**The Seagull**

**by Anton Chekhov**

**a new version by Michael West and Annie Ryan**

**Programme notes for Audio Described Performance**

**The Gaiety, 15th October 2016, 2.30pm**

Welcome to the introductory notes for Corn Exchange Theatre Companies new version of Anton Chekhov's **The Seagull** by Michael West and Annie Ryan. The play is also directed by Annie Ryan. Set Design is by Paul O'Mahony and Costume Design is by Saileóg O'Halloran. Lighting is designed by Sinéad Wallace and the Music and Sound Design is by Tom Lane.

The audio described performance is in the Gaiety Theatre as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival on the 16th of October and begins at 2.30pm. It lasts for two hours and thirty minutes, with one twenty minute interval.

**ABOUT THE SET**

A vast, bare stage except for a park bench placed centrally facing us. To our left at the front of the space a small make do desk made up of a wooden pallet resting on wooden legs. Around the legs are a mess of wires and a red extension lead. On the desk lives a small mixing desk, an apple mac, decorated with stickers and a head set. Behind the desk sits a blue plastic crate. A colourful deck chair rests against the desk.

The wooden pallet theme continues as the floor of the space is made up of the pallets, reaching back until it meets deep green lino flooring at the back third of the flooring. A wooden pallet walkway reaches across the back of the space width ways at the foot of a huge iridescent backdrop like a blown-up detail from an impressionist painting, a profusion of lush green foliage which with the aid of clever lighting changes the time of day and the mood.

Later in the first act Constance sets out a row of chairs including the deckchair alongside the bench width ways. Within which she weaves a headphone daisy chain. A headphone for everyone.

The lighting in this production is mostly naturalistic conveying the time of day, weather and setting although a spotlight or two are used for the more unconventional moments.

**ABOUT THE CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES**

I will describe the characters in order of appearance beginning with **Masha** played by **Imogen Doel** and **Medvedenko** played by **Stephan Mullan**. **Masha** is a woman in her twenties, sullen in facial expression and posture. She wears cotton loose fitting trousers with thin grey and white stripes along with an oversized black hoody and black doctor martin boots. Her long red hair hangs unfashioned around her face. Her pale face is highlighted by her use of thick dark eyeliner. In the second half of the play she wears similar dark and oversized clothing and no make up.

**Medvedenko**,a tall lanky fellow is equally unstylish in dark blue tracksuit bottoms with white and bright blue stripes up the sides. They are pulled up too high to reveal white sports socks with a red stripe. This outfit is finished off with white and light blue runners and a light blue and white sports t-shirt tucked unfashionably into his trousers. His not unhandsome face is framed by dark hair with a slightly overgrown short back and sides. Later in the first half he wears equally unfashionable navy blue shorts with white socks, runners and a green and white striped sports t-shirt.

In the second half he wears dark brown slacks with a brown v neck jumper over a shirt finished off with brown leather shoes. Medvedenko moves in contained fashion, often crossing his arms.

The next two characters we come across are **Constance** played by **Jane McGrath** and **Sorin** played by **Stephan Brennan**. **Constance** is another woman in her twenties, broad shouldered and tall, wearing dark jeans that have a small turn up, black doctor martins, a worn brown t-shirt with green writing, underneath a red checked oversized unbuttoned shirt. Her long brown hair is tied back in a ponytail. She wears a large watch on one wrist and a thick brown leather bracelet on the other. A simple leather chocker necklace with a pendant on it hangs around her neck. Later she wears dark trousers and a sleeveless grey tshirt.

**Sorin** is a man in his early sixties, although he appears older in his physical movements. He wears comfortable looking tan corduroy trousers with a light coloured shirt under a cream summer jacket. On his feet he wears brown suede brogues. His white hair is slightly balding at the top. Later he wears khaki shorts with a short sleeved shirt and a straw hat and uses a cane to aid his mobility. In the second half of the play he wears a brown suit before retiring into pajamas and slippers with a warm purple and white checked dressing gown.

Next on the scene is **Nina** played by **Genevieve Hulme-Beaman.** Nina has a petite boyish frame and a pretty face, she arrives wrapped in an illuminous safety jacket under which she has a black sleeveless t-shirt and grey sweat pants tucked into doctor martin boots. On her head she wears a bicycle helmet. She is laden down with a canvas bag, yoga mat and a bottle of water. Her brown hair falls to just below the shoulders. **Nina** oozes enthusiasm in her movements, her face expresses her emotions freely. Later in the first half she wears a pretty summer dress with large red flowers and bright red lipstick which emphasise her full lips. Later still she walks barefooted and wears tight denim shorts which show off her shapely legs and a red vest t-shirt. In the second half **Nina** appears layered in greys and blacks – black leggings, grey boots, long grey cardigan, black oversized over coat and thick grey scarf. Her hair is tied back in a ponytail and she wears no make up.

**Paulina** played by **Anna Healy** and **Dr Dorn** played by **Louis Lovett** arrive next. **Paulina** is a large woman, middle aged wearing a salmon pink cardigan over a striped tunic dress, she wears blue trousers underneath. On her feet she has flat black sensible slip on shoes. Her long dark brown hair is pulled away from her earnest face. Later she wears white cotton trousers and a short sleeved blouse – white with tiny pink flowers upon it and flat white sandels. In the second half she wears blue jeans, dark blouse and a navy blue cardigan once with flat slip on shoes once again.

**Dr Dorn** is a man in his fifties. He has a bright demeanour with a cheeky face framed by quiffed greying hair. When we first meet him he wears cream chino trousers with a brown belt and a tight fitting powder blue shirt tucked into the trousers with brown brogues. In the second half he wears a similar outfit in darker colours topped off with a suit jacket.

Last to come onto the scene are **Arkadina** played by **Derbhle Crotty** and **Trigorin** played by **Rory Keenan**. **Arkadina** enters in a white wide legged trouser outfit with a white blouse tied in a knot just above the waist. She wears large sunglasses and her long, thick, wavy red hair is styled to an inch and frames her face. She wears patent black heeled peep toed sandels on her feet. Later in the first half she wears a 1950s style black swimming costume with heels and a long silk blouse printed with brown flowers and a bandana in her hair to match. In the second half she wears tight fitting brown trousers with a khaki blouse and heeled ankle boots. Later still she appears in fitted blue jeans with over knee tan suede stilleto boots. A dark brown shirt and a tawny coloured free flow cardigan.

**Trigorin –** A thirty something writer with a tinge of grey in his immaculately styled haircut with beard to match. He wears glasses and appears well looked after in his fitted blue jeans, casual but well fitting purple shirt and brown brogues. He has a well thought out but casual looking style about him. In the second half he wears a similar outfit finished off with a warm brown jumper.

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That concludes the introductory notes for this production of **The Seagull** They were prepared by Máirín Harte, who will be describing the performance. Audio description at the Dublin Theatre Festival is provided by Arts and Disability Ireland with support from The Arts Council.

Thank you.

