



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IMAGINATION COMES TO LIFE ON NEW WEDU SPECIAL *Kids in the Arts Showcases Sarasota Playwright Festival*

Tampa, FL – Celebrating 17 years of inspiring children from Kindergarten to 12th Grade, Sarasota-based Florida Studio Theater’s WRITE A PLAY Program is the focus of *Kids in the Arts* – WEDU’s newest half-hour local special premiering Thursday, October 2 at 8:30 pm.

Produced in high-definition, *Kids in the Arts* host Gabriel Ortiz will take viewers on an inspiring and enlightening journey into the world of young authors. *Kids in the Arts* provides an insider’s look at the Florida Studio Theater’s 2008 Young Playwrights Festival, and the moving performances and inspiring stories of the playwrights themselves who tell us first hand the changes they have experienced through their participation and witnessing *their* written word come to life. From Bradenton 5th grader Noah Smith’s play about how a genie grants a wish and changes a basketball player’s life to a young Israeli girl’s story of a war victim in *Red Color* (“Red Color” means danger and is a way of life in certain areas of Israel), the exposure to the many varied young playwrights, and their ideas in the WRITE A PLAY Program helps to foster a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and acceptance.

Florida Studio Theater’s WRITE A PLAY program is an in-school arts initiative designed to inspire students to be creative and to write plays. The program has achieved incredible success by exposing youth to the performing arts, as well as providing the participants an opportunity to develop their creativity, spontaneity, language arts, self-confidence and teamwork skills. The WRITE A PLAY program has reached more than 1,000,000 students since 1991, and culminates annually with the Young Playwrights Festival. This year’s festival received more than 9,000 entries from young playwrights throughout the state of Florida and around the world, including Sarasota sister cities in Russia, Israel and Scotland.

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Kids in the Arts has been funded by a generous grant from Ann and Alfred Goldstein with a vision of promoting the arts throughout Florida's west coast. *Kids in the Arts* is an exclusive production of WEDU premiering on Thursday, October 2 at 8:30 pm; encore presentations can be seen on WEDU Thursday, October 9 at 3 pm and Sunday, October 19 at 2:30 pm. WEDU Vice President of Content, Jack Conely, served as the Executive Producer; Ken Cherry as the Producer. This local special can also be viewed on wedu.org.

For more information about WEDU programming, special events, outreach efforts and community partnerships visit wedu.org or call 800.354.9338. WEDU, a 501(c)(3) organization, is West Central Florida's primary PBS station serving 16 counties including the Tampa, St. Petersburg, Pasco, Polk and Sarasota areas through multiple media disciplines including on-air broadcasting and online experiences. WEDU, recently awarded its third consecutive four-star rating by Charity Navigator, is financially supported by its local community, and provides the highest quality education, information, and entertainment programming on local, national, and international levels.

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Florida Studio Theatre (FST) has been in operation in Sarasota since 1973. During its history, FST has grown into a theatre with a budget of over \$4 million and 20,000 subscribers a year, more than any theatre its size in the country. FST produces world premieres and contemporary works which have been produced on or off-Broadway within the last five years.

By focusing on the works of contemporary writers, FST has been able to offer plays to its audiences that are not normally produced by other area theatres. FST is comprised of six main programs: Mainstage, Cabaret, the Gompertz Theatre, Education, Touring and New Play Development.

For more information visit www.floridastudiotheatre.org.