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**FST PRESENTS *GIDION'S KNOT*
AN EXPLORATION OF LOSS, ART, AND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

(Sarasota, FL) – FST's Stage III series continues with *Gidion's Knot* by Johnna Adams, an exploration of loss, art, the school system, and bullying. This production runs through March 4. Tickets can be purchased online at www.floridastudiotheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at (941) 366-9000.

Over the course of a 90-minute parent/teacher conference, a distraught mother and an emotionally overwhelmed primary school teacher have a fraught conversation about the death of the mother's son, the teacher's student, *Gidion*. *Gidion* may have been bullied severely - or he may have been an abuser. As his story is slowly uncovered, the women try to reconstruct a satisfying explanation for *Gidion's* act and come to terms with excruciating feelings of culpability.

Neither *Gidion's Knot* nor playwright Johnna Adams is a stranger to the FST stage. *Gidion's Knot* was seen previously as part of the Sarasota Festival of New Plays in the Richard and Betty Burdick Reading Series in 2013.

FST Associate Artist and Director of *Gidion's Knot*, Jason Cannon, speaks to the gripping nature of this play. "Both characters in *Gidion's Knot* are desperately trying to glean meaning from tragedy. But each have only a few pieces of the entire story, and even when their pieces are put together, are they able to comprehend the 'entire' truth? Is that even possible? While there are provoking themes of censorship, the purposes and limits of pedagogy, bullying as manifestation of insecurity, and the peace of self-acceptance that even the youngest among us daily struggle towards, the driving force behind this play for me, at this moment, is the exploration of how the "truth" is approached, apprehended, manipulated, and finally—hopefully—understood."

Cast in *Gidion's Knot* are returning company members Kate Hampton and Katherine Michelle Tanner. Both actresses were previously seen in *Stalking the Bogeyman*. Cast in the role of the teacher Heather Clark is Tanner. A teacher herself, Tanner shares her connection to this role saying "There is a lot of protocol that goes into teaching in the public schools, assignments, discipline, following the principal's rules and communication with the parents. In the height of pain, anger, loss and grief, I love that Heather chooses to follow the vein of humanity and starts bridging the gap to healing."

On the opposite side of the desk is Hampton playing mother Corryn. She speaks to the relevance of this production in today's culture. "*Gidion's Knot* addresses some very tough questions about troubled pre-adolescents, the responsibilities that parents and teachers have to those children, and sexuality, violence and censorship in our speeded-up, twitter-filled era," says Hampton. "It's about electronic communication and social media and the ironic lack of personal connection and community that can result from it. It's about the isolation and alienation that so many kids feel."

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 theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the Gompertz Theatre, the Parisian style Goldstein Cabaret and 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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