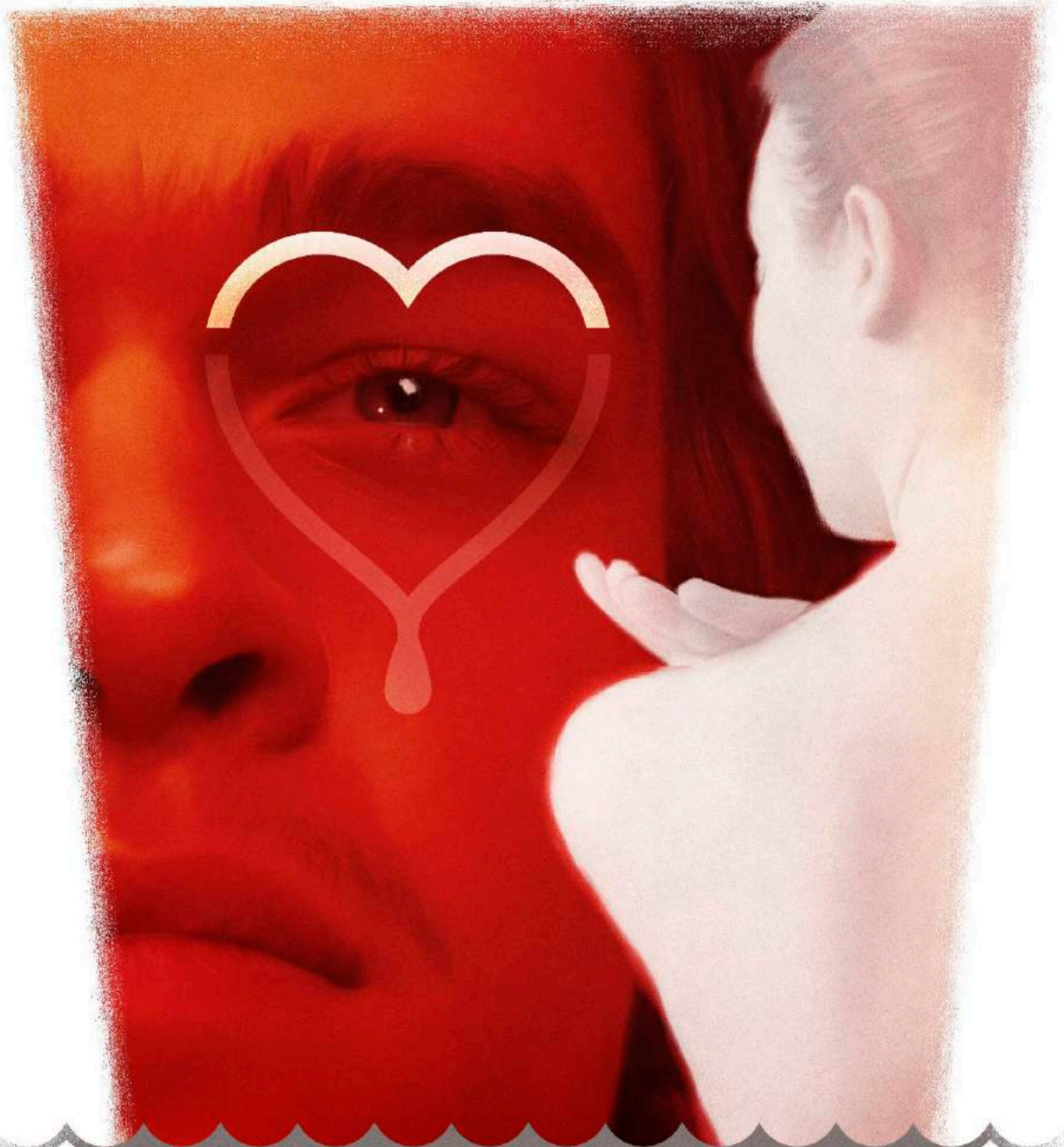


THEATRE AT UBC PRESENTS



# The Seagull

BY Anton Chekhov  
TRANSLATED BY Peter Gill  
DIRECTED BY Kathleen Duborg

Jan 23 — Feb 8, 2014 | TELUS Studio Theatre | \$7 Preview, Wed, Jan 22

Tickets: \$22 | \$15 | \$10 (+ service charge) | Box Office: 604-822-2678

[www.theatre.ubc.ca](http://www.theatre.ubc.ca)



a place of mind

# THE SEAGULL

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Press Release

Note: High resolution photos can be downloaded at

[http://www.theatre.ubc.ca/media\\_photos\\_seagull\\_2014.shtml](http://www.theatre.ubc.ca/media_photos_seagull_2014.shtml)

Show Site:

<http://http://www.theatre.ubc.ca/seagull/index.html>

## Chekhov Factoids

Chekhov had a legion of friends, hangers-on and so many female admirers that the term "Antonovkas," was coined to describe them.

The actual definition of an "Antonovaka" is:

"Antonovka or Antonówka is a group of late-fall or early-winter apple cultivars with a strong acid flavor that have been popular in Russia as well as in Poland."

He had a pet mongoose named "Svoloch".

He is best known for his short stories and plays.

He wrote 201 short stories.

One of his literary maxims is that 'If a gun appears in the first act, it must be used by the third,' and remains a rule of literature to this day.

Anton Chekhov has 266,619 likes on facebook and has a page dedicated to him with updated information everyday. <https://www.facebook.com/AntonChekhovAuthor>

He was friends with Russian writers, Leo Tolstoy and Maxim Gorky.

Chekhov won the Pushkin Prize for "the best literary production distinguished by high artistic worth" in 1888.

A bachelor for most of his short life, he finally married German actress Olga Knipper on May 25th, 1901 who starred in his plays at the Moscow Art Theatre.

He died of tuberculosis and his final request was for a glass of champagne. His body was returned back to Russia in a train car labeled, "Fresh Oysters," a comic detail Chekhov probably would've enjoyed in the somber context of his death.



His plays marked a new movement in the theatre with their use of subtext, intimacy, colloquialisms and realism.

It will be Chekhov's 154th birthday this January 29th.



Chekhov revolutionized the idea of what a play could be by creating drama among people in the words they spoke, and not in the acts they committed on stage.

His plays elegantly display the poetry of everyday life; The silences, cliches, stammerings and attempts at high expression by his characters are a mirror to our own improvised lives.

Seagull & Alfred Jarry's UBU Roi premiered the same year.

Actor Kirk Douglas debuted on stage in "The Three Sisters", a play originally written by Anton Chekhov.

## Quotes from The Seagull

"In all the universe nothing remains permanent and unchanged but the spirit."

"We should show life neither as it is, nor as it should be, but as we see it in our dreams."

## Anton Chekhov Quotes

"The role of the artist is to ask questions, not answer them."

"Man is what he believes."

"Medicine is my lawful wife and literature my mistress; when I get tired of one, I spend the night with the other."





## **Anton Pavlovich Chekhov 1860 - 1904**

**Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born in Taganrog, Russia in 1860.** His grandfather had been a serf, who had bought his family's freedom in 1841. Chekhov spent much of his childhood quietly sitting in his father's fledgling grocery store. He watched the customers and listened to their gossip, their hopes, and their complaints. Early on, he learned to observe the everyday lives of humans. His ability to listen would become one of his most valuable skills as a storyteller.

After the business went bankrupt in 1876, Chekhov's family moved to Moscow to find work. His father became a labourer and his mother a seamstress. Chekhov remained in Taganrog to complete his education and worked as a tutor to support himself.

**In 1879, at the age of 19, Chekhov joined the rest of his family in Moscow and took on the role of chief breadwinner.** He secured a place at the medical school of Moscow University and supported both himself and his family by writing humorous short stories for magazines. His first story was published in the magazine *Dragonfly* in 1880 and signed "Antosha Chekhonte". His first printed book was *Tales of Melpomene*, a collection of six comedy pieces which he self-published in 1884. Chekhov's writing soon gained him, not only financial rewards, but renown as well.

**Chekhov graduated from medical school in 1884 and worked as a doctor until 1892. He considered medicine his poorly paid second career.** He mainly treated peasants free of charge, as their poverty reminded him of his own childhood. He set up free clinics for the poor in provincial Russia and worked in the public hospital in Moscow. He treated patients during the cholera epidemic that swept Russia in 1891.

**Chekhov's own health, however, was delicate. In December 1884, he coughed up blood and was diagnosed with tuberculosis, the disease that would eventually kill him.**

Chekhov's first commercially published book, *Motley Stories*, was published in 1886. In 1887, Chekhov was elected to the Literary Fund, an honour only granted to the best writers of his day. At this point, Chekhov shifted away from writing humorous stories and concentrated on writing serious fiction which would 'depict life as it actually is' for intellectual magazines such as *New Times*. In 1888, he was awarded the Pushkin Prize for one of his most famous short stories, "The Steppe".

**Alongside writing short stories, Chekhov began to dabble with the idea of writing for the stage.** In November 1887, Chekhov was commissioned to write a comedic play, for Fiodor Korsh, which he completed in ten days. Chekhov presented Korsh with *Ivanov*. The production was a success but Chekhov found the experience 'sickening'.



His play *The Wood Demon* was written in 1888. Chekhov had a difficult time finding a suitable home for the play. The Maly Theatre rejected it and advised Chekhov to stick to writing short stories: 'Your attitude to the stage and to dramatic form is too contemptuous, you respect them too little to write a drama.' The play was eventually produced in 1889 by the Abramov Theatre in Moscow. It was a complete critical failure and withdrawn after only a few performances.

**Chekhov abandoned writing plays and set off to investigate the conditions in a penal colony on the island of Sakhalin in Siberia.** Chekhov was shocked and angered by what he saw there and published a serialised account of his experiences in the periodical *Russian Thought* between 1893 and 1894 called *The Island of Sakhalin*.

**In February 1892, Chekhov was able to buy a large estate called Melikhovo,** where he settled down with his family. He finally had more time to focus on his writing and built himself a lodge in the orchard in which to write.

**He took his responsibilities as a landowner very seriously. He built three schools, a fire station and a clinic and provided medical services to the local peasants.**

**In 1894, Chekhov turned to writing plays again and started work on *The Seagull*.**

The play was initially produced by the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St Petersburg in 1896. The production was a failure and Chekhov vowed never to write for the theatre again. The play did, however, catch the eye of the playwright Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. He managed to get Chekhov's permission to revive the play at the newly formed Moscow Arts Theatre in 1898. The production was directed by Konstantin Stanislavski. Stanislavski specialized in psychological realism and ensemble work. He focused on extracting the intricate subtleties of Chekhov's text. **This production opened on 17 December and this time the play was an immediate success with both audiences and the critics.** The production was such a success that the Moscow Arts Theatre adopted the seagull as its emblem.

Chekhov's life was never short of romance, but in 1898 he met the actress Olga Knipper, who was playing Arkadina in the Moscow Arts Theatre production of *The Seagull*. They began a love affair and married in 1901.

***The Seagull* is considered the first of Chekhov's four major plays, which were all produced at the Moscow Arts Theatre and directed by Stanislavski. *Uncle Vanya* (a reworking of his failed play *The Wood Demon*) premiered in 1899 and *Three Sisters* in 1901. *The Cherry Orchard* premiered in 1904, but Chekhov was upset by the way in which Stanislavski interpreted the play. He felt it was a comedy, whereas Stanislavski had focused on the play's tragic elements. Chekhov complained that Stanislavski had "ruined" his play.**



**By May 1904, Chekhov's delicate health had worsened. On the 3 June, Chekhov set off for the German spa town of Badenweiler with his wife Olga. He died there on the 2 July 1904 at the age of 44.** His body was transported back to Moscow in a refrigerated railway car and he was buried next to his father at the Novodevichy Cemetery.

# THE SEAGULL

By Anton Chekhov, Translator Peter Gill, Director Kathleen Duborg  
TELUS Studio Theatre, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts  
January 23 – February 8, 2014

\$7 Preview Wednesday January 22 | *Talkback Wed. Jan. 29!*

When famed Russian actress Arkadina visits her family with her young lover Trigorin in tow, they become ensnared in a tragicomic tangle of romance, intrigue and unrequited love. Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*, one of the greatest plays of the modern era, onstage at UBC's exquisite TELUS Studio Theatre in the Chan Centre for the Arts.

**Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860 – 1904)** is one of the most important playwrights of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a unique force in modern drama. His works are beloved for their brilliant wit and insight into the human condition. Chekhov was a literary artist of precision who probed below the surface of life, laying bare the secret motives of his characters. Best known for plays including *The Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters*. He is also celebrated today as one of the greatest short story writers.

**MFA Directing student Kathleen Duborg is a BFA Acting alumna who has worked in theatre, film, television, voice-over and new play development throughout Canada.** She recently directed *Bollywood Wedding* and will be directing the 2013 Governor General Award winning *Iceland* by Nicolas Billon. Theatre acting credits include *Champ de Mars* (Persephone); *Snowman* (Rumble); *A Lie of the Mind* (Main Street); *The Gift of the Coat* and *That Elusive Spark* (Alberta Theatre Projects) and *The Edward Curtis Project* (NAC). She is a former Artistic Associate at the Gateway Theatre.

*The Seagull* features the work of our BFA Acting conservatory students, **Ghazal Azarbad, Nathan Cottell, Mercedes de la Zerda, Thomas Elms, Helena Fisher-Welsh, Matt Kennedy, Daniel Meron, Demi Pederson, Nick Preston, Javier Sotres, Naomi Vogt, Zach Wolfman, Natasha Zacher.** The creative team includes BFA Production & Design students **Elliott Squire** (Set), **Lauren Stewart** (Lighting), **Daniel Tessy** (Sound), **Ndola Hutton** (Stage Management) and BFA Visual Arts student **Siân Morris** (Costumes).

**THE SEAGULL**, By Anton Chekhov, Translator Peter Gill, Director Kathleen Duborg **Jan. 23 – Feb. 8, 2014** | Telus Studio, Chan Centre, 6265 Crescent Rd., UBC MAP: [bit.ly/IN0qL2](http://bit.ly/IN0qL2) | CURTAIN: 7:30 p.m. | TICKETS: Reg. \$22/Senior \$15/Student \$10/Youth \$2/Groups \$2 off ~ plus service charges | **\$7 Preview Jan. 22** | Talk Back: Wed. Jan. 29 | BOX OFFICE: 604.822.2678 or [box.office@ubc.ca](mailto:box.office@ubc.ca) Book Online: <http://ubctheatre.universitytickets.com> | MORE: [www.theatre.ubc.ca](http://www.theatre.ubc.ca)



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