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**FST MAINSTAGE SEASON CONTINUES WITH**  
***brownsville song (b-side for tray)***

(Sarasota, FL) — FST continues the Winter Mainstage season with the FLORIDA PREMIERE of *brownsville song (b-side for tray)*. This touching drama of resilience and strength, written by Kimber Lee runs from January 25 through March 26 in the Gompertz Theatre. Subscriptions for all four Winter Mainstage shows can be purchased for as little as \$59 by phone at (941) 366-9000 or by visiting us online at [www.floridastudiotheatre.org](http://www.floridastudiotheatre.org).

Tray Thompson is not just a name, not just a statistic. Set against the gritty backdrop of rundown Brooklyn, *brownsville song* is a poignant, and uplifting story of one family's courage and endurance after a senseless act of gang violence alters a high school senior's dreams forever. Left to pick up the pieces, his family must find hope and resilience within their tight-knit Brooklyn borough.

Critics have raved over this production. *The New York Times* calls this production "Lyrical," "Vivid and rhythmic." *The Seattle Times* calls it, "Fierce," and "Starkly poetic." *Talkin' Broadway* calls it, "Compelling."

Directing the piece is FST Associate Director, Kate Alexander. "*brownsville song* takes us deep down into a journey past the masks of violent statistics, salacious headlines and sensationalized images of our young men," said Alexander. "It takes us to a necessary place where we put a fully human face on those statistics, where we feel the love and hope --Where we feel the lost boys of our human family. The Grandmother character takes us there gently. She is our lamp light in the darkness, and we leave, forever changed and challenged."

Previously known for her roles in the FST productions of *Black Pearl Sings!* and *Ruined*, is Alice Gatling. Gatling is returning for the role of Lena, Tray's loving and gentle grandmother. "I humbly submit to the role of Lena," said Gatling. "Her story is the story of so many mothers who are crying for their children who have been taken too soon and tragically."

Making there FST debuts are cast members is Catalina Grieco, Warren Jackson, Wesley T. Jones, Rachel Lu, and Deysha Nelson. A former musical theatre student in FST's education program, Grieco's previous credits include *A Christmas Carol* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Jackson was previously seen in *Member of the Wedding*, *Fences*, and *Coin Toss*. Jones' credits include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Tempest*, and *Midsummer Nights Dream*. Lu has previously performed in *Visions of Rosalind*, *Chinglish*, *Taming of the Shrew*. Rounding out the cast, Nelson's credits include TV appearances in *Sunny Side Up*, *The Goodnight Show* and commercial work with AARP and First Nigeria Bank.

Jones speaks to his excitement to bring the character of Tray to life on the Gompertz stage. "I see and feel a lot of myself in Tray; In his strength and all of the fight that he has had in him since a child, his perseverance, and mostly his love for his family. As an actor I tend to have the most fun with characters who aren't just one color. Tray has many colors to him. He could come off 'hard' or 'cold,'

yet deep inside he is loving and forgiving. He's been beat down by many adversities, yet he is a champion. He's funny, smart and I think Tray is one of those guys that there is more to than just what meets the eye. There is a lot going on inside, which I am excited to explore."

*brownsville song (b-side for tray)* is the kick off production for this season's *Dialogues on Diversity* series at FST. Events surrounding this production include post show discussions as well as two panel discussions. The first panel discussion, *Social Status of the Young Black Male* will be held on March 6. The second panel discussion, *Mothers and Daughters for Black Lives* will be held on March 13. For a full list of all events and discussions surrounding the show, please visit [www.floridastudiotheatre.org](http://www.floridastudiotheatre.org).

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#### 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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