



News Release
Virginia Repertory Theatre

For Immediate Release

Date: April 6, 2016

Contact: Susan Davenport
Director of Communications
Virginia Repertory Theatre
sdavenport@virginiarep.org
804-783-1688 ext 1133
804-513-8211

Virginia Rep Opens *Summer and Smoke*
By Tennessee Williams

Directed by Bruce Miller

Richmond, VA – Virginia Repertory Theatre announces the opening of *Summer and Smoke* by Tennessee Williams at the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre, 114 West Broad Street on Friday, April 22 with a preview on Thursday, April 21. The production runs through May 15, 2016. Set in Mississippi at the dawn of the 20th century, the story centers on a young woman's sexual awareness as it evolves from chaste modesty to desire. First staged on Broadway in 1948, the show was not well received. A 1952 revival at Circle in the Square Theatre featuring a legendary performance by Geraldine Page received rave reviews and was credited with beginning the Off-Broadway movement. Stu Falconer, one of six New York actors to form Barksdale Theatre (now Virginia Rep) in 1953, left his job as the stage manager of that Circle in the Square production to move to Virginia.

Director Bruce Miller finds this connection with Stu Falconer fascinating. "I fondly remember talking with Barksdale Founder Muriel McAuley about an emotional, impromptu reading of *Summer and Smoke* that took place one evening with the founders and their children sharing roles. The transition to start their own theatre had been trying, and that reading served to remind them that following their passions had been the right decision." That story has influenced Miller's vision for the show and his

decision to cast two children. Miller's directing credits include *As You Like It*, *Boleros for the Disenchanted*, *Legacy of Light*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Little Dog Laughed*, *The Crucible*, *The Lark*, the *Smoke on the Mountain* trilogy, *On Golden Pond*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Anything Goes*, *A Lug Nuts Christmas*, *Tartuffe*, and most recently at Hanover Tavern *I Do!*, *I Do!*. Miller will step aside this summer after 41 years as the founding Artistic Director of Virginia Rep. He will remain involved with the theatre in education and fundraising.

The design team includes set designer Rich Mason (*Equus* and *The Mountaintop* for Cadence Theatre in partnership with Virginia Rep), lighting designer BJ Wilkinson (*Equivocation*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* for Virginia Rep), and costumer Sue Griffin (*Mame*, *South Pacific*, *Gypsy* for Virginia Rep).

Alexander Sapp will play the role of John, the undisciplined young doctor. Sapp is currently on stage at the Children's Theatre in the title role of *Croaker*. Other recent Virginia Rep credits include *South Pacific*, *Treasure Island*, and *A Lie of the Mind* in partnership with Cadence Theatre Company.

Virginia Rep is delighted to welcome three actors from the University of Virginia MFA Professional Actor Training Program in their debut on the November stage. Carolyn Demanelis will play the lead role of Alma. Recent credits include *9 Parts of Desire*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *Our Town*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Alexandra Deglise will play the role of Rosa, and Dana Colagiovanni will play Nellie. The full cast listing is below.

Four Thoughts

1:30 p.m. on Sundays

The new Four Thoughts discussion series will continue on Sunday April 24, May 1, and May 15, 30 minutes prior to the performance. Bruce Miller will present four thoughts or ideas that provide context to the play. Open to public. No reservation needed.

Ticket Information

Box Office 804-282-2620

www.virginiarep.org

Full Price Tickets: \$38 - \$46.

Discounted Group Rates and Rush tickets available.

U-Tix for college and high school students \$10. Available by phone or in person day of show only. Student ID required.

The Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre is equipped with a new state-of-the-art induction loop hearing system that is compatible with all telecoil-equipped hearing aids and cochlear implants. A handheld receiver and headphone system is also available free of charge for anyone who is hearing impaired.

Valet parking is available for \$8 at all performances and free self-park is available for patrons within blocks of the theatre.

Press Kits Available at <http://va-rep.org/press.html>

Pass code accessible Hi Res photos available to media.

username = press password = HiRes121

Evening performances at 8:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays and select Wednesdays

Matinee performances at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday and select Wednesdays and Saturdays

Direction & Design

Director	Bruce Miller
Scenic Designer	Rich Mason
Lighting Designer	BJ Wilkinson
Costume Designer	Sue Griffin
Stage Manager	Rick Brandt*

Cast List

John	Alexander Sapp*
Alma	Carolyn Demanelis
Nellie, Mrs. Bassett	Dana Colagiovanni*
Rosa, Mrs. Winemiller	Alexandra Deglise
Rosemary	Keely Seward
Rev. Winemiller, Vernon, Gonzales	Thomas Cunningham
Dr. Buchanan, Dusty, Young Man	Charley Raintree
Roger	Trace Coles

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the U.S.A.

Full bios can be found at www.virginiarep.org.

About Virginia Repertory Theatre

Virginia Repertory Theatre, located in Richmond, presents productions of the great dramas, comedies, and musicals as well as contemporary works and world premieres, always seeking to demonstrate the unique power of theater to engage, enthrall, educate, and inspire. Productions are staged at four distinct venues: the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre and Theatre Gym at the downtown Virginia Rep Center, Virginia Rep's Children's Theatre located at Willow Lawn, and at Hanover Tavern, home to Virginia Rep's Barksdale Season.

Corporate Sponsors

Virginia Rep is grateful for the support from Altria, The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Shubert Foundation, Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Richmond Times- Dispatch, Richmond.com and Community Idea Stations.

