



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Associate
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
DATE: September 19, 2018

**FST ORIGINAL MUSIC REVUE, *UNCHAINED MELODIES*,
WILL OPEN THE 2018-19 WINTER CABARET SEASON**

(Sarasota FL) – Florida Studio Theatre (FST) kicks off its 24th Winter Cabaret Season with *Unchained Melodies*, a celebration of male harmony groups beginning with doo-wop and continuing through the swingin’ sounds of the 1950s and ‘60s. In addition to heartwarming musical numbers by such legendary groups as The Drifters and The Four Tops, this Florida Studio Theatre original production will explore how history shaped the music of the ‘50s and ‘60s and vice versa. Beginning October 3 in FST’s Court Cabaret, this musical revue will feature such hits as “Blue Moon,” “16 Candles,” “Save the Last Dance,” and “Working My Way Back to You.”

Unchained Melodies by Richard Hopkins and Rebecca Hopkins with arrangements by Jim Prosser is part of a three-show subscription package. Also included in the Cabaret subscription package is *Guitar Girls*, a tribute to female singer songwriters, and *The Wonder Years: The Music of the Baby Boomers*, a musical journey highlighting the music of “America’s first teenagers.” Subscriptions for all three Winter Cabaret productions are now on sale and can be purchased for as little as \$49 at (941) 366-9000 or floridastudiotheatre.org.

Best known for its signature four-part harmonies, doo-wop gave birth to a whole new sound in the 1940s with vocals designed to mimic musical instruments. Bringing this distinctive sound to life in FST’s Court Cabaret are four versatile vocalists: tenor Micah Jeremiah Mims, second tenor Nick Anastasia, bass David Marmanillo, and baritone Nathaniel P. Claridad. “This music is vocal Olympics,” said Director Catherine Randazzo. “It’s the flexibility of these four performers that will make this show really shine.”

But the magic of male harmony groups doesn’t stop at impressive vocals. “The showmanship of the men in these groups was wonderful,” continued Randazzo. “They were polished and synced with cool moves and slick suits. The vocals were the feature of this era, and the harmonies give music lovers a reason to appreciate the talent it takes to sing four parts in such a blended fashion.”

Doo-wop didn’t just blend voices. It also blended cultures. “Doo-wop was the music of teenagers, but it grew out of R&B, gospel, and swing,” explained Rebecca Hopkins, FST’s Managing Director and Lead developer of *Unchained Melodies*. “It came from the urban centers where African Americans, Latinos, and Italian Americans learned to harmonize on street

corners, in subway tunnels, and in gyms. Its lyrics were about love and compassion as well as other teenage issues such as getting jobs, or going to school. These themes united all teenagers around the music. The music itself showed young people how much they had in common, making differences seem surmountable.”

What cast member Nick Anastasia loves most about the music in *Unchained Melodies* is its ability to transport you to a different place and time. “I was born and raised on the Jersey Shore,” said Anastasia, “and even still today when I hear ‘Under The Boardwalk,’ I’m immediately taken back to those childhood summer days in the sun with my family.”

Unchained Melodies, celebrating the swingin’ sounds of the 1950s and ‘60s, kicks off Florida Studio Theatre’s 24th Winter Cabaret Season, and will run October 3 through February 3 in FST’s Court Cabaret. This show is part of a three-show Cabaret subscription package, which can be purchased for as little as \$49 by visiting floridastudiotheatre.org or calling the Box Office 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.

###