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CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Associate
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
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INTERNATIONAL HIT *THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME* HITS FST'S MAINSTAGE

(Sarasota, FL) —Florida Studio Theatre (FST) proudly announces its production of the five-time Tony Award-winning play, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Called "One of the most immersive works ever to wallop Broadway" by *The New York Times*, *Curious Incident* follows Christopher Boone, a highly gifted 15-year-old who sets out to investigate the bizarre death of his neighbor's dog. But what begins as a curious quest ends up taking Christopher on an unexpected adventure, exposing far greater mysteries. Written by Simon Stephens and adapted from Mark Haddon's bestselling novel of the same name, *Curious Incident* will run starting January 23 in FST's Gompertz Theatre. Single tickets can be purchased at (941) 366-9000 or floridastudiotheatre.org.

"I am drawn to the play because of its magnificent view of the universe," explained Richard Hopkins, FST's Producing Artistic Director and director of the production. "The audience has the privilege of viewing the universe through the extraordinary mind of Christopher. In this play, a grain of sand can become magnificent and the Milky Way seems manageable. The play demands our attention. It revels in the mystery of life and the mysteries of our planet."

The winner of a record-breaking seven Olivier Awards, *Curious Incident* centers on Christopher Boone, an exceptionally intelligent teenager who is ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. When he discovers his neighbor's dog Wellington has been murdered, he is determined to identify the culprit. His pursuit inspires a series of events that raise even more questions. As the clues fall into place, they reveal a community of disparate characters, a family with secrets, and a gifted mind in a complicated relationship with the world.

Called "Artfully conceived and skillfully manifested" by *The Guardian* and "Smart, original, and brimming with humanity" by the *Hollywood Reporter*, this international hit puts audiences inside the brilliant brain of a teenager who views the world in ways that most of us can only imagine. "It's a very simple story, but one has to theatricalize it so that the audience feels what it's like to be in that boy's shoes, to see through his eyes," shared Hopkins.

Playing Christopher Boone is Alexander Stuart, who previously played the part in the Actors Theatre of Louisville production of *Curious Incident*. Stuart is only the second American actor on the autistic spectrum to play Christopher. "[The play] sets itself apart from other spectacle shows in that its spectacular elements truly mean something, and serve a purpose that satisfies more than just the novelty of entertainment," shares Stuart. "It plunges you straight into the mind of another human being. All the design and storytelling within this play exists to show you the overstimulated brain of an adolescent on the spectrum, which is quite an extreme experience. The audience undergoes a true test of empathy as they walk a couple hours in my shoes."

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The cast includes faces familiar to FST: Brooke Benson, Voice 5 (*The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, 2018); Todd Licea, Ed Boone (*Doublewide*, 2017); Sam Mossler, Voice 4 (*Other People's Money*, 2018); Rachel Moulton, Judy Boone (*Honor Killing*, 2018); Liz Power, Voice 1 (*Dancing in the Street*, 2014); and Alex Teicheira, Voice 2 (*Native Gardens*, 2018).

Finishing off the cast are three newcomers to FST: Ann Gundersheimer, Ashton Heyl, Michael J. Berry. Gundersheimer has played Dot in *Last Lists of My Mad Mother*, Ellen in *The Waverly Gallery*, and Marina in *Uncle Vanya*. Heyl recently played Charlotte in Kate Hamill's *Pride and Prejudice* (Pittsburgh Public Theater) and Gretchen in *Boeing, Boeing* (New Theatre-Kansas City). Berry was part of the national tour of *Spamalot* and has performed regionally at Resident Theatre Company, Capital Rep, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time continues FST's 45th Winter Mainstage Season, and begins January 23 in FST's Gompertz Theatre. Single tickets can be purchased at (941) 366-9000 or at 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.

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