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CHERRY DOCS: DIGGING UP THE ROOTS OF HATRED

(Sarasota, FL) —Florida Studio Theatre (FST) presents the second production of its 2019 Stage III Series: *Cherry Docs* by David Gow, a fearless exploration of hatred and the powerful role it plays in society. Called “Bracingly Intelligent” by *The Boston Globe*, *Cherry Docs* sheds light on the dangers of extremism and depicts how fear can quickly change into hate. *Cherry Docs* starts playing in FST’s Bowne’s Lab Theatre February 20. Tickets can be purchased at (941) 366-9000 or floridastudiotheatre.org.

“The play takes us on a deep journey to the dark parts within all of us, where we can look at the face - the very roots of anger,” shared Kate Alexander, FST’s Associate Director At-Large and Director of *Cherry Docs*. “The play asks, where does hate come from? How do we face it? What is our responsibility to ourselves and to each other?”

One of the most-produced Canadian plays, *Cherry Docs* is a dramatic two-hander that focuses on Mike, a neo-Nazi skinhead charged with murdering an immigrant by kicking them to death, and Danny, the Jewish lawyer assigned by Legal Aid to his case. Although they have diametrically opposed belief systems, Danny and Mike are forced to work together to craft a defense for Mike. In the process, Danny is forced to examine the limits of his own liberalism and its underlying demons. This drama is an unblinking examination of hatred, the explosive effect it has on our society, and the hurdles that confront us as we set about eradicating it.

Called “Deeply troubling” by *Variety* and “An emotional mountain climb” by *New York Theatre Wire*, *Cherry Docs* premiered at the Factory Theatre in Toronto, Canada in 1998. The play was inspired by a beating that one of Gow’s own gay friends suffered during college. “At that time, during the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, there was quite an active skinhead population in Montreal,” shared Gow in an interview with *@This Stage Magazine*. “This was also true in Toronto, where there were a number of hate-inspired events over the years. And, unfortunately, this legacy of white supremacist neo-Nazism continues.”

FST’s production of *Cherry Docs* features Drew Hirshfield and Tom Patterson, both of whom were also part of FST’s production of *Hand to God*. Hirshfield has performed at numerous regional theatres across the country, including Huntington Theatre Company, Geva Theatre Center, Premiere Stages, and American Conservatory Theater. Patterson appeared in the Broadway production of *1984* and Studio Theatre’s production of *Constellations*, for which he won a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Actor in a Play.

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Cherry Docs is a hard-hitting drama examining bigotry and redemption that runs from February 20 through March 15 in FST's Bowne's Lab Theatre. Tickets can be purchased at (941) 366-9000 or floridastudiotheatre.org.

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 eventually settled down into a permanent home, acquiring the former Woman's Club building – now 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 Goldstein Cabaret, the renovated Gompertz Theatre, the 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. Under Producing Artistic Director and CEO, Richard Hopkins, 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.

ABOUT STAGE III

Stage III presents socially significant productions, producing plays that are challenging in content and unique in form, such as *Edward Albee's The Goat*. The program also offers something for the broader palate, seeking to entertain audiences with shows such as *Shear Madness*.

Stage III is also home to the FST Improv Troupe. Since 2001, FST Improv has been entertaining audiences and has grown wildly popular. FST also hosts the annual Sarasota Improv Festival, now in its eleventh year, to bring troupes from all over the world to Sarasota audiences.

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