

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: John Kelly  
John Kelly PR  
434-987-6513  
[john@johnkellypr.com](mailto:john@johnkellypr.com)

**UVA DRAMA TO OPEN 2016-2017 SEASON WITH  
SHAKESPEARE'S *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS***

**John Paul Scheidler and Betsy Rudelich Tucker To Direct**

**Opening September 29 at Culbreth Theatre**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA** – September 16, 2016 – The University of Virginia's Department of Drama is kicking off its 2016-2017 season with Shakespeare's raucous and riotous *The Comedy of Errors*.

Two sets of twins, separated at birth by a shipwreck two decades earlier, find themselves in a small seaport town with a well-earned reputation for sorcery and magic. To say chaos ensues would be an understatement of Shakespearean proportions! One of the Bard's first and most wildly farcical plays, the errors in this comedy come fast and furious in the form of mistaken identities, assumed personas, baffling misunderstandings, family feuds, and much more...all building to a fireworks-filled exclamation point finale!

*The Comedy of Errors*, by William Shakespeare, will be directed by John Paul Scheidler and Betsy Rudelich Tucker, and will be presented at the Culbreth Theatre on September 29-30 & October 6-8 at 8pm; and October 1, 8, and 9 at 2pm.

Tickets are \$14.00 for adults, \$12.00 for U.Va. faculty, staff, and U.Va. Alumni Association members, and \$8.00 for students. They are currently available online at [www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu), by calling 434-924-3376, or in-person from noon until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at the UVA Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Drama building. Full-time UVA students may receive one free ticket if reserved at least 24 hours in advance of their desired show date.

"If there is a single theme around our approach to this show," Scheidler said, "it is 'all hands on deck.' Our students are ready and willing and happy to explore it with us." The exploration is further ramped up by the synergy of two directors, he said. "Sometimes one of us comes up with something and the other says, 'I can't believe it, I was just thinking of that! Or other times we say 'How in the world did you come up with that?'"

Scheidler and Tucker and their cast and creative team are also taking full advantage of the flexibility Shakespeare's plays offer their interpreters. They have set the play in a semi-modern environment, leaning toward the 70's, he said, in a generally urban environment that does not tie them to any specific interpretation. "We are creating our own world of Ephesus (the Greek city in which the play is set) that doesn't need to conform to what everybody expects it to be." The approach extends to the set, which offers a literal representation of the show's many moving parts, and is often manipulated by the actors,

and, finally, to the text itself. “We are trimming some of the fat at times to increase the amplitude of some of the scenes,” Scheidler said, “and to bring out the magic in them and to bring the audience further into the story.”

While the show promises to be full of surprises, Scheidler said there is one thing the audience can count on. “People should look for this show to be a rollicking, entertaining romp. This is anything but a classical rendering of the story, though we are keeping the spirit of it. We are keeping it fast, and definitely keeping it zany.”

The choice of *The Comedy of Errors* was a strategic one by UVA Drama, made to coincide with The University of Virginia Library hosting the Folger Shakespeare Library’s First Folio tour from October 1-26 in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library. *First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare* is a national traveling exhibition to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016 of Shakespeare’s death. Printed by a group of Shakespeare’s friends in 1623 (seven years after his death), The First Folio contains 36 of Shakespeare’s plays. Eighteen of these, including *The Comedy of Errors*, had never been printed before.

“We thought that the First Folio tour gave us a great opportunity to allow our audience to delve into Shakespeare’s life and work in a way that people rarely get to do, then see his words come alive on stage,” said UVA Drama Chair Colleen Kelly.

Free parking for all U.Va. Drama performances is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, conveniently located alongside the theaters.

To access a photo of the production, visit <https://virginia.box.com/s/npam2ozznyewdd30733swueofrago4jh>

For more information on the production, visit [www.virginia.edu/drama](http://www.virginia.edu/drama).

###