



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Associate
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
DATE: May 7, 2019

**THE MARVELOUS WONDERETTES OPENS FST'S
2019 SUMMER MAINSTAGE SEASON**

(Sarasota, FL) — Florida Studio Theatre kicks off its 29th Summer Mainstage Season with *The Marvelous Wonderettes* by Roger Bean, an Off-Broadway hit that takes audiences on a fun-filled trip down memory lane. This upbeat musical opens on Springfield High's prom in 1958, which has unexpectedly lost its musical act. To save the night, four female friends—Betty Jean, Cindy Lou, Missy, and Suzy—take the stage to entertain their classmates in four-part harmony. *The Marvelous Wonderettes* starts May 29 in FST's Gompertz Theatre.

The Marvelous Wonderettes is part of a three-show subscription package. Also included in the Summer Mainstage subscription package is the powerful musical biography *Ethel Waters: His Eye is on the Sparrow*, and the Regional Premiere of the juicy comedy *The Cottage*. Subscriptions for all three Summer Mainstage shows can be purchased for as little as \$49, and single tickets for *The Marvelous Wonderettes* range from \$29-39. Subscriptions and single tickets can be purchased at floridastudiotheatre.org or at (941) 366-9000.

Called "Irresistible" and "Effervescent" by *The New York Times*, this bubbly musical centers on "The Marvelous Wonderettes," a quartet of friends with hopes and dreams as big as their crinoline skirts. Betty Jean, Cindy Lou, Missy, and Suzy dazzle their classmates and the audience with classic hits from the '50s and '60s, like "Rescue Me," "Lollipop," and "Son of a Preacher Man." Prom gets slightly less "marvelous" though, as the competition for Prom Queen draws nearer—suddenly, divisions appear, secrets emerge, and surprising love is professed. The musical then jumps a decade and audiences see "The Wonderettes" reunite onstage once again at their ten-year high school reunion, ready to sing about the challenges they've faced since graduating.

"This show enjoys immense popularity because the music is so infectious and fun," said FST Associate Artist Jason Cannon, who is directing this Summer Mainstage opener. "But if you listen closely to the lyrics, you'll hear yearning, ecstasy, loneliness, and hope as well. By exploring the music of two distinct eras through the prism of these four ladies' friendships and ambitions, this show is able to go beyond the basic nostalgia that drives similar musicals. The audience comes to care about the Wonderettes as individuals, and so the trip down memory lane resonates on an incredibly personal level."

Bringing the class clown Betty Jean to life is Meredith Jones, who played Patsy Cline in last summer's incredibly successful production of *Always...Patsy Cline*. "I relate to Betty Jean because she is a multi-dimensional, flawed human like all of us," shared Jones. "She's funny and likes to pull pranks, but she's also full of strong emotions. I'm excited to explore both sides of her."

Also returning to FST is Sarah Ledtke McCann, who was last seen as Velma Von Tussle in FST's 2014 production of *Hairspray*. McCann will play Cindy Lou, Betty Jean's best friend and a shoe-in for prom queen.

-MORE-

Jones and McCann will be joined onstage by two FST newcomers—Ann Flanigan (Missy), and Chelsea Turbin (Suzy). Most recently, Flanigan performed Off-Broadway in *The Last Jew of Boyle Heights*, and has previously played Miranda in *The Tempest* and Goneril in *King Lear*. Turbin was part of the international tour of *American Idiot*, and the Kennedy Center Broadway Centerstage Revival of *Chess*.

The Marvelous Wonderettes opens FST's 29th Summer Mainstage Season, and begins May 29 in FST's Gompertz Theatre. *The Marvelous Wonderettes* is part of a three-show subscription package. Subscriptions for all three Summer Mainstage shows can be purchased for as little as \$49, and single tickets for *The Marvelous Wonderettes* range from \$29-39. Subscriptions and single tickets can be purchased at floridastudiotheatre.org or at (941) 366-9000.

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.

###