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FST REOPENS IN MARCH 2021 WITH TWO NEW MUSICAL REVUES FOR SOCIALLY-DISTANCED AUDIENCES

(Sarasota, FL) – Florida Studio Theatre (FST) will reopen in late March with two all-new musical revues, *Vintage POP!* and *Three Pianos*, after being closed to the public for almost a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon reopening, FST will continue to operate within full compliance of CDC guidelines, including socially-distanced seating, required face coverings, paperless ticketing, and limited theatre capacities.

FST reopens its doors with *Vintage POP!*, a never-before-seen musical revue exploring the transformation of popular music from the 1920s to the 1980s. This all-new show, created by Summer Cabaret favorite **Carole J. Bufford**, highlights music made famous by artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Creedence Clearwater Revival. Called “One of Cabaret’s brightest rising stars” by *TimeOut New York*, Bufford will bring fresh new takes to classics like “Over the Rainbow,” “Every Breath You Take,” and “I Want to Hold Your Hand.” Due to popular demand, *Vintage POP!* has already been extended and will now play in FST’s Keating Theatre March 24 - April 25.

“*Vintage POP!* is a great show for us to reopen with because it revisits songs and stories that are at least half a century old,” said **Richard Hopkins**, FST’s Producing Artistic Director. “They help you put different eras in perspective, which gives us the understanding that, ‘If I survived *that*, then surely I can survive *this*.’ With everything that’s happened in the past year or so, we all could use some perspective.”

“My hope is that audiences will walk away from *Vintage POP!* filled to the brim with music and feeling satisfied,” said **Carole J. Bufford**. “Maybe they’ll be reminded of a song that they haven’t heard in years, but it takes them back to a specific moment in time. Or maybe the show will allow them to just escape for an hour. We can all use that!”

Opening a week after *Vintage POP!* is *Three Pianos*, an FST original musical revue created by **Richard Hopkins**, **Rebecca Hopkins**, and **Sarah Durham** with musical arrangements by **Jim Prosser**.

When FST was forced to close its theatres in March of 2020, the artistic team quickly went to work, creating a catalogue of Cabarets for future production. Now, the theatre reopens with *Three Pianos*, one of the very first productions that went into development last spring.

Featuring hits like “Crocodile Rock,” “Beautiful,” and “Just the Way You Are,” this high-energy Cabaret celebrates musical pioneers who refused to fit the mold of “rock star” and forged their own paths in the industry. *Three Pianos* plays in FST’s Gompertz Theatre from March 31 - April 25.

“*Three Pianos* is a healing show,” explained **Rebecca Hopkins**, a member of the Cabaret’s development team. “These artists write with so much heart. There is real insight in their work that connects to us all on a deeper level. To me, these musicians are the Beethovens and Shakespeares of our age—their music and words will be with us for generations.”

Tickets to *Vintage POP!* and *Three Pianos* are now on sale at FloridaStudioTheatre.org or by calling the FST Box Office at (941) 366-9000.

“We are thrilled to return to live performance again, but we also know the importance of protecting everyone’s health and safety—no matter if you’re a guest artist, an audience member, or FST staff,” added Rebecca Hopkins. “Although the theatre-going experience may look a little different, we’re dedicated to ensuring that everyone’s time at FST is safe and enjoyable.”

All performances will be socially-distanced and in compliance of all CDC guidelines. Facial coverings must be worn at all times—including throughout all performances—when on campus at FST, aside from dining in FST’s Green Room Cafe & Bar. The full list of actions that FST is taking to ensure the safety of its patrons, staff, and guest artists can be found at FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Florida Studio Theatre (FST) is Sarasota’s contemporary theatre. Founded in 1973, FST has grown to a village of five theatres located in the heart of Downtown, Sarasota. Each theatre is small in size and large in impact— providing intimate and engaging settings for high-quality, professional performances.

Today, FST has established itself as a major force in American Theatre. FST is the largest subscription theatre in the state of Florida and among the largest in the country, serving more than 230,000 live attendees each year across its six core programs: Mainstage, Cabaret, Stage III, Children’s Theatre, The FST School, and New Play Development.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to as many people as possible. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins, FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. Hip and historical, entertaining and challenging, we are the theatre where the street meets the elite — where everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

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