



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Danae DeShazer  
Public Relations Manager  
(941) 366 – 9017 ext. 338  
ddeshazer@floridastudiotheatre.org

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1241 N. Palm Avenue  
Sarasota, FL 34236

Box Office 941.366.9000  
FLORIDASTUDIOTHEATRE.ORG

## FST ANNOUNCES 2011-2012 MAINSTAGE SEASON

(Sarasota, FL) — Provocative. Contemporary. Heartwarming. Florida Studio Theatre's 2011-2012 Mainstage season will feature a Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, the latest from Tony Award-winning playwright Joe DiPietro, a smart, contemporary play, and a dynamic world premiere that is both thought-provoking and heart-wrenching. Subscriptions and single tickets are now on sale. Subscriptions to FST's Mainstage season can be purchased for \$39 - \$61 by calling the box office at (941) 366-9000 or by visiting FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

### 2011-2012 SEASON:

**NEXT TO NORMAL • Music by Tom Kitt, Book & Lyrics by Brian Yorkey**  
**2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and three 2009 Tony Awards including Best Musical Score**  
11/2/2011 through 01/02/2012 (Opening Night: 11/4/2011) in FST's Keating Theatre

**THE LAST ROMANCE • by Joe DiPietro**  
**The latest from Tony Award-winning playwright of Memphis**  
12/7/2011 through 2/12/2012 (Opening Night: 12/9/2011) in FST's Gompertz Theatre

**NEXT FALL • by Geoffrey Nauffts**  
**2010 Outer Critics Circle award winner**  
01/25/2012 through 03/25/2012 (Opening Night: 01/27/2012) in FST's Keating Theatre

**JERICHO • by Jack Canfora**  
**A National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere**  
04/04/2012 through 06/03/2012 (Opening Night: 04/06/2012) in FST's Keating Theatre

### ABOUT THE SEASON:

In November, Florida Studio Theatre opens ***Next to Normal***, a "brave, breathtaking musical" that won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It was also nominated for 11 Tony Awards in 2009, and won three Tony Awards - Best Score, Best Actress in a Musical, and Best Orchestrations – and features music by Tom Kitt, with book and lyrics by Brian Yorkey.

Set to a compelling contemporary score, ***Next to Normal*** is an emotional powerhouse of a musical about a family trying to take care of themselves and each other. Chosen as "one of the year's TEN best" by major critics around the country including the Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Rolling Stone and The New York Times. ***Next to Normal*** is an amazingly, emotionally-challenging, heartbreakingly beautiful show, showing that it's okay to feel things in general - it doesn't always have to be happy-go-lucky.

***Next to Normal*** had a surprising and highly unlikely route to Broadway. The musical began in 1998 as a 10-minute workshop sketch

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Kitt and Yorkey developed in their first year at a BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop in Manhattan, about a woman undergoing electroshock therapy, and its impact on her family, called *Feeling Electric*. Out of that idea, the show was born. After a debut in the 2005 New York Musical Theatre Festival, it eventually reincarnated as *Next to Normal*.

The revamped musical opened at Off-Broadway's Second Stage Theatre on February 13, 2008. Producer David Stone, who had been guiding the musical since 2005, took the unexpected step of bringing the show to Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage where it was significantly reworked again, and then back to New York and to Broadway, where it opened to rave reviews on April 15, 2009. This unusual trajectory from a New York Off-Broadway premiere to an out-of-town regional theatre engagement and then back to New York has been unprecedented.

***Next to Normal*** is only the 8th musical in American history to be honored with the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (reserved mostly for American plays). The Pulitzer jury recognized ***Next to Normal*** for its subject matter and stated that it "expands the scope of subject matter for musicals." The last musical to win the honor was Jonathan Larson's *Rent* in 1996.



The latest from Tony Award-winning playwright, Joe DiPietro, is a heart-warming comedy about finding love late in life. ***The Last Romance*** begins in the Gompertz Theatre December 7, 2011.

In ***The Last Romance***, Ralph decides to take a different path on his daily walk. Ralph embarks on the trip of a lifetime, and regains a happiness that seemed all but lost. This play is a heart-warming comedy about the power of love, one that leads to second chances and new romances.

Playwright DiPietro is best-known for the 1996 off-Broadway hit "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," which FST produced last season. Though, more acclaim came his way after his musical "Memphis" swept the 2010 Tony Awards, earning the 2010 Tony Award for Best Musical (and DiPietro a Tony for Best Book).



Following in the Keating Theatre is ***Next Fall***, a play that has already won widespread critical acclaim (nominations for the 2010 Tony Award for Best Play, Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Broadway Play). ***Next Fall*** by Geoffrey Nauffts begins performances on January 27, 2012.

***Next Fall*** is a love story about belief. After an accident, an unlikely couple is forced to rely on family and friends for support. This beautiful portrait of contemporary romance examines faith, family and what it means to love while defining and accepting who we are.

***Next Fall*** began performances Off-Broadway in May 2009 and then transferred to Broadway in February 2010 after sold-out and extension runs. The New York Times said it is an "artful, thoughtful and very moving story... Smart, sensitive and utterly contemporary."



Closing the Winter Season is the World Premiere of ***Jericho***, a new play by Jack Canfora. It is presented by the National New Play Network as a rolling world premiere, also in concurrence with Florida Studio Theatre's acclaimed Sarasota Festival of New Plays. ***Jericho*** begins performances in the Keating Theatre on April 4, 2012.

In ***Jericho***, two people meet: A 9/11 widow and a 9/11 survivor. Their lives quickly become entangled in an emotionally-charged journey that leads one of them to the Middle East. A thought-provoking and witty new play, exploring how people cope with personal and collective tragedy.

FST presented ***Jericho*** during its 2011 Summer Reading Series in July, with rave comments from the audience, saying the emotion grabbed them and the dialogue was sharp and witty. Another patron commented, "that was just wonderful. It's amazing how this

subject touches people in so many different ways.”

FST’s *Jericho* will be presented as part of the National New Play Network’s flagship program, the Continued Life of New Plays Fund, which supports three or more theaters to mount the same new play during a season. The result is a “Rolling World Premiere” in which a playwright develops a new work with three different creative teams, for three different communities, and ensuring the resulting play is of the highest possible quality. *Jericho*’s rolling world premiere will be produced at Florida Studio Theatre, New Jersey Rep and Phoenix Theatre (Indianapolis).



All 4 shows of the Mainstage Season – *Next to Normal*, *The Last Romance*, *Next Fall* and *Jericho* – will be presented at both FST’s Keating Theatre and Gompertz Theatre. Single tickets range from \$19 for previews to \$29-\$34 for regular performances. A subscription to all 4 plays of the Mainstage Season ranges from \$39-\$61. Both subscription tickets and single tickets may be purchased from the FST Box Office in person or by calling (941) 366-9000 or online at [www.FloridaStudioTheatre.org](http://www.FloridaStudioTheatre.org).

## ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Known as Sarasota’s Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by 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 three theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the Goldstein Cabaret and its newest space, the Gompertz Theatre.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to a broad-based audience. Under Richard Hopkins, Artistic Director and CEO, 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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