

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In the Studio

THE MAIDS

by Jean Genet

translated by Bernard Frechtman

directed by John Horwood

A modern classic, *The Maids* was inspired by a real life murder case. In 1933 two sisters in service with a respectable family in Le Mans savagely murdered their mistress and her daughter for no apparent reason.

In our production, as Genet intended, the parts of the maids and their cruel mistress are played by men. We regret that it is not suitable for children.

14-21 May at 7.45pm

In the Playhouse

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

by Tennessee Williams

One of the great plays of modern American theatre, written by one of its masters, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* shows how thin the veneer of domestic accord can be and how quickly it melts in the claustrophobia of family propinquity and stifling Southern weather.

21, 24 - 28 May at 7.30pm: 22 May at 2.30pm

Sponsored by



In the Studio — Double Bill

A COMPANION FOR CLAIRE

by Michael Law

directed by Diana Beevers

Rob, who may or may not know Claire, comes to visit her in what may, or may not, be an old windmill outside the village. She tells him to leave, but when he tries to she makes sure he stays and introduces him to Tweedy, her doll, or companion, or ...

plus

MAGGIE'S Mr. RIGHT

by David Price

directed by Anne Kilborn

Will Roland Truffe, Environmental Health Officer and keen amateur fungologist, turn out to be Maggie's 'Mr. Right'? He's her fourth suitor so far, through the dating agency 'Friendship Encounter'. They certainly get off to a promising start; Roland, after all, knows all the best restaurants in town. Well, the ones that are salmonella- and cockroach-free at any rate!

11-18 June at 7.45pm



THE QUESTORS THEATRE

Anton Chekhov

UNCLE VANYA

A Game for Adults

Directed by
OXANA MELESHKINA

This production is supported by
ROGER & WENDI KELLY

Director's Note
UNCLE VANYA

Chekhov is as much a classic as Euripides or Shakespeare. His plays, however, albeit very beautiful, are not museum-pieces; it is by their profound revelation of present-day life that they attract us. We often forget that when first performed they shocked the audience by their new ideas. Today's staging of them should be just as novel and original.

Since the plays were written the world has experienced two World Wars; Russia has lived through a Revolution, a terrible dictatorship and her break-up. In the arts we have witnessed very many new trends and directions: we have become acquainted with the works of Picasso, Dali and Magritte; of James Joyce and Kafka; of Fellini, Bergmann and Tarkovsky — to name but a very few — and today's theatre audience knows these names and watches performances fully aware of the contribution made by them.

In our lifetime a social and sexual revolution has taken place as well, and one cannot perform Chekhov's plays exactly as they were performed at the beginning of the century. He is not a period-piece; we must try to reveal his essence through all the changes that have taken place, because his plays are as relevant to our life today as they were to life at the time he wrote them.

Our world is breaking up and we cannot save it by contenting ourselves with studying the ethnic backgrounds or the folklore of each other, of other people and nations. We can only save it by a real understanding and a profound knowledge of each other, as only then will no-one think of war and destruction. The central image of this production is the Biblical one of Noah's Ark. We watch everybody's life falling apart; however, by the end we understand that only by individual effort and spiritual energy is it possible to build life anew — everyone must sacrifice his or her egoism to build this Ark at the end of the 20th Century.

It is Sonya who begins to build this Ark in Act II for Astrov, but she fulfils this idea only at the end by building it for *all* of them — Uncle Vanya, his mother, Telegin and Nanna (Marina) — because the Ark can only be built for all and not for one. In Act IV everybody overcomes their own egoism and sacrifices it to the person they love. This Ark thus becomes a symbol of saving the world from destruction by changing life. The oldest member, Nanna, who, it would seem, is approaching the end of her life, begins a new cycle by turning over the hourglasses. She opens the play by examining an egg — the symbol of new life — and ends it by renewing time.

OXANA MELESHKINA

*Roger and Wendi Kelly
are delighted to support
this production*

*They hope it will be enjoyed by
all members and their guests*

UNCLE VANYA

Anton Chekhov (1860 - 1904) wrote the play in about 1897. It was performed at the Moscow Art Theatre in October 1899, under the direction of Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko. Its first London production came in May 1914, at the Aldwych Theatre under the direction of Guy Rathbone. It has been revived many times in London, notably in 1963 in Laurence Olivier's production at the Old Vic, with Michael Redgrave as Vanya and Olivier himself as Astrov. Its first New York production (in Russian), performed by the Moscow Art Theatre, was in January 1924.

The play has received very different reactions, as the following comments show:

"As a gallery of worrying and futile personages, *Uncle Vanya* may have its value; as a stage play it is a desolate, dreary, competent piece of work, no doubt good to see once, but not, we trust, a second time. Alas, that so much labour should be devoted by the author and the actors to so distressing a picture of vacuity and bitterness of life!

— Egan Mew (*The Academy*, May 1914)

"*Uncle Vanya* is an unforgettably good play... If Chekhov's intellectuals are half-dead, the other half of them is very much, painfully much, alive. They suffer more consciously; there is intensity in their lassitude; at least, they torture themselves and each other, by displaying each his own bankruptcy. They are not comatose and outwardly contented, but sensitive, self-conscious and critical."

— Desmond MacCarthy (*New Statesman*, May 1914)

"One is always aware of a discrepancy between what is and what might have been; and by a sort of cruel kindness, Chekhov forces his characters, in the end, to see each other as they really are..."

— Kenneth Tynan (London, 1967)

"For me the staging of *Uncle Vanya* has enormous significance for the essential nature of the whole theatre. For me important questions concerning art, decor, props and administration are linked with it. And so I watch the whole not as a director, but as the founder of the theatre (i.e. The Moscow Art Theatre) looking to its future."

— Nemirovich-Danchenko, writing to Chekhov (October 1899)

"The fourth act again created a great impression. In a word, it's a huge success. There's not a ticket left for the third performance i.e. today's. People talk of nothing except your play."

— Marya Chekhova (Chekhov's sister), writing to Chekhov (October 1899)

"I don't consider it a pearl, but I see more ideas in it than other people do. Its ideas are huge, symbolic and its form is original, incomparable."

— Maksim Gorki, writing to Chekhov (January 1900)

UNCLE VANYA

by Anton Chekhov

Translated by Michael Frayn

First performance of this production Saturday, April 30th 1994

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Telegin (*an impoverished Landowner*) DON KINCAID
Marina (*old nurse*) FFRANGON WHELAN
Astrov (*a doctor*) FRANK HARLING
Vanya (*Maria Vasilyevna's son*) DAVID PEARSON
Serebryakov (*Professor Emeritus*) MICHAEL HILLER
Yelena (*his second wife*) SONIA PEARSON
Sonya (*his daughter*) MARGARET TURNER
Maria Vasilyevna (*widowed mother of Professor's first wife*) RUTH LISTER
Workman JOHN DAVEY

The action of the play takes place on the Serebriakov estate.

There will be an Interval of fifteen minutes.

THE PLAYHOUSE IS EQUIPPED WITH AN INFRA-RED SOUND TRANSMISSION SYSTEM FOR USE BY PEOPLE WITH HEARING DIFFICULTIES. To obtain a headset please contact the duty house manager. The Playhouse is equipped with a lift for the benefit of those with mobility problems.

PRODUCTION

Director OXANA MELESHKINA
Associate Director JOHN DAVEY
Designers JOHN ROLFE
YEVGENY KULIKOV
Lighting Designer FRANK WOOD
Sound Designer ROBIN THOMPSON
Costume Designer YEVGENY KULIKOV
Stage Manager ERIC LISTER
Deputy Stage Manager BRIDGETT STREVENS
Assistant Stage Manager SARAH FREEMAN
Prompter SUSAN OLIVER
Lighting Operator MARTIN UDALL
Properties HARRIET SIMON
RICHARD MURPHY
Construction GRAHAM CARPENTER
MATT HORTON
Wardrobe MARY ANDERSON
JEAN DERBY, CELIA DOWELL, JOAN GRIFFIN
CORINNE NIELD, PAUL MISSEN
Hair & Make-up COLETTE KING

Thanks to: ALEXANDRA BENCKENDORFF, JO PERSE,
JENNY RICHARDSON, MOËT ET CHANDON,
MARK MORAN, W13 ANTIQUES, BAMBOO 4U, JOHN STACEY

1. The taking of food and drink into the auditorium is NOT permitted.
2. The use of cameras, video-cameras or tape equipment during the performance is also prohibited.
3. Patrons are requested to turn off portable telephones and beepers in the auditorium, since the activation of these during a performance is offensive to audience and actors alike.

ART EXHIBITION IN THE UPPER FOYER

29 April to 7 May 1994

OXANA MELESHKINA and YEVGENY KULIKOV

Oxana Meleshkina was born in Kiev in the Ukraine; she lives and works in Moscow and in Olomouc in the Czech Republic. Her work has been shown in galleries in Russia, Western Europe and in the USA.

Oxana's paintings are theatrical miniatures of plays or poems about real life and dreams in which a female figure holds the centre stage personifying the harmony of the world.

Yevgeny Kulikov, too, was born in Kiev in the Ukraine; he lives and works in Moscow and Kiev as well as in Schenkelberg, Germany. Yevgeny is active in all spheres of the fine arts, including sculpture, and also designs for the theatre. His work has been bought by galleries in Russia and in Western Europe as well as by private collectors.

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Joint-stock Company "BIS Ltd" is a trade company. The firm is actively involved in business in Europe and in South-East Asia. The profits of the firm allow it to be a sponsor of the Arts.

With the help of the firm several exhibitions and sales of Russian painters' pictures were organized in France, Germany and the Czech Republic. The firm also sponsors the performances of Russian classical plays for European audiences. The firm is always ready to assist in setting up "Europe — House of Arts" societies.



The firm of SKOMA INC. LTD, whose offices are in Zábreh in the Czech Republic, is concerned with business and textile production. Business activities are largely confined to Russia, where the firm has for a long time had a partnership with a company in Moscow. The firm is now looking to extend its business activities to England.

Those interested should contact:

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Russia:	Moscow	Tel/Fax: 007 095 4974834

These two companies are sponsoring this production's tour in Russia in August.