

Friday, January 25, 2008

MTD opens 'Chekhov in Yalta' on Feb. 7

The Department of Music, Theatre and Dance presents "Chekhov in Yalta," a story that focuses on playwright Anton Chekhov. The play took more than just a few rehearsals to prepare. It took an OU group half-way around the world to research the playwright and make the production as authentic as possible.

Director Thomas M. Suda, Professor Pavlo Bosyy, costume shop supervisor Donna Buckley and students Christa Koerner and Josh Rotarius spent 10 days in the Ukraine, learning more about the setting for "Chekhov in Yalta," written by John Driver and Jeffrey Haddow. The story follows Chekhov's April 1900 stay in his beloved villa, as he battled tuberculosis. Enter the Moscow Art Theatre, whose members arrived to cheer him and, hopefully, take home his latest play.

Travel for faculty and staff was funded by the R. F. and Robert C. Howes Slavic Fund; student travel was funded by the Brad M. Glass Endowed Fund and a Provost's research grant. Very little information about the customs and cultures of the Ukraine society in 1900 is written in English, so the group traveled to the region to observe it firsthand.

They used resources such as the Anton Chekov Memorial Museum, Lesya Ukrainka Memorial Museum, Tatar Culture Centre, Museum of National Treasure, Kiev Lavra monastery, Kirovohrad Regional Museum, Kropyvnytsky Memorial Museum, Tobilevich Memorial Museum, Nadia Hamlet Memorial Museum, Regional Museum of Fine Arts Kropyvnytski, National Theatre and the Regional Research Library to conduct their hands-on research.

The play will feature student actors, who will be playing actors.

"The most fun, in a story about a bunch of actors and directors barging in on a playwright, is that theatre people get to play theatre people. It's like a license to steal," said Suda.

"Chekhov in Yalta" performances are scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 9 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 14 through Saturday, Feb. 16 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 17 at 2 p.m. A matinee will be held Friday, Feb. 15 at 10 a.m.

General admission is \$12, \$6 for students and all matinee seats. General admission tickets are available in advance from **Star Tickets Plus** or from the Varner Box Office, which is open Tuesday through Friday, 3-6 p.m. and one hour prior to performances.

For more information on tickets or performance times, call (248) 370-3013 or visit the **Music, Theatre and Dance** Web site.



Pictured in Yalta on the Black Sea are "Chekhov in Yalta" Director Thomas Suda (front), and (back, left to right) Christa Koerner, Professor Pavlo Bosyy, Donna Buckley and Josh Rotarius.

SUMMARY

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