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UVA DRAMA TO PRESENT TONY AWARD-WINNING MUSICAL *URINETOWN*

Sharply Satirical Dystopian Sendup of Legal System, Capitalism, Bureaucracy, Populism, Corporate Malfeasance And Social Irresponsibility To Be Directed by Robert Chapel

Opens March 29 at the Culbreth Theatre

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – March 7, 2018 –The UVA Department of Drama will continue its 2017-2018 season with the Tony Award-winning musical *Urinetown*, which will open on March 29 at the Culbreth Theatre.

An underground sensation Off-Broadway before taking Broadway by storm and capturing three Tony Awards in 2002, *Urinetown* features music by Mark Hollmann, and lyrics by Mark Hollman and Greg Kotis, and a book by Greg Kotis.

Urinetown, directed by Robert Chapel, will be presented in the Culbreth Theatre on March 29 and 30 and April 3, 4, 5, and 6 at 8:00 PM and April 7 at 2:00 PM.

Ticket prices for *Urinetown* are \$16 for adults, \$14 for seniors and UVA staff and alumni association members and \$10 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 UVA Arts Box Office, located in the lobby of the Drama building.

The show is a side-splittingly funny musical satire aimed at the heart of our nation's most time-honored institutions and issues, ranging from the legal system to capitalism, social irresponsibility, populism, bureaucracy, corporate mismanagement, and municipal politics – not to mention musical theatre itself. The show is set in a dystopian Gotham-like city where a terrible water shortage, caused by a 20-year drought, has led to a government-enforced ban on private toilets. The citizens are forced to use public amenities that are regulated by a monolithic corporation hell bent on taking every advantage it can find, including charging residents for answering nature's most basic call. Amid the chaos, a hero emerges who decides enough is enough, and plans a revolution to lead all to freedom.

In his original Broadway review of the show, *Time* Magazine writer Richard Zoglin hailed the musical as "Better than *The Producers*," and went on to say, "Adventurous and ground-breaking musicals can provoke us, engage us in fresh ways, push the boundaries of the form and make a real emotional connection on stage." Bruce Weber of the *New York Times* joined a swelling chorus of critical praise, writing, "There is no show I've ever seen that gives off such a sense that the creators and performers know what it takes to make the world a better place."

Chapel said that while the show clearly covers its share of serious themes that seem to have a special resonance in today's world, it would be impossible and unwise to ignore its plentiful hilarity. "I started out thinking of the show as very Brechtian, and thinking that you really need to find the serious things in the show. But as I got to staging it, I realized it becomes more like Mel Brooks. It is a very well-written and hilarious show, and we are having a lot of fun with the humorous moments, of which there are many. The writers were very careful to make this show not only highly entertaining and funny, but also very intelligent, which I think sets it apart from a lot of musicals of its kind."

In addition to its sharp societal and cultural barbs, *Urinetown* gives theatre lovers a lot to appreciate by paying homage to some of the most classic musicals of all time. "Throughout the show, the writers kind of paid homage to musical theatre by creating numbers that are reminiscent of songs in *Les Miserables*, *West Side Story*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and others. It has been fun to work these visual references into the show, and hopefully the audience will grin when they see it."

Chapel added that in spite of the fact that the show includes some adult content, *Urinetown* is a show with a wide and multigenerational appeal. "They were very careful not to include anything truly objectionable or inappropriate in the show. They knew where they were going with it in terms of creating an entertaining and really fun evening of theatre that everyone can enjoy."

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

To access photos of this production, visit

<https://virginia.box.com/s/lf4wgd1td6wpodgptecbyqq1p5bau94r>

For more information on the 2017-2018 UVA Drama season, visit <http://drama.virginia.edu/current-season>.