the Three Sisters

a play by Anton Chekhov    translation by Carol Rocamora

directed by Sharon Andrews

Wake Forest University Theatre presents

February 3-5 & 9-12, 2023
Tedford Stage
DIRECTOR’S NOTE

“Let us dream…of what life will be like for those who come after us, say, in two hundred to three hundred years”

These are the words of Aleksandr Ignatyevich Vershinin, a character in *The Three Sisters* who loves and even needs, to philosophize.

What will the world be like two to three hundred years from now? Will humanity have discovered how to live without war? Will the planet be saved from climate change? Will the gap between rich and poor be narrower? Will everyone have food and shelter? Will there be more laughter than tears? I suppose these are questions only time can answer.

In *The Three Sisters*, pondering and discussing the deepest human questions (such as, why do we suffer? what really matters? what must be done now to ensure a happier future for all?) was a pastime often engaged in by the characters who live in the world of this story.

The plays that last ask the deepest universal questions and Chekov’s plays have lasted. For me, and I would venture to guess, for all the artists who have worked to lift this play from the page and into the eyes and ears of this audience, have been challenged by the questions *The Three Sisters* poses and we are richer for having accepted the challenge.

INFORMATION

In consideration of everyone in the theatre, especially the cast who have rehearsed for weeks, please observe the following:

- Audience members are encouraged to wear a mask while inside the building including the entire performance. Masks are available at the box office upon request.
- Turn off and put away your cell phone or any device that might ring, buzz, or light up.
- If you are anticipating the need to be contacted during the performance, leave your name and seat location with the box office staff and the box office number with the person who may need you; the box office number is 336-758-5295.
- Laptops are not allowed; pens and paper are great alternatives for taking notes.
- Copyright laws prohibit recording in any format of any performance. Flash photography can be especially hazardous to performers and a distraction to the rest of the audience.
- Eating and drinking (other than water) are never allowed inside the theatre.

Thanks, and enjoy the show!

The show runs approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes with one 15-minute intermission.
Wake Forest University Theatre presents

the Three Sisters

by Anton Chekhov
translated by Carol Rocamora

February 3-5 & 9-12, 2023

Director
Sharon Andrews

Scenic & Lighting Designer
Rob Eastman-Mullins

Sound Designer
Tay Calloway (MA’23, MFA’23)

Dramaturgs
J.K. Curry
Katharine Collie* (‘23), Ellie Howell* (‘25)

Costume Designer
Mary Wayne-Thomas

Assistant Director
Ruisi Nicole Liu* (‘23)

Stage Manager
Sarah Cadena* (‘24)

CAST

OLGA...............................................................................................................................MaryAnna Bailey*§
MASHA............................................................................................................................Cameron Michles*§
IRINA...............................................................................................................................Sophie Thomas*§
TUSENBACK....................................................................................................................Ian Davis-Huie*
CHEBUTYKIN....................................................................................................................Kevin Frazier
SOLYONY........................................................................................................................Xander Friedel*
ANFISA............................................................................................................................Ananya Bali*
FERAPONT.....................................................................................................................Vir Gupta*
VERSHEININ..................................................................................................................Patrick Fenlon*
ANDREY.........................................................................................................................Michael Votto*§
KULYGIN..........................................................................................................................Evan Souza*§
NATALYA/NATASHA......................................................Georgia Orchid*§
FEDOTIK.........................................................................................................................Evan Daane*
RODE...............................................................................................................................Zac Anderson*§
MUSICIAN (GUITAR)......................................................................................................Zhirun (Reese) Fan*
MUSICIAN (VIOLIN).......................................................................................................Maggie Payne*
MAID..............................................................................................................................Melinda Cheatham
MAID..............................................................................................................................Lauren Veldhuizen*§

*Anthony Aston Players member
§Presidential Scholar in Theatre
The Three Sisters by Anton Pavlovich Chekov (1860-1904) was first performed at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1901. Chekov’s success as a playwright is closely entwined with that of the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT), established in 1898 by Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and Konstantin Stanislavsky. The first big hit for the MAT was a production of Chekov’s previously unsuccessful play The Seagull. When the MAT built a permanent theatre in 1902 a seagull image adorned the stage curtain and Chekhov’s three additional major plays Uncle Vanya (1899), The Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard (1904) were all produced at the MAT.

The MAT was created as an independent (not state controlled) theatre to produce serious drama, especially in the newly popular styles of realism and naturalism, with an emphasis on ensemble acting. Stanislavsky’s system of actor training, which would eventually have widespread international impact, emphasized the truthful presentation of human behavior. Actors were encouraged to make empathetic observation of real people in various situations. When acting a role, they used techniques such as studying a character’s given circumstances, pursuing the character’s objectives or wants, concentrating attention, and employing sense and emotional memory. Utilizing the concept of the “magic if” actors learned to respond in the moment with realistic emotion by imagining their response as if they were in the character’s situation.

Chekhov’s dramas provided ideal material for the MAT actors. In his plays, as with his famous short stories, Chekhov was a close observer of human behavior. Actors could delight in exploring the subtext in dialogue where what goes unsaid may be as important as the actual utterances. Though giving an impression of a slice of life, Chekhov’s scenes are composed of carefully selected moments that reveal characters’ longings and failures. Chekhov shows us that comedy and tragedy can sit side by side in the individual moments that make up a life.

Chekhov was also the observer of a society undergoing profound changes. The grandson of a serf, Chekhov used his writing to help support his parents and older siblings following the collapse of his father’s business and to put himself through medical school. In his writing, Chekhov observes individual winners and losers as time passes. He reminds us that even necessary, positive social changes can result in painful losses.

Though some aspects of human nature are timeless, the characters in The Three Sisters do not entertain themselves by watching television or playing video games. These are people who find amusement with music, reading, and especially by making conversation. The setting for this play is “the principal town of one of the provinces.” Privately, Chekhov identified the setting as a town such as Perm, which is hundreds of miles from Moscow with its theatres, concerts, restaurants and other pleasures. The characters in this play fill their spare hours debating philosophical points and quoting Russian literature. Quotations from and references to authors Alexander Griboyedov, Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Lermontov, and Ivan Goncharov appear in this play, in addition to quotations from two of the short fables by Ivan Krylov and three separate works by Alexander Pushkin. It is not necessary to recognize all the references to enjoy characters who turn to literature as a way to understand the world. It serves as a reminder that Chekhov himself was part of an artistic tradition that blossomed in Russia and now belongs to the world.

What does it mean to produce a play by a Russian playwright in 2023?

Chekhov is a Russian playwright. That may cause discomfort in a year when the Russian state has been waging war against its neighbor Ukraine. The Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered his military to commit acts of horror and violence that disregard basic human rights. However, we recognize a distinction between a country under tyrannical rule and individual Russians. Chekhov, a Russian writer of a much earlier era, demonstrates how art can remind us of our common humanity and connections beyond borders.
Dr. Wilson and his wife Emily have been avid supporters and champions of the Department of Theatre and Dance for many many years. He has even been known to participate in productions from time to time with his beautiful voice and charismatic presence. We searched for a special way to honor and thank them.

It came to our attention that Dr. Wilson was a lover of Anton Chekhov’s short stories and plays and had a particular fondness for *The Three Sisters*. There it was! We are in the business of making theatre, and the perfect gift we could give is a production of a play he loves.

We are thrilled to dedicate this production to our dear and long time friend, Dr. Ed Wilson.

There is a guest book in the lobby you are welcome to sign to wish Dr. Wilson a happy birthday.
## PRODUCTION STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Theatre</td>
<td>Corey Gilliam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Director</td>
<td>Thomas Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Shop Manager</td>
<td>Alice Burton Barsony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume &amp; Wardrobe Technician</td>
<td>Jacquelyn &quot;Jax&quot; Loy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Services Coordinator</td>
<td>Leslie Spencer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Coordinator</td>
<td>Lara Ianni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Stage Managers</td>
<td>Nathaniel Avery*, Margaret Williams*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Scenic Designer</td>
<td>Sean Jones*§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Research Assistant</td>
<td>Rachel Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant to the Sound Designer</td>
<td>Vir Gupta*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge Scenic Artist</td>
<td>Sean Jones*§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties Head</td>
<td>Zewen Ma*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Scenic Artist</td>
<td>Riley Shanaghan*‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>Sophie Thomas**, Georgia Orchid**, Celina Seo*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Electrician</td>
<td>Kevin Frazier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head Electrician</td>
<td>Corey Gilliam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Electrician</td>
<td>Anya Byke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>Ruisi Nicole Liu*, Zewen Ma*, Evan Souza*, Maggie Payne*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Shop Assistants</td>
<td>Evan Daane*, Sophie Thomas**, Drew Skilton*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah Cadena*, Riley Shanaghan*‡, Thomas Bauserman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zewen Ma*, Yue Yu, Gabby Miller*, Ruisi Nicole Liu*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Shop Assistants</td>
<td>Tatiana Bicalho, Isabelle Merrifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emily Patten, Hannah Riley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Production Crew</td>
<td>Lauren Veldhuizen*, Hannah Reynolds*§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zac Anderson*§, Ananya Bali, Ian Davis-Huie*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Assistance in the Costume Shop</td>
<td>Alyssa Cheng*, Nicole Namath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wardrobe Crew</td>
<td>Emily Patten, Cat D’Arcangelis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Board Operator</td>
<td>Alyssa Cheng*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Board Operator</td>
<td>Kate Raymond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographers</td>
<td>Lyndsie Schlink, Bill Ray III, Katie Fox*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Assistant</td>
<td>Zac Anderson*§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Managers</td>
<td>Hope Peterson (’17, MS ’18), Chris Cates (’22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devin Collins, Julia Jiang, Sarah Goncalves, Evan Lipetz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Office Staff</td>
<td>Zac Anderson*, Joey Crane, Sean Jones*§</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evan Lipetz, James Oparinde, Frances Gray Riggs*, Noah Stoycos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushers</td>
<td>Anthony Aston Players, WFU Dance Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APO service fraternity, Theatre &amp; Dance students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Anthony Aston Players member
†Presidential Scholar in Dance
§Presidential Scholar in Theatre

## SPECIAL THANKS

- UNCSA
- Eastern Costumes Company
- Little Theatre of Winston-Salem
- Chuck and Renee Colclough Hinson
- Corey and Anna Gilliam
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY THEATRE DONORS
January 1, 2022-December 31, 2022

Benefactors

Barton & Brenda Baldwin
Lee & Melissa Briggs
Michael & Cathy Brooks
John J. Casey
Estate of John Arthur Collins III
John & Lois Crowe
J.K. Curry & Dan Bradley
Ryann R. DuRant
Claire & John Friedenberg
Caroline Sandlin Fullerton

Dr. Cindy Gendrich
Mr. & Mrs. Henry H. Jordan II
Denise Koch
Joel Leander & Perry Patterson
James & Angela McNamara
Sioban Nicole McNamara
Hayes & Gail McNeill
Allison McWilliams
Margaret Henry Moore
Steve & Sue Nedvidek

Elizabeth Rovere O’Kelley
Kyle & Alexis Ransbottom
Paul Smith & Kaki Barrett
Harold & Josie Tedford
Vivian Tedford
Mary Wayne-Thomas
Dr. James & Patricia Toole
Edwin & Emily Wilson
Don & Nancy Wolfe
Estate of Robert Parker Wilson

Sustainers

Kay O. Ferrell
Michele Gillespie & Kevin Pittard

Don & Shannon Heck
Joyce & James Lewis

Bill & Sue O’Connor
Elizabeth and Kevin Sides

Patrons

Brook Davis & Michael Huie
Thomas S. Douglas

Lindsey E. Hardegree
Linda Jones ('69)

Elizabeth Rief & Shawn Hooper
John C. Whitaker

Sponsors

Henry Booke
Shannon Bosserman
Mark A. English

First Baptist Church of Old Fort
Forsyth Country Club

Karen G. Mannis
Bettie Shore
Tara R. Simkins

Friends

Sandra P. Adams
Co. Joseph Winston Chapter, NSDAR

Margaret Scales
Tara S. Singer
Shan Woolard

Wake Forest alumni
*Back Story* is the hilarious and moving story of the adventures of Ainsley and Ethan Belcher, a close brother and sister dealing with the disappearance of their father who, when they were small children, went on a fishing trip and never returned. Ainsley is a former musical prodigy devoted to protecting and guiding the entrepreneurial and energetic Ethan to a positive path in life. *Back Story* is based on a short story by playwright Joan Ackermann. Its unique theatrical feature is that its 19 scenes are written by 18 different playwrights, each of whom chose a specific moment in the short story to expand upon, thus creating the back story of Ethan and Ainsley.

**Tickets:**
$10 adults, $7 senior citizens, and $7 students
336-758-5295    theatre.wfu.edu

General admission seating. No late admission.