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FST BRINGS BACK THE BARD WITH *SHAKESPEARE'S GREATEST HITS*

(Sarasota, FL) —Finishing off Florida Studio Theatre's 2017-18 Winter Cabaret season is *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits*. With Shakespeare as inspiration, this cabaret features songs from Broadway, movies, and popular music. *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits* opens in the John C. Court Cabaret on February 9, 2018. Single tickets may be purchased online at floridastudiotheatre.org, by phone at (941) 366-9000, or by visiting the Box Office.

"Brush Up Your Shakespeare" with the best of the Bard! This tongue-in-cheek musical revue is a collection of songs inspired by the world's greatest playwright. From relevant to irreverent, from soulful to sinful, from "Get Thee To A Nunnery" and "Othello's Rap" to "What a Piece of Work is Man" and "Tonight," when it comes to William Shakespeare all the world is truly a stage and his work will play on and on. And it has!

Revamped and revised since its original production as part of FST's 1998-1999 Winter Cabaret season, *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits* is remembered by audiences and critics alike. *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* calls it "Charming and engaging," "Entertaining," and "Funny." The *Bradenton Herald* agrees that this "Side-splitting" revue is "Dazzling" and "Dynamic."

Returning to the Court Cabaret stage are Dane Becker and William Selby, honey-tongued minstrels who made audiences cackle in last season's hit production, *Older Than Dirt*. Thrilled to have the chance to perform a duet or two—something they always wanted to do last year—Becker and Selby are thrilled to be reunited. "We had such a good time with *Older Than Dirt*," says Selby, "We know each other's style of comedy," so audiences are certainly in for a treat. With Selby by his side, Becker is "Excited to dig into the style of Shakespeare" and "Bring the comedy to a whole new world with phenomenal source material."

Shakespeare's Greatest Hits also delves into the drama that permeates Shakespeare's plays. "There are beautiful, tender moments in our production," explains Selby. With emotional songs like "So In Love" from *Kiss Me, Kate*, and excerpts from Shakespeare's epic love stories, *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits* tugs at your heartstrings one moment and makes you laugh yourself into stitches the next.

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Directing this revue is FST Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins. When asked how *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits* connects with the rest of the Winter Cabaret season Hopkins remarked, "Next to *Blue Suede Shoes* with its iconic rock & roll songs and following *Mack the Knife* with its pop standard of the 50s, it really puts Shakespeare in context with modern lyricists and composers. When we compare him to the great living lyric poets of our age, we see how truly talented they are. We see how they speak to us in the same way Shakespeare spoke to his audience and how he rocked his audience the same way Elton John rocks us."

Shakespeare's Greatest Hits opens in the Court Cabaret on February 9 and runs through June 10. Single tickets may be purchased online at floridastudiotheatre.org, by phone at (941) 366-9000, or by visiting the Box Office.

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 Gompertz Theatre, the Goldstein Cabaret, the John C. Court Cabaret, and the 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 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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