

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: John Kelly  
John Kelly PR  
434-296-5577 (office)  
434-987-6513 (mobile)  
[john@johnkellypr.com](mailto:john@johnkellypr.com)

**UVA DRAMA TO OPEN 2019-2020 SEASON WITH DUNCAN MACMILLAN'S  
SMART AND FUNNY RELATIONSHIP PLAY *LUNGS***

**Opens October 3 in the Helms Theatre**

**Season to also Include *She Kills Monsters*; The New Works Festival  
and the Classic Musical *Once Upon a Mattress***

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – September 18, 2019** –The UVA Department of Drama will launch its 2019-2020 season with Duncan Macmillan's smart and funny play *Lungs*, which will open October 3 in the Helms Theatre.

Purposely set on a bare stage, the play guides audiences through a single conversation that takes place over one couple's entire lifecycle as they debate the consequences of bringing a child into an increasingly complicated world threatened by natural and external forces. Against this turbulent environmental and political climate change, the couple grapple with intimate questions of love, trust, betrayal, honesty and the inevitable pain we cause in those we love most.

UVA Drama assistant professor Dave Dalton directs the production and adds a unique perspective by featuring three separate casts performing on separate evenings. "Basically, we are rehearsing at three different times," Dalton said. "I am really trying to honor the way these pairs of actors are approaching the characters differently. It has been really interesting and compelling to see how one pair might be slightly different than another, and how they bring something to the piece that you may have never seen before. In addition, given that the playwright is intentionally ambiguous in terms of providing no backstories or context for the characters apart from what is in the dialogue, there is so much room for interpretation."

In addition to its universal relationship themes, Dalton said, the play has become increasingly popular due to its topical environmental subject matter. "Audiences will see the complexity of this couple's relationship, and how they relate to each other. There are some difficult conversations, and they also go through some wonderful times. It's a specific time in their relationship, and their talk about having a family brings up a lot of issues about the morality of doing that at a time when global warming will continue to have significant impacts on our culture and on our society."

The 2019-2020 UVA Drama season will also include *She Kills Monsters*, by Qui Nguyen and directed by Drama Department Artistic Director Marianne Kubik; the annual **New Works Festival**, produced by UVA playwrighting professor Doug Grissom and Dave Dalton; and the classic 1959 Mary Rodgers musical *Once Upon a Mattress*, directed by UVA alumna Amanda McRaven.

“This season exemplifies the best combination an academic theatre program can offer: practice, mentorship and experimentation,” Kubik said. The production of *Lungs*, she observed, provides such a model. “A multi-cast experience like this offers our student actors a laboratory for collectively exploring different acting choices and developing interpretive skills by observing one another in the same roles, guided by Dave’s vision for exposing students to a wide range of possibilities for inspiration and creativity.”

***She Kills Monsters***, which will open November 14 in the Ruth Caplin Theatre, is a deep and fascinating dive into the world of fantasy role-playing games. It tells the story of Agnes Evans as she copes with the accidental death of her teenage sister, Tilly. When Agnes finds Tilly’s Dungeons & Dragons game module, she stumbles into an action-packed adventure inside Tilly’s imaginary refuge from her adolescent experience, finding herself on an unexpected hero’s quest for the lost soul of Athens.

“The Drama Department has considered this script for a number of years,” Kubik said, “and now is a perfect time to explore its depths. As its director, I’m excited to collaborate with our actors and design team on the value of role-play in finding our ideal selves, and how we might safely share that self in ways we may not be comfortable with in the real world. I’m also excited about bringing puppetry into our students’ repertoire in the form of the D&D monsters “she kills.”

The New Works Festival, produced by Doug Grissom and Dave Dalton, returns to the Helms Theatre on February 27. “What I love about The New Works Festival is that, while it is mentored by faculty,” Kubik said, “the students drive the entire event. What a memorable opportunity to practice the art and craft of making theatre beyond the classroom. This kind of mentored creative practice encourages students to invest in the responsibilities essential to independently producing a professional production.”

The season will close with Mary Rodgers’ 1959 musical ***Once Upon a Mattress***, directed by UVA alum and Los Angeles artist Amanda McRaven. “It is a show with high performance values in the annals of American musical theatre,” Kubik said. “Looking closely at this classic sixty years after its inception, and the cultural ideology that informed it, offers students opportunity to uncover how and why perspectives on gender, identity and power have matured.”

Parking for UVA Drama performances is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, conveniently located alongside the theaters.

To access photos of *Lungs*, visit [LINK](#)

For more information on the 2018-2019 UVA Drama season, visit <http://drama.virginia.edu/current-season>.