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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA LAUNCHES  
2009-2010 SEASON WITH *THE FOREIGNER***

**Larry Shue's Timeless and Intelligent Comedy  
Offers Equal Parts Silliness and Social Satire**

*Set to Open In Culbreth Theatre on September 24*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – September 14, 2009** – A quiet Georgia fishing lodge sets the scene for self-discovery, mistaken identities, classic Shakespearean farce and a battle of good versus evil in Larry Shue's acclaimed comedy *The Foreigner*, set to kick off the 2009-2010 season for the U.Va. Department of Drama on September 24.

When Froggy, a gregarious soldier “protects” his painfully shy friend Charlie from socializing by telling the lodge keeper Charlie speaks no English, the would-be wallflower is suddenly is privy to a swirling storm of confessions and deceit and must reinvent himself as a charming foreigner. His life-changing acting job propels a series of increasingly hilarious happenings that build to comic crescendo and final faceoff of good versus evil.

*The Foreigner*, directed by Drama Department professor Richard Warner, will be presented at the Culbreth Theatre and will run from September 24-26, September 30 and October 1-2. All performances begin at 8:00 p.m., and there will be 2 p.m. matinee of on Saturday, September 26. Single tickets are now on sale and are \$14 for the general public; \$12 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and Alumni Association members; and \$8 for students.

Season subscriptions are currently on sale for \$73 for the general public, \$63 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and Alumni Association members and \$50 for students. And this year, thanks to the launch of the U.Va. Arts Box Office and its online ticketing system, ordering both season subscriptions and single tickets is easier than ever before.

Subscriptions and single tickets for all fall semester productions can be purchased online at <http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu/>. Tickets are also available by phone at 434-924-3376 between noon and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and in person at the Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Culbreth Theatre also from noon to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A \$3.50 processing fee applies to Internet, phone and mail orders.

Charlottesville has a well-earned reputation for welcoming visitors from around the globe with open arms. And this particular “foreigner” is a perfect example. The play, according to Warner, has been a legendary success at Heritage Theatre Festival, where it has racked up two record-breaking runs in decades past.

So what is it about this tale that has audiences flocking through the turnstiles and rolling in the theatre aisles? Warner points to several factors. “It’s been almost twenty years since we’ve done this play here. It is a truly great story with a sort of David and Goliath feel to it, the underdog defeating the larger force, and how Larry Shue puts that together is really genius.”

And, especially in these times, *The Foreigner* is back to deliver a seemingly dwindling and increasingly precious commodity in our world today. “When we looked at what shows to do this year, what we wanted was to give the community laughs. Pure and simple, it came down to, ‘Can we find something that will make people laugh in these very difficult times?’”

Warner knows the play and the playwright’s work as well as anyone thanks to his having acted in two productions of this play along with other Shue comedies including *The Nerd* and *Wenceslas Square*. And in this case, familiarity breeds respect.

“I think 100 years from now this play will exist in the American canon in the same way *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Harvey* exist. And I would also include in that canon one of our greatest comic writers, Neil Simon. I’d say *The Foreigner* belongs with *Barefoot in the Park*, *The Odd Couple* and one of my true sweethearts, *Lost in Yonkers*. The play has that much substance in terms of how it was built and its lasting effect. It has been a season saver across the nation for years and will continue to do so.”

Another aspect of Shue’s comedy Warner appreciates is that it can be enjoyed by the whole family. “There is a great adventure story here, and a lot of wonderful things about self discovery. It says even to the youngest mind, ‘Listen, if you try hard enough, if you are ingenious enough, you can defeat almost anything.’”

The 2009-2010 season will continue with *Language of Angels*, Naomi Iizuka’s haunting tale of a young girl’s disappearance in a cave and the lasting impact of her echoed cries and elusive truths on her nine friends that were with her that day. *Language of Angels* comes to the Helms Theatre from October 22-24 and October 27-31.

The season will also include Moliere’s *The Imaginary Invalid* (Helms, November 12-14 and November 17-21); Chekhov’s classic *The Seagull* (Culbreth, February 18-20 and February 24-27, 2010); Sarah Ruhl’s smart and funny *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* (March 25-27, March 30-31 and April 1-3, 2010) and the favorite musical theatre fairy tale *Pippin* (April 22-14, April 28-30 and May 1).

Parking is free at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, conveniently located alongside the theaters.

Press images for *The Foreigner* are available at [www.virginia.edu/drama/press.htm](http://www.virginia.edu/drama/press.htm).

For complete information on the 2009-2010 season, visit [www.virginia.edu/drama](http://www.virginia.edu/drama).

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