

PRESS RELEASE

****Sunshine State Theatre and Waterside Place Partner to Bring Shakespeare's Classic "Romeo and Juliet" to Waterside Place ****

[Manatee County, September 13] —Sunshine State Theatre (SST) and Waterside Place are delighted to announce a thrilling collaboration set to unfold next spring at the Waterside Place Plaza. This partnership will bring to life a captivating production of Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece, "Romeo and Juliet."

This partnership between two prominent local organizations promises to deliver an unforgettable theater experience that combines classic storytelling with modern inclusivity, set against the stunning backdrop of Kingfisher Lake.

Sunshine State Theatre (SST), Manatee County's first professional theatre company, is dedicated to entertaining and engaging audiences with performances that resonate with the modern audience. Founded just last year in 2022, SST has quickly established itself as a leader in the local arts scene. With a commitment to inclusivity and innovation, SST is set to elevate the outdoor theater experience with their production of "Romeo and Juliet."

Sights + Sounds at Waterside Place, a cornerstone of cultural enrichment in the region, has joined forces with SST to support this production. Their shared passion for community engagement, the arts, and accessibility aligns perfectly with the production's goals. This partnership will not only bring a beloved Shakespearean classic to life but also emphasize the importance of making theater accessible to all.

"We are thrilled to partner with Waterside Place for this iconic production," said Janet Raines, producing executive director of Sunshine State Theatre. "Their commitment to community engagement and inclusivity resonates with our own values. Together, we are determined to create a theatrical experience that not only entertains but also fosters a sense of unity within our community."

The production of "Romeo and Juliet" will feature innovative elements, including a "classic Shakespeare with a Florida Twist" costume aesthetic, a talented music director leading an acoustic band, creative lighting and audio designs, and an inventive set designed specifically for the pavilion at Waterside Place. Additionally, SST's dedication to inclusivity shines through with closed captioning services, ensuring that all audience members can fully engage with the performance.

"This partnership embodies our commitment to the arts and community enrichment," said Nicole Hackel, events and resident experience manager at Lakewood Ranch Communities. "By supporting Sunshine State Theatre's production of 'Romeo and Juliet,' we are not only showcasing the incredible talent within our region but also opening their doors to a diverse audience, reinforcing the power of the arts to bring people together."

The joint effort between Sunshine State Theatre and Sights + Sounds at Waterside Place represents a milestone in collaborative community initiatives. With this production, they aim to create an artistic experience that resonates with audiences of all backgrounds, fosters inclusivity, and highlights the magic of live theater.

"Romeo and Juliet" will run the last two Fridays and Saturdays of March at the Plaza at Waterside Place. For more information about tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and the production, please visit sunshinestatetheatre.com.

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