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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DRAMA DEPARTMENT TO CLOSE 2008-2009 SEASON
WITH SHAKESPEARE'S CLASSIC COMEDY THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA**

Madcap Comedy Showcases Classic Battle of Love Versus Friendship

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – April 6, 2009– The University of Virginia Drama Department is ending its 2008-2009 on a classic note with Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

One of The Bard's earliest forays into the world of comedy, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* takes an hilarious look at what happens when two friends fall for the same woman. When pals Valentine and Proteus square off as romantic rivals, they prove themselves to be "gentlemen" in name only, embarking on a series of romantic misadventures that test their own ties that bind against their hearts' desires. The result is a classic Shakespearean stew that features plenty of madcap fun as well as thought provoking explorations of the complexities of human nature.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, directed by Colleen Kelly, will be presented in Culbreth Theatre from April 16-18 and April 22-25. Tickets for the show are \$14 for the general public, \$12 for seniors and U.Va. faculty and staff and Alumni Association members, and \$8 for students. Full-time U.Va. students can use their **Arts\$ Dollars** as a form of payment to purchase both individual show and season tickets. 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 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.

"This play has everything needed for a good comedy," said Colleen Kelly, who is the director of training at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton. "There are witty exchanges, physical slapstick, gender-disguise and even a dog."

There is little question about the Bard's central theme. Love is mentioned 131 times in the play and 20 times in the opening scene alone. "The play certainly invites us to laugh at the absurd behavior often demonstrated by those in love." However, she points out, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* goes far beyond this by illustrating the profound and lasting impacts romantic decisions can have on the lives they affect.

"This is a play about the life-changing mistakes we make with our friends, family and lovers: the bad ones, the brutal ones, the ever-remembered-with-pain ones."

As much as anything else, she says, the play offers lessons about character and consequences. "It is, in short, a story about growing up and realizing that our actions create our character. In this

play, both ‘gentlemen’ live up to their character names. Valentine is wholeheartedly constant in friendship and love. And then there is Proteus, whose very name means ‘changeable.’”

Free parking is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, which is located mere steps away from the theatres.

Press images for **The Two Gentlemen of Verona** are available at <http://www.virginia.edu/drama/press.htm>.

For complete information on the 2008-2009 season, visit www.virginia.edu/drama.

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