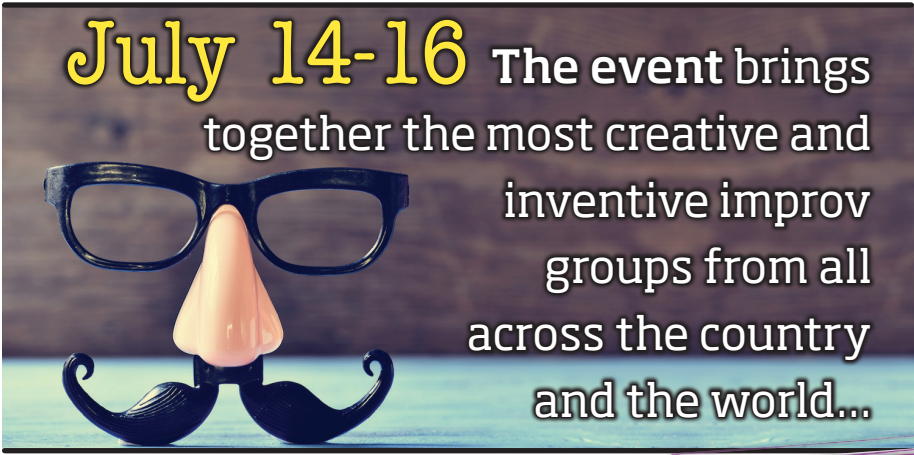




The Sarasota Improv Festival Brings Back the Funny



It's July and that means laughter takes over the entire Florida Studio Theatre campus. Eighteen of the top improv groups from all over come to Sarasota to take risks, get raw, and get real on stage in a variety of improv formats. **The 8th Annual Improv Festival** will be held on July 14, 15, and 16.

The Sarasota Improv Festival brings together the most creative and inventive improv groups from all across the country and the world. According to Festival Producer and FST Managing Director, Rebecca Hopkins, "There's a wide range of groups representing the spectrum of improv classifications: long form, short form, musical, dramatic, genre-based, and more. Every year it takes a lot to put together this weekend of comic shenanigans. We are always asking 'How do we shake things up bit?' It's a jam-packed weekend... man oh man is it jam-packed. I have to make myself breathe just thinking about it."

Also gearing up for these 3 days of non-stop laughter and unpredictable comedy is FST's Director of Improv, Will Luera. "This year, not only are we bringing back many of the festival favorites like North Coast, STACKED, ImprovBoston and Available Cupholders," said Luera. We're also welcoming three new teams who will add the level of improvised theatricality and humor that our audiences have come to expect. Two of the new teams are among the most recognized narrative ensembles in the world; Our headliner, Impro Theatre from Los Angeles and Parallelogramophonograph (PGraph), from Austin have been wowing audiences with their highly stylized improvised shows, and I'm very excited to have them here in Sarasota."

Headlining the festival, recognized by *Entertainment Today* as "The most uproarious, side-splitting, laughter-till-you-drop show," Impro Theatre brings a little sci-fi flavor to Sarasota with their hit show, *Twilight Zone: Unscripted*. *The Examiner* calls their show, "STUNNING! A phenomenal display of fearlessness, creativity and inspiration." From the darkest corners of reality to the land of the unexplained, this is a completely improvised show in the style of classic 60's sci-fi television shows. Enter the dimension of pure imagination as the company starts with audience suggestions and creates all new and completely improvised episodes.

For the second year in a row, FST brings in laughter from across the ocean as well.



< FST Improv
From Left Clockwise: Tony Rataj, Hunter Brown, Patrick A. Jackson, Steve Turrissi, Joseph James, Sal Piccolo, Emily Levin, Natasha Samreny, Adam Ratner, Andrew Deeb, Will Luera, Ali Reed, Christine Alexander, Jim Prosser. Photo: Matthew Holler.



< Big Bang Improv
Boston style freeform that has been wowing New England audiences and at festivals around the world for years. The entire set moves seamlessly from one scene to the next at the rate of over a scene a minute all following the group play philosophy of "follow the funny." The show builds rapidly and culminates in a series of surprising and organic callbacks done through unique editing styling and storytelling.



Just the Funny >
Just The Funny, Miami's Home for Improv and Sketch Comedy, and 5-time winner of the *New Times* "Best of Miami" presents Fever Pitch. Sometimes dramatic, sometimes comedic and always intense, Fever Pitch will take you on a voyeuristic journey, where the lines get blurred from what is performance and what is real. Not for the faint of heart, Fever Pitch, tackles any and every subject, and is not appropriate for kids.



< North Coast Improv
With a cast of improv comedy veterans in New York City (UCB, The PIT, and The Magnet theaters), North Coast's explosive performances have been packing comedy venues, universities, and festivals nationwide since 2009. Named one of the "Top Ten Best Comedy Shows" by *Time Out New York*, the show's improvised scenes are inspired by a single suggestion from an audience member - and they escalate into full-blown hip-hop songs, facilitated by resident beatboxer and World Beatbox Champion, Kaila Mullady. With their seamless melding of comedic timing and freestyle rapping abilities, North Coast frequently blurs the line between comedy show and concert, drawing audiences from the comedy, hip-hop, and theater communities.

"We are continuing our commitment to bringing in International Acts with Speechless," said Luera. "This cast is coming to us from Colombia and Canada with one of the most unique shows of the festival. Based on movement and physical expression, this wordless show is accompanied on stage by a live DJ." Laughter translates into every language.

Kicking off the festival with some homegrown comedy on Thursday evening are returning Florida groups Just The Funny, Dear Aunt Gertrude, Sick Puppies, The Third Thought, Post Dinner Conversation, and Villain Improv. These comedic comrades will wrap up the first night of the festival with FAST: the Florida All-Star King of the Hill Competition.

On both Friday and Saturday night, groups will perform 40-minute sets as the laughs continue with returning favorites including, STACKED, Hawk and Wayne, Dad's Garage, Available Cupholders, ImprovBoston, Big Bang, North Coast Improv, SAK Comedy Lab, and of course the home team of FST Improv. Last year's festival saw over 3200 attendees in just three days.

Festival attendees also get the chance to see 26 World Premieres, never before performed shows by the top improvisers in the field. Rounding out the festival is the always-anticipated *All Play* performance on Saturday night in the Gompertz Theatre. It's the one night with every single performer in the festival on stage playing together at the same time. Anything can happen at any moment. It's creativity at its most chaotic, and it works.

Tickets:

Passes are now on sale; 3 day passes are \$69, 2 day passes are \$59, Friday or Saturday passes are \$49, and Thursday passes are \$20. All festival passes are now on sale and may be purchased by calling the Box Office at 941-366-9000, or at floridastudiotheatre.org.

Performance Schedule:

- ★ **Thursday, July 9**
 - 7:00pm – Just The Funny/Dear Aunt Gertrude/Sick Puppies– Bowne's Lab
 - 8:30pm – Third Thought/Post Dinner Conversation/Villain– Bowne's Lab
 - 10:00pm – FAST (Florida All-Star King of the Hill Competition) – Bowne's Lab
- ★ **Friday, July 10**
 - 6:00 pm – FST Improv – Keating Theatre
 - 7:00pm – Parallelogramophonograph – Keating Theatre
 - 7:00pm – ImprovBoston – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 8:00pm – Dad's Garage – Keating Theatre
 - 8:00pm – Speechless – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 8:00pm – Impro Theatre – Gompertz Theatre
 - 9:00pm – Available Cupholders – Keating Theatre
 - 9:00pm – STACKED – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 10:00pm – North Coast Improv – Keating Theatre
- ★ **Saturday, July 11**
 - 5:00pm – Dad's Garage – Keating Theatre
 - 5:00pm – Hawk and Wayne – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 6:00pm – Big Bang Improv – Keating Theatre
 - 6:00pm – Parallelogramophonograph – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 7:00pm – North Coast Improv – Keating Theatre
 - 7:00pm – Available Cupholders – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 8:00pm – SAK Comedy Lab – Keating Theatre
 - 8:00pm – ImprovBoston – Goldstein Cabaret
 - 9:00pm – Impro Theatre – Gompertz Theatre
 - 10:30pm – All Play – Gompertz Theatre