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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA TO PRESENT
*VINEGAR TOM***

*Washington D.C. and Seattle-based director John Vreeke guest directs this play
written by celebrated playwright Caryl Churchill*

Opens February 16th in the Helms Theatre

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – February 1, 2012 – U.Va.’s Department of Drama kicks off the second half of its 2011-2012 season on February 16th in the Helms Theatre with *Vinegar Tom*.

Written by celebrated British playwright Caryl Churchill, *Vinegar Tom* uses the backdrop of the 17th Century witch trials to highlight the ongoing struggles for acceptance and equality faced by women. Originally penned amid the women’s rights movement of the 1970’s, Churchill’s story invites us to ask tough questions about our own roles in the discrimination we encounter—or even participate in.

Vinegar Tom, directed by Washington D.C. and Seattle-based director John Vreeke, will be presented in the Helms Theatre February 16-18 and February 21-25 at 8pm.

Ticket prices for *Vinegar Tom* are \$14 for adults, \$12 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and alumni association members and \$8 for students. Tickets are available online at www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu, by calling 434-924-3376 or in-person from noon until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at the U.Va. Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Culbreth Theatre building. A \$3.75 processing fee applies to all online or phone orders.

“*Vinegar Tom* is a gripping account of fear and prejudice made all the more riveting in this production thanks in no small measure to the contemporary musical compositions of Michael Rasbury,” said Tom Bloom, Chair of U.Va.’s Department of Drama.

Rasbury, who teaches Sound Design at U.Va., composed all original music to accompany Churchill’s lyrics, working with both students and local musicians to infuse the play with heightened musical energy. “Rasbury’s work offers a fresh spin on the play’s glimpse into one of history’s most prejudiced societies,” said Bloom.

U.Va. Drama welcomes guest artist John Vreeke as director of *Vinegar Tom*. Now based in Seattle, Vreeke's most recent work includes *A Bright New Boise*, which premiered this fall at the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in D.C. "Opportunities to engage with and learn from theatre professionals outside the U.Va. community are vital to our students' training and give our audiences a fresh new perspective and a unique theatre experience," said Bloom

The 2011-2012 U.Va. Drama Department season will continue in March with *Elephant's Graveyard* written by George Brant and directed by Richard Warner. *Elephant's Graveyard* comes to the Culbreth Theatre March 21-24, 2012 at 8pm.

Free parking for all U.Va. Drama performances is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, conveniently located alongside the Drama Building.

For more information on the 2011-2012 U.Va. Department of Drama season, visit us online at www.virginia.edu/drama.

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