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DATE: June 19, 2017

**FST'S 2017-2018 WINTER MAINSTAGE SEASON OPENS WITH  
THE EIGHT-TIME TONY AWARD WINNER, *ONCE***

(Sarasota, FL) —FST opens the 2017-18 Winter Mainstage Season with the winner of eight-time Tony Award-winning musical, *Once*. Adapted from John Carney's Film with Book by Enda Walsh and Music & Lyrics by Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova, *Once* runs from November 8 through December 31, 2017 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).

*Once* tells the enchanting tale of a Dublin street musician who's about to give up on his dream when a beautiful young woman takes a sudden interest in his haunting love songs. As the chemistry between them grows, his music soars to powerful new heights. Emotionally captivating and theatrically breathtaking, *Once* draws you in from the very first note and never lets go; an unforgettable story about going for your dreams and the power of music to connect us all.

Since its first appearance on Broadway in 2012, critics have weighed in on the play. *The New York Times* calls it "Vital and Surprising." *The Chicago Tribune* says it's, "Exquisitely crafted" and "Gorgeously resonant." *La Times* describes it as a "Delightful," "Beguilingly romantic" production."

Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins, speaks to the excitement of bringing this award-winning production Gompertz stage stating, "I think the appeal of this show is simple. First of all, it's a romance. It's a real romance, with real people and real issues...something everyone can relate to. Second, it's a romance that takes place on the lusty isle of Ireland with a strong set of European characters populating the world of the play. That to me makes it both exotic and universal."

This charming production brings the beauty of busking right to center stage. The production received eleven 2012 Tony Award nominations, and won eight including Best Musical, Best Actor and Best Book. It has also been recognized for its Academy Award-winning song "Falling Slowly." According to Hopkins, "The musical embraces the realities of romance which makes the love affair that much sweeter."

*Once* draws you in from the very first note and never lets go; an unforgettable story about going for your dreams and the power of music to connect us all. This first show of the 2017-2018 Winter Season runs from November 8 through December 31, 2017 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).

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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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