



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TOWN HALL THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEXT SHOW IN 75<sup>th</sup> SEASON: CHEKHOV'S  
MASTERWORK, *THE CHERRY ORCHARD***

JANUARY 23, 2020 – Town Hall Theatre is excited to announce the next show in its 75<sup>th</sup> “TRANSFORMATIONS” Season, Anton Chekhov’s final elegiac comedy masterpiece, ***THE CHERRY ORCHARD***, in a new translation by Richard Nelson, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. ***THE CHERRY ORCHARD*** will have 12 performances, including two previews, February 27 through March 21, 2020, at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA. Tickets are \$18 - \$30, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

THT will host three Special Events for ***THE CHERRY ORCHARD***: an *Opening Night* gala on Saturday, February 29, 2020; *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a literary salon on the theme “Regeneration” on Wednesday, March 11, 2020; and Theatre Club, our post-show talk-backs with complimentary wine, on Friday, March 6, 2020, and Friday, March 20, 2020. We welcome audiences to enjoy THT’s full bar and entertainment in our lobby one hour before performances. Town Hall is thrilled to welcome the Center for Elders’ Independence as a new community partner with this production. CEI helps at-risk seniors live at home, instead of in nursing homes, and works to improve the total environment of older adults in the East Bay.

**THE CHERRY ORCHARD**, Anton Chekhov's final masterwork, arrives at Town Hall in February/March 2020, in a new translation by Richard Nelson, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky of Chekhov's original 1903 *pre-rehearsal* script. At once timeless and prescient, **THE CHERRY ORCHARD** channels the "human comedy", with all its loves, losses and privileges past, and the inescapable future. The story is simple: on a chilly morning in May in the Russian provinces, around the turn of the last century, landowner Lyubóv Andréevna returns after a five year absence to her family's estate to find the cherry orchard in bloom. But all is soon to change, as debts must be paid.

At the time Chekhov was writing, 19<sup>th</sup> century stages were characterized by highly melodramatic plays and a histrionic acting style. One of the reasons his plays were so revolutionary then, and will continue to endure, was his desire for theatre to be "just as complex and also just as simple as in life. People eat their dinner, just eat their dinner, yet at the same time their happiness is taking shape and their lives are being smashed." [Chekhov's spoken words from 1889.] **THE CHERRY ORCHARD** is such a play, where nothing seems to happen, as everything happens.

Or as the playwright put it, another way:

"In real life people do not spend every minute shooting each other, hanging themselves, or making declarations of love." - "They eat, drink, flirt, talk nonsense." [Reminiscences of AP Chekhov - Gorodetski]

THT's production of **THE CHERRY ORCHARD** is directed by Susan E. Evans, Town Hall's Artistic Director, and features an impressive team of Bay Area performers: Sarah Ruby (as Lyubóv Ranévskaya), Ted V. Bigornia (*Lopákhin*), Tim Holt Jones (*Gáev*), Heather Kellogg Baumann (*Várya*), April Deutschle (*Ánya*), Jake Gleason (*Trofímov*), Tom Reilly (*Firs*), Alicia Piemme Nelson (*Dunyásha*), Emily

Keyishian (*Charlotta*), Ben Chau-Chiu (*Epikhódov*), Mick Renner (*Simeónov-Píshchik*), Domonic Tracy (*Yásha*), and Samuel Tomfohr (*Stationmaster, Passerby, Servant*).

The creative team for **THE CHERRY ORCHARD** is comprised of designers with credits from numerous Bay Area theatres and beyond, including Liliana Duque Piñeiro (scenic design); Delayne Medoff (lighting design); Michael Kelly (sound design); Maggie Whitaker (costume design); and Debbie Shelley (properties design).

## **Performance History**

### **THE CHERRY ORCHARD**

Chekhov submitted his final version of the play to the Moscow Art Theatre in 1903. Konstantin Stanislavsky and his colleagues revised the play for its 1904 premiere, and Stanislavsky's revised script became the standard version. Playwright and Translators Nelson, Pevear and Volokhonsky noted some important and intriguing differences between what had become the established version and the script Chekhov initially intended to be presented. They reconstructed and restored the 1903 pre-rehearsal script text using materials collected from Chekhov's *Complete Works and Letters*, providing exciting new insights into this classic of modern theatre. Town Hall's production marks the first staging of Chekhov's 1903 version of **THE CHERRY ORCHARD** for Bay Area audiences.

## **ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS**

**Richard Nelson's** many plays include *Rodney's Wife*, *Goodnight Children Everywhere*, Drama Desk-nominated *Franny's Way* and *Some Americans Abroad*, Tony Award-nominated *Two Shakespearean Actors* and James Joyce's *The Dead* (with Shaun Davey), for which he won a Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical, and the critically acclaimed, topical play cycle, *The Apple Family Plays*.

**Richard Pevear** and **Larissa Volokhonsky** have produced acclaimed translations of Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nikolai Gogol, Anton Chekhov, and Mikhail Bulgakov. Their translations of *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Anna Karenina* won the 1991 and 2002 PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prizes.

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

**Susan E. Evans** joined Town Hall Theatre as Artistic Director in December 2016, and has directed *The Revolutionists* and *Sense & Sensibility* for THT. Previously, she served as the Artistic Director of the Douglas Morrison Theatre, directing *Private Lives*, *Dividing the Estate*, *All My Sons*, *Eurydice*, *An Ideal Husband* (Scott Munson adaptation), *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Before DMT, Susan served for 11 years as the Artistic Director of Eastenders Repertory Company where her directing work included *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay*, *Frozen*, *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*, co-directed with Founder Charles E. Polly, and the World Premieres of Parts II and III of Mr. Polly's *Twyla Trilogy*, among many others. She trained at the Drama Studio London @ Berkeley. Evans has twice collaborated with solo artist Carolyn Doyle (the Marsh, SF Fringe Festival), and directed locally with CCCT (Lisa Kron's *Well*), and Actors Reading Writers in Berkeley. She is an Associate Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. [www.susaneevansdirector.com](http://www.susaneevansdirector.com).

## **ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY**

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre celebrates 75 years this Season and our 300<sup>th</sup> production, making it the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre has recently been honored with a 2019 Arts and Culture Commission Special Arts Recognition Award, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards and regional Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the "Best Children's Theatre Company" by *Bay Area Parent Magazine*.

THT's 105-year old historical building is managed by the Lafayette Association (LIA). Town Hall Theatre Company is located at 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA 94549. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 4:00 to 6:00PM, and Saturday, 2:00-4:00 pm, and can be reached at 925.283.1557. Information is also available at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

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## **CALENDAR Information on *THE CHERRY ORCHARD***

### **WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY presents**

**WHAT:** *THE CHERRY ORCHARD* by Anton Chekhov, translated by Richard Nelson, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, directed by Susan E. Evans

**CAST:** Heather Kellogg Baumann, Ted V. Bigornia, Ben Chau-Chiu, April Deutschle, Jake Gleason, Tim Holt Jones, Emily Keyishian, Alicia Piemme Nelson, Tom Reilly, Mick Renner, Sarah Ruby, Samuel Tomfohr, Domonic Tracy

**DATES:** Thursday, February 27, 2020, Preview @ **7:30 pm**  
Friday, February 28, 2020, Preview @ 8:00 pm  
Saturday, February 29, 2020: OPENING RECEPTION  
THROUGH March 21, 2020

**SHOWTIMES:** Feb. 27 – March 21, 2020  
Thursdays, Feb. 27 & March 19 @ **7:30pm**  
Fridays and Saturdays @ 8:00pm  
Sundays, March 8 & 15 @ 2:00 pm

**CLOSES: March 21**

**WHERE: Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette, CA 94549**

### **SPECIAL EVENTS:**

February 29, 2020: *Opening Night*

March 11, 2020: *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a Literary Salon, 7:30-9:00pm

March 6 and 20, 2020: *Theatre Club* 8:00pm Post-Show Talk-Backs

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**TICKETS:**     \$18 Previews  
                  \$27-30 Thurs. eve., Fri. eve., Sat. eve  
                  \$25-27 Sat. & Sun. matinees

Discounts available for Seniors and youth

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