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FST PRESENTS THE REGIONAL PREMIERE OF *RICH GIRL*

(Sarasota, FL) — Florida Studio Theatre’s Mainstage season concludes with the romantic and clever *Rich Girl* by Victoria Stewart. Based off of Henry James’ classic novel Washington Square, this REGIONAL PREMIERE runs from April 5 to May 26 in the Gompertz Theatre. Single tickets range from \$39-\$59 and may be purchased online at FloridaStudioTheatre.org, by phone at (941) 366-9000, or by visiting the Box Office.

For the first time in her life, Claudine has toppled head-over-heels in love. But her celebrity-financial-guru mother has obvious misgivings about her daughter’s amorous entanglements with Henry, an artist with rugged good looks. He’s got just enough charisma along with a negative bank balance. But does money matter when happiness is on the line? *Rich Girl* is a clever and contemporary comedy about women and their relationship to men, mothers, and money - in that order. Can they ever really coexist?

Critics have already raved about this charming comedy about life served on a silver spoon. *Talkin’ Broadway* says it’s “Smart writing” with “Clever detail.” *The New York Times* calls it “Highly appealing.” *Curtain Up* describes it as “Seriously funny” and “Smartly written.”

Making her Directorial debut at FST is Jessica Holt. Her recent directing projects include *Venus in Fur* (Virginia Stage Company), *Ugly Lies the Bone* (Alliance Theater), *Significant Other* (Actor’s Express), and *Bright Half Life* (Magic Theatre). “I adore this funny, contemporary update on Henry James’ classic novel Washington Square,” said Holt. “Playwright Victoria Stewart has a juicy, intriguing take on the familiar story: a young heiress to her mother’s fortune falls head over heels in love for a penniless but charming and handsome young man. Her mom will stop at nothing to thwart the relationship and protect her daughter from this young man’s advances. But is this young man actually a gold digger or are his intentions pure? And if it looks like love and acts like love, then who’s to say it’s not love?”

Playwright Victoria Stewart will also be in residence from March 13-17 to work directly with cast and crew on this fresh new work. Making their FST debuts in this clever comedy are cast members Justin Adams, Ali Rose Dachis, Allison Daugherty, and Tanesha Gary. Adams previous credits include *Hamlet*, *Eurydice*, and *Amadeus*. Dachis’ credits include *The Great Gatsby*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *As You Like It*. Daugherty’s previous credits include *An Ideal Husband*, *The Clearing*, and *Tom Jones*. Gary’s credits include *Sistas: The Musical*, *Hereafter*, and *Smokey Joe’s Café*.

Playing the role of Claudine, Dachis speaks to the relevant themes in this production. “Claudine has let self-doubt overtake her every move, she is doing her best to represent herself in the world as a worthwhile human, but has trouble believing it herself. My journey into Claudine is just beginning, but thus far, I have found that Claudine lets the deeply rooted fears many of us have of not being worthy of love, take over her life. When she falls in love her whole world shifts, revealing a joy in her she has never experienced. She is on a rollercoaster of self-discovery, self-worth, and her place in the world. I couldn’t be more excited to ride that rollercoaster.”

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Holt concludes, "Ultimately this play tells the story of a young woman's journey towards adulthood through the catalyst of love, betrayal and heartache. At the heart of this play, we find big questions grappling with the nature of our own self-worth, the ultimately unquantifiable and vast value-add of love in our lives, and what it means to grow up, stand on your own two feet and make decisions that are solely yours to own."

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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 then acquired the former Woman's Club building, becoming the first permanent venue. Shortly after Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins arrived, the building was purchased and 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 venues: the Keating Theatre, the Gompertz Theatre, the Parisian style Goldstein Cabaret, 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. 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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