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FST ANNOUNCES THE DESIGN TEAM FOR *STRAIGHT WHITE MEN*

(Sarasota, FL) —Florida Studio Theatre (FST) announces the design team for Young Jean Lee's *Straight White Men*, the second production of FST's 45th Winter Mainstage Season. Written by Obie Award-winning playwright Young Jean Lee, *Straight White Men* makes its regional premiere straight from Broadway. In this contemporary father-son drama, three sons gather at their father's house to celebrate Christmas. Caught up in the spirit of the holidays, sons Matt, Jake, and Drew quickly revert to their childhood selves by horsing around, playfully badmouthing each other, and enjoying Chinese takeout in matching Christmas-themed pajamas. It's a fun-filled reunion until a question none of them can answer interrupts their holiday cheer, and each son is forced to confront his own identity. Young Jean Lee's sharp comedy will open in FST's Keating Theatre on December 14, 2018.

For Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins, the play is a penetrating look into the behavior and psyche of the American male. "I think this play is so insightful because Lee is not a straight white male," said Hopkins. "Quite the opposite – she would be considered an 'outsider.' She is 'the other.' And I can think of no better point of view than that of 'the other,' to better understand the privilege, as well as the challenge, of being a straight white male in America today."

Directing this dynamic and challenging new play is Kate Alexander, FST's Associate Director At-Large. Alexander has recently directed FST's productions of *Always...Patsy Cline*, *Heisenberg*, *The Things They Carried*, *Clever Little Lies*, *brownsville song (b-side for tray)*, and *Grounded*. "I like how this play humanely, humorously and courageously addresses our changing world, a changing world view," shared Alexander.

Making his FST debut is Sean Fanning, who will be creating the set for *Straight White Men*. Fanning has designed the sets for numerous productions at San Diego Repertory Theatre, Cygnet Theatre Company, The Old Globe, and Diversionary Theatre. Jeff Smith of the *San Diego Reader* called Fanning's designs for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (San Diego Repertory) "Doubly ingenious" and that the set "Worked wonders." His design for *In the Heights* "Immediately dazzled as theatergoers enter...the set is full of attention to detail and subtle nuances, which is an unbelievable accomplishment in such a small space" (David Dixon, *San Diego Story*).

"Our idea for the setting is to create a sort of anthropological display of a family room within an iconic framework that represents the subjects on display," explained Fanning. "The intent is to play with the audience's expectations. We are first greeted with this masculine burnished oak frame clearly depicting the title of the play. Within this frame, and contrasting starkly with it, is a glittery curtain, used by the 'Persons in Charge' during the preshow. This flamboyant drape is parted to reveal a very realistic, almost diorama-like room, which represents both this out-of-date space but also a timeless place from the men's childhoods that they've come back for the holidays."

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Kelli Karen, who has been part of FST for about 25 years, will serve as the Stage Manager for *Straight White Men*. Karen has stage-managed over 25 productions at FST, and has worked as a Stage Manager at the New Victory Theater, Pasadena Playhouse, Crossroads Theatre, and Oprah Winfrey Theatre Smithsonian. The production's costume designer, Susan Angermann, joined FST the same year as Karen (1993), and has designed the costumes for numerous Mainstage, Stage III, Cabaret, and Children's Theatre productions at FST.

A frequent designer at FST, Thom Beaulieu will be designing lights for FST's second Mainstage production, while Thom Korp, FST's resident sound designer, will be responsible for all things auditory for the production. Beaulieu has designed the lighting for FST's productions of *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Honor Killing*, *Native Gardens*, *Once*, and several FST Cabarets. Now spending his third season as staff at FST, Korp has been the sound designer for FST's productions of *Native Gardens*, *How to Use a Knife*, *Once*, *The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey*, *The Columnist*, *Talley's Folley*, *A Chorus Line*, *Spamalot*, and *The West Side Waltz*.

Straight White Men is a refreshing, provocative look at the iconic father-son drama and runs from December 12 through March 1 in FST's Keating Theatre. *Straight White Men* is part of a four-show subscription package, including the musical comedy *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, the Tony and Olivier Award-winning *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and the WORLD PREMIERE of *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.

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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