

THE CHERRY ORCHARD



**ROUNABOUT
THEATRE
COMPANY**

**50
YRS**

UPSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **EDUCATION AT
ROUNABOUT**

UPSTAGE CALLBOARD

The Cherry Orchard

By Anton Chekhov

A New Version by Stephen Karam

Directed by Simon Godwin

Roundabout Theatre Company presents a new production of *The Cherry Orchard*, Anton Chekhov's masterpiece about a family on the edge of ruin—and a country on the brink of revolution. The story of Lyubov Ranevskaya (Academy Award® nominee Diane Lane) and her family's return to their fabled orchard to forestall its foreclosure, *The Cherry Orchard* captures a people—and a world—in transition, and presents us with a picture of humanity in all its glorious folly.

a note from Artistic Director Todd Haines

Anton Chekhov nearly left the field of playwriting when his first major piece, *The Seagull*, was met with a poor reception back in 1896. But what audiences didn't like back then is precisely the kind of writing that has become one of the most popular theatrical forms today: naturalism. It sounds ridiculous now, but at the time, it was shocking for Chekhov to reflect the kinds of speech and movement found in everyday life, to focus on a wide swath of characters from all social classes, each of them deeply complex, and to allow plot to be secondary to character. Thankfully, by finding great interpreters to translate his vision to the stage, Chekhov's work attained the hallowed place in the theatrical canon that it holds today, creating a legacy for playwrights like Stephen Karam, author of this new version of *The Cherry Orchard*, to pick up anew.

RUSSIAN NAMES: A GUIDE

Lyubov
(First)

Andreyevna
(Patronymic)

Ranevskaya
(Last)

Upon first read, the many identifiers used to address characters in Russian plays and literature can be daunting. Within the span of a few pages, a character might be addressed by upwards of five different names. What does it all mean?

Russians are given three names at birth: their first/given name, their patronymic, and their surname or last/family name. First and last names are fairly self-explanatory; first names are unique to a person, and last names are shared by a family (a father's last name is passed on to his children) or by a marriage (a wife takes on her husband's last name). However, it's worth noting that last names are adjusted to a person's gender. Lyubov Andreyevna Ranevskaya must have married a man with the last name Ranevsky; when she married, she took on the feminine version of his last name.

Patronymics are unique to the Russian naming system; they are not equivalent to English "middle" names. Instead, they are names that reference the first name of your father, again adjusted for your own gender (gender is apparent at the end of the name; female endings include *evna* and *ovna*; male endings *evich* and *ovich*). Lyubov Andreyevna Ranevskaya and Leonid Andreyevich Gaev, sister and brother, had a father named Andrey. Their patronymics mean, respectively, "daughter of Andrey" and "son of Andrey."

The way you choose to address someone in Russian holds clues to your relationship and respective status.

- As in English, the only time Russians use full (i.e. three) names is when they are introducing someone for the first time.
- When someone is addressed by their first name and patronymic, respect or formality is being signified. In English, this would be the equivalent of calling someone Ms. Last Name. This address can include a shortened version of the patronymic, in which one syllable is elided; i.e. from Leonid Andreyevich to Leonid Andreyich. "First, patronymic" addresses are given from servants to masters. The form is also used anytime someone wants to indicate deference or respect.
- When someone is addressed by their first name alone, we can assume the speaker is an intimate friend or family member. The exceptions to this rule are children and servants; they may be addressed by their first names by any speaker.
- Nicknames, or pet names, may also be used in substitution for a first name. Again, these names, which are usually diminutive endings on a first name (i.e. from Lyubov to Lyuba) indicate closeness and informality. •



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Russian Names: A Guide	Page 2
Interview with Director Simon Godwin	Page 4-5
Chekhov: His Life and Work	Page 6-7
Interview with Actor Diane Lane	Page 8-9
The World of the Play	Page 10-11
The Theatre of Chekhov	Page 12
Translation and Adaptation	Page 13
Interview with Actor Harold Perrineau.....	Page 14-15
Adapting Chekhov	Page 16
Designer Statements	Page 17-18
Pre-Show Activities	Page 19
Post-Show Activities	Page 20
Glossary and Resources.....	Page 21
About Roundabout and Staff Interview	Page 22
At the Theatre and Donor Credits	Page 23
Cherry Orchard Family Tree	Page 24

UPSTAGE CONTRIBUTORS

MANAGING EDITORS:

Kim Oria, *Senior Manager of Education Programs*
Jill Rafson, *Director of New Play Development*

WRITERS:

Jason Jacobs, *Teaching Artist*
Leah Reddy, *Teaching Artist*
Olivia O'Connor, *Artistic Associate*
Ali Leskowitz, *Marketing Promotions Associate*
Gracie Meier, *Education Intern*
Nick Mecikalski, *Artistic Intern*
Ashley Thomas, *Education Apprentice*

INTERVIEWS:

Ted Sod, *Education Dramaturg*

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Darren Melchiorre

EDUCATION STAFF:

Jennifer DiBella, *Director of Education*
Mitch Mattson, *Associate Director of Education*
Paul Brewster, *Assistant Director of Education,
Teaching and Learning*
Abby Case, *Education Program Manager*
Karen Loftus, *Education Program Manager*
Sarah Kutnowsky, *Education Coordinator*
Katlyn Rapini, *Education Assistant*
Shannon Gingell, *Education Apprentice*

Copyright © 2016 Roundabout Theatre Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR SIMON GODWIN

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke with director Simon Godwin about his work and vision for *The Cherry Orchard*.

Ted Sod: Tell us a bit about yourself: Where were you educated, and why did you want to become a theatre director? Did you have any teachers who had a profound influence on you?

Simon Godwin: I'm the eldest of four children, so I've always been bossy. I enjoyed directing my brothers and sister. And as I grew up, my mom took me to musicals and instilled a great love of theatre in me from that moment. When I got to Cambridge University, where I read English, I combined my fondness for being bossy with my love of theatre and became a director. I've had many great inspirations along the way. Peter Brook has shaped my thinking a lot. And, in my late twenties, I studied physical theatre with a teacher named Thomas Prattki, who taught me about how to engage with the body of the actor as well as with their mind.

TS: How did this production come about? Did you choose the title? How are you collaborating with Stephen Karam on this adaptation of Chekhov's play?

SG: I developed a relationship with Roundabout when I was working at the Royal Court in London, directing new plays. Later Todd Haines came to see my work at the National Theatre and suggested that I direct a play for Roundabout. We talked about titles, and we realized that *The Cherry Orchard* hadn't been seen on Broadway for a long time. I said, "It would be great to find a version of the play made for American actors and audiences." There's been a tradition of very English translations of the play, which makes Chekhov feel more like Noël Coward than the earthy, visceral writer he actually is. I asked Todd, "Who is the brightest young writer in America right now?" He said, "Stephen Karam." Todd explained that Stephen had written a wonderful play called *The Humans*, which of course Roundabout produced originally. I went to see *The Humans* and loved it. Fortunately, Stephen was very curious about a new American version of *The Cherry Orchard*. He agreed to the assignment, and we've been working together ever since.

TS: Stephen's plays are a combination of both comedy and tragedy. That seems to be the perfect fit for Chekhov, would you agree?

SG: That's right. Stephen's experience of writing plays that move between laughter and tears is completely accurate for Chekhov. Stephen also has a great interest in communities and, specifically, families. And Chekhov was the great poet of family life. Chekhov is interested in what constitutes a family and how a family grows and changes and the pain of this process. What are the conflicts, explicit and implicit, that we all experience inside our own families? Chekhov realized that, as long as there are humans on the planet, families will be a source of fascination.

TS: How do you prepare to direct a Chekhov play? Can you give us some insight into your process as a director?

SG: Recently I've been enjoying taking classical plays written, for example, by Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, or Chekhov, and asking, how can we rediscover their contemporary urgency? This



Simon Godwin

process begins by me getting to know the play, researching the writer's context, and exploring what he or she was thinking when they were writing. And then asking, how do we make a bridge between their time and ours? Chekhov was interested in the trauma of change—how some people adapt and some people don't. We are all creatures of habit. We like things to stay the same. But in a time of huge political upheaval, change becomes inevitable. And that's where the conflict arises—to resist or fight for it?

TS: Will you talk a bit about your understanding of the relationship between Lopakhin and Madame Ranevskaya, and Lopakhin and Varya?

SG: Much of the play is about love and hate. Ranevskaya drives Lopakhin crazy, but part of him has got a massive crush on her. He is both repulsed by and attracted to all she represents. Perhaps this is why Lopakhin can't acknowledge Varya, the person who truly loves him and wants to marry him. So there are different kinds of blindness in the play. Chekhov was a doctor, so people's flaws fascinated him. At the same time, he never judges, he just describes how we're all doing our imperfect best.

TS: I keep wondering how Ranevskaya and her brother Gaev are bonded. Do you think it's because they're both resistant to change?

SG: Yes, that's right. Both have found relationships in the wide world difficult to manage. They both idealize the past. They need each other, but they can't live in the same house. Once again, families; they can

"Families; they can liberate you and they can smother you. When do you commit to them and when do you leave them behind?"



Susanah Flood, John Glover, and Simon Godwin
in rehearsal for *The Cherry Orchard*

liberate you and they can smother you. When do you commit to them and when do you leave them behind?

TS: Do you have a sense of what the challenges are in directing Chekhov?

SG: Are his plays funny? Are they sad? How do you make them both? How do you make the plays feel urgent and not just about Russia a long time ago, but about our world today?

TS: How are you collaborating with your design team?

SG: I have been encouraging everybody to think freshly; to try and discover how we can show a cherry orchard or a house without literally showing it. There is a non-naturalistic poetry in the writing that should be in the sets, costumes, lighting, and music.

TS: What were you looking for in casting the actors? What traits did you need for this adaptation?

SG: People who would bring something new to the table. I was looking for a combination of expertise and personal investment. Chekhov was very curious about the unusual, the unconventional, and the unexpected. I needed actors who would bring sparkle and a sense of curiosity to their parts. We have an ensemble full of vividness, expertise, and precision united by a shared interest in doing things differently.

TS: Tell us about the non-traditional or colorblind casting you're doing. How did that come about?

SG: When you're presenting a play, you want to bring all the urgency of the street onto the stage. When you come to the theatre, you're not leaving life behind; you want to see life intensified on the stage. And, in order for people to feel like this play is relevant, topical, and urgent, we need to have a diverse company of storytellers. I wanted to celebrate New York by creating a company able to bring the widest range of resonances and associations to the text, without being hampered by traditional constraints or habits.

TS: I'm wondering if you have any advice for a young person who might want to direct?

SG: A piece of advice from Peter Brook; if you want to be a director, direct. As he puts it—"work attracts work." I've always lived by that advice.

TS: How do you keep yourself inspired as an artist?

SG: By being in the company of inspiring artists. The beautiful thing about directing is that you're bringing back to life the ghosts of extraordinary dramatists. When you're directing Chekhov or Shakespeare or Shaw, you're inviting them back from the dead. And collaborating with these forces of nature is always invigorating and sometimes frightening. You have to believe you will do them justice. They are stern taskmasters, as we would say in England. •

CHEKHOV: HIS LIFE AND WORK

"He moved in many orbits—he had dealings with teachers, doctors, tycoons, merchants, peasants, bohemians, hacks, intellectuals, artists, academics, officials, actresses and actors, priests, monks, with officers, convicts, whores, foreigners, and landowners. He got on well with people of every class and condition, except the nobility and court." — Biographer Donald Rayfield on Anton Chekhov



Portrait of Anton Chekhov by Osip Braz

THE LIFE

Born January 29, 1860 in the port city of Taganrog, Russia, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov received a difficult welcome to the world. His parents' families had bought and worked their way out of serfdom to the merchant class, but even with a grocery business, Anton's father, Pavel, struggled to keep his wife

and seven children afloat. He also struggled to parent them, beating his children mercilessly; in later years, Anton would recall to his brother Aleksandr that "tyranny and lies crippled our childhood so much that it makes me sick and afraid to remember."

In 1875, Pavel's tenuous business finally collapsed; bankrupt, he fled to Moscow to avoid his creditors. Most of the family followed, but two sons, Anton and Ivan, stayed behind to finish their schooling. As in *The Cherry Orchard*, the family home was auctioned off; so, too, was the grocery. Anton lived alone, making ends meet by tutoring younger students.

When Anton, hereafter referred to as Chekhov, joined his family in Moscow in 1879, he looked for a more stable life than the one he'd grown up with. When he was accepted (on scholarship) into medical school at the University of Moscow, he didn't just study hard. He also churned out an astonishing number of humorous stories and sketches and sold them to magazines under a pen name, keeping the funds to help support his still-struggling family.

When he graduated in 1884, his writing transformed from

a private money-maker to a public career. He continued to write his humorist work but also began to freelance as a journalist. By 1887, his work had achieved some renown in St. Petersburg. In 1888, he published his first work, a story called "Steppe," in a major literary review; the story won him the prestigious Pushkin Prize. Prior to this critical acclaim, he'd penned some 528 stories; after, his output—perhaps because of his shift to a more respected genre—was more modest but exceptionally impactful. The 50 stories he wrote between 1888 and his death in 1904—together with his plays—have become the basis for his reputation as one of the most influential dramatists and short-story writers of his time.

Chekhov's success as a writer allowed him to buy an estate in Melikhovo (a village about 50 miles south of Moscow) in 1892. While Chekhov had traveled widely throughout his life, the stability of an estate was a lifelong dream. He planted fifty cherry trees on the property. He lived at Melikhovo with his parents, his sister, Maria, and a rotating cast of other brothers, aunts, and cousins for six years, giving his family the comfortable life they'd never had. But he also spread his success beyond his family, opening multiple community facilities in Melikhovo (including a fire station and schools for local children) and a library in his hometown of Taganrog.

Chekhov, who for years had been plagued by health problems (tuberculosis had already felled some of his family members, and he suffered his first lung hemorrhage at 24), was forced to leave the estate in 1899. He had suffered another lung hemorrhage in 1897, and as his health became more fragile, he needed to find an environment more hospitable to his ailing lungs. He sold the Melikhovo estate and settled in a villa in a coastal resort in Yalta. He spent most winters here (with some trips to the French Riviera). The forced recuperation was a frustration to Chekhov, who didn't enjoy being cut off from the intellectual centers of Moscow and St. Petersburg. He occasionally made trips into the city for his plays, but for the most part, he was stuck in the country while his wife, Olga, continued to act. The two sometimes spent months apart.

Chekhov died in July of 1904, only 44 years old. He was in a German health resort at the time, and his body was transported to Moscow for burial. The details of his death have become well-known due to their unusualness. In his last moments, he told his doctor (who was by his side along with

his wife) that he was dying; the doctor called for champagne. After downing his glass, Chekhov said, "It's been a long time since I drank champagne." They were his dying words. When his coffin was moved to Moscow for burial, it was traveled in a cold freight car labeled "oysters."

THE WORK

Many of Chekhov's early plays, including *The Bear*, *The Proposal*, and *The Wedding*, are one-act farces—works similar in tone to the sketches that had carried him through medical school. He wrote his first full-length play, *Ivanov*, in 1887 and followed it with *The Wood Demon* (later reworked as *Uncle Vanya*) in 1888. His first major success as a playwright came in 1897, with the Moscow Art Theatre's production of *The Seagull*. The play's first production (1896) at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg had been a disaster. Chekhov was so distraught by the crowd's reaction that he left the theatre during the first performance's Act II,



Anton Chekhov with members of Moscow Art Theatre Company

vowing to abandon playwriting. But even by the second performance, the play's eventual success had begun to show itself. Actress Maria Chitau, who, along with her fellow cast members "had never heard so much booning" as on the play's opening night, recalled that the following performance ended in "total triumph."



Melikhovo Cottage, where Chekhov wrote *The Seagull*

And, in the hands of the Moscow Art Theatre—and director Konstantin Stanislavsky—more of Chekhov's plays became lauded as triumphs. *Uncle Vanya* premiered at the theatre in 1899, followed by *The Three Sisters* in 1901, and *The Cherry Orchard* in 1904 (*The Cherry Orchard*, Chekhov's last play, had its first performance just six months before his death). The productions and the theatre fed one another, both gaining respect and acclaim in tandem. But Chekhov was never happy with the Moscow Art Theatre's productions of his plays, believing that Stanislavsky's direction emphasized tragedy at the expense of his work's humor and lightness. •

INTERVIEW WITH ACTOR DIANE LANE

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod spoke to actor Diane Lane about preparing for the role of Ranevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*.

Ted Sod: Why did you choose to do Stephen Karam's adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and the role of Madame Ranevskaya?

Diane Lane: There were a few reasons, not just one. Being asked to return to Broadway in the same play I was in on Broadway as a child 39 years ago is one of them. My memories of that production with Irene Worth, Raul Julia, Meryl Streep, and everybody else who were all so wonderful in the play are indelible. Stephen Karam's gifted and sensitive adaptation is another reason. Finally, and most of all, our director Simon Godwin. People who have worked with Simon (in particular Ralph Fiennes told me personally), what they trusted and loved about Simon so, that sealed the deal for me.

TS: Can you talk to us about your process for a role like this? What are your initial thoughts on Madame Ranevskaya and her situation in the play?

DL: I always love to find the healing and acceptance to be gained from slipping into the skin of someone else. The trick is to be on the same page as my director and understand what the goals are. We're going to flesh out—literally as it were—the various aspects of Chekhov's brilliant writing. As much as it's tragic, it's a comedy. Most people forget how funny *The Cherry Orchard* is. I love that about great writing, that lifelike duality of the comedy of our pains. I am sure in rehearsals we will look at all the ways that our personalities get the better of us; how our idiosyncrasies, habits, need for comfort against anxiety or life's disappointments affect our behavior. We used to call them personality traits. Now, it's "a disorder" and prescriptions are available. I say this because Madame Ranevskaya is taking pills at a certain point, and she is pounding coffee right before bed. She confesses to her shame at having attempted suicide. She's a beautiful mess. The page is turning in the book of her life, and she can't go back to another chapter. That chapter is done. One must lose one's innocence in order to appreciate it. It's just one of those paradoxes of life. And Chekhov knows how to find the humor in people who are just flailing in all that.

TS: I'm struck by Ranevskaya's inertia. Do you understand it at this point?

DL: What seems like obstinate denial is her coping mechanism that helps her maintain her childlike heart; she feels everything deeply. Our children are supposed to outlive us, and Ranevskaya lost her young son—the cruelest fate imaginable for any parent. She took refuge in a romance that turned into a kind of hell, and then she fled that. The changing world that she is living in is zooming right past her (and her whole generation), and her references are becoming moot. Her world comes crashing down around her. We are human, we get attached, but life doesn't care, and that's scary. I liken her throwing a party (unconsciously? obstinately?) scheduled on the sale date of the orchard to the musicians playing on the deck of the sinking Titanic.

TS: What do you think the play is about? Or is it still formulating in your mind?

DL: It's still formulating. But I do think that resistance to change is the larger theme. We get to see it happening directly to each character



in the play; some are more flexible and ambitious than others. I also think it's about coping with loss. The cherry orchard has a sacredness. Trees are the givers of life. Families are branches of a tree. They make heaven and earth meet and bring forth fruit. Trees bring the sweetness of the cherries and sustenance and nurturance, and they are the beautiful habitats of birds and butterflies and flowers and ecosystems. Chekhov was ahead of his time in terms of the social comment regarding deforestation blighting our planet, as well as chipping away at the soul of our species. But for Ranevskaya, the orchard is tied up with her longing for simpler times.

TS: What about the relationship between Ranevskaya and Lopakhin? Do you sense that he's in love with her? Why doesn't he respond to Ranevskaya trying to get him to marry Varya?

DL: I think Lopakhin and Ranevskaya deeply appreciate each other, but that doesn't mean we're going to sexualize it. Even if we had a thread of that in our unconscious, I am not sure it would ever be brought to light. But I look forward to choosing some shared childhood memories with Harold Perrineau as Lopakhin. Maybe there was a childhood crush? As far as Lopakhin and Varya are concerned, Madame Ranevskaya sees Varya's heart. Varya is so pent up. She needs a lover more than anybody else in the play, and I think Ranevskaya/Chekhov gets that! Especially in contrast to the comparatively highly sexed Ranevskaya. Why that does not work out between them is very interesting, because what I see objectively, as if I were in the audience, is a small amount of loathing that they have for each other, because they see in the other one a mirror of their own repressed class, which



Diane Lane in rehearsal for *The Cherry Orchard*

Photo: Jenny Anderson

they actually wish to leave behind and not be reminded of.

TS: What do you look for in your collaboration with directors? Is table work important to you?

DL: I think it's important to have a game plan. You try different things, and then you say, "Wow, that's not as easy as I thought. Or how do we capture the nuance that we want?" That's the fun part. Getting the play on its feet and finding ways to make sure that every color that we want to be seen is seen. There is a timelessness to this story. It is of course about a specific time and place in history, but we'll be offering it unfettered to today's audiences.

TS: You were born in New York City, and you started as a child actor. Did you have formal education and training, or did you just learn by working?

DL: Just learned by working. Well, I cheated because I got some appreciation for acting from my dad, Burt Lane, who was an acting teacher. He was quite beloved by the people that he worked with. And

I've come across some of them over the years. He and John Cassavetes were working partners and, basically, they acquired everybody that didn't get into The Actors Studio. Bobby Darin, Jake LaMotta, Rocky Graziano, and Sugar Ray Robinson come to mind...of course Gena Rowlands was there. My dad had a great reverence for solid acting.

TS: Do you have any advice for a young person who wants to act?

DL: I would say, get as much exposure to the craft as you can. Which means watch great performances that have been recorded. Experience live theatre, get your feet wet taking risks (auditioning), read interviews of people, go where they speak about their craft and what they've learned and who they learned it from. Because learning never stops. Learning and growing never stop. You feel so naked and embarrassed by how little you know when you're a young actor. But it's just because you're at the early part of the journey that never ends. •

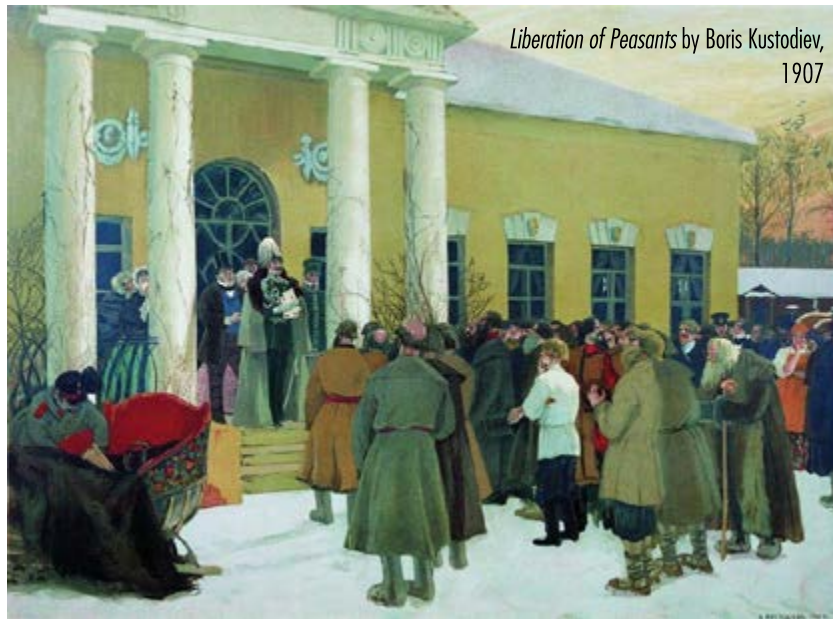
THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* takes place in Russia around 1904, in the midst of one of the country's greatest social transformations. About four decades earlier, Tsar Alexander II had enacted the Emancipation Reform of 1861, which freed the country's serfs—who at the time constituted over a third of the Russian population—from their landlords' ownership. Naturally, the Russian gentry opposed the proclamation, feeling themselves robbed of their labor source and vulnerable to a potential peasant uprising. On the whole, the liberation of the serfs remained relatively peaceful, but without its authority over the servant class, the Russian nobility would see its social status decline to the point of destruction by the turn of the century.

In Chekhov's play, Ranevskaya and her family belong to this deteriorated gentry class, and their estate, with its famous cherry orchard, stands as a relic of an era several decades earlier when the nobility enjoyed far more privileges and responsibilities. From the legal implementation of full serfdom in 1649 to its abolition in 1861, the Russian emperors trusted the gentry to serve as their eyes and ears throughout the country and prevent any grassroots revolutions against the state. In return for their loyalty, these landlords received exemptions from corporal punishment, personal taxation, and conscription, and they were granted the authority to draft their serfs into the military, collect their poll taxes, and administer local justice. After 1861, however, the gentry forfeited these responsibilities to local village authorities, found themselves unable to handle their own debts, and lost more and more of their land to landowners in other classes. As Russian society took steps toward equality and its middle class grew, the gentry class saw its social supremacy dwindle.

Lopakhin's pressuring of Ranevskaya and Gaev to sell their estate for the building of summer cottages, then,

serves as a microcosm of this seismic shift of the Russian social order. Lopakhin's father had once been one of the family's servants, but now, almost half a century after the Emancipation, Lopakhin is a wealthy merchant, and the land on which the cherry orchard stands has become prime real estate for vacation homes for the growing urban population of those merchants and wealthy citizens who, like Lopakhin, may have descended from serfs. Ranevskaya and Gaev face the possibility of being literally overrun by the rising middle class, whom their family once dwarfed in social status. Chekhov has situated Ranevskaya's cherry orchard at the physical and metaphorical crossroads of social tradition and social progress.



Liberation of Peasants by Boris Kustodiev, 1907

Stephen Karam's new version of *The Cherry Orchard*, however, evokes multiple groundbreaking moments in history—not just the decline of the Russian aristocracy, but also a very similar social upheaval that took place across the Atlantic Ocean at just about the same time as Alexander II's Emancipation: the American Civil War and the abolition of American slavery. Just as the Russian

gentry fell from their perch at the top of the social order in the 1860s, so did their American counterparts—Southern plantation owners—find themselves socioeconomically toppled by the end of the nineteenth century.

Before the Civil War, plantation owners ruled the American South. In 1860, at the height of the plantation economy, plantations operated about 33% of all Southern cotton cropland. These planters held extraordinary power in their rural communities—not only did they often exert complete and inhumane control over their slaves, but they also many times would serve as the only available sources of food and other essential goods to the smaller cotton growers who neighbored them. In these ways they ensured that their aristocratic statuses in their plantation homes and

their communities remained unchallenged. Enjoying social positions similar to those of feudal lords, these slave-owning planters dictated the politics and social life of the antebellum South.

But in the decades leading up to the Civil War, the institution of slavery was under attack from Northern abolitionists who decried the moral atrocities and economic inefficiencies of the practice. Southern slave-owners, with worries similar to those of the Russian aristocracy, repeatedly protected their legal right to own slaves and, in turn, preserved their economy and their way of life. But when Abraham Lincoln won the Presidency in 1860 after championing the containment of slave territory, the Southern states, more fearful than ever of losing control over their slave economy, seceded from the Union and created the Southern Confederacy. The next year, the Civil War began with the Battle of Fort Sumter. In an attempt to destabilize the Confederate war effort, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, freeing all slaves in rebel states. The next year, the Confederacy surrendered to the Union, and in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment made the liberation of all four million slaves in the United States a Constitutional imperative.

After the Civil War, the Southern planter class, similarly to the soon-to-be-dethroned Russian gentry, found its cherished social status slipping from its grasp. As Reconstruction began and ex-slaves abandoned their former captors, the plantation economy collapsed, stripped of its primary source of labor. Once-wealthy planters now struggled for survival

as their crops withered.

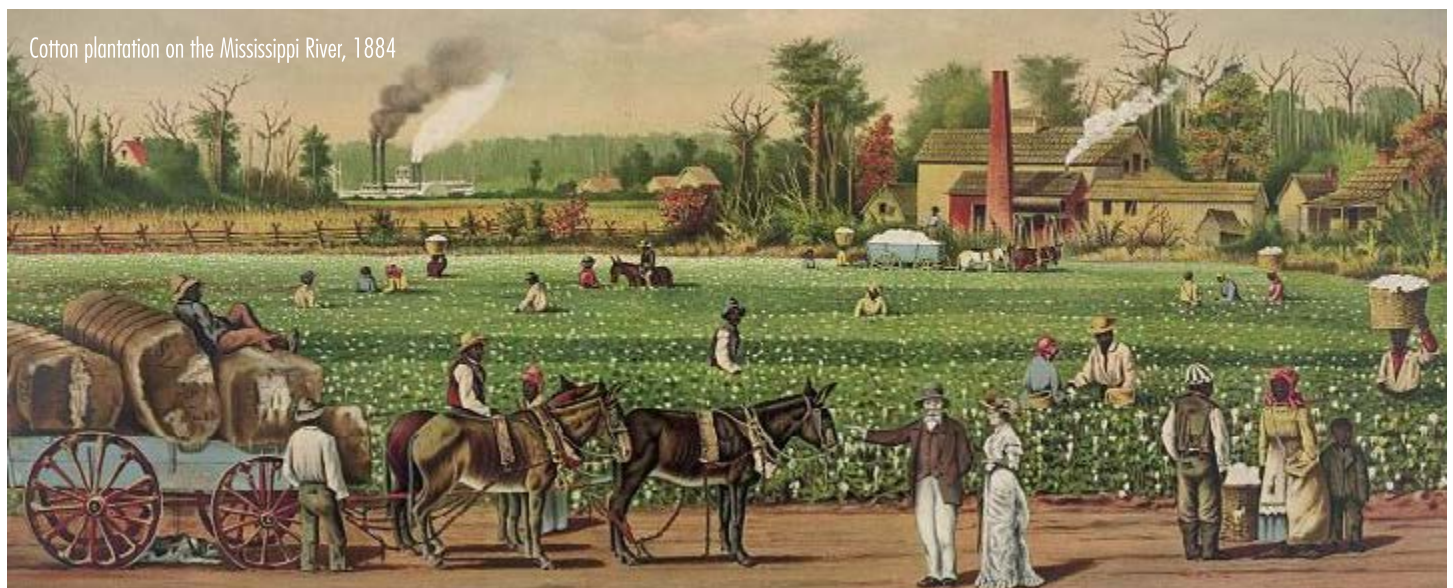
To save themselves, plantation owners would sell off tracts of their land, sometimes to the very people whom they had previously enslaved.

At the same time, members of the black community began to hold public office at all levels of government, and black activist leaders took steps to shape the Reconstruction effort themselves. By 1880, plantations as they had at one time existed had all but disappeared. Many of those once-untouchable planters now dispersed to the North or West to find work—their displacement in large part due to those black citizens whose activism and landownership was upending the social order. The era of the all-powerful Southern planter had come to a close.

The Cherry Orchard may take us specifically back to turn-of-the-century Russia, but those social movements that it dramatizes—the end of institutionalized forced labor, the fall of an aristocracy, the rise of a middle class—transcend time and place. When any social reorganization of such magnitude rocks a country, Chekhov asks, who benefits, and who is left in its wake? •



The Bargain by Nikolai Nerev (Sale of a serf girl)



Cotton plantation on the Mississippi River, 1884

THE THEATRE OF CHEKHOV

When a character in *The Seagull* complains about watching a play in which “nothing happens,” Chekhov may have anticipated his own critics. Indeed, the initial production of *The Seagull* (his first major play) was an enormous failure because neither the actors nor the audience understood how to approach his work. An iconoclastic artist, Chekhov broke from the theatrical conventions and audience expectations of his age.

Chekhov has been categorized as a Naturalist playwright, and, like Émile Zola, he viewed his characters through an objective, even scientific perspective. But Chekhov did not adhere to a deterministic view that behavior is shaped entirely by outside forces. Nor did he intend for his plays to conform to any genre.

Chekhov rejected Henrik Ibsen’s adherence to the well-made play, defied traditional genres of tragedy and comedy, and broke Aristotle’s rules of dramatic structure. Rather than a protagonist pursuing an action and acquiring self-knowledge, Chekhov followed groups of people wandering through life, attaining recognition. He moved major events offstage and placed the most quotidian activities front and center.

In his four major plays, Chekhov created a more truthful representation of the human condition than anyone had ever seen on stage. His final work, *The Cherry Orchard*, epitomizes his groundbreaking dramaturgy. Instead of plot, the play centers around a group of characters united by location and a central thematic situation: the cherry orchard and its loss. Dialogue reveals character and mood but rarely propels action, and people rarely listen to each other. Conflict is mostly expressed through understatement, subtext, gestures, and silences. The scenes center around commonplace events—arrivals, a party, departures; the denouement is inconclusive. Although Chekhov called *The Cherry Orchard* a comedy, he intentionally broke the foremost rule of the genre by not resolving the story with a marriage.

Chekhov’s theatre dramatized everyday life—with all its frustrations, irony, and absurdity—unlike any of his predecessors or contemporaries. He paved the way for so many of the plays, films, and television that we love today. •

“The fundamental aim of our art is the creation of this inner life of a human spirit, and its expression in an artistic form.”

— Konstantin Stanislavski

STANISLAVSKI

Born to a wealthy family in 1863, Konstantin Stanislavski started as an amateur actor and became one of the most influential acting teachers of the 20th century. In 1897, he co-founded the Moscow Art Theatre with playwright-director Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. Stanislavski believed that theatre’s purpose was to raise our ethical and cultural lives but found little of this on Russian stages at the time. Central to his vision was presenting a realistic and truthful view of humanity, with an emphasis on characters’ complex inner lives.

After *The Seagull* failed in its initial 1896 production, Stanislavski believed Chekhov’s play was perfect for his company. Co-directing with Nemirovich-Danchenko, he rehearsed the actors for an unprecedented 12 weeks. (In contrast, most Roundabout productions have 4 weeks of rehearsals). The success of their highly detailed, realistic production established MAT and redeemed Chekhov’s reputation.

Stanislavski directed the premieres of Chekhov’s four major plays, but Chekhov eventually became frustrated with his approach. He complained that Stanislavski “ruined” *The Cherry Orchard* by adhering to realism and making his characters into “cry babies.” Still, Chekhov’s plays remained in MAT’s repertory long after his death, where they are still performed today.

Throughout his life, Stanislavski refined a technique of acting focused on the inner life of the character and developing the actor’s observation, imagination, concentration, and physical actions. Stanislavski’s methods were first introduced to American theatre by Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg, and Stella Adler. He died in 1938, but his method is still widely taught and practiced today. •

Learn about Moscow Art Theatre’s most recent production of *The Cherry Orchard* [HERE](#).

Read more about the Stanislavski System [HERE](#).

TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION

Вишнёвый сад, the original, Russian-language play known in English as *The Cherry Orchard*, was published in June of 1904. It was the first of Chekhov's plays to be translated into English, a task undertaken by Avrahm Yarmolinsky at Yale University in 1908. Yarmolinsky rendered the title *The Cherry Garden*, as the Russian word **сад** can mean either *orchard* or *garden*.

Yarmolinsky's choice of garden over orchard exemplifies the complexities of translation, the process of moving the exact meaning of words from one language into another. For the Roundabout production of *The Cherry Orchard*, translator Allison Horsley created a literal translation for playwright Stephen Karam to adapt. Karam's adaptation—faithful to the original style, locale, and intent of Chekhov—uses modern American idiomatic English. Karam's role as adaptor of *The Cherry Orchard* was to find the language that allows these truths to come through to an American audience in 2016 as clearly as they did to Chekhov's Russian audiences in 1904.

In the literal translation, Horsley offers insight into both the meaning of each word and the nuances it may convey to a Russian speaker: whether a character is addressed formally or informally reveals relationship, for example, or how which of the more than two dozen versions of the verb "to go" is used indicates whether or not the character will return, or what mode of transportation will be used. She highlights symbols English speakers would miss: Lyubov, the name of one of the main characters, is the verb "love." She also points out word roots, noting:

Here is a look at the same passage rendered by different authors.

HORSLEY'S LITERAL TRANSLATION WITH HER ANNOTATIONS

Little peasant... My father, it's true, was a peasant and I here I am in a white waistcoat, in yellow **shoes/boots**. With a pig's **snout/mug** in Kalashny Row

[the Russian bread kalach was popular among both the rich and poor; this is probably either a reference to *really nice* kalach (so Kalashny Row is the area you find really nice kalach just for the wealthy), or it's an area for rich people. Either way, Lopakhin is implying he's a pig in a parlor]

1922 TRANSLATION BY JENNY COVEN

Small peasant...My father was a peasant, true, but here I am in a white vest and brown shoes...like a pearl in an oyster shell.

STEPHEN KARAM'S ADAPTATION

Poor boy...
...well...my father was dirt poor and now, here I am in an expensive suit and shiny shoes....a pig in a palace.

"Russian is built on a lot of roots (usually one syllable) that appear in related words...A root that shows up a lot in this play is 'schst' which means 'happiness' or 'luck.' Neschst'e (the opposite of 'schst'), meaning misfortune or bad luck, shows up very frequently. While a dictionary definition may not identify the link between words related by root, native speakers might subtly (even subconsciously) be aware of the link because of the similarity in sound."

In the years since Yarmolinsky's initial translation, *The Cherry Orchard* has been translated and adapted for English-speaking audiences dozens of times. The New York Public Library offers 38 different versions to patrons. The choices made in adaptation at first appear small but over the course of the play allow the audience to understand the play's cultural context. Should **мужичок**, which means *little peasant* ("little" has an endearing connotation) be left unchanged, or adapted? Chekhov was writing at a time of great change to the old Russian social order, and *little peasant* had a very specific meaning to his countrymen. But America has never had peasants, and use of the word might distance an American audience, despite the fact that Americans certainly understand what it's like to live through a time when power is passing to traditionally marginalized people. Karam has chosen not to use "peasant" himself, and instead lands on an idiom both close to Chekhov's original and clear to today's theatregoer in connotation. •

INTERVIEW WITH ACTOR HAROLD PERRINEAU

Education Dramaturg Ted Sod talked to actor Harold Perrineau about playing the role of Lopakhin in *The Cherry Orchard*.

Ted Sod: Why did you choose to do Stephen Karam's version of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and the role of Lopakhin?

Harold Perrineau: Simon Godwin, the director, gave me a call and said, "We're doing this production of *The Cherry Orchard* and Stephen Karam's doing the adaptation and I was wondering if you were interested in playing Lopakhin." I was more familiar with *The Three Sisters*, so I had to reread *The Cherry Orchard*, and then I watched it on Amazon just to refamiliarize myself with it and I thought, oh, this is going to be amazing. It is an interesting time to do *The Cherry Orchard* because politically things were changing at that time in Russia just as they are changing here. People who were in power were being challenged, the country was changing culturally and economically—lives were in flux and were turbulent.

TS: As an actor of color, do you approach a role like Lopakhin in a different way, or is that not important to your process?

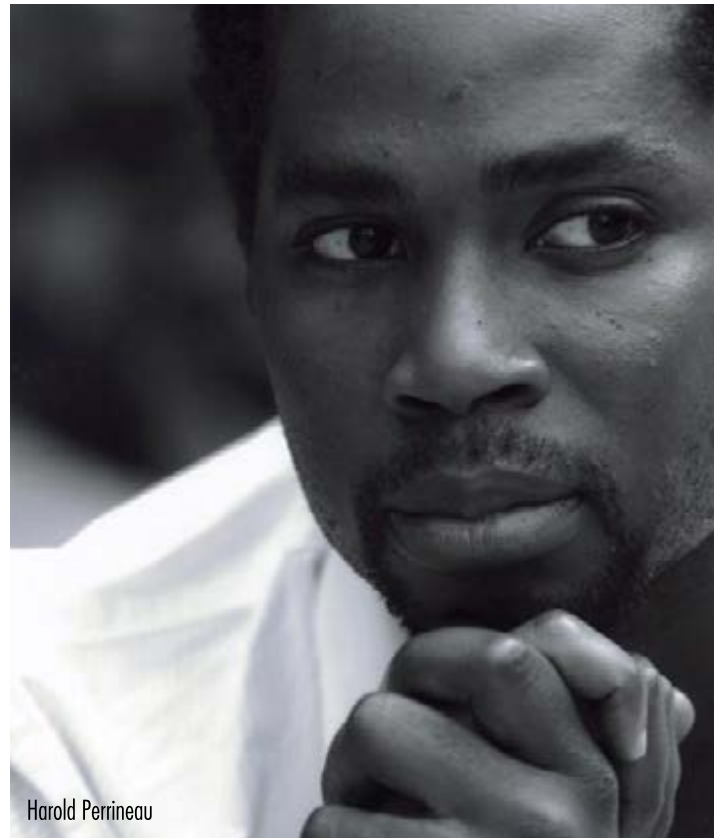
HP: I don't approach it any differently. I think it makes a lot of sense having a black man play this role. Chekhov wrote the play when the serfs were no longer slaves and they were slowly becoming part of the middle class. The aristocracy was in decline. Slavery is a part of my heritage and I come from a poor background. My mom used to wash floors and clean other people's homes, so I understand Lopakhin—his parents were indentured servants, and now he is a hardworking businessman who loves the fancy life but realizes he comes from nothing. That translates very easily. There are plenty of similarities between my background and Lopakhin's that resonate for me.

TS: Other than reading the text, what else do you have to do to prepare for a role like this?

HP: I believe in a playwright's words. Even when I'm doing television, I try my best to find out what the writer is trying to convey—that's my part of this puzzle as an actor—if I can make that meaning come to life, then my work as an artist is fulfilled. Acting is bringing these souls to life. I really try to figure out where they are coming from. I have been doing a lot of reading about Chekhov, where he was in his life when he wrote this play and why he wrote what he wrote. I am reading the other plays and his short stories, but I am most interested in what was happening during the time he wrote *The Cherry Orchard*, which was his last play. I try to extract things that are relevant to me, then build the soul of Lopakhin's character.

TS: It is often said your character, Lopakhin, is a self-made man. Do you agree with that appraisal?

HP: My family is from Brooklyn. No one in my family was ever an actor, let alone a successful actor. That's a journey that I've gone on, and I have had a lot of help throughout, but a lot of the time, it has just been me building my career. I understand the kind of continued work and dedication that you need to build a career that doesn't necessarily come naturally to you. And then navigating in the world that you've become part of—that is a huge challenge. At the beginning of my career, I really felt like a fish out of water, but I found a way to become a part of it, as opposed to always being on the outside looking in. That



Harold Perrineau

is what is happening to Lopakhin in the play. There's so much about this new world of affluence that he really seems to admire and enjoy, but he didn't grow up with it.

TS: What do you think the play is about?

HP: I am still discovering it, but the play feels to me like it's a commentary on privilege. And what your responsibilities are being part of the privileged class. I feel like Ranevskaya and her family have all this privilege, but they don't know what to do with it. There's some sort of commentary in this play about the fact that nothing lasts forever and you can't idly sit by and expect it to. That's what happens in *The Cherry Orchard*: the aristocrats sit idly by while change happens. The country evolves, the city evolves, evolution happens, and some people are unaware of it.

TS: Can you talk a bit about what you perceive to be the relationship between Lopakhin and Ranevskaya?

HP: I can't wait to start diving into it a bit more. Lopakhin eventually buys the cherry orchard, and I don't think it's just about power. I think some of it has to do with her; she's so dynamic. Everybody loves her. She's special. And people like that, you want to be around—you want a piece of them. I think he's in love with her.

TS: It makes sense when you consider that Ranevskaya is trying to foist him onto Varya. If he's holding a torch for Ranevskaya, it seems obvious that he would never ask Varya to marry him.

Harold Perrineau in rehearsal for *The Cherry Orchard*



Photo: Jenny Anderson

HP: Right. But it's so unspoken between them.

TS: It's unsynchronized passion.

HP: Exactly. I feel that when Lopakhin buys the cherry orchard, in some desperate way, he thinks Ranevskaya will say, "We can be here together. We can be together."

TS: Do you think Lopakhin may not care for Varya because she's too much like him?

HP: I think it's because her mother is just so much more dynamic than she is. Varya seems nice enough, woman enough, and he'd still be part of the family. It would all make sense if he can just hold onto whatever he is feeling for her mom. Hopefully, if we build it well enough, it'll almost be impossible for him to be in the room with the two women together. This passion is so deep with him. He says when he was a kid, Ranevskaya was nice to him. He's been holding a torch for this woman

ever since he was a child.

TS: What do you look for in a director?

HP: I really like to collaborate. There are times when it's not possible. You work with directors who just don't have the language to speak with actors. I find that happens more in films, but I really look for an artistic partner, and I look to be an artistic partner. I love that we come in for a night and we only have that night to tell the story, and whatever happens, it's only for all of us who are in the theatre that night. We will have to work as an ensemble, as a team, in order to create this very special evening. So I look for a director to create a production that we can perform eight times a week and have an experience with. I look for someone to help guide and shape this entire thing.

TS: I'm wondering if you would talk a bit about where you got your training. Did you have any teachers who profoundly influenced you?

HP: I had a number of teachers who profoundly influenced me. I was a violinist in high school. I went to Shenandoah Conservatory, a music conservatory, where we had this great theatre director named Harold Herman. I left Shenandoah because I got a scholarship to dance at the Alvin Ailey School. I danced at Alvin Ailey for years and years but really wanted to be an actor. Eventually, I stopped dancing and I studied acting at the William Esper Studio, where I studied with Barbara Marchant—that changed my whole way of thinking about being an actor. When I first went there I would do this thing—I would think in my head, how would Denzel do it? How would

Sam Jackson do it? And Barbara said, "How would Harold do it?" And that one question changed the way I approached acting for the rest of my life.

TS: Any advice for young people who want to have an acting career?

HP: I always say you should really study and learn and have a craft that's yours—that can't be taken away from you—because it's so hard to be an actor emotionally. You're being turned down, you're being told that the thing that you're selling, your wares, are not good enough, they're not strong enough, you're too short, you're too skinny, you're too fat, you're too dark, you're too light. Things that just beat you up over and over and over and over, and at every level, it gets trickier and trickier. But if you have craft, that's the thing that you can always carry with you. I tell people: work and learn your craft. No one can ever take that away from you. •

ADAPTING CHEKHOV

What do Anton Chekhov, Jerry Seinfeld, and Stephen Karam have in common?

Karam himself explained the connection in a 2012 conversation at the University of Scranton.

"I think I discovered Chekhov, what he does...almost gave me permission to be myself. He tells stories that are quite beautiful in structure but seem to go nowhere—he's almost like Seinfeld, his plays seem to be about nothing."

But the idea that Chekhov's plays are about nothing is misleading, as Karam goes on to explain. "You spend an evening with these cast of characters where not so much happens but you feel like somehow every facet of humanity has been touched upon. There's an epicness to something that seems so ordinary and so small."

Like Chekhov, Karam, author of *The Humans*, *Sons of the Prophet*, and *Speech and Debate*, uses "ordinary and small" moments to allow big emotional truths to surface. In *The Cherry Orchard*, Chekhov uses the impending loss of a family home to explore major changes in the Russian class system and our ability to endure through change. In *The Humans*, Karam uses a quotidian family Thanksgiving to explore the "black pit of dread and malaise" in America in the years since 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008, and our relationship to fear.

Karam and Chekhov both weave comic and tragic moments into their plays and build realistic worlds with little plot. While modern American audiences are familiar with this approach, it was so revolutionary in Chekhov's day that an entirely new approach to acting and directing was required. In an era when stories and plays were emotionally melodramatic and featured important, powerful figures, Chekhov wrote about ordinary people. As his contemporary and fellow writer Leo Tolstoy wrote to Chekhov, "And where does one get with your heros? From the privy to the sofa and from the sofa back to the privy?" Chekhov's work paved the way for what might be referred to as modern American naturalism.

Karam exemplifies a new generation of naturalist playwrights, including Annie Baker (*John and The Flick*), Amy Herzog (*4000 Miles and The Great God Pan*), and Steven Levenson (*The Unavoidable Disappearance of Tom Durnin* and *Dear Evan Hansen*) whose appeal is evident

in how often their works are produced in regional theatres across the country. This group, along with Richard Nelson (*The Apple Family plays*), create compelling stories that seem to reflect ordinary 21st century life yet invite audiences to see the whole of society more clearly.

Consider the parallels between Karam and Chekhov in these quotes.



The New York Times critic Charles Isherwood's 2015 review of *The Humans*

"...the play is rackingly funny even as it pummels the heart and scares the bejesus out of you ... The whole hailstorm of human grief is pummeling them even at Thanksgiving, and yet they still make bad jokes, forgive betrayals and retreat into pettiness, overdrink and regret it, count calories and fail to, are piteous and angry and as overflowing with love for their failed little pod as Karam evidently is with ours."

The New York Times critic Alexis Soloski reviewing a production of *The Cherry Orchard* at BAM in 2015

"Nothing happens in the plays of Anton Chekhov. But everything happens, too. People complain about restaurants, sing comic songs, make speeches in praise of bookcases even as they're loving and losing and dying."

Chekhov subtitled *The Cherry Orchard* "a comedy," possibly because, while tragedy occurs in the play, at the end the characters move forward into the future. The same argument could be made for both *Sons of the Prophet* and *The Humans*: nothing is perfect, homes may be lost, but the characters move forward into the uncertain future. •



DESIGNER STATEMENTS

NICO MUHLY—ORIGINAL MUSIC

The music for *The Cherry Orchard* needs to explode out of the music for the party in Act III, both by practical necessity and to thicken a mystery about the play: Who are these musicians? How do they relate to the servants? How do they comment on—and exist inside and outside—the goings-on in the house? The luxury of live music should, in this case, be in counterpoint to the overall sense of loss that permeates the play. The music is scored for three musicians, mostly onstage: a violinist, who acts as a sort of band leader, a clarinetist, and a percussionist who plays a variety of instruments. While the practical heart of the music is the party, the emotional core comes from a plaintive melody related to Ranevskaya's dead son, Grisha. This "mourning" music abuts the practical (and perhaps slightly sinister) music that belongs to the house, as well as the somewhat perverted folk idioms that should create a context for the transformation of the estate.

SCOTT PASK—SET DESIGN

For this production of *The Cherry Orchard*, I did a lot of visual research of the places and people in pre-Revolution Russia, and of the life and the spaces which the family would have shared and inhabited. Simon Godwin and I then gave ourselves the freedom to depart largely from the naturalistic requirements of domestic life—walls, doorways—and instead strove to find an emotional, even fragile and poetic space in which to tell our story. I looked to the natural world for further inspiration—most importantly to trees. Years of abundance, but also deprivation, are clearly shown in the rings of a tree's life, especially when a particularly majestic one is hewn. Our environment is comprised of wistful and

fractured remainders of a more fruitful life and family history constructed upon the hearty, and metaphoric, remainder of a once monumental tree, one that had been in existence for generations. These fragile elements that appear in the space also contribute to our understanding of the shift in location and time of year for each scene and are the fragile ghosts of a more abundant life.

MICHAEL KRASS—COSTUME DESIGN

On reading the version of *The Cherry Orchard* that playwright Stephen Karam has presented to us, I felt that the yellowed quality too often associated with Chekhov translations has been removed, and I was seeing a clear, crisp text that was written not about the past but about the eternal, and, just as it was in 1900, written vitally about our lives today. Director Simon Godwin and I spoke often about how we might create this same sensation for our audience visually, while still honoring the specific and individual humanity that, famously, Chekhov and now Karam have written deeply into each character in the play. And so we stretch and tease history. Our play takes place today, in Russia, but with a definite reference to the past. I began by looking at 2016 fashion with an eye for what I knew of earlier periods, then I looked at fashion and clothing of 1900 and forward which looked appealing and appropriate to today. Once we looked at those visuals together, creating a world to draw from, we realized that each character might pull differently from the past and present on their journey through the play—some hung on to their past dreams, some forcefully injected today onto a sleepy society. We tracked each character's journey, knowing that the intersections of periods would create meaningful sparks in the story. Always,



DESIGNER STATEMENTS CONT.



Costume research for *The Cherry Orchard*

however, we honor the elemental and individual humanity of Anton Chekhov and his characters. Being asked to help tell the biggest universal social and political themes of the text, while simultaneously describing the intimacy of deeply specific and beloved human characters, is an exhilarating assignment. I have been thrilled to take it on.

DONALD HOLDER—LIGHTING DESIGN

The principal objective of my design is to fill the world of *The Cherry Orchard* with a living light that informs and supports the storytelling, suggests the passage of time and season, and ebbs and flows with the constantly shifting emotional landscape. We experience almost every time of day, and move from spring to summer, fall and winter during the course of the evening. These changes will largely be articulated through light: by subtle (and not so subtle) shifts in angle, color, texture and intensity. Each of *The Cherry Orchard's* four acts will have a distinct lighting vocabulary and personality. Act One takes place in the cool pre-dawn early morning light, coupled with the warmth of candle and lamplight. Act Two take place in a nearby field: we experience a sense of natural light transitioning from sunset to twilight, and ending in the early evening. Act Three brings us to a candle-lit drawing room in the midst of a party (highlighted by the exaggerated shadows that you might encounter in a painting by Singer-Sargeant or Degas), and Act Four takes place in the cool and diffuse light of a gray winter. There's a fantastic marriage of both reality and abstraction in Scott Pask's scenic design, and I hope to craft the light in a way that reflects this interesting dichotomy. There will be times when the light evokes a sense of poetic realism, and other moments, such as Lopakhin's

announcement that he has bought the orchard, or when Firs finds himself totally alone during the final minutes of the play, that the light will seamlessly shift into a stark and expressionistic landscape. The process of creating the lighting began with a careful study of the script, followed by preparation of a scene-by-scene analysis from a lighting perspective, and a meeting with my collaborators to discuss intention and overall approach. I then developed a list of lighting ideas I would use to bring the world to life, and created technical documents that the electricians referenced when installing the

lighting equipment. The actual light "cues" or stage pictures are created during technical rehearsals, and the lighting is shaped and refined during the preview period.

CHRISTOPHER CRONIN—SOUND DESIGN

Starting this process, I had (like many) read *The Cherry Orchard* before. Returning to it now, I was struck by the immediacy of Stephen Karam's adaptation. The ignorance of impending doom is nothing new. This impulse has driven history over and over. But, it has, right now, current political implications rendering this production extremely relevant. And I must admit, the urge to ignore what is happening around us is tempting, but the need to not do so has tempered my reading of the play. That was on my mind when I started to see the path that Simon, the director, was providing in the setting and composition of the production. The audience gets to thread our way toward the future, being pursued by the past, and hopefully exiting the orchard before the trees start to fall. The music and sound needed to reflect that as well. Nico's music is balanced between the stately and the frenetic—managing to be both modern and recalling a simpler time for the Ranevsky clan. The most present sound design element of *The Cherry Orchard* is the baseball bat to the side of the head, the TWACK of the axe starting the literal destruction of the Ranevsky Orchard (and the figurative destruction of a way of life). All during their purposeful ignorance of the impending doom, the pre-echoes of this fateful chop need to be present—if only they had listened. And the phrase that resonates is Lopakhin saying over and over: "I have been telling you...have you not been listening?" •

HOW DOES AN ACTOR DISCOVER AND PLAY A CHARACTER'S SUBTEXT?

(Common core code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3)

In modern theatre (or life) it's not uncommon for a character to say one thing, but mean another. Take, for example, the phrase, "It's great to see you." Depending on the speaker's attitude and tone it can convey anything from delight to disdain. This meaning-underneath-the-words is called **subtext**.

ANALYZE Distribute scenes from this adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* [downloadable **HERE**] to students. Ask them to read the scene first for sense, then go back through and choose at least one line where their character's subtext doesn't match what he or she says. Have students write out the character's subtext below the line.

REHEARSE Ask students to rehearse their scene several times, exploring different ways they can convey their character's subtext.

SHARE & REFLECT Hold an open rehearsal of the scenes, presenting them in the order they appear in the play. Ask the group: What was the subtext of that line? How did you know? What do you think *The Cherry Orchard* is about? Why? Ask the actors: Why did you choose that line and that subtext? How did writing out the subtext change rehearsal for you?

HOW DOES AN ACTOR PURSUE AN OBJECTIVE IN A SCENE?

(Common core code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1)

When Chekhov's first major play was produced, actors and directors struggled with how to stage his naturalistic text. Eventually, Moscow Art Theatre founder Konstantin Stanislavski created a system for developing the inner life of a character, an approach that revolutionized actor training around the globe. A key part of Stanislavski's approach asks actors to define their character's **objective**—the goal a character wants to achieve—in each scene. For more on Chekhov's theatre and Stanislavski, read the article found on page 12 of this guide.

ANALYZE Distribute scenes from this adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* [downloadable **HERE**] to students. Ask them to read the scene first for sense, then go back through and articulate an objective for their character in the scene. Offer examples of possible objectives: Does the character want everyone to leave? Does she want her sister's approval? Does she want someone to tell her what to do? Does she want coffee?

REHEARSE Ask students to rehearse their scenes on their feet, attempting to achieve their character's objectives.

SHARE Hold an open rehearsal of the scenes, presenting them in the order they appear in the play. Ask the actors: How did pursuing an objective change your behavior? What objectives were you pursuing? Did your objective put you in conflict with another character?

REFLECT Ask the audience: What actions did you see actors take in order to pursue their objective? Make a list. Reveal that the next step in the Stanislavski system is to name the **actions** your character takes in order to achieve their objective.



POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

HOW DOES A PLAYWRIGHT USE WORD CHOICE TO SET A STORY IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT?

(Common core code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6)

Playwright Stephen Karam based his adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* on Allison Horsley’s literal translation of Chekhov’s text. For more on their process, read "Translation and Adaptation", found on page 16 of the guide

BRAINSTORM In discussion, create a list of possible times and places to set *The Cherry Orchard*. How does each setting connect to the play’s themes?

ADAPT Share the section of Horsley’s literal translation of *The Cherry Orchard* with students. Using the list the group brainstormed, have each student choose a new context for the play and adapt this section of the text to fit that context. Horsley’s translation can be found **HERE**.

SHARE Hold a staged reading of several adaptations, asking the author not to reveal the setting before the reading. Ask the group: Where and when was this adaptation set? How did you know? What choices did the playwright make in their adaptation?

HOW DOES AN ACTOR IMPROVISE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A CHARACTER?

(Common core code: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3)

The Cherry Orchard ends with each character moving off into a different, and uncertain, future. How does each feel about the events of the play, and what will happen to them going forward?

MATERIALS: sticky nametags, markers

WRITE Ask students to choose a character from the play that they agreed with or understood. Have them write a few sentences, from the perspective of that character, about what happened to them at the end of the play and what they think their life will be like moving forward. Also have each student write their characters name on a sticky name tag and affix it to their shirt.

IMPROVISE Create an Oprah-like talk show set up in the classroom. The host can be played by a student or teacher, and can be given a punny, thematic name like Oprahyov Winifriskaya. Students take turns as guests on the show, speaking as their characters as the host asks them questions that reveal their perspective on the events of the play and their hopes for the future. Questions for specific characters can also be taken from the audience.

DISCUSS What did you discover about your character when you wrote and spoke from their perspective? How did the talk show change your understanding of other characters?

GLOSSARY AND RESOURCES

- BANALITY:** the condition of being so obvious, it is boring
Trofimov believes the realest part of this world is the banality of being poor.
- CHASTE:** maidenly, innocent, simple, and restrained
Gaev mutters in confidence that Ranevskaya is not a chaste woman.
- JUBILEE:** a special anniversary of an event
Gaev suggests celebrating the bookcase's jubilee of being made 100 years ago.
- KVASS:** a fermented beverage made from black or rye bread (alcohol content: 1.0% ABV)
Lopakhin asks Dunyasha to bring him some kvass.
- MONASTERY:** a building or buildings occupied by a community of monks living under religious vows; a religious community
Varya dreams of traveling to monasteries all over the world.
- NEDOTYOPA:** a nickname that implies stupidity and incompetence; a good-for-nothing
Firs calls Dunyasha a nedotyopa when she does not bring the cream out with the coffee.
- NONENTITY:** a person or thing with no special or interesting qualities; an unimportant person or thing
Trofimov calls Ranevskaya's former lover a nonentity.
- PROMISSORY NOTE:** a signed document containing a written promise to pay a stated sum to a specified person or the bearer at a specified date or on demand
Gaev thinks there may be a way to arrange a Promissory Note so he can get money.
- SALTO-MORTALE:** a dangerous and daring jump with a possibly lethal outcome
When she was a girl, Charlotta would perform the Salto-Mortale at fairs.
- SAMOVAR:** a metal container used to heat and boil water
Firs recounts the sound of the samovar humming.

RESOURCES

- "About Russian Names" PBS. PBS.com. Web. 1 August 2016.
- "American Civil War History" History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 29 July 2016.
- Baehr, Stephen L. "The Machine in Chekhov's Garden: Progress and Pastoral in the Cherry Orchard." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 43.1 (1999): 99-121. Web. 24 August 2016.
- "Black Leaders During Reconstruction." History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2010. Web. 29 July 2016.
- Bloom, Harold. *Anton Chekhov*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. Print.
- Boyd, William. "Anton Chekhov: a lifetime of lovers" *The Guardian*, 1 March 2013. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Brantley, Ben. "Chekov Melancholy, Never so Welcome" *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*. 29 November 2012. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich, Richard Nelson, Richard Pevear, and Larissa Volokhonsky. *The Cherry Orchard: A Comedy in Four Acts*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2015. Print.
- "Chekhov in American" (1997). *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company. Web. 4 August 2016.
- "Constantin Stanislavski Biography" *Biography.com*. Web. 1 August 2016.
- Genovese, Eugene D. *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*. New York: Vintage, 1967. Print.
- Gilman, Richard. *Chekhov's Plays: An Opening into Eternity*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1996. Print.
- Griffin, Richard W. "Problems of the Southern Cotton Planters After the Civil War." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 39.2 (1955): 103-17. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Hingley, Ronald F., "Anton Chekhov" *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 4 September 2015. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Hingley, Ronald. "Chekhov's Russia." *Anton Chekhov's Plays*. Ed. Eugene K. Bristow. By Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. New York: Norton, 1977. 215-41. Print.
- Irwin, James R. "Explaining the Decline in Southern per Capita Output after Emancipation." *Explorations in Economic History* 31.3 (1994): 336-56.JSTOR. Web. 28 July 2016.
- Jones, David Richard. *Great Directors At Work: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Kazan, Brook*. California: University of California Press. 1986. Print.
- Lewis, Pericles. "Anton Chekhov." *The Modernism Lab at Yale University*. Yale University. 2010. Web. 1 August 2016.
- Lynch, Michael. "The Emancipation of the Russian Serfs, 1861: A Charter of Freedom or an Act of Betrayal?" *History Today*. Dec. 2003. Web. 4 August 2016.
- MacMonagle, Niall. "What Lies Beneath: Anton Pavlovich Chekhov." *The Independent*, 18 Jan. 2016. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Martin, Alexander. "Russia's Age of Serfdom, 1649-1861 (Blackwell History of Russia)." *Reviews in History*. Institute of Historical Research, Feb. 2009. Web. 27 July 2016.
- Mccauley, Martin. *Emergence of the Modern Russian State, 1855-81*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Print.
- Moore, Sonia. *The Stanislavski System*. New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1965. Print.
- Moravcevic, Nicholas. "Chekhov and Naturalism." *The Norton Critical Edition: Chekhov's Plays*. Eugene K. Bristow, Ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977. Print.
- Mydans, Seth. "IN RUSSIA, TRADITIONAL NAMES ARE POPULAR AGAIN." *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, 15 Feb. 1985. Web. 24 August 2016.
- "Native Son: Stephen Karam in Conversation with Paul Holdengraber." *YouTube*. The University of Scranton, 11 Dec. 2012. Web. 4 August 2016.
- Parks, Tim. "The question of belonging" *OUPblog*. 30 July 2015. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Piepenbring, Dan. "Autobiography (With Oysters, Orgy)" *The Paris Review*. 23 February 2015. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Pushkarev, Sergei G. "The Russian Peasants' Reaction to the Emancipation of 1861." *The Russian Review* 27.2 (1968): 199-214. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Rayfield, Donald. "Anton Chekhov: a life". Faber and Faber. 2000. Print.
- "Resource Notes." *The Cherry Orchard*. Brian Woolland, ed. 1996: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Print.
- Ruef, Martin. "The Demise of an Organizational Form: Emancipation and Plantation Agriculture in the American South, 1860-1880." *American Journal of Sociology* 109.6 (2004): 1365-410. Web. 24 August 2016.
- "Russian Naming Conventions Resource Guide" Regional Educational Laboratory at Education Northwest. Web. 24 August 2016.
- "The Seagull" Study Guide. Goodman Theatre's Education and Community Engagement Department. Web. 24 August 2016.
- Sekirin, Peter. *Memories of Chekhov: Accounts of the Writer from his Family, Friends and Contemporaries*. McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers. Jefferson, North Carolina and London. 2001. Print.
- Shoebottom, Paul. "The Differences between English and Russian." *Language Differences: English*. Frankfurt International School, Jan. 2011. Web. 29 July 2016.
- "Slavery in America." History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 29 July 2016.
- "A Teacher Resource Guide." *McCarter Theatre*. Web. 24 August 2016.
- "Thirteenth Amendment." History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 29 July 2016.

ABOUT ROUNDABOUT

ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY - 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director) is committed to producing the highest-quality theatre with the finest artists, sharing stories that endure and providing accessibility to all audiences. A not-for-profit company founded in 1965 and now celebrating its 50th anniversary, Roundabout fulfills its mission each season through the production of classic plays and musicals; development and production of new works by established and emerging writers; educational initiatives that enrich the lives of children and adults; and a subscription model and audience outreach programs that cultivate and engage all audiences. Roundabout presents this work on its five stages and across the country through national tours. Roundabout has been recognized with 26 Tonys®, 50 Drama Desks, 59 Outer Critics Circle, 12 Obie and 18 Lucille Lortel Awards. More information on Roundabout's mission, history and programs can be found by visiting roundabouttheatre.org.

2016-2017 SEASON



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN MAIURI, HEAD ELECTRICIAN AT THE AMERICAN AIRLINES THEATRESM

Ted Sod: Tell us about yourself. Where were you born and educated? How and when did you become the Head Electrician at the American Airlines TheatreSM?

Brian Maiuri: I was born in Oregon, but my family moved to the suburbs of Los Angeles, California when I was young. So that's where I grew up and also where I was educated. I became the Head Electrician at the American Airlines TheatreSM in late 2004. Although I was already the assistant at the theatre when the head position became available, like many others, I submitted my resume for consideration. Thankfully, I was offered the job and have been gainfully employed in that title ever since.

TS: Describe your job at RTC. What are your responsibilities?

BM: The job as Head Electrician at the American Airlines TheatreSM is somewhat unique in comparison to other positions of the same title within the Local One jurisdiction. Typically this job would entail the hiring of crew for load-ins and load-outs of shows, making sure that the power requirements for the lighting and sound rigs are within evenly distributed tolerances and powered in a safe manner that complies with the electrical code standards, executing cues during each performance as required by that show's specific needs, and maintaining the facility house lighting. In addition to these responsibilities, unlike most, I am also the Production Electrician as well as the house head. This requires interfacing with the lighting and sound designers of each show. Making sure that the gear they spec is prepped, circuited, and rigged to an exacting standard that allows them to most efficiently fulfill the artistic

vision that they intend to weave together to create an environment that compliments and progresses the moods and manners of a piece. And then to maintain the integrity of those designs over the length of a run of a show so that every audience is afforded the same experience.

TS: What is the best part of your job? What is the hardest part?

BM: The best part of the job is being able to assist in the creation of an art form that is both entertaining and transformative. The hardest part of the job, without a doubt, is the hours required to make it all happen. While loading in a new production, I often work from 8am to midnight, seven days a week for a month or more at a time. We do this at least three times a year. It can be exhausting to say the least. I often tell people that sixty hours in a week is a slow, easy week for me.

TS: Why do you choose to work at Roundabout?

BM: That's real simple—we do a lot of stunning productions here. The fact that we do at least three shows at the American Airlines TheatreSM in a season really helps to keep things fresh as well. Always getting to work with new casts, new designers, and different directors is something I particularly enjoy. I also think that those many and varied offerings are what keep so many other theatre fans interested in what we do here at the Roundabout. It really is exciting to me to know that I help make that happen on some level. •

Learn more at roundabouttheatre.org. Find us on:



WHEN YOU GET TO THE THEATRE

TICKET POLICY

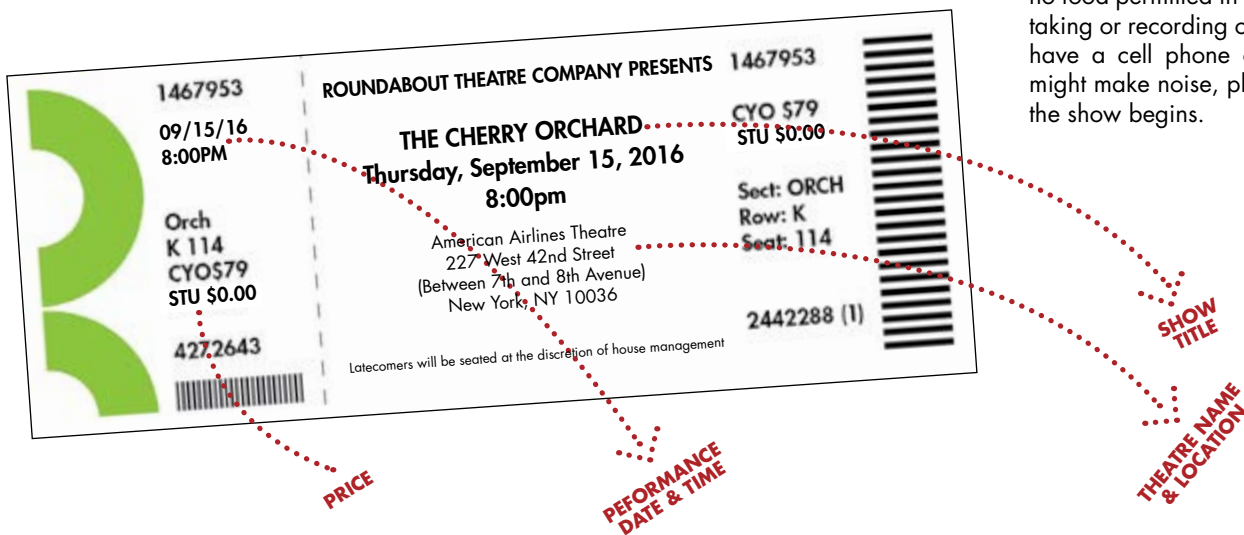
As a student, you will receive a discounted ticket to the show from your teacher on the day of the performance. You will notice that the ticket indicates the section, row, and number of your assigned seat. When you show your ticket to the usher inside the theatre, he or she will show you where your seat is located. These tickets are not transferable and you must sit in the seat assigned to you.

PROGRAMS

All the theatre patrons are provided with a program that includes information about the people who put the production together. In the "Who's Who" section, for example, you can read about the actors' roles in other plays and films, perhaps some you have already seen.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

As you watch the show please remember that the biggest difference between live theatre and a film is that the actors can see you and hear you and your behavior can affect their performance. They appreciate your applause and laughter, but can be easily distracted by people talking or getting up in the middle of the show. So please save your comments or need to use the restroom for intermission. Also, there is no food permitted in the theatre, no picture taking or recording of any kind, and if you have a cell phone or anything else that might make noise, please turn it off before the show begins.



As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on the support of our passionate individual, foundation, corporate, and government donors. Because of these dedicated supporters who give generously each year, all of our Education programs and activities are made possible. Due to space limitations, this list reflects gifts of \$5,000 and above to Education at Roundabout during the 2015-2016 school year:

The Aeroflex Foundation
 AJA Charitable Fund
 The Theodore H. Barth Foundation
 The Bay and Paul Foundations
 Roger Berlind
 The Bok Family Foundation, Roxanne and Scott L. Bok Trustees
 Mr. and Mrs. David Boonshoff
 R. Martin Chavez and Adam Norbury
 Con Edison
 Dalio Foundation
 Glen de Vries
 The Walt Disney Company
 Jeanne Feldhusen and Gerry Jager
 Mark R. Fetting
 Kathleen Fisher and Rocco Maggioletto
 Myrna and Freddie Gershon
 Jodi and Dan Glucksman
 The Golden Family
 Barbara McIntyre Hack

Meryl Hartzband
 Maureen A. Hayes
 The Hearst Foundation, Inc.
 The Heckscher Foundation for Children
 Muna and Basem Hishmeh
 Doug Hitchner and Larissa Martell
 JobsFirstNYC
 The JPB Foundation
 Elroy and Terry Krumholz Foundation, Inc.
 Ms. Alexandra Lange
 Ms. Barbara Lee and Mr. Alston Gardner
 Randi Charno Levine
 David and Anita Massengill
 Sara Miller McCune/SAGE Publications, Inc.
 Mr. Terrence Meck and Mr. Breton Alberti
 Mellam Family Foundation
 Scott and Iva Mills
 New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
 New York Community Trust

New York State Council on the Arts
 Cynthia Nixon
 Charles R. O'Malley Charitable Lead Trust
 Stephen Pierce
 Lisa and Gregg Rechler
 Daryl and Steven Roth
 The Rudin Foundation, Inc.
 S&P Global
 The Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation
 Mr. Michael Slocum
 Denise R. Sobel
 Fern and Lenard Tessler
 Time Warner Cable
 Troutman Sanders LLP
 Michael Tuch Foundation
 Diane and Tom Tuft
 Lori D. Uddenberg
 Emily J. Zuckerman, Esq. and Dr. Edward H. Bonfield

The Family



Ranevskaya, Lyubov Andreyevna
a landowner



Gaev, Leonid Andreyevich
Ranevskaya's Brother



Anya
her daughter



Varya
her adopted daughter

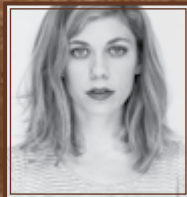
The Staff



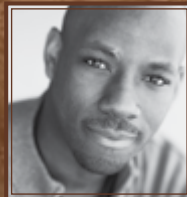
Firs
a servant



Yepikhodov, Semyon Panteleyevich
a bookkeeper



Dunyasha
a maid



Yasha
a young servant



Charlotta Ivanovna
a governess

Guests



Simeonov-Pischik, Boris Borisovich
a landowner



Lopakhin, Yermolai Alekseyevich
a businessman



Trofimov, Pyotr Sergeyeovich
a student