

*University of Virginia Drama Department announces return of alumnus Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine in special performance of one-man show **Biro***

The 2005-2006 season of the U.Va Drama Department opens with a special performance by guest artist Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine of his critically acclaimed one-man show *Biro*. Mwine (U.Va Drama '89) will perform the play about immigration, the struggle for democracy, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, one night only, on Saturday, September 17 at 8 p.m. in the Culbreth Theatre.

Written and produced by Mwine, *Biro* is based on a true story of a young man caught up in the Ugandan insurgency of 1979. His struggle to help liberate his country and to survive propels him across the landscapes of Africa, Cuba and America. He confronts an HIV-positive diagnosis, as well as the toll the HIV/AIDS epidemic takes on his family and friends. The audience comes to understand the difficult choices that lead to his eventual incarceration in Texas. The play opens in prison as *Biro*, the title character, pleads for assistance from an immigration lawyer. Ultimately, we discover that in the face of adversity *Biro* "will do anything to survive...even if it means going to hell. I'll do it to survive then move on."

Biro had its World Premiere at Uganda's National Theater in January 2003. Later performance venues include the London stage, New York's Public Theater, The Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa, Seattle's Empty Space Theater, Kenya's National Theatre and Harare, Zimbabwe. Mwine also performed *Biro* at the 2004 African Union summit meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Biro* was a New York Times critics' pick in 2004.

Mwine's acting credits include leading roles at The Steppenwolf Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Lincoln Center, The Public Theatre and the National Tour of *Six Degrees of Separation*, for which he received an NAACP Image Award nomination for Best Actor. TV credits include *ER*, *CSI* and *Law & Order*.

Department of Drama Chair Tom Bloom says, "Ntare's appearance at U.Va offers all of us in the Drama Department an opportunity to come together in support of the significant endeavors that he is involved in. His work also stands as a model for all theatre artists who aspire to make positive contributions to human well-being."

Positive community outreach is a primary goal of the Drama Department, and Head of Acting Richard Warner adds, "I believe there really couldn't be a better time to invite Ntare to Charlottesville. His play, *Biro*, asks a lot of questions about the way we live and how that affects the way people live in other nations...all around us. I hope it will provoke thought and discussion. I hope it will serve as a sounding board as we try to solve issues of diversity right here at U.Va and...turn our attention to those less fortunate in our country and beyond."

Tickets for *Biro* are \$14 for adults, \$12 for seniors and \$8 for students; full-time U.Va students can use their ART\$ Dollars to purchase tickets. For more information, call the Drama Department Box Office at 434-924-3376. The box office is open from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Mwine will be on grounds September 15-17 for workshops, discussions and a screening of his documentary “Beware of Time.” This film on the Ugandan AIDS pandemic will screen at the Small Special Collections Library on Thursday, September 15 at 7 p.m. and is free of charge.

On Friday September 16 Mwine will participate in an informal discussion entitled “AIDS in Africa: Doctors and Artists Respond.” Joining Mwine for the discussion will be Department of Internal Medicine Professor Dr. Michael Scheld, one of the leading international experts on AIDS/HIV, and Dr. Rebecca Dillingham, a Fellow in Infectious Disease. Dr. Scheld has focused his overseas work in Africa, particularly Uganda. The discussion will be held at 3pm in Newcomb Hall Theatre, and is free and open to the public.

For more information, visit the UVA Drama Department’s website at www.virginia.edu/drama. Mwine’s web site is www.bewareoftime.com.