FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   **CONTACT**: Judy McPeak
                                                          434-924-8137
                                                          judym@virginia.edu

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
TO OPEN SPRING 2013 SEASON WITH *GOD'S EAR*

With Guest Artist Sandy Shinner Directing
Opens February 21 in the Helms Theatre

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – February 11, 2013 – Love, loss, and language take
center stage when the U.Va. Department of Drama's production of *God's Ear* opens
February 21st in the Helms Theatre. This recent work by Jenny Schwartz depicts the
power of language to enlighten and obscure when a couple is unable to escape their grief
following a terrible tragedy. The department welcomes celebrated director Sandy
Shinner as guest artist for this production.

Ms. Shinner has directed over 100 plays, many of them world premieres at Chicago's
Tony Award-winning Victory Gardens Theater, her artistic home for 33 years. Victory
Gardens is a theater dedicated to staging new works, so it is no accident that U.Va.
Drama paired Ms. Shinner with the work of emerging playwright, Jenny Schwartz. Sandy
has worked with playwrights Sarah Ruhl, Theresa Rebeck, Joel Drake Johnson, Jeffrey
Sweet, and John Logan, among others. Her directing work has also been seen Off-
Broadway, and at Actors Theater of Louisville's Humana Festival, Steppenwolf Theatre's
First Look, Theatre of the First Amendment, Sacramento Theater Company, Rivendell
Theater Ensemble, and American Blues Theater.

When *God's Ear* premiered off-off Broadway in 2007, *The New York Times* wrote, "Ms.
Schwartz has surely been inspired by various canonical playwrights of the absurd
(particularly Ionesco), {and} by later innovators like Caryl Churchill … But her witty
linguistic collages have their own rhythms and rules, reflecting the attitude of a
generation that takes for granted the cosmic banality of everyday discourse and the
disjunction between emotion and expression that is the hallmark of the post-ironic age –
the youth whose response to the confusions of the world is a cosmic 'whatever'. "

"How interesting then, for the U.Va. Department of Drama to juxtapose this past fall's
show, Ionesco's 1959 masterpiece *Rhinoceros*, with Schwartz's *God's Ear,"* said director
Shinner. "And what better place than the college campus to present an original new
voice, a 'major new playwright' who is obsessed with today's language; a writer who
uses clichés, misremembered idioms, and fragments of dialogue to hilarious effect while
telling a story of an undeniable personal tragedy."

Shinner continues, "In *God's Ear,* the characters keep crashing against the limits of language. Mel and Ted try to stop their marriage from unraveling after the accidental death of their son. They cope by using torrents of words to avoid pain, or to try to be heard, or to escape. And they must navigate their way through a highly original world in which the Tooth Fairy and GI Joe dispense words of wisdom."

God's Ear will be presented in the Helms Theatre February 21-23, February 26-28, and March 1-2 at 8pm.

Ticket prices for *God's Ear* are $14 for adults, $12 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and alumni association members and $8 for students. Tickets are available online at www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu, by calling 434-924-3376 or in-person from noon until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at the U.Va. Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the U.Va. Drama building on Culbreth Road. A $3.75 processing fee applies to all online or phone orders.

In addition to *God's Ear* the U.Va. Department of Drama will present the classic American comedy *You Can't Take It With You*, in April which will be the inaugural production of the Ruth Caplin Theatre.

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

For more information on the 2012-2013 U.Va. Department of Drama season, visit us online at www.virginia.edu/drama.

# # #