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Contact Information: Deb Eyerdam

305-812-9008 deb@sobearts.org



2100 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach

SoBe Institute of the Arts to Premier Annual Music & Shakespeare Series with “Twelfth Night” at Little Stage Theater

Miami Beach, FL – Executive Artistic Director Carson Kievman has announced that SoBe Institute of the Arts (SoBe Arts) will present "Twelfth Night" as the first production of an annual Music & Shakespeare series. Dr. Kievman, who will direct "Twelfth Night," explains, "Our Music & Shakespeare series will explore an element of Shakespearean theater that has been lost over the years - that's the interplay between live music and drama. Music was a critical and integral part of the original productions of William Shakespeare, and 'Twelfth Night' is without question one of the most musical of all Shakespeare's plays." Kievman notes that the SoBe Arts production will be integrated with Elizabethan music as it was in Shakespeare's day, and the series will include a free concert and a lecture/discussion. "As an arts education and performance institute which is home to professional musicians and actors alike, reintroducing connections between live music and classical drama is integral to our mission of making outstanding professional performance and arts education readily available to everyone." "Twelfth Night," which had its original stage production in approximately 1602, will preview at Little Stage Theater @ SoBe Arts Thursday March 18th and run for three consecutive weekends.

It is believed the title "Twelfth Night" refers to the Carnival-like festivities for a mid-winter feast of the Epiphany, which allowed for raucous behavior as an escape from the more established and sedate social order of the time. Shakespeare's consummate romantic comedy takes place in a festive environment in which three couples are brought together in topsy-turvy fashion. It begins with Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, expressing his love for the Countess Olivia. Meanwhile, the shipwrecked Viola disguises herself as a man and enters the Duke's service, who employs the young man (or so he believes) to woo Olivia for him. Viola secretly falls in love with the Duke, and Olivia falls in love with the young man who is really Viola in disguise, and the complexity of plots within plots continues, demonstrating Shakespeare at his very best. William Shakespeare was a master of illusion, gender confusion, mistaken identity, and unrequited love. "Twelfth Night," subtitled "What you will," has it all.

The role of *Olivia* will be handled by Amy McKenna who has an impressive list of regional theater credits including performances at Alley Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse and

the Houston Shakespeare Festival. Playing *Feste*, Olivia's Jester, is Andres Lefevre whose most recent stage experience was at Little Stage Theater playing multiple roles in SoBe Arts popular "Grand Opening Cabaret." Ken Clement, a Carbonell award-winning actor whose body of work includes the world premiere at New Theatre of the Pulitzer prize-winning "Anna in the Tropics," will take the role of Olivia's uncle, *Sir Toby Belch*. Merry Jo Cortada is a founding member of The Women's Theatre Project who has appeared at theaters throughout South Florida, including the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts where she received critical acclaim in the role of Anita Bryant in Michael Yawney's "1000 Homosexuals", will play *Maria*, Olivia's Waiting Gentlewoman. Jody Owen will come out of acting/broadcasting retirement to take the role of *Malvolio*, a steward in Olivia's household. Joshua Ritter, who has appeared in varied roles from Shakespeare to Shepard will assume the part of *Orsino*, Duke of Illyria. Glen Lawrence, who counts amongst his credits multiple roles in "Brecht" and "Hamlet" at Actors Theatre of Louisville, will play *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, Sir Toby's companion. And last but certainly not least, the ever-present character of *Viola*, the shipwrecked lady of Messaline, will be portrayed by Elena Sanchez, graduate of Cornell University and the Lee Strasbourg Theater and Film Institute. Authentic Renaissance music written by Thomas Morley, Thomas Weelkes and others for the original production of "Twelfth Night" will be played by Carl Ferrari on guitar (lute) and Adam Chefitz on keyboards (clavichord/harpsichord).

Carson Kievman (director) is a skilled composer and stage director. His symphonies, operas and experimental works have been performed internationally in stage, concert, dance, and museum settings, including the Berkeley Art Museum, the Pennsylvania Ballet, the Florida Philharmonic, and a music-theater retrospective at the Nationaltheater-Mannheim. He is the recipient of numerous international awards and was honored with a Naumberg Fellowship to Princeton University. As a director, Kievman has staged works for The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, Tanglewood Music Festival, Nationaltheater Mannheim, Basel State Theater of Switzerland, among others. A former Composer/Director in residence for the Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival, Kievman created an opera/music-theater version of "Hamlet" on commission from the legendary theatrical producer Joseph Papp ("Hair" "A Chorus Line"). It was Mr. Papp's final commissioned work before his passing away in 1991.

This limited run will preview Thursday and Friday, March 18th and 19th, followed by opening night Saturday March 20th, and a matinee Sunday March 21st. It will continue with Friday, Saturday and Sunday performances over the following two weekends, closing April 4th. All Friday and Saturday performances are at 8:00pm (as well as the first Thursday preview); Sunday matinees are at 3pm. Tickets are \$15 for previews, \$25 for opening night and all subsequent evening performances and \$20 for Sunday matinees. \$12.50 student tickets are available for all performances (with proper I.D.) \$12.50 rush tickets may be purchased 30 minutes prior to each performance, subject to availability. To purchase tickets, call 305-674-9220, visit www.sobearts.org/twelfthnight.html or visit SoBe Institute of the Arts in person weekdays at 2100 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach.

Patrons interested in gaining a more complete understanding of the use of music in Shakespeare's world are invited to attend two free events prior to the opening of "Twelfth Night": **Open Friday - "Music in the time of Shakespeare,"** featuring the SoBe Arts Chamber Ensemble conducted by Robert Chumbley (formerly Music Director for Atlanta Ballet and Cleveland Opera - currently on the faculty at SoBe Arts), March 12 at 8pm; **and Art Speaks - "Music & Shakespeare"** a discussion by Robert Chumbley and Carson Kievman, March 19 at 6:30pm. Both events take place in the Carl Fisher Clubhouse at SoBe Arts.

About Little Stage Theater: The Carl Fisher Clubhouse / Little Stage Theater Complex is home to SoBe Institute of the Arts, located next to the Miami Beach Convention Center alongside the Dade Canal, in a park-like setting between the Miami Beach Botanical gardens and the Miami City Ballet. The theater, which was built in 1937 and known to South Floridians most recently as Acorn Theater, has been shuttered for many years. SoBe Arts and the City of Miami Beach have partnered to share the financial and time-consuming burden of its renovation. SoBe Arts opened the theater January 1, 2010 with a limited-run Grand Opening Cabaret (conceived and directed by Dr. Kievman) that not only enjoyed capacity crowds and was held over by popular demand, but earned SoBe Arts a 2010 Mastermind Award from *Miami New Times*.

About SoBe Institute of the Arts: SoBe Institute of the Arts (SoBe Arts) is a non-profit arts education and performance 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization located at 2100 Washington Avenue, in the Miami Beach Cultural Arts district. SoBe Arts draws on a faculty of professional artists to provide high-caliber training in music, music-theater, theater, and dance. Small group and individual instruction is offered to adults and children, and full and partial scholarships are available for youth immersion classes and ensemble training. Now in its third performance season, the Institute has provided a series of acclaimed "Open Friday" concerts, multimedia events, "Art Speaks" lectures, and weekend "Music Unites!" family concerts, all free and open to the public. SoBe Arts mix of traditional, experimental, and multidisciplinary arts events has garnered it the reputation as the place to expect the unexpected.

SoBe Institute of the Arts is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, and the City of Miami Beach.

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