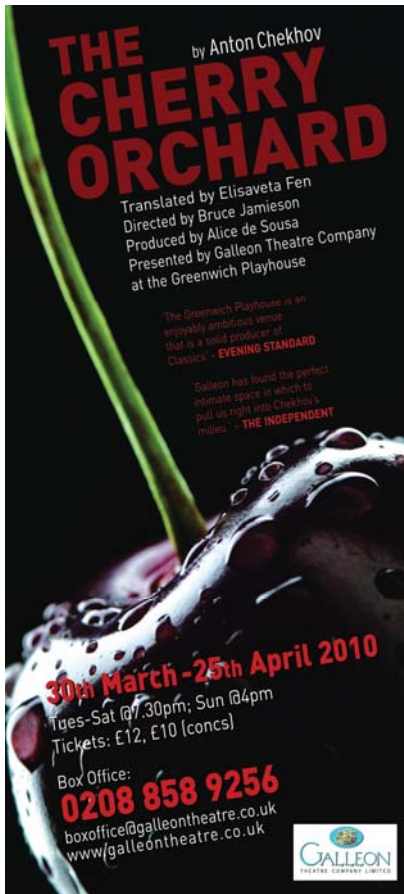


PRESS RELEASE



THE CHERRY ORCHARD

By Anton Chekhov

Directed by **Bruce Jamieson**;
Produced by **Alice de Sousa**;

Set Design by **Sara Gianfrate**;
Costume Design by **Eleanor Wdowski**;
Lighting Design by **Robert Gooch**;
Presented by **Galleon Theatre Company Ltd.**

DATES: 30th March – 25th April 2010

Tues-Sat @ 7.30pm - Sun @ 4pm

PRESS NIGHT: Thursday, 1st April 2010 @ 7.30pm

Tickets: £12, £10 (concs.)

Box Office: 020 8858 9256 - boxoffice@galleontheatre.co.uk

VENUE: GREENWICH PLAYHOUSE, Greenwich Station Forecourt,
189 Greenwich High Road LONDON SE10 8JA
www.galleontheatre.co.uk

"Galleon has found the perfect intimate space in which to pull us right into Chekhov's milieu." - The Independent

Following two exceptional decades of presenting internationally acclaimed theatre, Galleon Theatre Company (resident at the Greenwich Playhouse) celebrates the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of **Chekhov's** birth with an elegant production of his last play.

'The Greenwich Playhouse is an enjoyably ambitious venue and is a solid producer of classics'
– Evening Standard

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) was born in Russia and went on to be regarded one of the country's most celebrated writers. Few playwrights have had a more remarkable impact on theatre than **Chekhov** and his five full length plays have undisputedly secured his place alongside the world's greatest dramatists. He also wrote farces, comic sketches, one-act plays, made regular contributions as a journalist and is considered to be one of the most renowned short story writers in the history of the world of literature.

Chekhov qualified as a doctor in 1884 and always viewed this to be his main profession. However, he prospered little by it as he frequently treated the poor free of charge. He is quoted to have said:
'Medicine is my lawful wife and literature my mistress'.

In 1887, a theatre manager commissioned **Chekhov** to write a play and the result was *Ivanov*; which was written in a fortnight and staged in November of the same year. Although the play was a success and praised as a work of great originality, **Chekhov** did not enjoy the initial experience of writing for the stage; and after the disastrous opening night of *The Seagull* in 1896 (successfully revived in 1898 by Stanislavski), **Chekhov** renounced the theatre. However, the stage and his life were permanently intertwined and three more plays were to follow and seal his reputation: *Uncle Vanya*, published in 1899 and performed in 1900; *Three Sisters*, written 1900 and first produced in 1901; and *The Cherry Orchard*, his final play premièred at the Moscow Art Theatre on the 17th January 1904, and like the previous under the direction of Stanislavski.

"This studio-sized venue has been put on the cultural map with productions of epic quality."
– South London Press

The Cherry Orchard opens with the return of an aristocratic Russian woman and her family to their estate, which includes a large cherry orchard, and just before it is auctioned to pay the mortgage. Even though, they are presented with opportunities to save their home the family fail to act and the play ends with the property being sold to the son of a former serf, and with them leaving to the sound of the cherry orchard being destroyed.

The Cherry Orchard exposes both the failure of the aristocracy to maintain its status and the ineptitude of the bourgeoisie to find a purpose within their newly found materialism. The play further reveals the socio-economic forces at work in Russia at the turn of the 20th century, such as the rise of the middle classes after the abolition of serfdom (mid-19th century) and the annihilation of the aristocracy.

The Cherry Orchard is Chekhov's most autobiographical play as it resembles the author's own financial and domestic troubles. It further echoes Chekhov's love of the land and his passion for his own cherry orchard, which after returning to Yalta where he had gone due to ill health; he was devastated to find cut down by its new owner.

The Cherry Orchard shares familiar social and political themes with the writer's earlier plays but above all it is pertinent to contemporary environmental issues because its concern with industrial deforestation. This led to Chekhov being regarded one Europe's first significant ecological writers.

"Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wild life's become extinct, the climate's ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day". - [Uncle Vanya](#)

The Cherry Orchard is elegantly designed by a very experienced design team; performed by a talented cast of twelve actors (*full cast to be announced shortly*) and presented **Galleon Theatre Company**, which has been staging acclaimed theatre for the last twenty years. Amongst a uniquely diverse repertoire which includes quality new writing, full scale musicals, World Premières of neglected European writers and large cast revivals of the classics, **Galleon** has previously presented productions of Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1996 and again in 2005); *The Cherry Orchard* (1997); and *3 Sisters* (2002).

The Cherry Orchard is creatively spearheaded by a very experienced and award winning team.

- **The Director: BRUCE JAMIESON** has previously directed nearly thirty highly successful **Galleon** theatre productions and played leading roles in some sixty stage plays. As an actor, his television and film credits include *The Oxford Murders* (Odeon); *Murphy's Law* (Tiger Aspect); *Monarch of the Glen* (Ecosse); *Ali G-Inda House* (Universal); *Roughnecks* (BBC); *In Suspicious Circumstances* (Granada); *Crime Solver* (BBC); and *Spongebob* (BBC). He is the co-founder of the **Greenwich Playhouse, Galleon Theatre Company** and **Galleon Films**.
- **The Producer:** is multi-award winner **ALICE DE SOUSA** who in 2009 won two prestigious international awards, including the Portuguese government's '*Premio de Talento*' in recognition of her 25 year career in the theatre. She has created over seventy stage productions; played leading roles in some thirty theatre plays; and written many highly acclaimed stage and screen scripts. In 2005 the American Biographical Institute awarded her with '*Great Women of the 21st Century* and '*Woman of the Year 2005*'. (These awards exclusively recognise the impact on society of the work of 1000 prolific women worldwide).
- **The Company: Galleon Theatre Company** has staged critically acclaimed theatre for twenty years. Press quotes for previous **Chekhovian** productions include:

THE SEAGULL (2005)

"Bruce Jamieson's unfussy staging captures the keen sense of inevitability that permeates Chekhov. We laugh the laughs of genuine Chekhovian discomfort and squirm along with our characters caught in a net." - [The Independent](#)

"An impressive production that gives every actor, and indeed, every character, the space they deserve." - [Time Out](#)

"Galleon Theatre Company gives an excellent account of this much loved classic, capturing the sadness of unrequited love and failed aspiration, but finding the humour in it too." - [What's on in London](#)

"Galleon has produced a fiercely individual and relevant production that manages to stay true to the play's original ideas. I was transfixed from start to finish." - [South London Press](#)

3 SISTERS (2003)

"This production brings out the truth-laden nature of Chekhov's work and makes the audience want to rush out and buy the play script." - [What's On In London](#)

"True to previous form, Greenwich Playhouse's Galleon Theatre Company, directed by Bruce Jamieson, lovingly recreates a period atmosphere" - [The Stage](#)

"Chekhov's great play is superbly staged by Galleon Theatre Company." - [News Shopper](#)

"Bruce Jamieson gives us a spirited production of Chekhov's study of upper-class inertia" - [Time Out](#)

- **For further information, interviews or images contact the Greenwich Playhouse on 020 8858 9256; the producer on 07957 548010 or alice@galleontheatre.co.uk**
- **Please consult our website on www.galleontheatre.co.uk**