



Tampa

Florida Studio Theatre and Embracing Our Differences Partner for Student Matinee Performances of BUTLER

by

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A line of school buses is now a familiar sight outside of FST's Keating Theatre. As a partner of FST's Dialogues on Diversity, Embracing Our Differences is providing free bussing for students to attend all special student matinee performances of FST's Mainstage hit, BUTLER. This is made possible through their Make-A-Day-Of-It! program which allows for free field trips for students to experience a

variety of arts education programs.

EOD is a not-for-profit organization that uses the power of art and education to expand consciousness and open the heart to celebrate the diversity of the human family. What began as a partnership to allow for children to see FST's WRITE-A-PLAY productions back in 2004, has now blossomed and expanded, giving thousands of children and teens over the years, the chance to experience professional theatre, in many cases for the very first time.

EOD President and Founder [Michael Shelton](#) speaks to the importance of the Make-A-Day-Of-It! Program, "From the beginning, Embracing Our Differences has tapped into the power of art to open people's minds. Live theatre is especially powerful in this regard. Thanks to our partnership with FST through our Make-A-Day-Of-It! program, we are able to offer thousands of area students the opportunity to experience moving performances every year."

Students also have the opportunity to participate in a post-show talk back with the cast members of the show. Shelton, speaks to the importance of making these types of

opportunities available to students through the partnership with FST. "It's one thing to engage in an abstract discussion about diversity. It's another to experience, first-hand, scenes from the lives of people of different races, backgrounds, genders or sexual preferences. Live theatre puts us in someone else's shoes and lets us see life through their perspective. The results can be profound and life-changing for many young people. Our partnership with FST allows us to give students the kind of empathic experiences that only theatre can provide."

Upcoming Student Matinee Performances are:

10:15am - Wednesday February 24

10:15am - Thursday February 25

10:15am - Friday February 26

10:15am - Wednesday March 2

10:15am - Thursday March 3

10:15am - Friday March 4

Embracing Our Differences is a not-for-profit organization that uses the power of art and education to expand consciousness and open the heart to celebrate the diversity of the human family. It accomplishes this through an annual, large-scale outdoor juried art exhibition and a comprehensive series of educational initiatives, programs and resources designed for teachers and students.

They believe that diversity is one of the world's greatest assets. To realize the promise of diversity, we must ensure that everyone is respected, included and valued for his or her individuality. Our goal is to create a community where diversity and inclusion are honored while teaching the importance of being an "up-stander," and not a "by-stander."

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. As FST grows and expands, it continues to provide audiences with challenging, contemporary drama and innovative programs.

Photo Credit: Florida Studio Theatre's website

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