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**UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DRAMA DEPARTMENT TO PRESENT
THE LOVE SONG OF J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 12, 2009**

**Surreal Dreamscape Captures Offers Look at Complex and Fascinating
Man Behind The Creation of the Atomic Bomb**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – February 2, 2009 – The University of Virginia Drama Department is set to offer audiences a kaleidoscopic window into the mind of one of the most complex figures in American history with its upcoming production of *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer*.

Written by Carson Kreitzer, the play is a hyperkinetic, surreal journey through memory and dreams of the man behind the Atomic bomb. Kreitzer takes the audience along for a remarkable ride that moves from the literal desert of Los Alamos to the personal deserts of Oppenheimer's fractured romantic life and his devastating personal transformation from government golden boy to international outcast.

The play explores a wide range of issues, from faith to conscience to science and the ultimate consequences of the pursuit of knowledge. Particularly fitting for a life filled with triumph and tragedy of biblical proportions, the play's journey is led by the ghost of Lillith. Lillith is the "first woman" in Hebrew mythology, and the story goes that she was cast out of the Garden of Eden for misbehaving.

The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer, directed by Betsy Tucker, will run at Culbreth Theatre from Culbreth Theatre from February 12-14 and 18-21, 2009. All performances are at 8p.m. Single tickets are \$14 for adults; \$12 for seniors and U.Va. faculty, staff and Alumni Association members; and \$8 for students. Full-time U.Va. students can use their **Arts\$ Dollars** as a form of payment to purchase both individual show and season tickets. Tickets can be ordered by calling the Drama Box Office at 434-924-3376 or by visiting the Culbreth Theatre Monday through Friday between the hours of 1 p.m. and 5 p.m..

According to director Betsy Tucker, the play provides a unique context for a defining era and pivotal moment as well as a look at a man defined as much by his contradictions as by his accomplishments. "Oppenheimer was such a contradictory, fascinating and multi-faceted person," she said. "He was a poet, he knew Sanskrit, he was a Jew who named

his test site 'Trinity.' So in addition to the historical snapshot of the history of the bomb, you get a history of his life, and his process of coming to terms with what he had done."

The play's treatment of history, she adds, is anything but traditional in its presentation. "The snippets we see of his life, the memories and dreams of the characters, are distortions or compressions of 40 scenes compressed into one. It is not meant to be a sort of John Adams historical recreation, but a fictionalized look at a real person."

Tucker said the use of Lillith as a ghost character literally takes the production to new heights. "She acts as sort of Oppenheimer's unspoken thoughts, as a sort of balance or counter to his public self. Also cast out of her culture as he was, Lilith is in many ways a female version of him. Their interactions are highly theatrical because she is 20-feet in the air, operating in a harness. It is really exciting to use that space as an acting space."

The 2008-2009 season will continue with *Fuddy Meers*, a tale of one wild, farcical day in the life a family that is like no other family you have ever met before. Fuddy Meers fomes to the Helms Theatre from March 19-21 and 24-28, 2009.

Parking is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage. Opened last spring, the garage is free of charge and located mere steps from the theatres.

Press images for The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer are available at <http://www.virginia.edu/drama/press.htm>.

For complete information on the 2008-2009 season, visit www.virginia.edu/drama.

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