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CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Associate
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
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FST ANNOUNCES PLANS TO REOPEN IN 2021

(Sarasota, FL) – **Florida Studio Theatre (FST)** announces that, after careful consideration, the theatre plans to reopen in the spring of 2021 with two new musical revues. Following these two Cabarets, FST will return to full production in June with a three-show Summer Mainstage Season and a three-show Cabaret Season. Upon reopening in late March, FST will continue to operate within full compliance with all CDC guidelines, including social distancing, temperature checks, and limited theatre capacities.

"We're excited to return to what FST, as a theatre, does best: live shows for live audiences," said **Richard Hopkins**, FST's Producing Artistic Director. "We're offering these spring musical revues as a way to serve our community, which has been thirsting for live entertainment for months. Not only will these shows lift our audience's spirits, but they will be fun for us to produce. Reopening in March with these special spring performances is our first step toward FST coming back to life after the pandemic."

Featuring FST Summer Cabaret favorite **Carole J. Bufford**, *Vintage POP!* begins playing in FST's Keating Theatre on March 24. With music made famous by Ella Fitzgerald, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Creedence Clearwater Revival, this brand-new musical revue explores the evolution of popular music from the '20s to the '80s. Called "One of Cabaret's brightest rising stars" by *Time Out New York*, Bufford will bring exciting, fresh takes on songs that defined their eras, like "St. Louis Blues," "You Can Never Tell," "Have You Ever Seen the Rain," and more.

"I can't wait to get back to Florida Studio Theatre!" shared **Carole J. Bufford**. "I have been looking forward to getting back onstage and performing for live audiences. I am so happy that my first series of performances will be at FST. It feels a bit like coming home."

FST's second spring musical revue, *Three Pianos*, begins playing in FST's Gompertz Theatre on March 31. Created by **Rebecca Hopkins** and **Sarah Durham**, 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* includes classics like "Crocodile Rock," "Beautiful," and "Just the Way You Are."

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.

In June 2021, FST is planning to return to full production with a three-show Summer Mainstage Season and a three-show Summer Cabaret Season.

On the Mainstage, FST will present one of the most successful Rock & Roll musicals of all time, ***Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story***; an insightful new play about the unlikely friendship between Albert Einstein and Marian Anderson, ***My Lord, What a Night***; and a touching comedy about fatherhood, friendship, and baseball, ***Rounding Third***.

FST's 2021 Summer Cabaret Series includes the return of Sarasota's favorite swing-era territory band, ***The Swingeroots***, along with two Cabaret groups new to Florida Studio Theatre: ***Great Balls of Fire*** and ***Shades of Bubl : A Three-Man Tribute to Michael Bubl ***.

For more information on FST's Summer Season lineup, visit FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

All shows will be socially-distanced and in compliance of all CDC guidelines. FST has taken additional measures, including installing MERV-13 air filters, updating its air conditioning system to eliminate the use of recycled air, and is requiring masks. 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, Education, 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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