

Lively rough theatre

Cellar Theatre's production of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

Reviewed by Kwame Dawes

Cellar Theatre's production of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* proves that UNB is blessed with a wealth of dramatic talent that is now, thank God, being exploited to the fullest.

In the small, cramped space in the basement of Carleton Hall, clever and efficient directing, witty and intelligent acting and a script that remains as eloquently crafted and evocative as it was when first produced in Russia years ago, combined to treat the packed house to an entertaining and thought provoking evening of theatre.

The Cherry Orchard is about the fall of the aristocracy in 19th

century Russia and the rise of the mercantilistic petty bourgeoisie in its stead. Chekhov litters the stage with comically sad characters who are very deeply engrossed in a poignant class war. The cherry orchard that the aristocratic family must sell becomes symbolic of the more affluent upper classes of Russia: exceptionally beautiful but conspicuously unproductive and impractical. It is to the credit of the cast of this production that this image assumed such resonance on stage.

Kent Thompson, manages to make appropriate use of the techniques of poor theatre, complete with the alienating devices of very bright white lights, un concealed set changes, and the passing around of bland "pease pudding" to the audience members during the three brief intermissions. The set is extremely stark and representational and the cast has to bear the brunt of evoking the barely perceptible rotting facade of affluence of the Cherry Orchard manor.

It is ultimately, the cast that brings to life this witty and moving drama. They manage to balance comic and almost farcical acting with a certain tragic quality to achieve the paradoxical complex that is the hallmark of Chekhov's play. While we laugh at the quirkiness of the many characters who enter and exit form the black makeshift wings of the theatre, we are at the same time moved by their emotional imprisonment and by the loss of the old order that this

The entire cast displayed a full understanding of the structure and tone of the piece, but there were some outstanding performances. Alison Lake is an expressive actress with a stage presence that

is enviable. Her portrayal of Madame Lyubov is an important anchor for the production for she manages to handle, with empathy, the woman's struggle with accepting the fact that she is no longer a wealthy person. Her speech about the orchard, delivered as she stares out of the window into the estate, was quite impressive.

Mark Sypher who plays Trofimov, the perpetual student, is a powerful actor who delivers his lines with careful attention to nuances and pace. His delivery during the long speech about the death of the aristocracy was undoubtedly one of the high points of the evening for one was convinced that the actor had given careful attention to every beat in the speech. Sypher's non-speaking moments were less impressive, and at times his concentration seemed to wane, but he remains an impressive actor.

The performances of Sean Dockrill (Lopahin), and Julie McGowan (Varya) played a great part in establishing the pathos of the piece. Sean Dockrill is relatively new to the stage and what he lacks in volume and vocal dexterity, he makes up for with a fully internalized interpretation of character. Julie McGowan's unflattering role as the plain adopted daughter of Madame Lyubov served as a useful foil for Alane Boudreau's portrayal of the spoilt legitimate daughter, Anya.

Comic relief was amply supplied by Martin Bakota as the dotish neighbour, Costa Papista as Gaev, the billiards-addicted brother of Lyubov, Angela Green as the earthy and philosophical maid, and Brian White as the viciously satirized lovelorn clerk Epihodov. Both Paul Palmer and Dan

McMorran manage to play their symbolically antithetical roles of Firs, the aging and abandoned servant who harks on the death of serfdom, and Yasha the cruelly pretentious and opportunistic valet of Madame Lyubov with competence. Finally, Michael Ingram's brief moment on stage as the vagrant was executed with more than adequate concentration and skill.

It is clear that a tremendous amount of work went into the staging of this production and

thankfully the effort was spent trying to give the actors a clear sense of who their characters were and their importance to the entire show. By selecting to approach the production with a no-frills attitude and with a "Rough Theatre"-type reliance on energy and immediacy, Kent Thompson managed to produce a very intriguing piece of theatre. We look forward to seeing more of these kinds of productions on this campus. After all, the talent is there.

CHSR-FM PLAYLIST TOP 40, WEEK ENDING MARCH 17th

TW	LW	ARTIST: Title (Label)	WO	HP
* 1	1	THE TRAGICALLY HIP: Road Apples (M.C.A)	4	1
2	2	FRONT 242: Tyranny For You (Epic)	4	2
* 3	5	NUMB: Christmeister (Oceana/Onalot)	3	3
4	7	JESUS JONES: Doubt (Capitol)	6	4
* 5	6	DREAM WARRIORS: And Now The Legacy Begins (Island)	4	5
6	11	THE REPLACEMENTS: Dont Sell Or Buy, Its Crap - EP (Sire/Reprise)	3	6
7	9	PAUL SIMON: The Rhythm Of The Saints (Warner)	4	7
8	8	MORRISSEY: Bona Drag (Sire/Reprise)	5	4
9	NE	R.E.M.: Out Of Time (Warner)	1	9
10	12	BRIAN ENO/JOHN CALE: Wrong Way Up (Opal/Warner)	3	10
* 11	19	BLACKPOOL: We The Living (Justin)	2	11
12	38	DINOSAUR JR.: Green Mind (Blanco-y-Negro)	2	12
* 13	10	VARIOUS ARTISTS: CFNY - Modern Music (CFNY)	9	1
14	31	ENIGMA: MCMXC.AD (Charisma)	2	14
15	32	SONIC YOUTH: Dirty Boots - Live EP (D.G.C)	2	15
* 16	15	BRETT RYAN: The Answers Electric (Bratt)	4	14
17	16	POP WILL EAT ITSELF: Cure For Sanity (R.C.A)	7	6
* 18	3	LESLIE SPT TREBO: Dont Cry Too Hard (Capitol)	13	1
19	17	HINDU LOVE GODS: Hindu Love Gods (Giant)	4	17
20	26	ASWAD: Too Wicked (Mango)	2	20
* 21	13	BLUE RODEO: Casino (Warner)	10	1
22	22	SOHO: Goddess (Atco)	3	22
23	36	ADAMSKI: Dr Adamski's Musical Pharmacy (M.C.A)	2	23
24	40	PALE SAINTS: Half-Life -EP (4AD)	2	24
* 25	4	THE DOUGHBOYS: Happy Accidents (Restless)	11	1
26	30	RIDE: Nowhere (Sire/Reprise)	5	16
27	14	INFORMATION SOCIETY: Hack (Tommy Boy/Reprise)	4	9
28	29	NAIVE: Switch Blade Knife (Maximum Rock N Roll)	4	28
29	25	THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH: Cheke (Go Disco)	3	25
30	37	HAVANA 3AM: Havana 3am (I.R.S)	2	30
31	24	JESUS LIZARD: Goat (Touch And Go)	3	24
* 32	35	TERRY ODETTIE: Without Wings (Wart)	2	32
* 33	NE	MANUFACTURE: Voice Of World Control (Network)	1	33
* 34	NE	VARIOUS ARTISTS: West Coast Music - Unsigned Talent (W.C.M.-U.T.)	1	34
35	23	HAWKWIND: Space Bandits (GWR/Cargo)	5	22
36	21	THE DENTISTS: Heads, And How To Read Them (Integrity)	3	21
37	39	THE POETS: Subversive - EP (R.C.A)	2	37
38	28	DANIEL ASH: This Love (Beggars Banquet)	8	10
39	29	AZTEC CAMERA: Stray (Sire/Reprise)	3	29
* 40	17	JOHN BOTTOMLEY: Library Of The Sun (Latent)	9	2

* = Canadian Content

TW = This Week, LW = Last Week, WO = Weeks On Chart, HP = Highest Position
Chart Compilation based on frequency of airplay. Music Director: Dave Keighiey



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