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## **UVA DRAMA TO PRESENT *OUR TOWN***

**Robert Chapel To Direct Beloved Thornton Wilder Classic Featuring Cast  
Comprised of Students and Community Members**

**From November 18-22 at Ruth Caplin Theatre**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA** – November 6, 2015 – The University of Virginia’s Department of Drama is taking audiences to one of the most cherished destinations in the history of American theater when it presents Thornton Wilder’s Pulitzer Prize winning 1938 classic *Our Town*.

Robert Chapel leads a multigenerational cast of students and community members on a journey to the timeless and universal Grover’s Corners, where the intersecting lives of two families offer up lessons on love, loss, and life that have captivated generations, and still resonate today.

*Our Town* will be presented at the Ruth Caplin Theatre from November 18-21 at 8pm and November 22 at 2pm. Tickets are \$14 for adults, \$12 for U.Va. faculty, staff and U.Va. Alumni Association members, and \$8 for students. Tickets are 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 U.Va. Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Drama building. Full-time U.Va. students may receive one free ticket if reserved at least 24 hours in advance of their desired show date.

“This play is profound in its simplicity,” Chapel said, “I said to the cast recently that this show could easily be retitled ‘Not Our Town,’” he said, “because it is really not about our town. It is about our world. Or it is about ourselves. The things that are expressed in the show are the simple, everyday goings-on of human beings. They are so universal, and the writing, especially in the speeches by the Stage Manager, is so beautiful and profound.”

While Chapel and Co. are sticking to Wilder’s basic instructions on how to present the show, they added a twist when it came to casting the lead role. “Thornton Wilder created this as a minimalist show so that all the focus could be on the words the characters are saying. We are not using any props at all.” The twist Chapel said, comes courtesy of Carolyn Demanelis, a U.Va. Drama graduate student who plays the Stage Manager. “It is so much different than having an older man in the role. I think Carolyn brings a certain modern edge to the story. It has been really interesting to watch her, and all of her fellow cast members, discover the subtext behind a lot of these speeches.

That cast features community members including 10-12 year-old boys, as well as a young girl. “I think more than anything,” Chapel said, “this is a play about generations. So having this real sense of generations, as opposed to having students portray moms and dads and sons and daughters, really helps what we are doing.”

The interest his cast has in the play and in their roles, Chapel said, is a credit to its remarkable writing. “The writing is clearly above that which you normally find in plays. It’s been amazing to see how many young people were drawn to being a part of it. I just think they are tapping into these ideas, which are about us getting up and going to school and going to work and living, and falling in love, and marrying, and dying. These are the things human beings go through, and the message at the end, that nobody takes the time to stop and listen to one another, somehow feels more relevant than it ever has before.”

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/kjl8g3y9prnvuk91u7c2vz2capgm6bxn>. The cutline for the photos are in the comments section for each photo.

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

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