

CHEKHOV, LOVE & ALL THAT

A Bilingual Russian-English Play
Based on Two Vaudeville Comedies by Anton Chekhov



Saturday, March 10 at 7:30 PM
Sunday, March 11 at 2:30 PM
Free and Open to the Public

UO Global Scholars Hall 123
1710 East 15th Avenue
Eugene OR 97403



Presented by Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Oregon, in collaboration with University of Oregon Libraries, Department of Theatre Arts, Global Scholars Hall, and University Housing. Adapted and Directed by Lara Ravitch.

The University of Oregon is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request. Accommodations for people with disabilities will be provided if requested in advance by calling 541-346-4078.

Director's Note

In the US, Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) is best known for his full-length plays, which he called comedies, but are perhaps less likely to evoke laughter than tears. In Russia, his short stories are also well-known: wry observations on human nature, as seen through perfectly detailed vignettes. Chekhov's name does not generally evoke hilarity and slapstick. A former physician, many see his work as serious observation and diagnosis of faults in the human condition. However, some of his earliest work as a playwright was in a genre that he described as vaudeville. Based on the French comedies that were popular at the time, vaudeville took Russia by storm in the late 1800s. The Russian adaptation of the style was generally full of grotesque stereotypes, crude humor, and basic, repetitive formulae. In Chekhov's hands, though, the vaudeville became not only a sharp and shrewd (but funny!) commentary on the characters in the play, but also a re-definition of the genre itself. If the typical vaudeville had frail women taking the vapors, he would have a hypochondriac man; if a leading man should be a handsome romantic, he would turn him into a crude, bear-like creature. Chekhov often spoke disparagingly of his vaudevilles, but to my mind they are some of his best work: no less observant of the foibles of human nature, but with comic relief, the perfect antidote to a grey winter in Eugene.

In this production, we build on Chekhov's alteration of the genre, making several changes to the original. First, we turn a father into a mother, and we create a family. In the original, these two plays have separate casts of characters, but in our play, we imagine the female leads as sisters, and the father of one becomes the mother of both. Second, we envision the play in an imagined bilingual community, where everyone speaks or understands both English and Russian to some degree.

As an applied linguist with a research interest in bilingualism and heritage languages, I put a great deal of thought into the language use characteristics they might “code-switch” into a new language. The servant speaks mostly Russian, as it is likely that he would have received little formal education in English. The mother seems most comfortable in Russian, but also speaks English, sometimes with her daughters, but most frequently with their English-dominant suitors. The eldest daughter speaks Russian easily with her mother, but English with her younger sister – and that sister speaks almost solely English, typical of a younger sibling. The suitors are clearly English-dominant, using Russian only for the occasional insult or exclamation. We hope that you enjoy both Chekhov’s humor and our re-imaginings.

The cast and crew have been a delight to work with in every way, and I thank them for their hard work. May all of our sorrows and conflicts turn into laughter and love and all that!

Lara Ravitch



Left to right: Lara Ravitch, Sam McGee, Ksenia Gordeeva, Svetlana Osadchuk, James Barton, Emma Resk, Murad Jalilov

Cast in Order of Appearance

Olga Aleksandrovna Chubukova, a widowed landowner Svetlana Osadchuk

Natalia Stepanovna Chubukova, Olga's daughter Emma Resk

Elena Stepanovna Popova, Natalia's sister, a young widow Ksenia Gordeeva

Luka, Elena's servant Murad Jalilov

Gardener Alistair Moore

Grigorii Dmitrievich Smirnov, a bachelor landowner Samuel McGee

Ivan Vassilievich Lomov, Smirnov's friend, and the Chubukovas' neighbor James Barton

Singer Kodiak Hast

The Crew

Director Lara Ravitch

Music Director Kodiak Hast

Lighting Design Lauren Nychelle

Set Design Alexander Kashirin

Costume Design Anastasia Savenko-Moore

Photography Paul Harvey

Program Heghine Hakobyan

Sophia Badalian

Act I: The Bear

Elena Popova, still in mourning for her husband Nikolai who died over a year before, is visited by her sister, Natalia, who supports her, and her mother, Olga, who thinks she needs to get out more. Their family squabbles are interrupted by the arrival of Grigorii Smirnov and his friend Lomov, who have come to collect on a debt that Nikolai owed to Smirnov. Olga recognizes her neighbor, Lomov, and he agrees to see her and Natalia back to their home.

Popova refuses to give Smirnov his money, as her steward is unavailable to check on her finances, and Smirnov becomes increasingly irate. Eventually, after Popova insults him, he challenges her to a duel. When she accepts his challenge, he realizes that his feelings for this remarkable woman are much more complicated than he initially believed.

~15 minute intermission~

Act II: The Proposal

Olga Chubukova is entertaining her daughter Elena and new son-in-law, Grigorii Smirnov, when they are interrupted by the arrival of her neighbor, Ivan Lomov. It turns out that Lomov has come to ask for the hand of Olga's daughter Natalia in marriage, so Elena and Grigorii leave to give them privacy. Between Lomov's nervousness and strange hypochondriacal physical maladies, he finds it difficult to propose to Natalia and instead ends up first in a land dispute with her and then in an argument about the relative merits of hunting dogs. Finally, Olga intervenes to help the young lovers to agree to marry, despite themselves.

Meet the Cast



Svetlana Oss teaches Russian language and works on her thesis on Dostoevsky. Before coming to the UO, she lived in the middle of nowhere in Russia in her creaky wooden house next to the woods. When she didn't read Dostoevsky she read Chekhov, and wrote her own stories. She is a published author and a former journalist for The Moscow Times. She recognizes that Chekhov's humor is something pretty difficult to render in a foreign language and is happy this bilingual play gives everyone an opportunity to laugh both in Russian and in English!

Emma Resk is a senior undergraduate student at University of Oregon. She is a Theatre Arts major and is studying acting, playwriting, and makeup and hair design. Last year she was in a production of New Voices through the Theatre Program at UO called *On the Street Where We Used to Live* by Cora Mills where she played Jade. From March 15th to the 25th she will be in the Northwest Ten Festival at Oregon Contemporary Theatre in the play *Talk Time* by Clare McDonald and she will be playing Miriam. Before taking this class, Emma knew absolutely no Russian, so she has really enjoyed learning some and being in this play. It has been a very thrilling experience for her. She really enjoys the absurd and ridiculous arguments that her character has during *The Proposal* and cannot wait for the audience to enjoy the hilarity of it as well.





When Ksenia Gordeeva was growing up in the great Russian city of Nizhnii Novgorod, she dreamed of exploring the world, and life has not disappointed her. She fell in love with the United States during her first visit, and came here for longer in 2013. While here, she decided to pick up a couple of degrees, first an MA in Linguistics at West Virginia University, and then MA in REEES at UO. This year she appears in the REEES bilingual play as a wealthy widow—an upgrade from her last year’s role as a peasant. Last year she enjoyed eating cookies made by Chris Shiroma, while this year she loves drinking tea with her theater colleagues, Svetlana and James.

Murad Jalilov is a graduate student in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at University of Oregon. He is also a translator, writer, and YouTuber during his free time. Otherwise, he is locked away in his office reading obscure books. This is his debut in Russian Theatre—or acting in general, but he is at everyone's service, nonetheless.

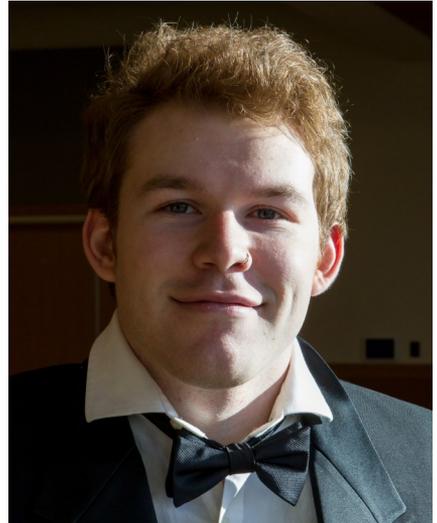




Sam McGee may be new to theatre, but he is no stranger to Russian letters. This will be his first time taking creative works from the page to the stage. Sam is a Spanish major and enjoys a variety of world literatures, but Russian will always hold a special place in his heart.

He has taken a number of classes in the Russian department and has grown to love the culture and literature. He hopes to learn the language so he can read great Russian works in their original form, and to one day travel and explore the country he has read so much about.

James Barton is junior at University of Oregon, considering the REEES major and pursuing a poetry minor. He is from the Oregon Coast and is very excited to be in the Russian Theater program. He has a strong love of Russian literature and poetry and hopes one day to work with both languages in translation and live abroad to experience the culture. James also makes a decent Borsch.





Baritone Kodiak Hast graduated in 2017 with a B.A. in Music from the University of Oregon, where he performed with Russian theater for two years. He has also sung with the Eugene Opera chorus in *The Elixir of Love*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Eugene Onegin* and in excerpts from *Aida*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and *Die Fledermaus*. He performed the role of Don Alfonso in the UO Opera Ensemble's production *Così fan tutte*, and currently is a member of the Corvallis Repertory Singers. Besides singing, Kodiak enjoys learning Russian and traveling.



Left to right: James Barton, Svetlana Osadchuk, Ksenia Gordeeva, Emma Resk

Russians in the Pacific Northwest: From Fort Ross to the Aleutian Islands

April 6 & 7, 2018

Gerlinger Alumni Lounge, University of Oregon

Organized by Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

With the generous support of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Provost, and the Oregon Humanities Center

To mark our fiftieth anniversary, Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Oregon is sponsoring an international conference on “Russians in the Pacific Northwest: From Fort Ross to the Aleutian Islands.” The conference will be held in the historic Gerlinger Alumni Lounge on the University of Oregon campus on Friday and Saturday, April 6 and 7, 2018 and will be the first conference in Oregon to take stock of the Russians’ role in the vast region spanning from Alaska to northern California from the eighteenth century to the present day.

The event will include a keynote address by Russian historian Andrei Grinev of St. Petersburg Polytechnic University and scholarly presentations on a wide range of topics representing a number of different disciplinary perspectives (anthropology, art history, ethnic studies, history, and religion), as well as cultural programming that will appeal to the broader public. Presentation topics will include: the history of Russian trade and colonization in the region; environmental and immigrant history; the interconnected histories of Russians and Native Americans in the region; and Russian art and religion of the Pacific Northwest. Thus this event will provide a window onto the complex and multifaceted history of Russians in the region—a topic of special significance in the state of Oregon, which has a large Russian diaspora.

Of particular interest to the general public will be a presentation by staff members from the Fort Ross Conservancy on Metini-Fort Ross and a lecture by T. Edward Bak on his graphic novel on Georg Wilhelm Steller and Russian Alaska. A truly international event, the conference will include the participation of scholars, museum staff, artists, and writers from Canada, Russia, and the United States.

The event is free and open to the public. For the conference program, visit the events' section of the REEES homepage at <https://rees.uoregon.edu/>. For additional information, contact Prof. Ryan Jones at rtj@uoregon.edu.



Fort Ross Chapel, courtesy of Tatiana Zaikova

Special Thanks

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences

University of Oregon Libraries

University of Oregon Department of Theatre Arts

University Housing

Global Scholars Hall



Melikhovo—commonly known as Chekhov’s Estate, in Russia

<https://hisour.com/museum-p-chekhov-melikhovo-russia-7370/>

Visit us online:

<https://rees.uoregon.edu>

<https://russian-theatre.uoregon.edu>