



VIRGINIA STAGE COMPANY
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release • February 6, 2006 • Contact: Chad Bauman, (757) 627-6988 ext. 343

An American Classic Up Next at Virginia Stage Company

Virginia Stage Company continues its Season of Firsts with John Steinbeck's classic *Of Mice and Men*, directed by VSC's Artistic Director Chris Hanna. *Of Mice and Men* is a timeless tale of two friends who discover the underside of the American Dream. Set against the backdrop of America's Great Depression, two itinerant laborers form a deep friendship and dream of owning a piece of land to call their own. But after they come to work on a ranch in California, their hopes, like "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men," begin to go awry.

The production runs from February 28 through March 19, 2006. Tickets to *Of Mice and Men* range in price from \$8.00 to \$42.50, with Sunday, February 26, 2006 serving as a Pay-What-You-Can performance. Virginia Stage Company will continue its popular Best Ticket in Town Program during the 2005-06 Season. Best Ticket in Town performances will be February 28-March 2, 2006 and all tickets will be sold for \$8.00. All tickets may be purchased at the VSC Box Office, by calling (757) 627-1234 or online at www.vastage.com.

John Steinbeck was born in 1902 in California's Salinas Valley—a region in which many of his novels, including *Of Mice and Men*, are set. He studied literature at Stanford, but left without a degree to work as a laborer and then a journalist in New York City. After his first novel was published in 1929, he became a relentless and dedicated writer. His well know masterpiece, *The Grapes of Wrath*, was written in 1939, earning him the Pulitzer Prize. Steinbeck experimented with many forms, writing plays, novels, short stories and movies. He wrote about many topics, but was known for his compassionate understanding of the disinherited written with a beautiful, unpretentious lyricism.

Virginia Stage Company's *Of Mice and Men* will feature some of the nation's most well-respected actors including stage veterans Ernest Perry (Chicago), Jefferson Breland (Baltimore), Tony Ward and Kristin Fiorella (New York) and Sean Meehan and David Sittler (New Jersey). Rounding out the cast are several local actors, including Robert Nelson (Virginia Beach), Chaney Tullos and Terry Jernigan (Norfolk) and Dave Hobbs (Corapeake, NC). "I've had the privilege of watching some of the actors whose work will be on stage in *Of Mice and Men* develop their individual craft right here in Hampton Roads. Their choice to pursue serious acting careers in this area is fairly unique - the path can be lonely - and I'm thrilled to be rewarding their dedication with challenging roles in this production," said Chris Hanna, VSC's Artistic Director.

Chris Hanna's directing credits have taken him from Edinburgh, Scotland, to Juneau, Alaska, and have included productions Off Broadway, at the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, and the Juilliard School. He served as Associate Artistic Director of Virginia Stage Company from 1984- 1991; favorites among his many previous productions at the Wells Theatre include *The Rainmaker*, *Arms and the Man*, *Ah Wilderness!* and the world premiere of Alan Havis' play *Morocco*. He has served as Resident Director at the Juilliard School, as Artistic Associate for seven seasons with the Chautauqua Theatre Company, and is presently Director of Theatre at Old Dominion University. He holds a MFA in Directing from the University of California, San Diego.

Virginia Stage Company | 27 Years New

Chris Hanna, Artistic Director **Keith Stava**, Managing Director
P.O. Box 3770, Norfolk, VA 23514 P: 757.627.6988 F: 757.628.5958
Website: www.vastage.com

of mice and men

FACT SHEET

Of Mice and Men runs from February 28 through March 19, 2006. Tickets to *Of Mice and Men* range in price from \$8.00 to \$42.50, with Sunday, February 26, 2006 serving as a Pay-What-You-Can performance. Virginia Stage Company will continue its popular Best Ticket in Town Program during the 2005-06 Season. Best Ticket in Town performances will be February 28-March 2, 2006 and all tickets will be sold for \$8.00. All tickets may be purchased at the VSC Box Office, by calling (757) 627-1234 or online at www.vastage.com.

Box Office Information: In Person: At the Wells Theater (corner of Tazewell & Monticello Streets), Phone: 757-627-1234, Fax: 757-628-5958, Online: www.vastage.com.

Cast

George.....TONY WARD*
Lennie.....JEFFERSON BRELAND*
Candy.....ROBERT NELSON
The Boss.....DAVE HOBBS
Curley.....SEAN MEEHAN*
Curley's Wife.....KRISTIN FIORELLA*
Slim.....DAVID SITLER*
Carlson.....TERRY JERNIGAN
Whit.....CHANEY TULLOS
Crooks.....ERNEST PERRY Jr.*

* denotes membership in Actors' Equity Associate

Creative Team

Written by: John Steinbeck
Director: Chris Hanna
Set Designer: Anita Tripathi Easterling
Costume Designer: Jeni Schaefer
Lighting Designer: A. Nelson Ruger IV
Sound Designer: Walter Tillman
Stage Manager: Bradley C. Cooper

Performance Schedule

Pay-What-You-Can Performance: Sunday, February 26, 2006 7:00pm

Best Ticket in Town Performances (Previews): Tuesday, Feb. 28 7:00 pm; Wednesday, Mar. 1 8:00 pm; Thursday, Mar. 2 8:00pm

Opening Night/Press Night: Friday, Mar. 3 8:00 pm

Public Performances: Saturday, Mar. 4 4:00 pm & 8:00 pm; Sunday, Mar. 5 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm; Tuesday, Mar. 7 7:00 pm; Wednesday, Mar. 8 8:00pm; Thursday, Mar. 9 8:00 pm; Friday, Mar. 10 8:00 pm; Saturday, Mar. 11 4:00 pm & 8:00 pm; Sunday, Mar. 12 2:00 pm; Tuesday, Mar. 14 7:00 pm; Wednesday, Mar. 15 8:00 pm; Thursday, Mar. 16 8:00 pm; Friday, Mar. 17 8:00pm, Saturday, Mar. 18 4:00pm & 8:00pm; Sunday, Mar. 19 2:00pm

Signed Performance: Saturday, Mar. 11 8:00pm

After Performance Discussion: Sunday, Mar. 5 2:00pm

Closing Performance: Sunday, Mar. 19 2:00pm



of mice and men

THE CAST



JEFFERSON BRELAND (*Lennie*) is very pleased to make his Virginia Stage Company debut. A former photojournalist, Jefferson began acting just after his 30th birthday. Since then he has performed in productions at the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), The Kitchen (NYC), LaMAMA, etc. (NYC), American Repertory Theater, South Coast Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Festival and Cape Playhouse among others. As a member of New York's Ridge Theater, Jefferson appeared in *Every Day Newt Berman*, and the world premieres of Mac Wellman's *The Sandalwood Box*, *The Damned Thing*, and *Jennie Richee, or: Eating Jalooka Fruit Before it's Ripe*. Favorite roles include: Earl Hill in *Book of Days*, Sam in *All Men Are Whores*, Mickey in *Hurlyburly*, Buckingham in *Richard III*, and The Judge in *The Inspector General*. TV and Film appearances include: *The Wire*, *Third Watch*, *Law and Order*, *Law and Order: SVU*, *Memphis Bound and Gagged*, and *The Jimmy Show*. Jefferson is a graduate of The American Repertory Theatre Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard University. When he isn't acting, Jefferson makes his living as a carpenter and is completely renovating the home he shares with his wife, Stacey MacFarlane. Meegwetch LOML.



KRISTIN FIORELLA (*Curley's Wife*) Off Broadway, she has worked at The Rattlestick, New Georges, The Image Theater, Center Stage, Irish Arts Center, and Manhattan Theater Source. Regionally, she has worked at The Old Globe Theater and Yale Repertory Theater. She made her film debut in the leading role of Emma in *Curse of the Starving Class* co-starring James Woods and Kathy Bates. Ms. Fiorella received her BA from Columbia University and her MFA from Yale School of Drama.



DAVE HOBBS (*The Boss*) has been performing professionally since he retired from the U. S. Navy. He has appeared in numerous docu-dramas airing on The Learning and Discovery Channels. He has appeared locally in several musical theatre productions including *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Grease*. Summer 2005 took him to Boone, NC where he performed the lead in the country's third longest running outdoor drama, *Horn in the West*. Most recently he performed at Old Dominion University as Ezra Mannon in the O'Neill classic *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Dave currently resides in North Carolina with his wife and five children.



TERRY JERNIGAN (*Carlson*) is a Norfolk native who is happy to make this his third appearance at VSC. TJ works mostly in television and independent film. He most recently wrapped the independent film *The 8th Plague* and although his scene ended up on the cutting room floor, he can be seen in *The New World* by Terrance Malick. Other recent projects: *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, *No Retreat from Destiny*, *An Ordinary Killer*, and *Judges* will be going to The History Channel, video stores, Showtime and HBO with in the next few months. The locally produced *Forgotten Stars* is traveling the Indy Circuit and won Best Short Film at the S.N.O.B. (Somewhat North of Boston) Film Festival. Commercials can be seen through out the country. He would like to dedicate these performances to his parents Gene & Phyllis and his love, Eva. His inspiration, his muse, his Cho.



of mice and men

THE CAST



SEAN MEEHAN (*Curley*) started off at Trinity Repertory Conservatory, where he received his Master of Fine Arts in Acting and appeared in many Trinity Repertory Company productions including *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *A Christmas Carol*. Since then, he has started his own theatre company, random.acts, done some independent film, been in two *Law and Order* episodes, and worked in various regional theatres with such directors as Jack Hofsis, Lawrence Sacharow and Marshall Mason.



ROBERT NELSON (*Candy*) is happy to be returning to VSC for his fifth production, his last role here having been Kappelmeister Bono, the oldest man alive, in *Amadeus*. Two of Bob's favorite roles, Enobarbus in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and Pa Joad in *Grapes of Wrath*, were also, not coincidentally, directed by Chris Hanna, so he is quite thrilled to be directed by Chris again. Bob was Artistic Director of Norfolk's Generic Theater for 8 years, has taught acting & Shakespeare classes for the Governor's School for the Arts, and has performed or directed at most area theaters. He has appeared in a number of TV roles on such shows as *New Detectives*, *FBI Story*, *The Prosecutors*, etc., several largely unseen films, and he most recently played Don Quixote in a new adaptation for the 40th St. Stage in Ghent.



ERNEST PERRY Jr. (*Crooks*) is making his Virginia Stage Company debut. Regional Theatre: Mr. Perry recently appeared in the co-production of Arden Theatre and Actor's Theatre of Louisville's *Fences*, and the American premiere of *Elmina's Kitchen* at Baltimore's Center Stage. Since 1979 Perry has been resident actor at Chicago's Goodman Theatre appearing in: *Play Mas*, *Edmund*, *Galileo*, *Pudd'n Pete*, *Cry*, *the Beloved Country*, *Ties that Bind*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Let Me Live*, *Oo-Blah-Dee*, *Drowning Crow*, and *Heart Break House*. Other regional credits: *Five Rooms of Furniture*-Organic Theatre- Best Actor Award; *Will the Circle be Unbroken?*-Steppenwolf, *Mary Stuart* -Court Theatre, *The Emancipation of Valet de Chambre* -Cleveland Playhouse, and *King Hedley II*-Alliance Theatre. Broadway: *Death and the Kings Horseman*. International Credits: *My Children, My Africa!*-Vienna's English Theatre, *The Ice Man Cometh*-Abbey Theatre-Dublin, and performances at Royal Shakespeare Company-London, Thalia Theatre-Hamburg, and Mc93 Bobigny-Paris. Film/Television: *Love Liza*, *Liar Liar*, *A Rage in Harlem*, *The Color of Money*, *Barber Shop II*, *Roll Bounce*, *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*, *Early Edition*, and *ER*. Mr. Perry serves as spokesperson for Wrigley's *Big Red Gum*.



DAVID SITTLER (*Slim*) is thrilled to be making his debut with the Virginia Stage Company. He was last seen in NYC in the *Imposters*, a new play in the Neurofest and in FL in an original adaptation of *War of the Worlds* at American Stage. He's been on Broadway (*An Inspector Calls*) and worked with over 16 theatre companies in the NYC area as well as regionally from Maine to Utah. TV credits include *Law and Order:SVU*, *Now and Again*, *Guiding Light* and *As the World Turns* and film credits include the award winning films *Ghetto Dawg*, *Treeshade* and he just finished principle photography playing Herman Bolster in *Herman Bolster*. Thanks to all at VSC and a great cast and crew and especially wife/actor Carolyn Popp. Proud member of Actors Equity Association.



of mice and men

THE CAST



CHANEY TULLOS (*Whit*) a Louisiana native, returns to the VSC main stage after playing the Ghost of Christmas Past in *A Christmas Carol*. A member of VSC's Emerging Artist Ensemble, he is currently touring Hampton Roads' schools with VSC's children's show *Wiley & the Hairy Man* as the Hairy Man. Chaney holds a Master of Fine Arts in Acting from Louisiana State University. Credits with LSU include *The Illusion* and the title role in *Tartuffe*. As a member of the resident ensemble at Swine Palace (Baton Rouge's professional theatre), his credits include *The Laramie Project*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Tavern*, and a joint production of *Macbeth* with New York's SITI Company. He also spent a season with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, acting in their productions of *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.



TONY WARD (*George*) is very happy to make his Virginia Stage debut. Tony recently created the role of "The Man" in the world premiere of Lucinda Coxon's *Vesuvius* at South Coast Repertory. He spent this fall as Edgar in Baltimore Center Stage's production of *King Lear*. His New York credits include *Wonder of The World* at Manhattan Theatre Club (u/s), *The Two Orphans* at New York Stage and Film, *The Elephant Man* and *Beyond The Horizon* with Synapse Productions, and four summers with the Lincoln Center Theatre's Director's Lab. His Regional work includes *Morphic Resonance* at Westport Country Playhouse, *Edward II* and *As You Like It* at Yale Rep, Also at Baltimore *The Wilder Plays* and *As You Like It*, *Terra Nova* at South Coast Rep, *The Steward of Christendom* at The Huntington, *Twelve Angry Men* at Buffalo Studio Arena, *The Rainmaker* at Merrimack Repertory, *Arms and the Man*, *Othello* and *A Doll's House* with The Acting Company and three summers at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's Nat'l Playwright's Conference. Film and TV: Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, *The Guiding Light* and *Law and Order*. Mr. Ward received his MFA from the Yale School of Drama.



of mice and men

THE COMPANY

John Steinbeck (*Playwright*) was born in Salinas, California, on February 27, 1902.

During summers he worked as a hired hand on nearby ranches, nourishing his impression of the California countryside and its people. After graduating from Salinas High School, Steinbeck attended Stanford University. He left Stanford permanently in 1925 to pursue his writing career in New York. His first novel, *Cup of Gold* was published in 1929, but attracted little attention. His two subsequent novels, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *To a God Unknown*, were also poorly received. Steinbeck married his first wife, Carol Henning in 1930. They lived in Pacific Grove where much of the material for *Tortilla Flat* and *Cannery Row* was gathered. *Tortilla Flat* (1935) marked the turning point in Steinbeck's literary career. It received the California Commonwealth Club's Gold Medal for best novel by a California author. Steinbeck continued writing, relying upon extensive research and his personal observation of the human condition for his stories. *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) won the Pulitzer Prize. During World War II, Steinbeck was a war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune. Some of his dispatches were later collected and made into *Once There Was a War*. John Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962. He died December 20, 1968, in New York City.

Chris Hanna (*Director*) is in his first full season as Artistic Director at VSC. Directing credits have taken him from Edinburgh, Scotland, to Juneau, Alaska, and have included productions Off Broadway, at the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, and the Juilliard School. He served as Associate Artistic Director of Virginia Stage Company from 1984- 1991; favorites among his many previous productions at the Wells include *The Rainmaker*, *Arms and the Man*, *Ah Wilderness!* and the world premiere of Alan Havis' play *Morocco*. He has served as Resident Director at the Juilliard School, as Artistic Associate for seven seasons with the Chautauqua Theatre Company, and is presently Director of Theatre at Old Dominion University. He holds a MFA in Directing from the University of California, San Diego, and is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

Anita Tripathi Easterling (*Scene Design*) is delighted to be designing for VSC again. She has also designed scenery for *A Christmas Carol*, *Vincent in Brixton*, *Private Lives*, *Greetings!*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, *The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi*, *Jumping Mouse*, and *A Promise is a Promise*. Other credits include *Proof*, *Fully Committed*, *Old Wicked Songs*, and *The Exact Center of the Universe* (Greenbrier Valley Theatre), *King Lear* and *As You Like It* (Virginia Shakespeare Festival) and *Life Is A Dream* (Old Dominion University). In New York, Anita has worked at the Public Theater and assisted Broadway designer David Gallo with model making for *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. She has also worked regionally as a scenic charge and props master at such theatres as the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and Flat Rock Playhouse. Anita is currently the Resident Scenic Designer and Properties Manager for Virginia Stage and holds an M.F.A. in Scene Design from the University of South Carolina. She is a member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829.



of mice and men

THE COMPANY

Jeni Schaefer (*Costume Design*) is pleased to be designing again for VSC. She has been with VSC for the past three seasons as Costume Shop Manager where she made her design debut on the mainstage with *Drawer Boy*. Jeni holds a MAC in Costume Design from Wichita State University where her design credits include *Bus Stop*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, *The Perfect Wedding*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Her various other design credits include *Driving Miss Daisy*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Yellowman* (VSC), *Wit* (PlayMakers Repertory Theater), *Carousel* (West Virginia Public Theatre), *Anything Goes* (USD 443 Performing Arts School), and a film entitled *My Day in the Barrel* (Pinwheel Productions). Jeni would like to thank her husband Tony & her daughter Sara.

A. Nelson Ruger IV (*Lighting Design*) Credits include *Treasure Island*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*; *Vaudeville* (Virginia Stage); *Big River*, *West Side Story*, *Betrayal*, *Peter Pan*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Syracuse Stage). Other credits include work with Muhlenberg College, Surflight Theatre, Savoy Company, Opera Delaware, Circa 21 Playhouse, and The Proper Villains Theatre Company, of which he is a founding member. For several years, Mr. Ruger was an Assistant Professor of Scenic and Lighting Design at Millikin University where he designed the sets and lights for numerous productions. He is an alumnus of Muhlenberg College and holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Lighting and Scenic Design from Syracuse University.

Walter Tillman (*Sound Design*) is pleased to be working with VSC again. Other VSC designs include: *Vincent in Brixton*; *Driving Miss Daisy*; *Private Lives*; *Drawer Boy*; *Greetings*; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. Off-Broadway: *Joy* (Assistant Designer). Other designs include: *The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas*; *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*; *Grease*; *Hair*; *Smokey Joe's Café*; *Always... Patsy Cline*; *Damn Yankees* (Eastern Carolina University); *Art*; *Blythe Spirit* (Surflight Theatre); *The Foreigner* (Cumberland County Playhouse).

Bradley C. Cooper (*Stage Manager*) is delighted to return to VSC for his third season. Bradley received his training from Northern Michigan University. He has also worked professionally at Seaside Music Theatre, in Daytona Beach, Florida, and the Arundel Barn Playhouse, just outside of Kennebunkport, Maine. Bradley has been the Stage Manager for four shows at VSC including the World Premiere of *The Taste Test*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Driving Miss Daisy* and *Vincent in Brixton*.