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**A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER  
OPENS FST'S 2018-19 MAINSTAGE SEASON**

(Sarasota, FL) —Florida Studio Theatre (FST) opens its 45th Winter Mainstage Season with the four-time Tony Award-winning musical, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. Called "A true tour de force" by *The New York Times*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* follows Monty Navarro, a lowly born Englishman who suddenly discovers he is eighth in succession to become the Earl of Highurst, and is determined to gain the title...by any means necessary. This critically-acclaimed, knock 'em dead musical, with Book and Lyrics by Robert L. Freedman and Music and Lyrics by Steve Lutvak, will run starting November 7 in FST's Gompertz Theatre.

*A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* is part of a four-show subscription package. Also included in the Mainstage subscription package is the regional premiere of *Straight White Men*, a comedic and poignant father-son drama by Obie Award-winning playwright Young Jean Lee, the Tony and Olivier Award-winning play, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and the World Premiere of Mark St. Germain's new murder mystery *Wednesday's Child*. Subscriptions for all four Winter Mainstage shows can be purchased for as little as \$69 at (941) 366-9000 or [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org).

"It's a wonderful, funky opening to our Winter Season," said FST's Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins. "*Gentleman's Guide* is tight, smart, funny, and the perfect musical comedy for FST's intimate Gompertz Theatre." This Broadway hit was the most nominated play of the 2014 season and is filled with unforgettable music, nonstop comedy, and a scene-stealing role for one actor who plays all of the doomed D'Ysquith heirs. As Monty tries to finish off his eight relatives, he must also juggle a fiancée, mistress, and the constant threat of being caught.

*Time Out Chicago* calls *A Gentleman's Guide* "Rich and lovely" and "One of the best Broadway musicals in years." *Entertainment Weekly* calls this murderous romp "Gut-bustingly clever" as well as "Thoroughly delightful and charming."

Taking on the lead role of Monty Navarro is Jimmy Nicholas, who was recently on Broadway in *The Book of Mormon*. "I love Monty," said Nicholas. "He has the same goals and desires that we have today, like love and success, but he lives in a society that tells him there's no path to achieving those things, and he rails against that. He's justified in his anger at the system, and how this rich family treated his mother so cruelly, and so he takes on this righteous avenger persona." Opposite Nicholas is Richard Henry, who is assigned the Herculean task of playing the eight doomed D'Ysquith heirs in less than two hours. Henry has performed Off-Broadway in *Fiorello* (Encores!) and *Two Gentlemen of Verona the Musical* at the Public Theatre in New York City.

Joining Nicholas and Henry on stage are Sarah Ellis as the sultry Sibella, Monty's mistress, and Alexandra Zorn, who plays Monty's heartfelt fiancée, Phoebe. Zorn shared, "I think Phoebe is my ideal ingénue to play. She's written beautifully—like a real human being. She's funny, smart, and leads with her heart, but she still has unflattering moments too—decisions fed by her ego,

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conniving, and jealous when pressed for loyalty. It's a real gift to play someone who is written so three dimensionally."

Bringing this Winter Mainstage opener to life is the same creative team that brought FST audiences *Million Dollar Quartet* and *Once*: FST Associate Artist Jason Cannon (Director) and Darren Server (Musical Director). "Darren and I immediately noted an instinctive trust of the other's expertise, and we both are driven by the same goal: to make the actors and the show look amazing," shared Cannon. "If I have musical ideas or notes, he helps me translate them into the appropriate language...and if Darren senses that the music will necessitate a particular staging, character, or emotional choice, he shares that with me and I've learned to trust his ear."

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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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