

**U.Va. Drama Department Presents *dark play or stories for boys*, an  
Exploration of Identity in the Virtual World March 23-26; Symposium and  
Post-Show Talk March 24**

March 15, 2011 — The RecentWorks series continues at the University of Virginia's Drama Department with the timely and provocative *dark play or stories for boys*, directed by Marianne Kubik and playing March 23-26 in Helms Theatre. Playwright Carlos Murillo will be in residence during the run of the play, and will participate in a symposium and a post-show discussion on March 24.

The play illuminates the dangers found in the darkest corners of the Internet, and of the human heart. What begins as a high school student's ruse to embarrass an unwitting, lovestruck teen boy turns into a diabolical plot that blurs all lines between reality and virtual reality, and has tragic and lasting consequences for both.

When Murillo came across a 2005 Vanity Fair article about the story of a young boy who took on dozens of chat room personas in an effort to manipulate another young Internet user that he met online, he was immediately intrigued. As Murillo read the story of "John," he was less interested in the facts of the outlandish tale and more in the characters' motivations. *dark play or stories for boys* resulted from that curiosity.

While addressing modern-day concerns such as cyberbullying, Murillo admits he didn't intend to write a socially conscious play. "We obviously live in an age where the Internet and social media are creating fundamental changes in the way humans relate to one another," Murillo said. "While there is certainly irresponsible use of the Web in the play, I don't think that is the central point." Rather, Murillo set out to write a play about human relationships and the changing nature of identity.

**Ticket information for the play**

"dark play or stories for boys" will be presented in the Helms Theatre March 23-26 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 general public and \$5 for students, U.Va. faculty, staff and Alumni Association members.

Full-time U.Va. students may receive one free ticket to every performance of *dark play or stories for boys*. 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.

Tickets can be purchased at [www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu) or by calling 434-924-3376. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the U.Va. Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Culbreth Theatre building, Mondays through Fridays from noon until 5 p.m. A \$3.50 processing fee applies to all Internet and phone orders.

**About the symposium and post-show discussion March 24**

A symposium inspired by the topics explored in *dark play or stories for boys*, called "Poke Me: Teens, Sex and Social Media" will be held on March 24 at 4 p.m. in the Helms Theatre. In an era of the World Wide Web, texting and webcams, teenagers are encountering new and unique

ways of exploring and testing the world around them. Friends and enemies are made, secret thoughts are revealed and new identities are created, all without leaving the privacy of a personal computer screen. But how is this altering our coming-of-age stories? How is this affecting our perspectives on sex and relationships? And, more importantly, how is the world adapting to this new form of 'growing up?'

"Poke Me: Teens, Sex and Social Media" will be a moderated discussion on how social media is impacting teenagers' exploration of their own sexual expression and creating relationships with those around them. The symposium will also delve into social media's impact on how we, as a society, are adjusting or should adjust to this new aspect of adolescent development. Panelists include:

- Amori Mikami, U.Va. assistant professor of psychology
- Carlos Murillo, *dark play or stories for boys* playwright
- Andrea Press, U.Va. chair of the Media Studies Department and professor of sociology
- Tyler Fortman, post-doctoral psychology intern, U.Va. Center for Clinical Psychology Services

The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are required and are available from the U.Va Arts Box Office at [www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu) or by calling 434-924-3376. Although the event is free, a \$3.50 processing fee applies to all Internet and phone orders. If purchased in person, there is no fee. The box office is located in the lobby of the Culbreth Theatre building and is open Mondays through Fridays from noon until 5 p.m. A reception will follow the symposium.

Murillo will also participate in a post-show discussion with director Marianne Kubik and the cast following the March 24 performance.

The RecentWorks Series is supported by the Office of the Vice Provost for the Arts and the Provost's Arts Enhancement Fund. Additional support for Murillo's residency is provided by the Keenan Family Memorial Lecture Series.

The 2010-2011 U.Va. Drama MainStage season will conclude with Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Evita," April 21-22 and 27-30.

Parking is free at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, located alongside the theaters. Please note – Culbreth Road has been closed recently due to construction, which has prevented access to the parking garage from Rugby Road. While the road is scheduled to be open by the week "dark play" opens, construction delays may prevent this. If Culbreth Road remains closed, the parking garage remains accessible from University Avenue.