

FARINGDON DRAMATIC SOCIETY

(affiliated to NODA)

PRESENTS

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by **ANTON CHEKHOV**

FARINGDON JUNIOR SCHOOL

MAY 11th, 12th and 13th 2006

Chekhov: a brief chronology

- 1860 Born 17 January in Taganrog, a port on the Sea of Azov, the son of a grocer and grandson of a serf.
- 1875 Father's business fails, family flees to Moscow, leaving Chekhov behind.
- 1879 Completes his education at the local high school, and sets off for Moscow, to enter the medical faculty of Moscow University.
- 1880 First comic story published.
- 1882 Contributes regularly to a St Petersburg humorous journal – short stories and sketches.
- 1884 Graduates from University, begins medical practice in Moscow. First signs of TB.
- 1887 First performance of *Ivanov*.
- 1889 First performance of *The Wood Demon*.
- 1890 Travels across Siberia to carry out research on the penal colony of Sakhalin Island.
- 1896 Disastrous first performance of *The Seagull* in St Petersburg.
- 1898 Begins association with the Moscow Arts Theatre. Worsening TB forces him to move to Yalta in the Crimea. First successful performance of *The Seagull*.
- 1899 First performance of *Uncle Vanya*.
- 1901 First performance of *Three Sisters*. Marries the Moscow Arts Theatre actress Olga Knipper.
- 1904 First performance of *The Cherry Orchard*, which opens on his 44th birthday on 17 January. Dies in the spa town of Badenweiler, Germany on 2 July.

The Cherry Orchard

It is perhaps fitting that the Society's May production should be a play in which the curtain rises on a May morning on Madame Ranevskaya's estate in Russia. The action takes place one summer at the turn of the nineteenth century, a couple of decades before the Russian Revolution. Already some of the social stresses that were to lead up to the Revolution are in evidence – an effete landowning gentry, mortgaged up to the hilt, a burgeoning middle class, and servants who only forty years before had been serfs tied to the land of their masters.

Chekhov was not only a famous short-story writer and dramatist, but also a practising medical doctor and social reformer. He had experience of all strata of Russian society, which enabled him to create such a varied cast of characters. He described the play as a comedy – bitter-sweet no doubt, tender, funny, sad, like life itself – and it looks at the clash between the old values of the nineteenth century and the emerging energies of the twentieth.

From a number of translations into English, we have chosen that by Stephen Mulrine (by arrangement with Nick Hern Books) which is perhaps that most akin to English vernacular.

Society News

Nick Tyndall, who gave an eloquent and memorable performance as the Friar in our 2003 production of *Much Ado about Nothing*, died in April. Although this was his only appearance with the Society, he was a regular member of the Mummers who perform in the Market Square on Boxing Day, and of the Icknield Way Morris Men.

Congratulations to our multi-talented Stage Manager **Tim Evans** who completed this year's London Marathon and raised £1500 for the Blue Cross.

We bid a fond – and hopefully temporary – farewell to our assistant director **Rachel Coward** as she prepares to leave Faringdon to take up a teaching post in Berkshire. Rachel joined the Society in 2000 and has been involved in virtually every production since then, including *Shakers* and *Educating Rita* (as Director) and acting roles including Beatrice in *Much Ado* and Chris in *Dancing at Lughnasa*. She has also served as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer to the Society. Thank you and good luck, Rachel!

CAST (in order of appearance)

Dunyasha , a maid	Karen Whiffen
Yermolai Lopakhin , a merchant	Daniel Lander
Yepikhodov , the estate clerk	Dominic Bullock
Firs , an old retainer, aged 87	Dave Headey
Servants	Tim Evans, Nick Evans
Anya , Ranevskaya's 17-year-old daughter	Laura Coleman
Lyubov Ranevskaya , a landowner	Carolyn Taylor
Varya , Ranevskaya's adopted daughter	Sandra Keen
Leonid Gaev , Ranevskaya's brother	Peter Webster
Charlotta Ivanovna, a governess	Katie Dyet
Simeonov-Pishchik , a landowner	Jeff Barry
Yasha , a manservant	Gary Field
Pyotr Trofimov , a student	Adrian Wells
Tramp, Stationmaster	Alan Taylor

Charlotta's dog is played by **Poppy**

Directed by **John Taylor**

Assistant director **Rachel Coward**

The action takes place in the house and on the estate of Madame Ranevskaya

Act 1 - May: early morning

Act 2 - June: late evening on the estate

Act 3 - August: evening

Act 4 - October: morning

There will be one interval between Acts 2 and 3 during which the bar will be open and the raffle will take place.

The entr'acte music is from Tchaikowsky's *The Seasons* (op.37b): "May" and "October".

Production Team

Producer	Mary Mountford-Lister
Stage Manager	Tim Evans
Set Design	Jo Webster
Set construction	Nick Coard, Nick Evans, Tim Evans, Gary Field, Rob Griffin, Richard Lock, Paul Mountford-Lister, Carole Tappenden, Rob Thorpe, Jo Webster, Peter Webster
Stage crew	Nick Evans
Lighting	Ian Chandler, Rob Griffin
Sound	Gary Bates
Wardrobe	Joan Lee, Jeni Summerfield, Anita van Eijndhoven
Props	Fiona Merrick, Keith Merrick
Prompt	Debbie Lock
Posters	Adrian Wells
Programmes	Dave Headey
Publicity	Mary Mountford-Lister, David Field
Magic consultant	Daniel Lander
Dance arrangements	Carolyn Taylor
Sourcing dance music	Katie Dyet, Daniel Lander
Noises off	Gary Bates, Debra Warner, Jennifer Whiffen
Front of House	Denise Monk (organiser), Jill Headey, Katie Goodwin, Joyce Harrison, Gillian Jacobs, Mary Mountford-Lister, Clare Pinkney, Ann Taylor

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following:

- **Faringdon United Church** for rehearsal facilities
- **Faringdon Junior School** for providing a venue and for their continuing cooperation
- **Oxford Rural Drama Wardrobe** for assistance with costumes
- **Tetronics Ltd** for storage and scenery-building facilities
- **White Horse Country Wear** for box office facilities
- **Members of the Society, AfPiC charity shop, Jenny Braithwaite, Haine and Smith, Folly Flowers, White Horse Country Wear and The Portwell Bar** for kindly providing props
- **Frankie Keen** for the loan of Poppy

The Players

Carolyn Taylor (Ranevskaya)

Carolyn is looking forward to the challenge of Chekhov having enjoyed acting and directing with FDS since 1986. Recent highlights have been playing the charming homicidal maniac, Aunt Abigail, in **Arsenic & Old Lace** and directing the award winning productions of **The Crucible** and **Dancing at Lughnasa**. The Act IV Theatre and Cotswold Arcadians have also kept her on her toes over the last few years.



Daniel Lander (Lopakhin)

This is Daniel's fourth production with FDS but only the first with an enormous beard. Previous credits include Mortimer Brewster in **Arsenic & Old Lace** and Nico in the award-winning **Albert**. Professionally trained, Daniel once worked on a twelve week national tour with Gordon Kaye from 'Allo 'Allo and for only £5 will tell you what he (Gordon, that is) is really like.

Laura Coleman (Anya)

This is Laura's first time acting with FDS. She is studying Drama for GCSE at school, which she enjoys a lot. "I have been in a few plays before but none as demanding as this one. I enjoy this play because working alongside everyone else is really fun"



Sandra Keen (Varya)

Sandra has been acting for six years, starting with a production of **Cinderella**, and has since performed a variety of roles including Lady Sneerwell in Sheridan's **School for Scandal**. This is her third appearance for FDS following her roles as Rose in **Dancing at Lughnasa** and Pasqualine in **Idle Chatter**.

Adrian Wells (Trofimov)

Adrian has thoroughly enjoyed appearing in a variety of productions over the years since 1994, including **Lark Rise**, **The Crucible**, **Arsenic & Old Lace** and, recently, **Albert** and **Dreamers**. The list may have been longer, but he has to compete with other members of his family who also enjoy what the Society has to offer! When not acting, he happily spends his time poring over clipart and designing FDS posters.



Peter Webster (Gaev)

Although he is seen on stage from time to time, most recently as the psychopathic Jonathan Brewster in **Arsenic & Old Lace**, Peter is more likely to be found with a paintbrush or screwdriver behind the scenes. Or with a pen - he is the author of six pantomimes, all of which have been produced by FDS.

Karen Whiffen (Dunyasha)

Karen has been a member of FDS for over 10 years, and has been involved in many productions as actor, director and backstage. Her most recent appearance on stage was in the Pantomime this year. **The Cherry Orchard** has been her first attempt at classic drama. She has thoroughly enjoyed herself, and wishes cast and crew all the best for this production.





Jeff Barry (Pishchick)

Jeff has been involved in productions as diverse as **The Importance of Being Ernest** and **Sweeney** with both the Leach Valley Players and Stratton Drama Group. His first role with FDS was Gerry in **Dancing at Lughnasa**

Dominic Bullock (Yepikhodov)

Dominic has appeared in a number of FDS productions over the years including **Cabaret** (as “Emcee”) and several pantomimes, most memorably as the Mad Hatter in **Alice in Wonderland**. He also writes comedy sketches and recently staged his first play at the Old Fire Station Theatre in Oxford.



Gary Field (Yasha)

Gary joined FDS in February 2005 and has worked backstage on the last three productions. He’s relishing the opportunity to act and this will be his first time on stage since 1985! “I’m having a ball and I hope we all provide you with a good evening of entertainment.”

Katie Dyet (Charlotta)

Katie first came to FDS to kick up her legs as a Kit-kat girl in **Cabaret** and since then has appeared in four pantomimes which appealed to her sense of humour, and in **Separate Tables** as the hysterical and insecure Sybil. Being Polish, this is the first play in which she hasn’t had to worry too much about her accent. “I’m thoroughly enjoying playing an eccentric, conjuring governess”



Dave Headey (Firs)

Dave joined FDS in 1978, two years after moving to Faringdon, and has graduated from youthful lead in **Post Horn Gallop** to grey-bearded patriarch in **Much Ado About Nothing** as well as directing a number of plays. Firs is the first role in many years for which he has to be made up to look 27 years older than he really is, which cheers him up immensely.

Alan Taylor (Tramp/Stationmaster)

Alan joined FDS in 1986 and for the next 16 years was involved in every production, either on stage or behind the scenes - lights, sounds, props etc. He was also involved with the outdoor Shakespeare productions of the Cotswold Arcadians.

Today, however, in his declining years, he tends to take on more marginal roles!



Poppy (Charlotta’s dog)

Poppy’s first stage appearance was in **Waiting for Dogot** and she has also appeared in musicals as diverse as **The Hound of Music** and **Corgi and Bess**. She understudied for K9 in the film **Star Paws** but sadly her greatest unachieved ambition was to appear on stage with Ronnie Barker.

Recent Awards to the Society

Ron Kench Shield awarded by the National Opera and Drama Association for the best amateur production in London and the South East:

2001 **The Crucible**

2004 **Dancing at Lughnasa**

Oxford Drama Network award for the best pantomime in Oxfordshire:

2005 **Snow White**

Wallingford One-Act Play Festival awards:

2004 Punters prize: **Shakers**

2005 Best production: **Albert**

New Members

Faringdon Dramatic Society was formed over fifty years ago in 1948. Since then it has mounted over 130 productions, ranging from pantomime to dramas, comedies and Shakespeare. Recently we have carried off a number of awards including the Ron Kench Shield for Drama for “The Crucible” in 2001.

Our current membership is 60, but new members are always welcome, and there are opportunities for backstage and front of house personnel as well as actors.

For up to date details of the Society or membership please visit our website:

www.faringdondramatic.org.uk

Or email us at webmaster@faringdondramatic.org.uk

Forthcoming Productions (at Faringdon Junior School):

Noises Off - a comedy by Michael Frayn - November 8, 9, 10 & 11

Pirates of the Faribbean - a pantomime by Nick Coard - Jan 26 to Feb 3