



TIMESOC

Chekhov-inspired family comedy to debut at South Coast Repertory

By Anne Artley

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Christopher Durang's family comedy "Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike," an homage to Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, is set to show Sunday to Oct. 31 at South Coast Repertory's Julianne Argyros Stage.

The Tony Award-winning play is centered on Vanya and Sonia, two sisters who share a country house in Bucks County, Penn. Drama ensues when their self-absorbed movie star sister, Masha, and her much younger lover, Spike, visit for the weekend.

Bart DeLorenzo, who has directed three Chekhov plays and acted in one, is the production's director.

"It's been a blast," he said. "Imagine showing up for work and laughing for six hours straight."

According to DeLorenzo, Durang described the script as "putting the works of Chekhov in a blender," even though DeLorenzo said it ends more happily than any of its Russian counterparts.

"It's a play that asks you to think about your life, your dreams and desires, and how you've succeeded," DeLorenzo explained. "Most likely, you haven't gotten everything you want, and as you get older and older, your chances of getting it are diminishing."

Although DeLorenzo said he thinks the show contains a profound message at the end, his main goal is for audience members to laugh and enjoy themselves.

“I want them to go home as if they’ve been to a wonderful party and hope they’re invited back soon,” he said.

“Vanya and Sonya,” is the seventh production DeLorenzo has directed for South Coast Repertory.

“We have a wonderful cast. All of them are extremely funny and well-suited to their roles,” he said. “I think that’s why rehearsals are so much fun.”

In addition to the Tony Award, the production also received the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Play, Drama League Award for Best Production of a Play and Drama Desk Award for Best Play.

Durang, a member of the American Theater Hall of Fame, has also received numerous awards for his work.

Free post-show discussions with cast members are planned for Oct. 9 and Oct. 10. The repertory’s literary staff will lead a behind-the-scenes session about the play on Oct. 13, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This event includes interviews with cast members and production staff as well as a tour of the set. Tickets are \$12 and may be purchased in advance or at the door.

Anne Artley is a contributor to Times Community News.

If You Go

What: “Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike.”

When: Sunday to Oct. 21.

Where: South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa.

Cost: Tickets start at \$23.

Information: scr.com, (714) 708-5555.