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CONTACT: Nicole Clayton
Public Relations Associate
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
Nclayton@floridastudiotheatre.org
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FST CONTINUES THE MAINSTAGE SEASON WITH THE CULTURE CLASH COMEDY *NATIVE GARDENS*

(Sarasota, FL) —FST continues the 2017-18 Winter Mainstage Season with the culture clash comedy *Native Gardens*, by Karen Zacarias. *Native Gardens* runs from January 24 through March 25 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.

Stately Gardens and cultures clash turning friendly neighbors into feuding adversaries. Pablo, a high powered lawyer, and doctoral candidate Tania, his very pregnant wife, are realizing the American dream when they purchase the house next door to community stalwarts, Virginia and Frank. But a disagreement over a longstanding fence soon spirals into an all-out comic battle of taste, privilege, and entitlement. In this battle of the backyard, no one comes out smelling like a rose.

Critics have weighed in on *Native Gardens*. *Cincinnati.com* calls this a “Fiery” production with “Laugh lines worthy of an Emmy-winning sitcom.” *Broadway World* agrees calling it, “Playful and smart.” *Chicago Timeout* says Zacarias’ “Carefully pruned comedy” “Really blooms.”

Cast in this production and all making their FST debuts are company members, Alicia Taylor Tomasko, Alex Teicheira, Carolyn Popp, and John Thomas Waite. Tomasko’s previous credits include the Broadway production of *In The Heights* and the National Tour of *Evita*. Teicheira previously performed in *Hamlet* and *Comedy of Errors*. Popp’s credits include *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* and *110 in the Shade*. Waite has performed in the Broadway productions of *Dracula* and *Amadeus*.

According to Teicheira, “*Native Gardens* is so much about pride and about belonging. My character is Chilean and I am American, but I know so much about feeling like an outsider and feeling like I have to work twice as hard just to be accepted by my co-workers without ever feeling like I truly belong to my community or cohort. The grass is always greener, especially in show business. We all struggle to focus on what’s right in front of us, but having a wandering eye. Being envious of another’s projects, connections, successes is so universally human.

Directing this play is FST Associate Director At-Large, Kate Alexander. Audiences know her direction from FST hits such as *Grounded* and *Heisenberg*. Alexander states, “We all have stories and secrets about our neighbors— and this play delightfully takes on a neighbor-border dispute and turns it into the broader border of who and what we are; how our American face is changing — all through a light touch.”

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Waite concludes, “I fell in love with *Native Gardens* because it gently encourages us, artists and audiences alike, to re-examine our subtle, often unconscious prejudices. All of the characters in the play are good hearted, but each one of them sees the world through the lens of their own preconceptions. With laughter, the play makes us think and that's what good theater should do.”

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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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