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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
CONTINUES SEASON WITH SARAH RUHL'S 'DEAD MAN'S CELL PHONE'**

Show Opens March 25th at Helms Theatre

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – March 15, 2010 – Are we dead when our hearts stop or when our cell phones stop ringing? This is just one of the questions posed in Sarah Ruhl's smart and quirky comedy, "Dead Man's Cell Phone," which continues the 2009-2010 UVA Drama Department season in the Helms Theatre beginning March 25.

When a woman chooses to answer a dead man's cell phone at a restaurant, she begins an odyssey that soon has her at the epicenter of the bizarre life he left behind and fully ensnarled in a tangled web of lies of her own making. Her intricate ruse delivers plenty of laughs along with fascinating observations about mortality and our obsessive need to connect in this digital age.

Ruhl's "Dead Man's Cell Phone," directed by U.Va. Department of Drama professor Betsy Rudelich Tucker, will be presented at the Helms Theatre and will run from March 25-27, 30-31 and April 1-3, 2010. All performances begin at 8:00 p.m. 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.

"The play is poetic, odd, quirky, lumpy and uneven, in ways like life is lumpy and uneven. It is sometimes very personal and challenging. Sometimes outrageous, funny and poetic," said Tucker. "Ruhl, like her teacher Charles Mee, has moments in her play where the reality of her play breaks open, and we shift time and space. Weird and unexpected things can and do happen in those moments."

Designed by a team of U.Va. undergraduate students, the set, lighting, costume and sound designs for "Dead Man's Cell Phone" come together to give the audience a uniquely intimate experience in a theatre-in-the-round setting. "Working the "round" is a challenge for actors, but quite fun for the audience," said Tucker.

Community dancers will also be featured in the production each night. Nineteen adult and student dancers from U.Va. and the local community have been cast to perform in the "cell phone ballet." Each performance will feature a different combination of dancers and improvised movements. A broad thematic structure, choreographed by U.Va. Drama professor Marianne Kubik, will be coupled with the lyrical strands of singer Zora Tucker and creative sound editing by U.Va. Drama professor Michael Rasbury and undergraduate student Audrey Edwards to produce a different theatrical experience each night.

All full-time enrolled U.Va. students will receive one free ticket to every performance of "Dead Man's Cell Phone." Free U.Va. student tickets must be reserved in advance and are not available on the day of a performance. For more information, contact the U.Va. Arts Box Office.

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

The 2009-2010 season will close with the favorite musical theatre fairy tale *Pippin* (Culbreth Theatre, April 22-14, April 28-30 and May 1).

For information on the 2009-2010 season, visit www.virginia.edu/drama.

Press images for "Dead Man's Cell Phone" are available at www.virginia.edu/drama/press.htm.

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