST will be Extended Company members (2017-2022).
- E. Develop relationships with new writers and commission them for new works (2017-2022).

Goal 6: To ensure a vital, affordable, accessible theatre that reflects and serves the concerns of a diverse society.

- A. Continue making programming in all three theatres affordable by maintaining ticket prices that are comparable to the price of attending a movie, resulting in continual audience growth. This ticket price is ½ the national average as reported by the TCG survey (\$20 vs. \$36) (2017-2022).
- B. Continue FST's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion by continuing to create a culture of inclusion where employees of diverse human qualities can thrive and succeed and are able to participate in, and contribute to, the progress and success of FST, while growing both professionally and personally. (2017-2022).
- C. Continue to focus on high retention/low attrition rates of subscribers by providing professional, contemporary theatre at low prices (2017-2022).
- D. Continue service to special populations by providing scholarship funding for the financially disadvantaged, physically challenged, blind and visually impaired, and other students with special needs to attend the FST VIP Performing Arts School for Special Needs Youth, as supported by funds from individuals, foundations and corporations (2017-2022).
- E. Continue to provide ethnically and racially diverse theatre (e.g. *Native Gardens*, *How To Use A Knife*, *Black Pearl Sings!*, *RACE*, *Best of Enemies*, *Fly*, *Butler*, and *brownsville song*) that reflects the diversity of the region, the country and the world (2017-2022).
- F. Continue to provide cutting-edge theatre that challenges with as much gusto as it entertains, exploring a diversity of important and thought-provoking issues (e.g. *The Things They Carried*, *Honor Killing*, *The Belly of the Beast*, *The Exonerated*, *Next Fall*, *Next to Normal*, *Stalking the Bogeyman*, *Grounded*) (2017-2022).
- G. Continue to write, produce and perform musical satire and sketch comedy in the Cabaret Theatre that explores political issues of the day with FST's *Laughing Matters*; producing sketch material in the Cabaret by-yearly (2017-2022)
- H. Enhance the theatre-going experience by connecting what is onstage with relevant community events and organizations, and pre-/post-show discussions (2017-2022).
- I. Maintain all facilities as accessible to people with disabilities. (2017-2022)
- J. Continue our statewide commitment to underserved populations through the provision of subsidized participation in the WRITE A PLAY Program, as supported by foundations, corporations, and the FST-In-The-Schools Endowment. (2017-2022).
- K. Grow FST's endowment and reserves by \$1 Million by 2020. Grow it by another \$1 Million by 2022.
- L. Double the commitment to FST's Legacy Campaign (2020).

Goal 7: To provide excellent theatre for children and train them in the language and thought of the theatre.

- A. Increase outreach activities.
 - 1. Continue to bring yearlong playwriting residencies in schools with the greatest need (2017-2022).
 - 2. Increase the number of joint programs with human service organizations to bring theatre into the community and to bring the community into the theatre (2017-2022).
- B. Expand education outreach and the scholarship program
 - 1. Utilize FST's resources to overcome transportation problems for students via satellite programs and bussing (2019).
 - 2. Continue to partner with groups such as the Easter Seals and Alta Vista School to offer after-school classes to serve students with financial or special needs (2017-2022).
- C. Expand education outreach by partnering with local organizations such as Tidewell Hospice to create programs that serve students with emotional needs (Blue Butterfly Acting Program for students dealing with grief).
- D. Continue to align programming with Florida Public School's core curriculum (2017-2022).
- E. Stabilize the new Family Subscription Series for children's theatre which includes two children's shows, a holiday show, and *Under Six* (2018).
 - 1. Grow relationships with other Children's Programs in the area such as the Boys and Girls Club by having these groups attend Children's Theatre productions (2018).
 - 2. Double the audience for the Children's Theatre Single-Ticket Summer Show (2019). (complete) Double it again (2020).
 - 3. Double the subscription base for the Children's Theatre Family Series (2019).
 - 4. Maximize on the potential of the two new Children's Theatre productions by touring the plays to various groups and schools in the area (2018). (complete)
 - 5. Grow the Christmas show to a Family Event for the entire community (2019).

Goal 8: To maintain a thriving and supportive work environment for artists in which they can grow and flourish.

- A. Continue to secure career artists by maintaining salary and benefits above the national average in an economic climate that might otherwise dictate cuts. Ensure this through the utilization of benchmarking surveys such as Theatre Communication's Group's *Theatre Facts Survey* and the Nonprofit Resource Center of the Community Foundation of Sarasota's Compensation and Benefits Report (2017-2022).

- B. Expand staff training programs by offering at least three opportunities a year for non-executive staff to attend trainings and conferences (2018). **(complete and continuing)**
- C. Maintain the theatre as a vital place for artists.
 - 1. Maintain FST's Extended Company of artists (artists who return to the theatre for multiple productions). Each year, at least 25% of all guest artists employed by FST will be Extended Company members (2017-2022).
 - 2. Provide guest artists with growth opportunities through their participation in teaching in FST Labs at least 5 times a year (2019).
 - 3. Grow the next generation of theatre professionals through the FST Internship program (2017-2022).
 - i. Expand the Apprentice and Internship program from 36 to 40 (2020).
 - 4. Continue to offer year-round employment to artists (2017-2022).
 - 5. Continue to expand performance opportunities for FST Apprentices through new lab programming (2017-2020).
- D. Expand offerings in both adult and youth education programming. (2017-2022).
 - 1. Expand day time offerings for the senior community from two days to offerings every weekday (2019).
- E. Continue relations with alumni artists, interns, and staff (2017-2022).
 - 1. Develop a tool to track where former artists, interns, apprentices, and staff go after Florida Studio Theatre. Add a component to our website that can be self-maintained about where they have gone (2021).
 - 2. Develop a tool to track former WRITE A PLAY winners. (2021).

Goal 9: To renovate and construct new facilities; to remain at the forefront of integrating technology accelerators into the operation of the theatre.

- A. Continue to integrate state-of-the-art technology into all five of FST's theatres (2017-2022).
- B. Complete the Kretzmer Artist Residence for interns and apprentices (2018). **(complete)**
- C. Construct the new Artist Plaza on 1st Street that will include housing for visiting guest artists, affordable housing for local artists, education studio space, and a parking garage (2022).
- D. Renovate the newly purchased Simonsen-Montminy Theatre Wing next to FST's current buildings. This will make room for an expanded production and administrative department (2020). **(Complete)**
- E. Renovate the Sudakoff Theatre Wing to expand the Muriel O'Neal Producing offices .(2019)
- F. Continue to utilize new technology to provide more efficient tools to staff and a more accessible theatre to the audience (2017-2022).
 - 1. Add an online archive to FST's website that the public can access (2020).

Goal 10: To be accountable to our audiences and donors by operating with fiscal responsibility.

- A. Increase earned income.
 - 1. Increase ticket sales through extending the runs of productions in all five theatres.
 - 2. Increase profits from food and beverage sales by 3% a year (2017-2022).
- B. Increase unearned income.
 - 1. Increase institutional/corporate sponsorship by 20% including one new national funder (2022).
 - 2. Expand small gifts by 20%, through increased audience base (2022).
 - 3. Expand prospect research to identify new donors (2017-2022).
 - 4. Double the commitment to FST's Legacy Campaign by establishing relationships with trust departments of local financial institutions (2020).
- C. Continue to implement advanced "Technology Accelerators," including software upgrades and web integration, to enhance customer service, increase productivity, and reach a broader audience (2017-2022).
- D. Grow FST's endowment by \$1 million by 2020. Grow it by another \$1 million by 2022.
- E. Continue to operate in the black (2017-2022).