

# UNCLE VANYA

Scenes from country life

By **ANTON CHEKHOV**  
Translated by **MIKE POULTON**  
Directed by **KEN HANN**

## Future Productions

**March 2011**  
**Mitchell's Wings**

A new play by Johnny Carrington  
In collaboration with Oasis Youth Theatre



*'The story of the Spitfire'*

**Oasis Academy, Fairisle Road, Lordshill, Southampton, SO16 8BY**

Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd March at 7.30pm  
Box Office : 023 8039 3660 (day) 023 8073 9797 (evening)

**Museum of Army Flying, Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, SO20 8DY**

Friday 4th March at 7.30pm  
Saturday 5th March at 7.30pm – Anniversary Performance to mark the 75th anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire.  
Box Office : 023 8071 1818 [www.ticketsouth.co.uk](http://www.ticketsouth.co.uk)

**Solent Sky Museum, Albert Road, Southampton, SO14 3FR**

Thursday 10th March and Friday 11th March at 7.30pm  
Box Office : 023 8071 1818 [www.ticketsouth.co.uk](http://www.ticketsouth.co.uk)

*Please pick up a flyer or contact the Box Offices for ticket prices*

**17th – 18th March 2011**  
**One Act Plays**

At the Maskers Studio  
Maskers Studio, off Emsworth Road, Shirley, SO15 3LX  
Box Office : 023 8055 1489

**16th – 21st May 2011**  
**Ladies Day**

By Amanda Whittington  
Maskers Studio, Emsworth Road, Southampton, SO15 3LX.  
Box Office : 023 8055 1489

**20th – 30th July 2011**  
**Treasure Island**

Adapted from the Robert Louis Stevenson novel  
In the open air at  
Hamptworth Lodge, Landford, Nr Romsey, SP5 2EA  
(no performance Monday 19th July)  
Box Office : 023 8071 1818 ([www.ticketsouth.co.uk](http://www.ticketsouth.co.uk))  
(booking from March 2011)

**October 2011**  
**Humble Boy**

by Charlotte Jones.  
Maskers Studio, off Emsworth Road, Shirley, SO15 3LX  
Box Office: 023 8055 1489  
(booking from July 2011)

## Anton Chekhov

Chekhov was born one hundred and fifty years ago in 1860. He grew up in a small port on the Sea of Azov in Southern Russia. His parents were grocers and his grandfather had been a serf. In 1876 his parents, now bankrupt, fled to Moscow leaving their sixteen year old son to finish his education. He begins to write short plays.

Having completed his education he joins his parents in Moscow during 1879 where they are living in poverty. Chekhov spends the next five years at Moscow University studying medicine. Whilst there he writes short stories for magazines and in 1881 submits a full-length play to the Moscow Maly Theatre. It is rejected. It is thought to have been Platonov, a work of vast length, seldom performed in its entirety.

Chekhov qualifies as a doctor (doctors will appear in three of his four major plays) in 1884 and whilst practicing he continues to write short stories and one act plays many of which he sees as jokes or vaudevilles.

1887 sees the first production of a full-length play, Ivanov, which, according to Chekhov, "Didn't go badly." It is another two years before his second play, The Wood Demon, is performed. It is not well received and closes after only three performances. It will later reappear, in a much altered form, as Uncle Vanya. It will be another seven years before we see another major work. During this time he immerses himself in helping fight famine and cholera amongst the poor, helping to build schools, plant trees, grow vegetables and stock fishponds which remind us of Dr Astov in Uncle Vanya. His health worsens and he is diagnosed with tuberculosis.

In 1886 The Seagull is premiered, unsuccessfully. Chekhov swears to never write another play but a year later he publishes Uncle Vanya which is not, however, performed. The following year The Moscow Arts Theatre performs The Seagull, directed by Stanislavsky. He plays Trigorin and Olga Knipper, later to marry Chekhov, Arkadina. It is a great success.

Uncle Vanya, again directed by Stanislavsky at the Moscow Arts Theatre, is staged in 1889 and hugely admired. Chekhov is much in demand.

Chekhov, although admiring the "naturalistic" performances of Stanislavsky, is constantly concerned that his plays are not given the lightness of touch that he desires. He sees much comedy in the way his characters behave but feels this is lost in the slowness and gravity of the productions. The two clash on many occasions.

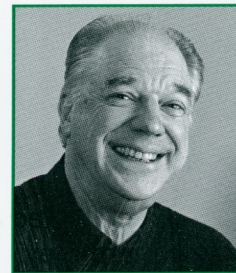
Chekhov's health deteriorates but he writes, and sees performed, Three Sisters in 1901. Although now very ill he finishes The Cherry Orchard in 1903 and is able to see the third act of the premiere in January 1904. He leaves for a health resort in the Black forest where, in July 1904 he dies whilst having a glass of champagne. There is some confusion during the funeral procession back to Moscow. His body is transported in a wagon marked "Fresh Oysters." A situation which surely he would have found amusing.

Performances at the Maskers Studio start at 7.30pm

**NUFFIELD THEATRE**  
University Road Southampton SO17 1TR  
Tuesday 18 - Saturday 22 January 2011

## Director's Notes

Arguably the first modernist drama, Anton Chekhov's depiction of the breakdown of a dysfunctional and loosely structured family full of "might-have-been" characters is a closely observed tragi-comedy set in the dying days of Tsarist Russia.



I first saw Frank Hauser's production at The Oxford Playhouse in 1969 and became fascinated with the play. That production, with Nyree Dawn Porter as Yelena and Robert Eddison as Vanya, actually toured to The Nuffield in the same year.

I have chosen a very accessible translation by Mike Poulton which tells a story full of unrequited love and idle intrigues where all the protagonists are locked in a system of illusions in order to protect themselves not only from others but from themselves. It is an intriguing study of the impact people have upon each other and where time seems very important to characters who have been, and still are, wasting their lives.

Serebryakov, a retired professor, arrives on the family estate with his new, young, bride. Their coming throws the regular, ordinary lives of Sonya, his daughter, and his brother-in-law Vanya into turmoil. Over everything hangs the shadow of the death of Sonya's mother some ten years earlier.

Considered by many to be Chekhov's best loved and best composed play he asks many questions and provides few answers, allowing the audience to form their own conclusions.

A delicate balance of the tragic and absurd the play is, at its core, a beautifully moving love story which still resonates with today's audiences.

I hope you will come to love it as much as I have done.

*Ken Hann.*

### Why not join The Maskers.....

The Maskers Theatre Company is keen to welcome new members, you don't just have to be interested in acting! There are opportunities to be involved with back stage, technical, set painting, marketing and front of house and the many activities involved in producing quality theatre.

Contact Hazel Burrows, the Membership Officer for more information on 023 8063 4009 or email [hazelburrows@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hazelburrows@tiscali.co.uk)

See Maskers Website for information and to download a Membership Form - [www.maskers.org.uk](http://www.maskers.org.uk)



Reg Charity no 900067

## The Cast

### in order of appearance

|                   |  |                   |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Marina            | an old nurse                                 | Ros Liddiard      |
| Dr. Astrov        | a country doctor                             | Steve Carroll     |
| Uncle Vanya       | Serebryakov's brother-in-law                 | Matt Avery        |
| Serebryakov       | a retired professor                          | John Souter       |
| Telegin (Waffles) | an impoverished landowner                    | Philip de Grouchy |
| Sonya             | Serebryakov's daughter by his first marriage | Joanna Russel     |
| Yelena            | Serebryakov's second wife                    | Rachael Courage   |
| Maria             | Vanya's mother                               | Avril Woodward    |
| Yefim             | A servant                                    | Ian Wilson        |

## Production Team

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Director             | Ken Hann   |
| Director's Assistant | Val Claisse  |
| Production Manager   | Graham Buchanan  |
| Stage Manager        | Angela Barks   |
| Costume              | Serena Brown   |
| Costume Assistants   | Susan Wilson, Hannah Roche, Kay Hann                                 |
| Properties           | Ella Lockett, Gill Buchanan, Alison Tebbutt, Helen Officer           |
| Set Design           | John Hamon   |
| Sound Design         | Jamie McCarthy assisted by Martyn Welch                              |
| Lighting Design      | Clive Weeks assisted by Gail Blues                                   |
| Music Recording      | Chris Hann   |
| Set Construction     | Roger Lockett, Graham Buchanan, John Hamon, Ken Spencer, Geoff Cook, |
| Stage crew           | Members of The Maskers   |
| Marketing/Publicity  | Angela Stansbridge and team  |
| Front of House       | Pete Hill and members of The Maskers                                 |
| Photography          | Clive Weeks  |



## The play takes place

Act 1 The garden of a large house. Afternoon in early summer  
Act 2 The living room. Midnight of the same day

*Interval 20 minutes (drinks may be ordered in advance)*

Act 3 The living room. An afternoon in September  
Act 4 The living room. Later that day

*The music used during this production is Satie's Grossiennol played on a variety of instruments contemporary with the period*

(The Play ends at approximately 10.15pm)

There will be gun shots during this performance

## Acknowledgements

Index Engineering  
Bristol Costume Services  
The Wig Room  
Great Oaks School  
History in the Making – Gun Hire  
Dee Cee Upholstery  
Members of Maskers for the loan of props and furniture  
The Maskers Theatre Company would like to thank the Nuffield Theatre staff for their help in promoting and assisting with this production.

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It is The Nuffield Theatre's policy that there should be no photography or recordings during the performance. All mobile phones should be switched off.

The audience may leave at the end of the performance by all exit doors. All gangways, corridors, staircases and passageways which afford a means of exit should be kept free from obstruction. The safety curtain will be lowered and raised at each performance in the presence of the audience.

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## Win a pair of FREE tickets to see Treasure Island in the open air at Hamptworth Lodge in July 2011.

Complete this slip and pop it in the box in the foyer.  
A wonderful evening at Hamptworth Lodge could be yours!!

.....  
Please add me to your database, send me details of forthcoming productions and enter me in the prize draw. Details will be sent via email if you wish. Winners will be notified by 1st June 2011.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Email: .....

You can also return the slip to the box in the foyer/bar or send to:  
Maskers Theatre Company, c/o 29 Lime Gardens, West End, Southampton, SO30 3RG.