

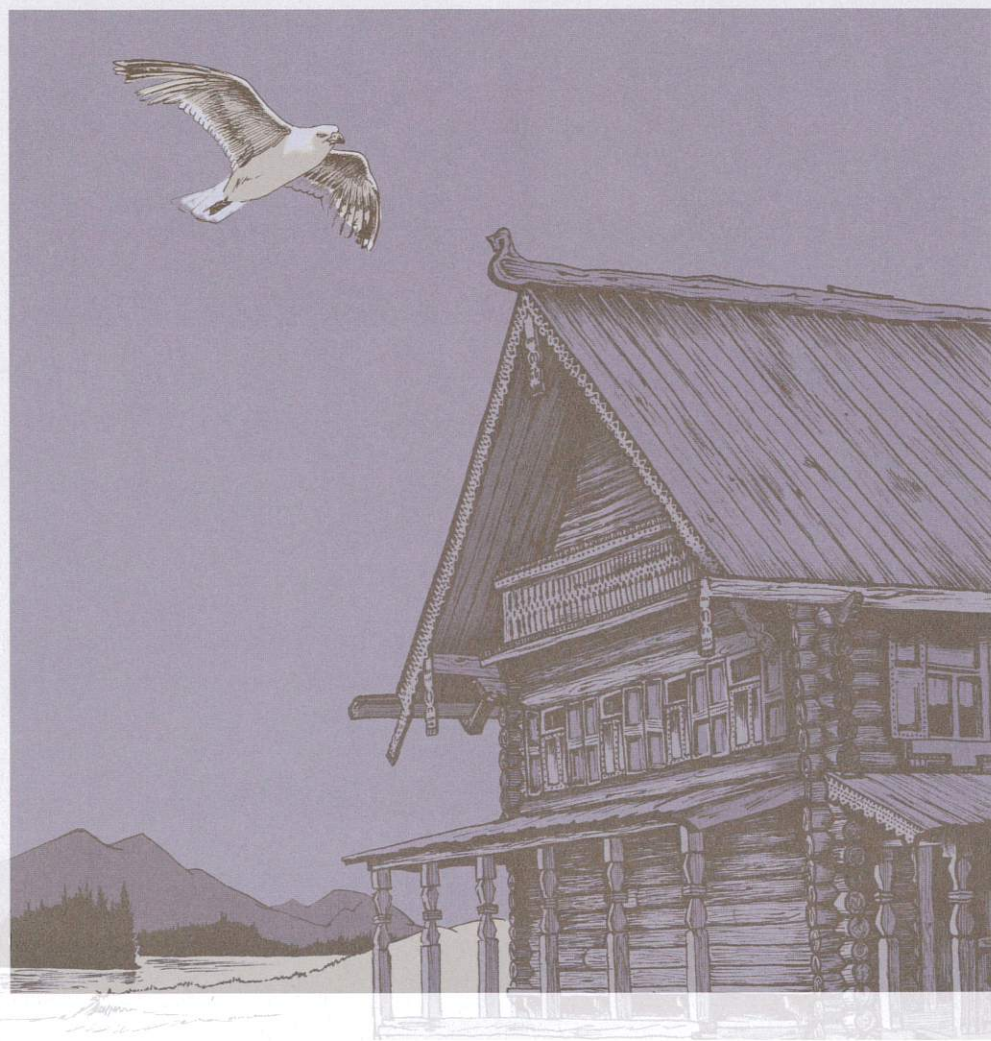
# The Seagull

Written by  
**Anton Chekhov**

Directed by  
**Barta Heiner**

Oct. 31–Nov. 17, 2007  
Margetts Theatre  
Harris Fine Arts Center

Translated by  
**Thomas F. Rogers**





REPORTING ARTS AND CULTURE

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## The Seagull

By **Anton Chekhov**

Translated by **Thomas F. Rogers**

Directed by **Barta Heiner**



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Viva La Vie Boheme!

### Setting

Sorin's estate, Ukraine, early 1900s.

BYU Department of Theatre and Media Arts

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## Cast

Medvedenko	Andrew Veenstra
Masha	Olivia Carrasco
Jakov	Christopher Davis
Worker	Rafe Gándola
Sorin	David Morgan
Treplev	Jason Purdie
Nina	Caitlin Wise
Polina	Emily Foster
Dorn	Kevin Goertzen
Shamraev	Gene Ledbetter
Arkadina	Lauren Noll
Trigorin	David St. Julien
Cook	Anne Shakespeare
Maid	Abby Burnworth

## Production Staff

Director	Barta Heiner
Dramaturg	Janice Lynn Jenson
Production Stage Manager	Orinda Herring
Scenic Designer	Susan Jaussi
Lighting Designer	Anna Kron
Costume Designer	Summer Brown
Sound Designer	Christina Tibbetts
Makeup and Hair Designer	Shiloh Cheney
Assistant Costume Designer	Mary Haddock
Assistant Makeup and Hair Designer	Mary Haddock
Assistant Stage Manager	Mitchell Glass
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## The Follies of Obsession

Barta Heiner  
Director

There passes before one a long file of men and women, slaves of their love, of their stupidity and idleness, of their greed for the good things of life; there walk the slaves of the dark fear of life; they straggle anxiously along, filling life with incoherent words about the future, feeling that in the present there is no place for them. In front of that dreary, grey crowd of helpless people there passed a great, wise, and observant man and, with a sad smile, with a tone of gentle but deep reproach he said to them: "You live badly, my friends. It is shameful to live like that."

—Maxim Gorky



Trigorin (David St. Julien)  
and Arkadina (Lauren Noll)

Gorky was speaking of Chekhov's gift of being able to expose the idiosyncrasies of human nature through laughter and tears. His play, *The Seagull*, characterizes many themes: unrequited love, parental irresponsibility, and the sins of omission—to name a few.

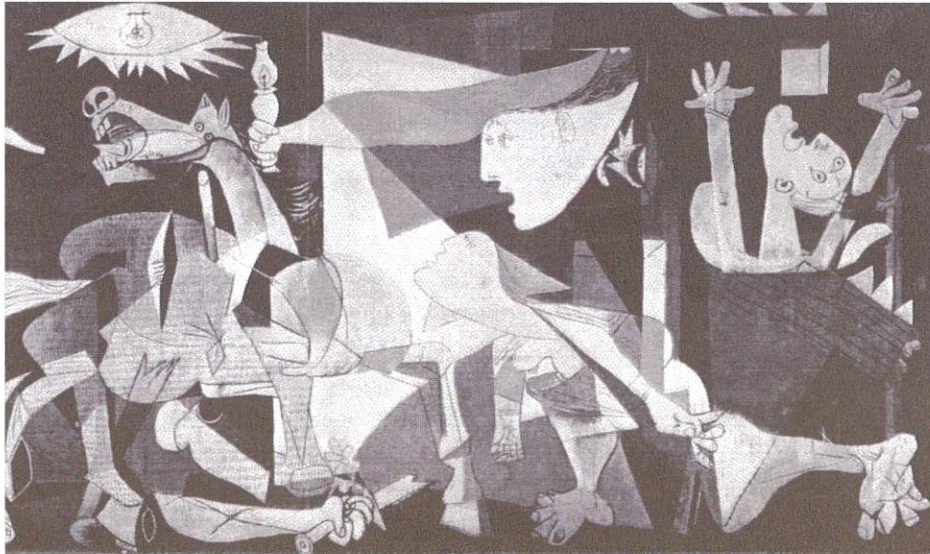
However, I believe the folly of obsession encompasses them all. Too often we find ourselves longing for the good things in life, becoming slaves to the ideal of the perfect mate, becoming obsessed with money or fame, or waiting for what the future might bring. When all around us is goodness and we are too blinded by false dreams to see the great worth of people and opportunities close by. Masha obsesses over Treplev and overlooks the kindness of Medvedenko. Arkadina obsesses over money and her appearance to the point of inhibiting the progress of her son's education and happiness. And Nina obsesses about the fantasy of fame and follows it to her destruction. Perhaps we can all see ourselves in one of the characters in *The Seagull*. And if so, then how can we learn to appreciate those who are around us? How do we stop fearing life and begin savoring what God has given us? □

# Chekhov as the Avant-garde

Janice Lynn Jenson  
Dramaturg

The avant-garde, a term borrowed from the military to describe a soldier in the front lines leading his fellow soldiers to battle, is now colloquial for contemporary arts and artists that are radical, advanced, and forward-thinking. Although we may often find this and other avant-garde art to be unusual, through the process of defamiliarization—of both form and content—art of the avant-garde forges ahead to change art, and in the process, our perceptions. Although we often think of Chekhov's work as part of the literary canon, his pioneering spirit parallels the ideals of the avant-garde, taking *The Seagull* to the forefront of a battle of theatrical ideology.

*The Seagull*, Chekhov's second play, shows his sense of adventure. He reworked the conventions of an art he had grown to love as a boy. In this quest he rejected the traditional Russian melodrama of the day and attempted something else. No one can quite put a word on it even today. He considered himself a naturalist. Today we consider Chekhov to be a pioneer of symbolism or a father of realism. And he adamantly disliked



Picasso's *Guernica* is a prime example of the artist's avant-garde cubist style that is no longer shocking to audiences.

the official avant-garde movement of his age, although, by his inherent nature, his revolutionary spirit can be considered comparable to the literal term of avant-garde. Whatever the semantics, Chekhov forged ahead with art reform in *The Seagull*. He was markedly upset at the debut at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in 1896 because it had limited rehearsal time and the actors didn't comprehend the text—the play was notably a failure. He admitted to some friends later that he hid in a dressing room for a few acts so as not to share in the humiliation of the performance. Why didn't this revolutionary performance appeal to the audience? As Greenberg, a prominent art historian, explains, "almost all new manifestations of art get misunderstood in the first attempt to explain them, and they usually stay misunderstood for a good while after" (Greenberg, *Late Writings*, 8).

Nemirovich-Danchenko, one of two founders of the Moscow Art Theatre, rediscovered the text and found it a perfect fit for the theatre's aim, as *The Seagull*'s stark realism was needed to encourage an alteration in production style. Although the theatre had already produced a handful of plays, the combination of Stanislavsky's style and the realism in the Chekhov's text created a truly avant-garde theatrical experience. *The Seagull* was a perfect fit for the Moscow Art Theatre, as both Stanislavsky and Chekhov earnestly desired an alteration of the production process—deviating from the star system, using a unified concept, and following a director—all of which are now common in contemporary theatre. Thus, through the combination of text and alteration of form, theatrical realism was born.

Regarding the purpose of the avant-garde, Greenberg stated, "The true and most important function of the avant-garde was not to 'experiment,' but to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture moving in the midst of ideological confusion and violence" (Greenberg, "Avant-Garde," 2). Therefore, Chekhov did not write *The Seagull* with the intent to merely be cutting-edge and experimental. He saw the need for a reform in his society and in the art of his society; Chekhov merely responded. Ideologies of art from the avant-garde are eventually adopted into mainstream culture, thus necessitating the presence of the avant-garde for the further progression of society. "Official culture has assimilated the avant-garde art all along, but only after waiting until a given phase of the avant-garde has receded far enough into the past" (Greenberg, *Late Works*, 20). Without Chekhov's work, today's mainstream theatre would be much different.

Although once avant-garde and revolutionary, *The Seagull* has been adopted into our theatrical canon. Many of the artists whom we consider prominent in culture—Picasso, Beckett, Duchamp—relied on their sense of adventure when exploring the unknown of art. Does canonization invalidate the text? A comprehensive study of art includes canonical works as well as that of the avant-garde. It is therefore necessary to look ahead towards new art and forms, perhaps even stumbling upon the next great movement in our journey. Art and theatre of the avant-garde is the only way to combat the dumbing down of culture. □

# Meet the Company

**Abby Burnworth**  
Maid

From Mill Hall, Pennsylvania. Abby is starting her first year in the pre-music program. Other credits include title role in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*.

**Olivia Carrasco**  
Masha

From Huntington Beach, California. Olivia is a junior in the BFA acting program. Recent acting credits include player in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Mother in *Bus Stop*, and narrator in *The Boxcar Children*.

**Christopher Davis**  
Jakov

From Pepperell, Massachusetts. Christopher is a sophomore with a double major in acting program and Russian. Recent credits include Filostrato in *The Decameron* and Dr. Sanderson in *Harvey*.

**Emily Foster**  
Polina

From Las Vegas, Nevada. Emily is a recent transfer student from UNLV. Other credits include Elizabeth in *Six Degrees of Separation*, Chris Gorman in *Rumors*, and Emily Webb in *Our Town*.

**Rafe Gandola**  
Servant

From San Diego, California. Rafe is a freshman majoring in international relations. Prior performances include *Candide*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Inherit the Wind*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *Pippin* (a 2006 Edinburgh Fringe Festival production). He was awarded the best cameo and named a humorous monologue finalist by the California Theatre Education Association.

**Kevin Goertzen**  
Dorn

From Orem, Utah. Kevin is a senior in the BFA acting program. Recent credits include Starbuck in *The Rainmaker*, Curly in *Oklahoma!*, Radames in *Aida*, Bobby in *Urinetown*, and Archibald Craven in *The Secret Garden*.

**Gene Ledbetter**  
Shamraev

From Provo, Utah. Gene is a sophomore in the pre-acting program. Recent credits include Metellus Cimber in *Julius Ceasar*, Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, and Smirnov in *The Boor*.

**Lauren Noll**  
Arkadina

From Johnson City, Tennessee. Lauren is a senior in the BFA acting program. Recent acting credits include Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*, Horatio in *Hamlet*, Alais in *The Lion in Winter*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, and Rusty in *Footloose*. Dramaturgical credits include *The Little Foxes*.

**Jason Roger Albert**  
Purdie  
Treplev

From Pleasant Grove, Utah. Jason is a senior in the BFA acting program. Recent credits include Polonius in *Hamlet*, Charles in *Angels Unaware*, Reginald in *Getting Married*, and Ross in *Macbeth*.

**David St. Julien**  
Trigorin

From Provo, Utah. David is a senior in the BFA acting program. Recent credits include Dr. Einstein in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Howard in *Moon Over Buffalo*, Valere in *The Miser*, and Tony Kirby in *You Can't Take It with You*.

**Anne Shakespeare**  
Cook

From Vernal, Utah. Anne is a sophomore in the pre-acting program. Recent credits include Irish Dancer and Teacher in Pioneer Legacy Theatre, and scenic designer for *My Fair Lady*.

**Andrew Veenstra**  
Medvedenko

From Rochester, New York. Andrew is a junior in acting. Recent credits include Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Lumiere in *Beauty and the Beast*. Andrew has also performed with the North Carolina Ballet Company and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Caitlin Wise**  
Nina

From San Diego, California. Caitlin is a senior in the BFA acting program. Recent credits include Lucia in *Julius Caesar*, Pedrolino in *The Faithful Friend*; the White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; Chris in *Whisper Island*; and Mr. Toad in *The Wind and the Willows*.

# Production Staff

## **Summer Brown** Costume Designer

From Pahrump, Nevada. Summer is a senior in theatre arts education with a minor in TESOL. Recent credits include assistant costume designer for *Hamlet* and *Taming of the Shrew*, Mother in *The Yellow Boat*, Sunny in *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, and director of *Peter Pan*.

## **Shiloh Cheney** Makeup Designer

From Evanston, Wyoming. Shiloh is a third-year graduate student in costume design. Recent credits include *Il trovatore*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Angels Unaware*.

## **Mitchell Glass** Asst. Stage Manager

From Mesa, Arizona. Mitchell is a junior in the theatre arts education program. Recent credits include LeFou in *Beauty and the Beast*, Gravedigger/Player in *Hamlet*, Ellard in *The Foreigner*, Alligator in *Really Rosie*, and assistant director/choreographer/dance captain in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

## **Mary Haddock** Asst. Costume Design

From Bountiful, Utah. Mary is a senior in the BA theatre arts program. Recent credits include assistant costume designer for *You're a Good man Charlie Brown*. Other Credits include costume designer at UVSC on *The Miser*, *Farewell To Eden*, and *Sleepy Hollow*.

## **Barta Lee Heiner** Director

Received her BA in theatre from BYU and later attended the American Conservatory Theatre where she earned her MFA in acting. She acted professionally with Denver Center Theatre and taught acting and directed projects for the National Theatre Conservatory in Denver. Eventually Barta was asked to return to BYU to strengthen the acting program. She has performed in numerous theatrical and film productions including Lettice in *Lettice and Lovage*, Prospero in *The Tempest*, the title role of *King Lear*, Clara in *Brigham City*, and Eleanor in *The Lion in Winter*. Her most recent directing projects have been *Julius Caesar*, a collaborative project of *The Trojan Women* with Caroline Prohosky, director of *Dancers' Company*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *Macbeth*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. She recently returned from the University of San Diego where taught and directed MFA acting students in Shaw's *Major Barbara*.

## **Orinda Herring** Stage Manager

From Saint Johns, Arizona. Orinda is a senior in the theatre arts program. Recent credits include stage manager and technical director for *The White Star*, assistant lighting designer for *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and stage manager for *Blood Brothers*.

## **Susan Jaussi** Scenic designer

From Provo, Utah. Susan graduated from BYU with a BA in theatre studies with a design emphasis. Recent design credits at BYU include scenic designer for *Die Fledermaus*, *Aida*, *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, and costume designer for *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.

## **Janice Jenson** Dramaturg

From Riverside, California. Janice is a senior in the theatre arts program. Recent credits include stage managing *Little Women*, *Stuck on the Edge*, *My Fair Lady*, *42nd Street*, and *Cinderella*.

## **Anna Kron** Lighting Designer

From Columbus, Ohio. Anna is a junior in the theatre arts with a minor in communications. Recent credits include stage manager for *The Wrestling Season*, assistant stage manager for *Hamlet*, and assistant lighting designer for *The Foreigner*.

## **Judy Simmons** Props Designer

Most currently from Salem, Utah. Judy is a junior in the media arts program. Recent design credits include props designer for *The Gondoliers* and *The Little Foxes*, and costume designer for the film *Dragon Hunter*. Recent acting credits Kori in *The Wrestling Season* and Feste in *Twelfth Night*

## **Christina Tibbetts** Sound Designer

From Mesa, Arizona. Christina is a junior in the theatre arts program. Recent credits include assistant sound designer for *Stuck on the Edge*, director for *Cinder-Riley*, and drama teacher at Montessori International School.

up and away

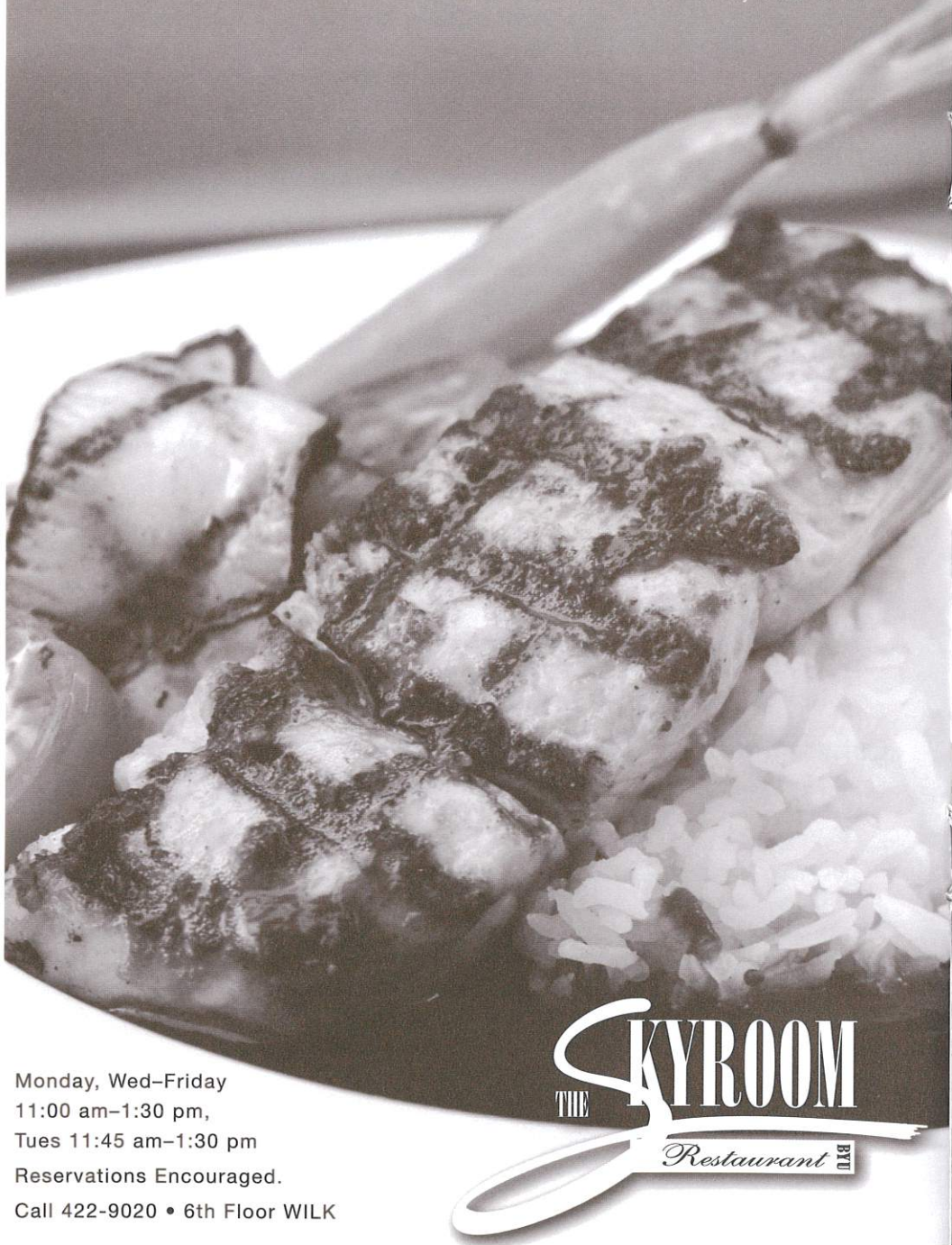
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## Viva La Vie Boheme!

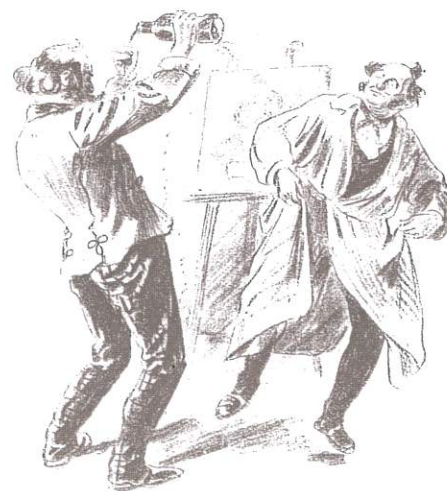
Janice Jenson  
Dramaturg

Bohemia (n): Literally, a geographic area in Europe that once shared borders with Saxony, Silesia, and Hungary. Today it refers to any gathering of artists, especially in a secluded area, such as a ghetto or coffeehouse.

Bohemian (adj): Refers specifically to the followers of John Huss, who was excommunicated from the Catholic Church and was eventually burned at the stake for heresy. The Hussites belief of extreme sacrifice for an intellectual idea continues today in artistic thought. Today, to be bohemian means to adopt any one of the following characteristics: extreme lifestyle, hair, clothing, beliefs. It is characterized by both

eccentricity and eclecticism. A bohemian likes to shock the bourgeoisie; however, they are a product of the society that they despise. They are often poor. Although many bohemians are artists, it is not a requirement to be bohemian—you just have to hang out with the right people. Modern manifestations include the hippy, emo, punk, goth, indie, and hipster movements and other counter culture movements associated with adolescence.

“They say it’s too bohemian, but I’m drawn to the lake, like a seagull.”



### Scenes de la Vie Boheme

The most recognizable work celebrating the bohemian life of artists is that of Henri Murger. Murger lived in the Latin Quarter of Paris when its prominent bohemian community began to spring up. With three friends, he established the Water-Drinkers, an association to encourage and discuss art. Eventually, these four friends became known as “The Four Musketeers of Bohemia.”

*Scenes de la Vie Boheme* were Murger’s autobiographic sketches and stories originally published in a Parisian

newsletter. These short vignettes have greatly influenced the way we perceive the life of artists. Murger's original work has been adapted several times, most notably by Puccini (*La bohème*) and Jonathan Larson (*Rent*).

It seems that many adults see a voyage of the imagination as something reserved for artists, writers, and other 'creative' people. I don't agree with that. Yes, there are people with extraordinary talent. But creativity and talent are not the same thing. With practice, we all have access to creativity, no matter where our talents lie.

—James Christensen, as told to Renwick St. James

## To be an effective artist, is it necessary to adopt a counterculture lifestyle?

To days of inspiration,  
Playing hooky,  
Making something out of nothing  
The need to express, to communicate,  
To going against the grain,  
Going insane, going mad.

To loving tension, no pension  
To more than one dimension  
To starving for attention,  
Hating convention, hating pretension,  
Not to mention, of course,  
Hating dear old mom and dad.

To being an us for once,  
Instead of a them.  
—from *Rent*

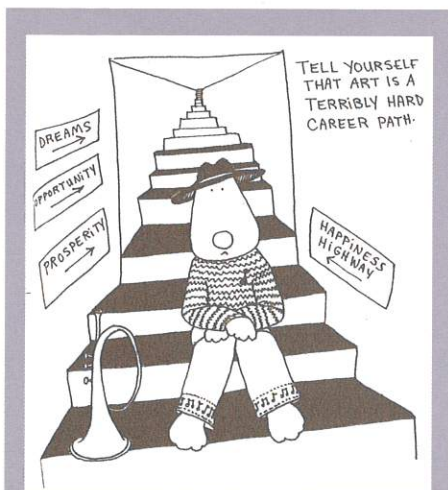
### The Hunger Artist

Kafka satirized the traditional view of the starving artist in *The Hunger Artist*. The main character is treated like a caged animal on display for the entire community. He becomes "intoxicated of success" and focuses on starving rather than creating art.

### The Artist's Way

Julia Cameron suggests that to be truly creative, an artist must "let go of the drama of being a suffering artist" (Cameron, xxvi).

In her guide that seeks to open one's creative potential, Cameron explains that true creativity comes when one eradicates all self-destructive behavior from one's life and creates a connection to the Great Creator. While this book is specifically focused on unblocking artists, Cameron encourages adopting creativity in other parts of our life, as "our lives become our work of art" (Cameron, xxvi).



One of Cameron's satirical suggestions in *How to Avoid Making Art*

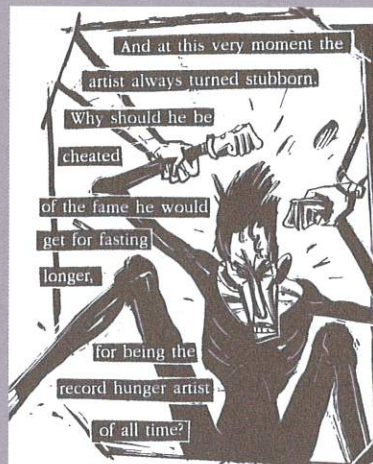


Image from Peter Kuper's *Give It Up! and other short stories*.

To go into acting is like asking admission to an insane asylum. Anyone may apply, but only the certifiably insane are admitted.

—Michael Shurtleff

### The Gospel Vision of the Arts

It has been said that many of the great artists were perverts or moral degenerates. In spite of their immorality they become great and celebrated artists. What could be the result if discovery were made of equal talent in men who were clean and free from vices, thus entitled to revelations?

—President Spencer W. Kimball

## Does the bohemian lifestyle help or hinder artistic pursuits?

Modern bohemians are mostly teenagers and young adults, each eager to celebrate their radical lifestyle. While piercings, fishnets, and vintage blazers may be far from the Russian lake or from the Latin Quarter of Paris, bohemia keeps one thing in mind: challenging the norm. □

Bohemia antedated the avant-garde and meant a way of life, not a way of art.

—Clement Greenberg

There was music in the cafes at night  
And revolution in their air.

—Bob Dylan, *Tangled Up in Blue*

She sang, she played the piano, she painted in oils, she carved, she took part in amateur performances; and all this not just anyhow, but all with talent, whether she made lanterns for an illumination or dressed up or tied somebody's cravat—everything she did was exceptionally graceful, artistic, and charming. But her talents showed themselves in nothing so clearly as in her faculty for quickly becoming acquainted and on intimate terms with celebrated people.

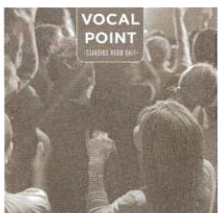
—Chekhov's description of Olga Ivanova in *The Grasshopper*

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### The Seagull Post-Show Discussions

"Art benefits from examination on the parts of both artist and audience . . . Creative inspiration accompanied by analysis and reflection will most likely lead to productions and projects that fulfill the spiritual, social and personal potential of the theatrical event."

—Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas

<<http://www.lmda.org/blog/LMDASponsoredPrograms/ElliottHayesAward>>

We invite you to participate a post-show discussion following Thursday performances facilitated by the production dramaturg. Audience members will have the opportunity to examine, analyze, reflect on, and respond to the theatrical event they have just experienced. In preparation for the discussion you may want to consider the following questions:

- Which character best represents Chekhov's voice in *The Seagull*?
- Overt political art usually passes away with the generation that inspired it. What qualities of *The Seagull* make its social and political commentary timeless?
- Art is a personal experience; everyone that views BYU's production of *The Seagull* is affected differently. What in this play affects you the most? Why?
- Do you feel that the differences in your culture and the culture portrayed on stage inhibit your understanding of the performance?
- What qualities in Chekhov's *The Seagull* do you think Stanislavsky found that paralleled his desire for a reform in acting?
- Realism is currently the dominant acting style in the U.S. Do you think this is a hindrance or an aid in our ability to produce theatre?
- How does the metatheatrical commentary within the play reflect the plays position in theatre history?

# Theatre & Community Stories

Funded by the Mary Lou Fulton Chair in Theatre and Media Arts

Telling stories is what we do. We tell stories in the plays we perform and the films we make. We tell stories in our families and in our community. Join us as we reach into our communities and search for and tell the stories that define, characterize, and motivate us, and help us learn about each other. We hope to expand our definition of performance in ways that allow us to examine who we are and also our relationships within the multiple communities where we live as families, neighbors, cultural and religious groups, and citizens.

The following events will be part of this initiative during our 2007–2008 season.

Sonja Kuftinec, professor at the University of Minnesota, will present the Mary Lou Fulton Lecture, Thursday, November 1, 11 a.m., in the HFAC. In addition to the lecture, she will present workshops and master classes on community-based theatre.

Amy Jensen, TMA alumna and MFA student in dramaturgy at Stony Brook University,

will be an artist in residence in January. She will facilitate a devised piece based on community stories.

TMA will co-host the Timpanogos Storytelling Conference, February 22 and 23 at BYU. Register through Conferences and Workshops, <http://ce.byu.edu/cw>.



Several of our theatre season offerings were selected with this initiative in mind, including *The Jungle Book*, *Playing Fields*, and *Esperanza Rising*.

Other initiative events include (times and places to be announced):

- Ten-minute play festival in December.
- Applied theatre workshop and showcase directed by George D. Nelson
- Workshops with community and education groups on theatre and media storytelling, devised theatre, and community stories
- Additional productions presented on the TMA Platform Season

For more information, visit [tma.byu.edu](http://tma.byu.edu). □



The centerpiece of the Theatre and Community Stories initiative is a weeklong residency of Sonja Kuftinec, professor from the University of Minnesota Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Professor Kuftinec's research focuses on the role of theatre in fostering social change in various communities.

She has created theatre works both in the U.S. and in the Middle East that specifically address this issue. During her residency, Professor Kuftinec will also present workshops and master classes on community-based theatre and visit various theatre classes.

## Mark your calendar

Professor **Sonja Kuftinec** presents  
Mary Lou Fulton Endowed Chair Lecture  
**Re-membering Mostar: Building Community and Theatre with Bosnia Youth**  
Thursday, November 1, 11:00 a.m.  
Nelke Experimental Theatre

**Devised Performance Piece**  
Friday, November 2, 5:00 p.m.  
Nelke Experimental Theatre

Free

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The Department of Theatre and Media Arts expresses deep appreciation to our generous patrons. For information about giving to Theatre and Media Arts, visit <http://cfac.byu.edu> and click on the link "Giving to the College."

For information on how you can play a greater role in Theatre and Media Arts at BYU contact Rodger D. Sorensen, department chair, at (801) 422-8132 or [rodger\\_sorensen@byu.edu](mailto:rodger_sorensen@byu.edu)

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