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**UVA DRAMA TO INTRODUCE NEW MFA ACTING COMPANY
IN *DEATH OF THE AUTHOR* AND *GOD OF CARNAGE***

Streaming April 22-25, 2021

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – April 14, 2021 –The UVA Department of Drama will introduce its new MFA Acting company in two one-act plays that will stream April 22-25, 2021 on the ShowTix4U platform. ***Death of the Author*** by Steven Drukman and ***God of Carnage*** by Yasmina Reza and translated by Christopher Hampton, will be video recorded live on the Culbreth Theatre stage without an audience and with all actors masked and following protocols in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The performances are components of graduate course DRAM 7400: Mentored Study: Acting.

UVA Drama professor and head of the MFA professional actor training program Colleen Kelly directs both productions. “Early in the fall semester, in my own teaching, I had to stop myself from saying ‘under normal circumstances’ and change to embracing the moment as it is,” Kelly said. “We are creating theatre under these circumstances and this is what we do now.”

The MFA Acting company started the spring semester participating in a virtual residency with Tectonic Theatre Project founded by Moisés Kaufman, which focused on contemporary storytelling and devised work. UVA Drama engaged UVA graduate alum Denise Stewart to coordinate the residency locally and to continue working with the graduate students as Assistant Director of both plays. Kelly stressed the importance of giving the students the opportunity to apply the work. “We looked for plays that we would be able to license for streaming which would give our students roles of substance in which they would extend the work of the residency to these characters and also apply lessons learned this year in movement and voice.”

Death of the Author by Steven Drukman is set at a prestigious university in the current day just before graduation and focuses on Bradley, a senior who is accused of plagiarism in his final paper for an English course. Bradley and his instructor Jeff don’t see the situation the same way, and the play debates the question of whether there an absolute right or absolute wrong. “I think it was good timing for us to produce with the MFA actors because they are students themselves and can identify with Bradley, but they are simultaneously Graduate Instructors and can see Jeff’s side,” Kelly said. ***Death of the Author*** streams April 22 at 9pm, April 23 at 7pm, April 24 at 9pm and April 25 at 2pm. Free streaming tickets are available at <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/50415>

God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza and translated by Christopher Hampton, won the Tony Award for Best Play in 2009 and an Olivier Award for Best Comedy the same year. Reza’s play looks at what happens when the parents of two 11-year-old boys try to settle the aftermath of a playground altercation. “The subject matter is serious, but the amount of drama that happens in this roughly 75-minute play creates its own humor,” Kelly stated. “People’s personalities change in an instant and then change back again –

a rollercoaster ride for the actors – as these two couples try to stand up for their children without devolving into juvenile behavior themselves. The play is an exercise in how parents talk about violence and address violence with their children. It is a global topic that is compressed into a schoolyard fight.” **God of Carnage** streams April 22 at 7pm, April 23 at 9pm, April 24 at 7pm and April 25 at 4pm. Free streaming tickets are available at <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/50413>

A virtual talkback with the actors will be held following each of the Sunday performances. More information can be found at <https://drama.virginia.edu/stage>

To access photos click appropriate link

Death of the Author <https://virginia.box.com/s/iope84hmw0vnpodsesd56a4h2hpa7xv9>

God of Carnage <https://virginia.box.com/s/1g2b7qipn4mjj40x373lsckf2tnyd4pr>

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