

*U.Va Drama Department presents historical drama **The African Company Presents Richard III***

Playwright Carlyle Brown to participate in post-show Q&A Feb. 16

What happens to a dream deferred? Do human beings barred from liberty and the pursuit of happiness dare “to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them?” Posing questions of passion and survival is the aim of the University of Virginia Drama Department’s next production, *The African Company Presents Richard III*. Written by Carlyle Brown and directed by Theresa Davis, *The African Company Presents Richard III* will run in the Culbreth Theatre February 15-17 and 21-24 at 8:00 p.m. Mr. Brown will attend the Friday, February 16th performance and participate in a post-show discussion.

Set in New York in 1821 and based on historical events, *The African Company Presents Richard III* follows two competing theatre companies performing Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. The African Company, the first African American theatre troupe in the United States, has announced its production of *Richard III*. A rival white producer has imported a renowned English actor for the same role and fears competition from the increasingly popular African Company. With the aid of trumped up charges (and an easily swayed constable) the rival producer shuts down the African Company’s theatre, inspiring the troupe to move their production right next door to the rival impresario’s theatre. A mighty clash of wills ensues, and the pitting of passion against societal mores explodes in riots in the streets of New York City. Members of the African Company fight to overturn the barriers of slavery, race and immigrant status barring them from freedom, at a time when America supposedly welcomed the huddled masses yearning to breathe free.

With this production Theresa Davis makes her directing debut as a faculty member of the Department of Drama. Last season Ms. Davis was a Department guest artist, directing *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*. Last fall she directed August Wilson’s *Seven Guitars* at Purdue University. Davis says of the play, “It’s the re-asking of an age old question, to assimilate or not to assimilate? How do we make a way? We want to be valued.” She finds relevance in the work as a continued comment on battles still to be fought and victories yet to be won.

Playwright Carlyle Brown is a writer/performer and the artistic director of Carlyle Brown & Company based in Minneapolis. He has received commissions from Arena Stage, the Houston Grand Opera, the Children’s Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Mr. Brown will attend the Friday, February 16 performance before participating in the post-show talk-back. A reception hosted by the Virginia Players (the student service group at the U.Va. Drama Department) will follow the opening night performance on Thursday, February 15.

Tickets for *The African Company Presents Richard III* 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, visit www.virginia.edu/drama or 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.

Parking Update

Due to construction projects which will improve parking in the future, there is currently no parking in the lots adjacent to the Drama Building. The closest available parking will be in the Peyton House lot (off Rugby Road, across from the University Art Museum); along University Way (above Lambeth Field); along Gordon, Grady & University Ave.; and in the Newcomb Hall Parking Garage (see the map on our website www.virginia.edu/drama). Please allow ample time to park and walk to the Drama Building.