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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA LAUNCHES  
2010-2011 SEASON WITH *THE GLASS MENAGERIE***

*Tennessee Williams Masterpiece To Open “Main Stage Series” in Culbreth on October 7*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – September 21, 2010** – The 2010-2011 U.Va. Drama Department season will begin on a classic note when *The Glass Menagerie*, one of the most celebrated American plays of all time, comes to Culbreth Theatre starting October 7.

Director Richard Warner will lead his cast in revisiting and rediscovering this quietly devastating family portrait, seen through the eyes of lead character Tom Wingfield, who is torn between duty to his broken family and the call of a wide open world. It’s a delicate and powerful look at life through the prism of lost hope and failed expectations, delivering iconic characters, universal themes and timeless messages that have resonated through generations.

*The Glass Menagerie*, will be presented from October 7-9, and 13-16 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.

Full-time U.Va. students may receive one free ticket to every performance of *The Glass Menagerie*. Free U.Va. student tickets must be reserved in advance and are not available on the day of a performance. For information, contact the U.Va. Arts Box Office.

Subscription packages for 2010-2011 are currently on sale and include tickets to all four Culbreth Theatre MainStage productions. The packages are \$51 for adults, \$29 for students, \$44 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and alumni association members.

Subscription packages and single tickets can be purchased online 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 5:00 p.m. A \$3.50 processing fee applies to all Internet, phone and mail orders.

For Richard Warner, *The Glass Menagerie* was far more than a play. It was a sort of beacon that helped light the way toward a lifetime in the theater. “I fell in love with this play after reading it in high school and can honestly say it is probably the main reason I am here today. There was a deep personal connection, and the young mind sort of says this is something I want to be connected with somehow for the rest of my life.”

Warner, like so many are, was drawn particularly to the play’s universality. “Amanda shares so many traits that my mother has, and I think so many people can say that. It’s a wonderfully

universal story about motherdom and all the thrills and spills of that and I am hoping that any audience member from any background will be able to look up there and say the same thing.”

Warner has waited more than 20 years to direct the play, he said. “What I truly admire about it is that Williams is really saying something primal, essential, about the human experience. It speaks to us in so many ways. First, it’s a play about money, and this family’s desperate need for money. And it is a play about loneliness, and responsibility. And in the end, it’s a simple play about simple folks that are actually pretty profoundly complex, which is really true of all of us.”

In sitting down to revisit the play to prepare for the production, Warner said he considered doing some pruning. Then he quickly thought again. “You simply cannot prune this play. You cannot take out one word. They are all there to take the emotional path it leads you on. When you talk about America’s master playwrights, you can talk about O’Neill and Miller, but to me this is the guy who is really our Chekhov. The writing is poetic and wise and simple and clear and makes such an emotional connection. I tell my cast to just surrender to his poetry, to find a way to let it get inside them and play it to each other.”

In doing a classic play like this, Warner said, you are looking to appeal to three types of audiences – those who know the play well, those who are somewhat acquainted with it and those who will be discovering it for the first time. “I am hoping this production will tantalize and please all three. I want those who know it well to actually even forget the ending, and the ones who sort of know it to fall in love with it all over again.”

And as for that third category, Warner is hopeful that his personal history can repeat itself for others. “This is the kind of play you should bring your kids and grandkids to, and I really hope that we can appeal to a person out there who just might get hooked on it like I did.”

The 2010-2011 U.Va. Drama MainStage season will continue with Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which comes to Culbreth Theatre from December 1-4 at 8:00 p.m. and December 4-5 at 2:00 p.m. The season will also include *The Beaux Strategem*, by George Farquhar and adapted by Thornton Wilder and Ken Ludwig (February 17-19 and 23-26, 2011) and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Evita* (April 21-22 and 27-30).

The RecentWorks series in the Helms Theatre will feature Marina Carr’s *By the Bog of Cats* (October 21-23 and 26-30) and Carlos Murillo’s *dark play, or stories for boys* (March 23-26).

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

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

For complete information on the 2010-2011 season, visit [www.virginia.edu/drama](http://www.virginia.edu/drama).

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