

School of THEATRE + DANCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

For Immediate Release:

October 4, 2018

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Broadway actress and UF theatre alumna returns to the School of Theatre and Dance to perform *Hairspray*, October 19 – 28

Gainesville, Fla., October 5, 2018 – University of Florida’s School of Theatre and Dance brings the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Hairspray* to the Constans Theatre stage October 19 through 28, featuring alumna LaVon Fisher-Wilson.

Hairspray is an uproarious and upbeat campy musical set in contrast to the political storm of racially segregated Baltimore in 1962. Sunny-natured and pleasantly plump Tracy Turnblad earns a dream spot as a dancer on her favorite local hit TV dance program *The Corny Collins Show* and becomes an overnight sensation. With her newfound fame, Tracy tries to win the heart of teen-hunk Link Larkin, dethrone Amber Von Tussle as the reigning Miss Teenage Hairspray and push the local TV stations to integrate; all while trying not to dent her ‘do.

“*Hairspray* is as relevant as ever with the current political climate we’re in,” Director Tony Mata said. “*Hairspray* shows what we were going through during the 1960s—in a fun way. The show takes artistic license in the sense that it gives us the happy ending that we as a country did not get, as it is still very relevant to today’s world.”

The School of Theatre and Dance is proud to welcome Broadway veteran and School of Theatre and Dance alumna LaVon Fisher-Wilson back to the Constans Stage in this production of *Hairspray* as Motormouth Maybelle.

“Motormouth is such a pivotal part of the show,” Mata said. “She shows what real people were going through at the time, especially with her song ‘I Know Where I’ve Been,’ which is arguably the most serious moment of the entire show. It is great to have LaVon Fisher-Wilson back after 20 years for this role and singing this song. The Musical Theatre program was in its infancy when she was here as a student so it’s great to see her here in the new facilities, teaching us all.

During her reign of the Constans Theatre stage, she was featured in shows such as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *1940s Radio Hour* and *Into the Woods*. She received her MFA from the University of Florida in 1998 and has since been featured in several Broadway shows such as *Newsies*, *Chicago* and *The Color Purple*.

“Oscar Hammerstein once said, ‘By your pupils, you are taught,’” according to Mata. “To have one of our past students come back and share their knowledge with us—it’s powerful and Fisher-Wilson will certainly do that.”

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Directed by Tony Mata with musical direction by Tony Offerle and choreography by Andrew Cao, *Hairspray* is showing October 19 – 28 in the Constans Theatre located in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion on UF's campus. Performance times are 7:30 p.m. October 19 – 20 and 23 – 27 and 2 p.m. October 21 and 28.

Hairspray features a book written by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan, an original score by Academy Award-nominated Marc Shaiman and lyrics by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, based on the 1988 New Lines Cinema film written and directed by John Waters.

Hairspray opened on Broadway at the Neil Simon Theatre on August 15, 2002, to rave reviews. At the 57th Tony Awards, *Hairspray* was nominated in 13 categories and won eight, including for best musical, book, score, and direction.

Tickets are \$20 for the general public, \$16 for seniors, \$16 for UF faculty and staff and \$14 for students. Tickets can be purchased at the University Box Office, located at Gate 1 of the Stephen C. O'Connell Center. The University Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. and can be reached at 352.392.1653 or by email at scoc-info@ufl.edu. Tickets will also be available 45 minutes prior to every performance and can also be purchased online at www.ticketmaster.com. Group rates are available for parties of eight or more.

The Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion is located on the UF campus at 1800 McCarty Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611. Parking is available across the street from the UF Bookstore & Welcome Center located on Museum Road.

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts' institutionally-accredited schools. Undergraduate students can pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting, dance, musical theatre, theatre production—including costume design, lighting design and scenic design—or a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance studies or general theatre. Minors are also offered in dance and theatre as well as certificates in arts in medicine and dance in healthcare. Student organizations showcase programs and other intensives provide students with invaluable professional experiences. UF is home to three School of Theatre + Dance performance venues; the Constans Theatre, Black Box Theatre and G-6 Studio. To learn more about the School of Theatre + Dance, including upcoming performance dates and ticket information, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/theatreanddance.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools— the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

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