

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA TO PRESENT
ACCLAIMED MUSICAL *SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD***

Local Music/Theater Favorite Doug Schneider To Direct Collection of Defining Moment-Inspired Tunes From Tony Award-Winning Composer Jason Robert Brown

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – February 4, 2008 – What is more compelling than witnessing a date with destiny? How about...witnessing 15 of them?

That is exactly what awaits audience members of *Songs for a New World*, an acclaimed musical by Tony Award-winning composer Jason Robert Brown that features a dramatic and inspiring collection of tunes built around life-defining moments. The show, directed by local music/theater favorite Doug Schneider, comes to Culbreth Theatre starting February 14. The run continues through the 16th and continues from February 20th-23rd.

All performances begin at 8p.m. Single ticket sales are on sale now and are \$16 for adults, \$14 for seniors and \$10 for students. Tickets can be ordered by calling the Drama Box Office at 434-924-3376 or by visiting the Culbreth Theatre Monday through Friday between the hours of 1pm and 6pm.

New this year, we are offering a 15% discount on all tickets and subscriptions to U.Va. Faculty and Staff. Also, full-time U.Va. students can use their **Arts Dollars** as a form of payment to purchase both individual show and season tickets. Visit www.virginia.edu/artsdollars for more information.

Songs for a New World was originally conceived in the mid-1990's as a sort of "theatrical cabaret" to showcase the work of Jason Robert Brown. Brown describes the show as being "about one moment. It's about hitting the wall and having to make a choice, or take a stand, or turn around and go back." These moments range from the whimsical (Mrs. Santa Claus considering whether she should leave her marriage) to the powerful (a Christopher Columbus crewmate standing on the bow and looking out toward the new world).

"Each song is really its own little play," Schneider said, "its own little world. We are embracing that fact that this is not your typical musical in the way we are setting it up. The challenge for me and for my extraordinary cast is to tie these extraordinary songs together in a way that gives the show the weight and importance and relevance it deserves."

Jason Robert Brown has not only earned critical praise and awards, he has also helped to attract a new generation to the musical theater tent. “He has a huge following among high school and college students,” Schneider said. “I think he resonates with that generation because the songs are so inherently dramatic. He writes such interesting story/character songs, and he writes really well for a belting type of voice that helps give the songs a real concert quality.”

This quality will be enhanced, he said, by its setting. “This show is really kind of a theatrical concert, and we are taking it out of the cabaret feel by putting it at Culbreth and getting this big sound from the band and the performers. We want the audience to feel like they are right there feeling the passion of the whole thing.”

The 2007-2008 season will continue with Drama Associate Professor Doug Grissom’s play *So Careless* (Helms, March 20-22 & 25-29, 2008) and the David Mamet-adapted Harley Granville-Barker play *The Voysey Inheritance* (April 17-19 & 23-26, 2008).

Tickets for *Songs for a New World* and *So Careless* are on sale now, and tickets *The Voysey Inheritance* will go on sale Monday, February 25. All performances begin at 8p.m.

The new Arts Parking Garage is scheduled for completion by Spring 2008 and will feature parking conveniently located next to the theatres. Until that time, construction has closed the lots flanking Culbreth Road and Culbreth Road itself. Free parking is available in the Mad Bowl lot adjacent to the Peyton House and the Madison Hall lot. Free spaces may also be found on University Way, University Avenue or McCormick Road. Parking for an hourly rate is available at the Central Grounds Garage. You may purchase a short-term parking pass for the Emmet/Ivy Garage by contacting U.Va. Parking and Transportation at 434-924-7231. Please allow extra time to park and walk to the theatre.

Press images for *Songs for a New World* can be found at <http://www.virginia.edu/drama/press.htm>.

For complete information on the 2007-2008 season, visit www.virginia.edu/drama.

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