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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA  
CONTINUES WITH TONY AWARD-WINNING  
MUSICAL *SPRING AWAKENING***

*Opens November 29 in Newly-Renovated Culbreth Theatre*

*Powerful Pop-Infused Score Fuels Triumphant Tale of Teens  
Coming of Age In Repressive 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – November 12, 2012** – The ~~2011~~2012-201~~2~~3 U.Va. Drama season will continue with the international musical theatre sensation *Spring Awakening*, opening on November 29 in the newly-renovated Culbreth Theatre.

Taking Broadway by storm in 2007, this pop/rock/folk adaptation of an 1892 play by Frank Wedekind follows the lives, loves and longing of a group of German teens exploring and embracing their emerging sexuality under the disapproving eyes of their repressive parents, and society at large. The show captured eight Tony Awards®, including Best Musical, and features an infectious score by Grammy Award®-winning artist and composer Duncan Sheik. Book and Lyrics are by Steven Sater.

*Spring Awakening*, directed by Robert Chapel, will be presented at the newly-renovated Culbreth Theatre from November 29-30, December 1 and December 5-8 at 8:00 p.m.

Ticket prices for *Spring Awakening* are \$16 for adults, \$14 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and alumni association members and \$10 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 ~~Culbreth Theatre~~U.Va. Drama building.

“This is a show that was really chosen by the students,” Chapel said. “So many of them expressed interest in doing this show, and I think a lot of it has to do with the way it resonates with them and the fact that they have also kind of grown up with the show.”

Both when he saw the show in New York and as he has delved into it further to prepare for this production, Chapel said he has been impressed with how the play deftly weaves the original play’s themes in with its modern songs and score. “This is a play that still has

references to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany, and a sort of modern rock concert, all rolled up into one.”

Chapel said he has been careful to stay true to the vision of the Broadway production without copying it. “After having seen the production in New York and re-watching it at Lincoln Center, I sat down with a somewhat blank canvas in terms of staging, so that not every scene is exactly the same as it was on Broadway, but making sure we are doing justice to what is a terrific show, and sending the same message.”

It’s a message, he said, that connects with his student cast and other young people around the world, for obvious reasons. “I think it really speaks to young people in that it is about the pressures of not failing in whatever they do, and having high pressures from their parents. Also, this is a show about kids growing up, and about the awakening of their sexual desires. That is a major part of the show. More than anything, spring awakening is, in essence, sexual awakening.”

Given these themes, Chapel said, this is a show intended for mature audiences only. “If the Broadway production were a movie, it would have earned an R rating. And our production would as well. This is a wonderful show, but it does have sexuality, it has violence and it has profanity. I think it is very important that our audiences understand that clearly going into it.”

Spring Awakening will offer U.Va. Drama Department audiences a first chance to experience the newly-renovated Culbreth Theatre, which features new seats and increased accessibility. Chapel hopes, a taste of what is to come later this spring. “It will be kind of fun for our audience to go into a quasi-new theater, and it is all part of the excitement of the upcoming Ruth Caplin Theatre opening.”

The \$13.5 million, 300-seat, thrust-style theater will open April 18 with the George S. Kaufman/Moss Hart classic screwball comedy *You Can’t Take it With You*, which closes the 2012-2013 season.

The next show in the season is *God’s Ear*, a touching look at love, life, and loss from playwright Jenny Schwartz. *God’s Ear* comes to the Helms Theatre from February 21-23, February 26-28 and March 1-2 at 8:00 p.m.

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

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

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