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PRESENTS

ROBERT DAWS **FRANCESCA ANNIS** **IAN MCKELLEN** **MARTIN SHAW** **JENNY SEAGROVE**

WITH

BEN ALLEN LLINOS DANIEL ALIS WYN DAVIES ASHLEY D GAYLE ALISON HALSTEAD
NICK HOWARD-BROWN KEZRENA JAMES ASIF KHAN LEE KNIGHT MISSY MALEK

UNTIL
SAT 13
NOV

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

CHEKHOV'S COMEDIC MASTERPIECE

DIRECTED BY SEAN MATHIAS

ADAPTED BY MARTIN SHERMAN

SET DESIGNER LEE NEWBY

LIGHTING DESIGNER NICK RICHINGS

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER ADAM CORK

COSTUME DESIGNER LOREN ELSTEIN

WIGS & MAKE-UP DESIGNER SUSANNA PERETZ



01753 853888 theatreroyalwindsor.co.uk



THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Our Theatre Royal Windsor production directed by Sean Mathias is a version of Anton Chekhov's 1903 play *The Cherry Orchard*, adapted by Martin Sherman, and is being performed on the Theatre Royal Windsor stage for just 6 weeks from Friday 1st October 2021.

Our education pack has been hand-crafted to support studying and exploration of the play, including its characters and themes, as well as give some specific insight into creative elements within our production.

CONTENTS PAGE

ABOUT US

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

HIS LIFE

SYNOPSIS OF THE CHERRY ORCHARD

CHARACTERS

THEMES

COSTUME DESIGN

NOTABLE PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



ABOUT US

Theatre Royal Windsor is an exciting and thriving regional theatre and we are proud to be the only unsubsidised producing theatre to operate all year round in Britain.

The theatre hosts a busy programme of shows and events focusing on drama and musicals, supported with live music comedy and dance. The auditorium seats 633 and the building is grade 2 listed.

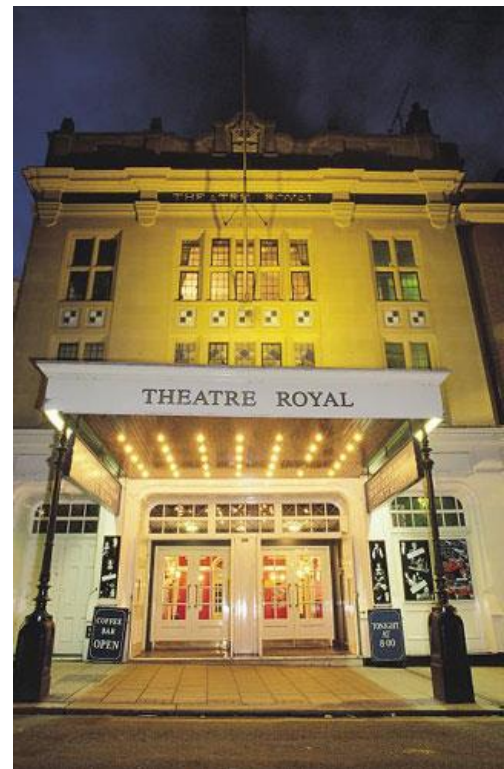
We are operated as part of Bill Kenwright Ltd. which is one of the largest commercial theatre producers in the UK. The theatre produces and opens several of Bill Kenwright's touring productions, in addition to its own in-house productions and the annual pantomime.

Theatre Royal Windsor was founded in 1793 in its original home on the town's High Street. That building was later sold and turned in to a chapel. A new building was built on Thames Street (where we are still housed today) in 1815 but was devastated by a fire in 1905.

George III was a frequent visitor, and Royal visits have continued through to this day with many of the current Royals attending regularly.

Work started on our current theatre in 1908 and it opened in 1910. Following the outbreak of Covid-19 where theatres have been closed for over a year, we are extremely excited to be re-opening our beautiful and historic venue with our season including Hamlet and The Cherry Orchard.

The Cherry Orchard will be performed during the dates of 1st October – 13th November.



THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



The Cast



Ben Allen
Trofimov



Francesca Annis
Ranyevskaya



Llinos Daniel
Passer-by



Robert Daws
Pishchik



Ashley D Gayle
Station Master



Alison Halstead
Carlotta



Nick Howard-Brown
Post Office Clerk



Kezrena James
Varya



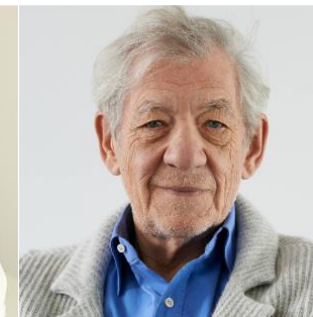
Asif Khan
Yepikhodov



Lee Knight
Yasha



Missy Malek
Anya



Ian McKellen
Firs



Jenny Seagrove
Gaev



Martin Shaw
Lopakhin



Alis Wyn-Davies
Dunyasha

The Creative Team

Director - **Sean Mathias**
Assistant Director - **Sophie Drake**
Set Designer - **Lee Newby**
Costume Designer - **Loren Elstein**
Lighting Designer - **Nick Richings**
Composer & - **Adam Cork**
Sound Designer

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Alongside the actors and creative team, there is a team of people who enable the production to go ahead. Below are just a few examples of the different roles within the theatre, including those behind-the-scenes, office staff, and front of house roles – do you know what they all do?

Why not...

...Choose 2 of these roles and work out who else those might work alongside them. What do you think their jobs might involve?

Stage Crew Box Office staff Front of House Staff
Education & Outreach Co-Ordinator
Theatre Administrator Costume Makers Deputy Stage Manager
Lighting Programmer Wigs Supervisors Company Stage Manager
Theatre Directors
Dressers Producers Costume Supervisor
Public Relations (PR Team)
Production Sound Engineers Wardrobe Mistress
Props Buyer Theatre Technicians
Assistant Stage Managers Wigs Makers
Wigs Mistress Graphic Designer Finance Manager
Marketing manager Production Manager

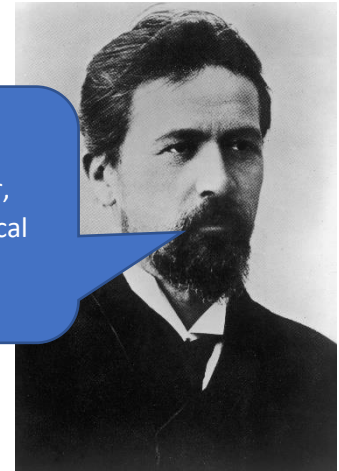
HIS LIFE

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born on January 29th 1860. His father, Pavel Yegorovich, was a devout orthodox Christian and the director of a parish choir. He was said to have been an abusive father.

Meanwhile his mother, Yevgenia, loved to entertain the children by telling them tales.

Did you know.....

As well as being a writer, Chekhov also was a medical doctor and a Qualified Physician....



Chekhov initially began writing stories to earn money, but as his artistic ambition grew and his career flourished, he became a significant name in contemporary literature.

He famously said “the role of an artist was to ask questions and not answer them”. In following this theory, it is often said that Chekhov was partially responsible for creating Modernism in theatre, alongside other practitioners August Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen.

Chekhov gave up writing dramas after the audience gave a round of boos as a reception for *The Seagull* at the Moscow Art theatre in 1896.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Chekhov is said to have taken much inspiration from his own life in his writing; for example, the idea for the plot of *The Cherry Orchard* was borne from personal experience when his family home was bought and torn down by a wealthy man whom his mother had previously called a friend.

Chekhov's gun (A principle used in his writing), which Chekhov explained as "ensuring that each element of the story is important and necessary" Meaning elements shouldn't appear to make 'fake promises' by never coming into play. In this metaphor, the story elements are seen as loaded guns which should be subsequently fired in order to have had purpose, so each incorporated element should have an influential role in the story (a moment when the gun is given significance/fired), and any irrelevant elements should be removed. One modern example of an element which seems irrelevant when it is first mentioned, but has significance later on, is the swan in the film *Hot Fuzz* – if you know the film, can you explain why this is an example of Chekhov's gun? (Answer down below).

Did you know... *The Cherry Orchard* is the only one of Chekhov's plays in which 'a gun' is shown in the first half and never fired.

Answer (spoiler alert!): The swan, first seen being chased by the 2 protagonist police officers near the beginning of the film, is actually influential in 2 ways later on: not only does it provide PC Angel with the moment of realisation and breakthrough regarding their town murderer, but the swan actually causes one of the antagonists, Frank, to crash the stolen police car near the film's conclusion, allowing the police officers to finally catch one of their criminals.

Why not...

...think of some other examples of plays/musicals, films, or TV series which exemplify the principle of Chekhov's gun being loaded and fired?

Synopsis of The Cherry Orchard

Written between 1901-1903, and first produced at the Moscow Arts Theatre in 1904, *The Cherry Orchard* is Chekhov's final play, and was written through a period in which Chekhov's physical health was weakening. This may be one reason why Chekhov so vehemently pushed the play as a comedy, subtitling it 'A comedy in four acts', but Constantine Stanislavski insisted on directing it as a tragedy – this dual emotion has been debated by both actors and directors up until this very day!

Why not...

...read a passage from *The Cherry Orchard* in a group and decide if you would direct it as a comedy or a tragedy, and why? Try reading certain lines using both emotions and see if it changes the flow of the text. Think about the timing of the lines; for example, try using pauses to see if it changes how line feels when it is read out loud.

The play opens with the return of Ranyevskaya (an Aristocrat) and her family to their estate just before it is to be auctioned to pay off debts. Amidst the grounds of the family home sits a large and luxurious orchard of Cherry trees, and although the family have various options to save their family home, they are unable to see the sheer depth of their situation, and ultimately lose themselves along the way. The play concludes with the sound of their beloved Cherry Orchard being cut down.

Characters

Mrs. Lyuba Ranyevskaya: A middle-aged woman who owns the estate and the Cherry orchard. She has faced many upsets in her life which we see her trying to escape from throughout the play. Interestingly, her first name means 'love', and this is depicted in her generosity through the play.

Yermolay Lopakhin: A businessman and the son of the peasants on Ranyevskaya's estate; he is therefore very self-conscious when in the presence of Ranyevskaya, he repeatedly refers his lack of education and subsequent attempts to refine himself.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Leonid Gaev: Gaev is Ranyevskaya's brother, who exhibits intriguing habits choosing unexpected and inappropriate moments to mention shots in the game of Billiards. He appears to be a considerate and kind man.

Varya: Varya is Ranyevskaya's adopted daughter. She is twenty-four years old and in love with Lopakhin, but is convinced he will never propose to her. She is hard working, responsible, and as the estate manager is probably most directly affected by the sale of the estate.. She has no control over the sale of the orchard, or her own destiny

Anya: Anya is Ranyevskaya's biological daughter, she is seventeen years old and has lived a sheltered life. During the play, Anya and Trofimov become very close and their potential romantic connection is feared by some of the other characters. Anya tries to hide this from her sister Varya.

Peter Trofimov: A student at the local university, referred to as 'eternal student' by Lopakhin due to the lengthy time he has spent in education. He knows Ranyevskaya from tutoring her son, Grisha, before he died.

Boris Simeonov-Pischik: A nobleman and fellow landowner who, like Ranyevskaya, is in financial difficulties. An optimistic man and somehow always finds a way to raise money to pay the mortgage.

Charlotta: Anya's Governess. Charlotta is thought of as a clown because of the performances and magic tricks she does to entertain everyone.

Firs: Ranyevskaya's -old mumbling manservant who is the only surviving member of the estate's glorious past. He spends a large portion of the play reminiscing about how wonderful it was to live on the estate in the past.

Yasha: A young manservant who has been Ranyevskaya's right hand man since travelling around France. He is thought of as repulsive and obnoxious, openly telling Firs that he is too old and should die, whilst also complaining about how uncivilised Russia is compared to France.

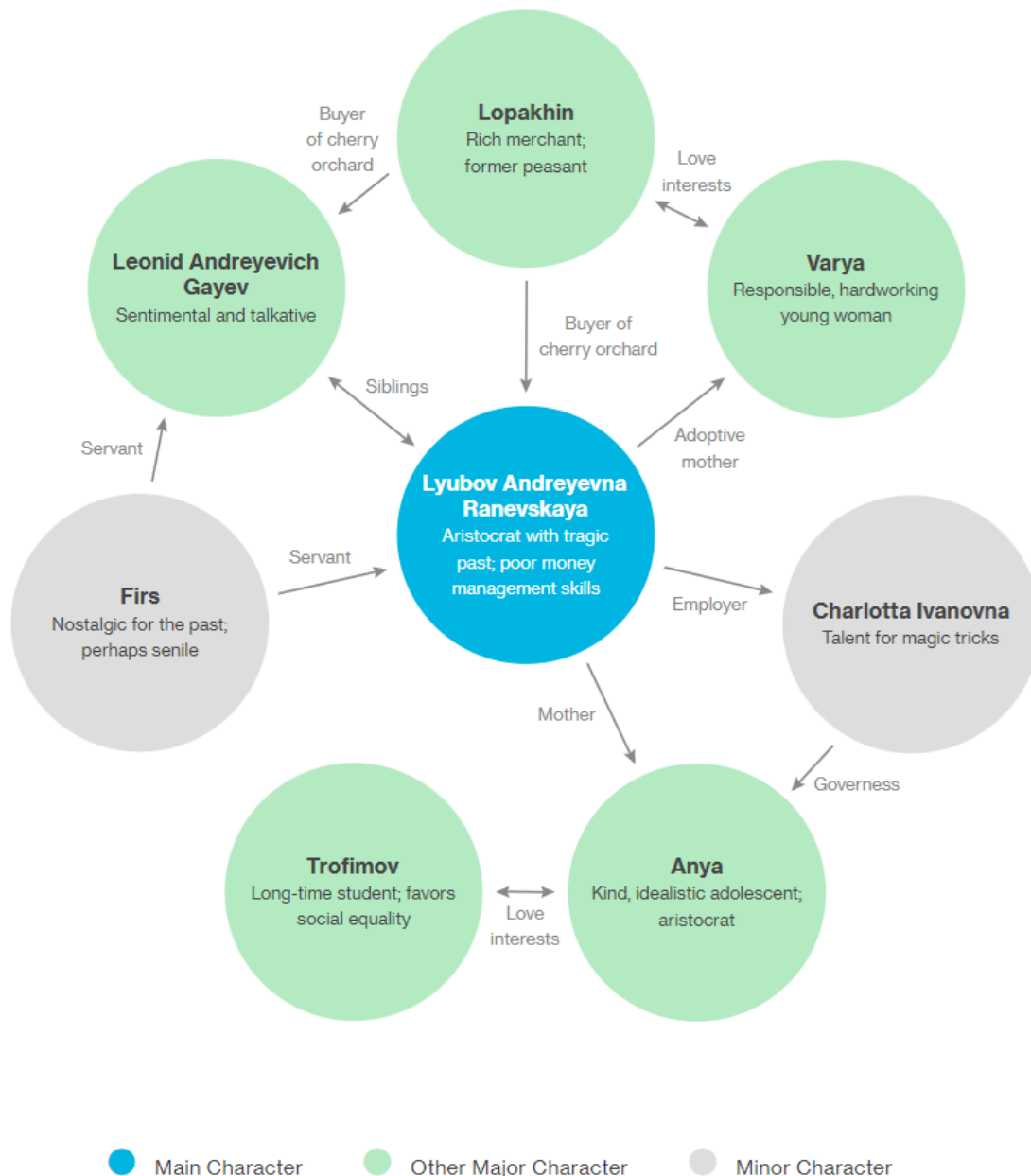
Simon Yephikodov: A clerk at the Ranyevskaya estate and a source of amusement for the other workers, whereby he is known as 'Simple Simon'. He is in love with Dunyasha and proposes to her.

Dunyasha: A maid at the estate. The loves that she shows him accentuates and induces Yephikodov's selfishness throughout the play.

Why not...

...put the characters in order of how closely linked you think they are to the cherry orchard on the family estate, and think about how they might feel to hear of its eventual destruction.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



CourseHero (2021). The Cherry Orchard Character Map. Available at: <https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Cherry-Orchard/character-map/> (Accessed 15th August 2021).

Themes

There are several different themes running through *The Cherry Orchard*, including:

- Modernity challenging the old Russia: the values of modernity as opposed to more established Russian values. A large amount of literature written in the late 19th century, was in reaction to this change.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



- Loss, Grief and Class: affecting everybody in the play, but none more so than Madame Ranyevskaya, her brother Gaev and her daughters, over the loss of their family home. This is further emphasised in the piece through Ranyevskaya's grief over the death of her son. Every character in The Cherry Orchard is coping with some form of grief.

Why not...

...concentrate on the final few scenes after Lopakhin buys the house at auction; his delight is at the expense of what the other characters have all lost. See if you can identify some ways in which the other characters grieve and change their attitudes towards him once he announces the destruction of the orchard. How might you capture this in a performance?

As they are leaving look at the language Chekhov uses – do you think that Lopakhin regrets buying the property once he realises how much it means to the family?

Memories

Every character in the play frequently reminisces their memories of the orchard and its personal significance to them. whilst also being held back by their struggle to forget aspects of their past. Memory is seen throughout the play as not only a fond form of identity for the characters in recalling their youth, but contrastingly, also as a burden which prevents them from achieving their own happiness.

One major struggle Ranyevskaya must overcome is to return to the estate she associates with the death of her son; this is a big part of the reason she fled to France in the first place.

Meanwhile, Trofimov is more concerned with his memories of Russia's "oppressive" historical past. He believes the country need to move on.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Class

Class is a prominent theme throughout much early 20th-Century writing, and in *The Cherry Orchard* Chekhov presents a wide range of social classes all under one roof. The audience observes the triumph of a former serf buying the estate, compared with the desolation of a landowner losing her family home. Spanning from Ranyevskaya and Lopakin in the upper classes through to the working-class characters of Varya and Firs, to the old man who asks Ranyevskaya for money. Setting the characters out in this way is interesting as it allows Chekhov to comment on the attitudes of the classes towards each other whilst interacting, portraying to an audience how their treatment of each other may alter as circumstances change.

Why not...

...split up into 3 groups and walk around the space. Think about how the different hierarchical levels of society might interact with one another in the early 20th Century. Assign each group either Upper-, Middle-, or Lower-Class. Whilst passing one another around the room, think about:

How they would move? Would they walk with a purpose? Would they dawdle about and talk to people? Would they be close by a person in a different class to them? Would they stand up straight or hunch over? Would they look other classes in the eye?

How would they talk? Would they speak with a different accent if they are upper class?

How would a Lower class interact with an upper class? What would they say to each other, if at all? if they did, what kind of conversations would they have?

Time

There is a distinct emphasis on the passing of time throughout the play, and repetition surrounding the past through stories of the death of Ranyevskaya's son, her time in Paris, Lopakhin's childhood, and Fir's reminiscence of old Russia. In the final scene, Firs is left in the house alone whilst the other characters move into an uncertain future, leaving their past behind.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021

Many characters in *The Cherry Orchard* spend their time waiting for love. Varya is waiting for Lopakhin to propose, whilst Dunyasha who is wooed by both Yepikhodov and by Yasha.



Why not...

...get into groups and improvise what you think would happen after all the characters leave the house for the last time? What are their emotions? Who will comfort who? Where do you think they will be in a week? A month? Or a year?

COSTUME DESIGN

As with all professional productions, costume design for our production of *The Cherry Orchard* was a very detailed process, especially as the costumes needed to be precisely and correctly tailored both to the period in which it is set and, of course, the actors. It is famously difficult to refine the setting of *The Cherry Orchard* to a specific year of history, but our Costume designer's sketches are akin to that of fashion in Russia through the 1890's.

Why not...

...have a think about what questions you might ask yourself if you were designing the costumes for a show? Are there any specific questions that you would need to answer regarding *The Cherry Orchard*?



THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Some of the things our Costume Designer, Loren Elstein, will have asked herself include:

- What do the costumes need to tell the audience?
- Is the play set in the modern era, or is it set in the time of the writer's original intention?
- If characters are from different social classes, how could this be distinguished using suitable costume?
- Practically, are there any changes in which a character must get changed quickly either on- or off-stage? If so, how do we achieve that?
- Additionally, all shows have a budget for each member of the Creative team they must stick to. How will the hire or creation of the costumes work within the budget for the piece?



During early stages of the pre-production process, the Costume Designer and Director will have an initial talk regarding the period in which the play is set and what kind of aesthetic the Director would like. This conversation will provide the foundations to how the costume designer envisages the entire production, before starting to draw some initial sketches. However, prior to a design and sketch any proposed costume, the designer will research appropriate attire for characters including key points such as: period, social class, family background, and the overall aesthetic aims of the production – all of which would be tied into the director's interpretation of Chekhov's writing!

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Once the costume designer has a basic outline for the the outfits, they will begin adding detail and choosing fabric. Thereafter, using the final sketches and material designs, the Director and Costume Designer will meet again for a final discussion to assess any changes and any further necessary adjustments. The actors will finally be called in for costume fittings, and the physical tailoring process will begin!

Why not...

...create a small timeline of this process, and have a think about who else the Director might be having discussions with throughout this period? Where would you put these discussions in your timeline, and what other physical things might be created before the show has it's get-in at a theatre?

An issue Loren encountered, was that the style of fashion changed so dramatically over the period in which the play is broadly set. This was partially due to a change kickstarted by Peter the Great in both women's and men's fashion at the beginning of the 18th Century, in which he stated that the Russian dress was "peasant and non-progressive". Both men's suits and women's dresses were often made-up of several layers of fabric and a vast combination of materials, but there were also very regular expectations in terms of hairstyle, whereby men wore their hair slicked-back with a pointed beard and large moustache, and the norm for women was to wear their hair up in high chignons with soft curls at the front.

Why not...

...choose a character from *The Cherry Orchard* and design a costume for them. You could even choose a particular actor who you think would be impressive in that role and draw some sketches around an image of them.

Perhaps your character might wear a specific uniform at one point in the play? Has a think about costume in relation to the themes we've discussed so far; for example, how would you differentiate a character from the upper classes who might have a lot of money to spend on clothing against a more middle-class character? Ranevskaya, for instance, is shown in many productions to have spent grandly on her clothing, so depending on the setting for your production, you could research modern top-of-the-range fashion shows and use inspiration from this to suggest that she wears designer clothing, illustrating her wealth to the audience.

Finally, would you want your character to stand-out in any particular way from the other characters in the piece? How might you do this?

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Notable Previous Productions



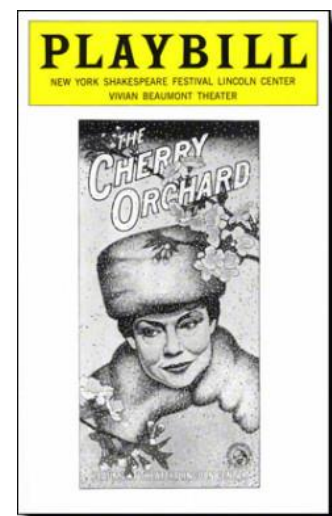
There have been many notable productions of *The Cherry Orchard*, spanning from the West End, to Broadway, to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and a host of other venues all around the world!

Set Design Theatre- Pinterest [Pin on theater inspiration. \(pinterest.co.uk\)](https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/on-theater-inspiration-1000000000000000000/)

First performed in 1904 at the Moscow Arts Theatre, debuting to an amazing reception. Fast-forward 60 years, and it opened at the Royal Shakespeare Company in partnership with BBC films, with a cast of stars such as Peggy Ashcroft playing Ranyevskaya and Judi Dench playing Anya. Another 20 years later and Dench would also go on to play Ranyevskaya in a BBC film version.

In 1976, *The Cherry Orchard* opened for a thirteenth time; this time on Broadway, starring Meryl Streep as

Dunyasha! This production was nominated for 5 Tony awards and won the categories of Best Costume Design and Best lighting design.



[The Cherry Orchard Broadway @ Vivian Beaumont Theater - Tickets and Discounts | Playbill](#)

1997, saw the Moscow Arts centre set up a festival on Broadway opening with *The Cherry Orchard*; performed in Russian with headsets to provide English translation. It received rave reviews.

More recently, in 2009, a new version of the play adapted by Tom Stoppard debuted on Broadway starring, Simon Russell Beale, Ethan Hawke and Sinead Cusack.



These varied examples illustrate a variety of ways in which *The Cherry Orchard* has been staged, so...

<https://www.livedesignonline.com/special-report/cherry-orchard-broadway-1>

THE CHERRY ORCHARD EDUCATION PACK 2021



Why not...

...in pairs, figure out how you would stage *The Cherry Orchard* to enhance the text as much as you can.

Would you use the original Russian text with English Subtitles or headset translation? If not, then would you ask your actors to use any accents at all in your production?

If set indoors, how are you going to show the scale of the cherry orchard? Would you produce it in a theatre, in an old estate home, or how about an immersive site-specific production in a real cherry orchard?

How big would your set be? Think about whether you think having a large extravagant set contributes to this particular production in a specific way? Would it be helpful to leave more to the imagination of your audience, or do you think that a very naturalistic set with large windows, high ceilings and furniture from the period would be most beneficial?

Would you want to set your production in its original period, or would you try to modernise your adaptation? If so, would you need to change any of the main elements of the story? and how would you make it relatable to audiences of today? You may find it useful to have a target-group in mind for your audience!

