

# Vera

or

## The Nihilists

by

Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900)

premiere in New York, August 1883 - the author was 29

### Scenes

Prologue:	On the way to Siberia; an inn run by Vera's father.
Act 1	Five years later, the nihilists meet in Moscow
Act 2	The court of the Czar
	<i>Interval</i>
Act 3	The Nihilists' garret
Act 4	The Czar's ante chamber

### Characters

Prologue	Old Peter, Vera's father, an Innkeeper Michael, in love with Vera Vera, Dmitri, her brother Colonel Kotemkin, soldiers, prisoners	Dennis Adams Peter Gardiner Cecily Blyther
Nihilists	Some of those above and some unnamed, plus: Alexis Their President, Professor Marfa General Kotemkin	Nigel Lawrence
At Court	Prince Paul, Prime Minister The Czar Prince Petrovitch, Count Rouvaloff, Marquis de Poivard, Baron Raff etc...	Robin Ingram Ken Ratcliffe <i>Peter Knight</i>

Czar Alexander II was assassinated by Nihilist Revolutionaries in March 1881. a proposed production of the play at the Adelphi was cancelled 'because of the present state of political feeling'. Wilde had met the new Czar, whose wife was a sister of the Princess of Wales. Wilde crossed for the New York production; but he would wait until the nineties for his theatrical successes.

Wilson Knight, in *The Golden Labyrinth*, surprises one with his enthusiasm: 'Wilde has left nothing else so good, at least in conception ... Scene on scene has power; characterisation is excellent, rhetoric is adequate, the dialogue often crisp and the romance moving. Without sentiment or propaganda a full consciousness of European politics and sociology is felt to be in control. The opposition of the stern and cold revolutionaries and the heartles brilliance of the aristocracy is replaced by Alexander's will to build from his marriage a reign serving his people'. After this Wilde was more inclined to wear his heart in his buttonhole.

Rehearsed Reading Sunday May 23rd 1993  
Admission by programme 50p

\*\*\* *Next Rehearsed Readings* \*\*\*

June 13th: **Napoleon** written and directed by David Duff  
July 11th: **Readings from James Joyce**, director Joe Purcell  
July 25th: **Out of Order**, director Simon Thomas