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AUCKLAND  
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COMPANY

On behalf of the Auckland Theatre Company, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the fourth and final play of our 1994 International Season, *THE SEAGULL*. Undoubtedly, this is our most ambitious project to date, and our first sortie into the classics. Chekhov is regarded as the father of the modern theatre. His writing is exceptional to the extent that what is not said has perhaps more potency than the dialogue. His advice to the actors of his time captures the essence of his work:

"In life, people eat most of the time, drink, flirt and talk nonsense. This must be shown on stage. We must make a play where people come, go, eat, talk about the weather, play whist....let everything on stage be as complex and simple as in life. People dine and while they eat, their fortunes are made and their lives broken."

Award-winning director Colin McColl, whose last play for us was the compelling *DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN*, joins designer Tony Rabbit to create another vivid and memorable theatrical experience. Under his helm, an outstanding group of actors combine their talents to bring to life Chekhov's characters in all their quiet desperation. Bridget Armstrong returns from London for the role of her life, as Arkadina. Craig Parker, one of New Zealand's most popular young actors, takes a break from television to play her son, Konstantin and Sophia Hawthorne expands her classic repertoire as the *Seagull* Nina. Add to these the comedic skills of Mark Hadlow and the unique talents of Alison Bruce, Martyn Sanderson, Stephen Lovatt, Carmel McGlone, Geoff Snell and Ryan McFadyen and you have a cast as classic as the play itself.

It seems apt to close our International Season with truly international sponsorship. We thank Hewlett Packard and Smirnoff Vodka for their generous support, and Thai Airways for flying Bridget back from London. As well, we must thank Television New Zealand for its invaluable contribution throughout the year. We believe that one of theatre's rarest qualities is its ability to bring people together. In a way, this extraordinary blend of sponsors proves this to be true.

From all of us at Auckland Theatre Company, we thank you for your support this year. It has been gratifying to see audience numbers steadily increase and to welcome new subscribers. We trust. We look forward to seeing you in 1995 at *OLEANNA*.

Very best wishes

Simon Prast

ARTISTIC CO-ORDINATOR



## COLIN McCOLL

### Director

Colin was Artistic Director of Downstage Theatre in Wellington 1984-92.

His innovative productions there such as **Romeo and Juliet** and **The Threepenny Opera** spurred an invitation to tour Ibsen's Hedda Gabler to the Edinburgh Festival, the Ibsen Festival in Oslo, the Covent Garden Festival and the Festival of Sydney.

Colin was also acclaimed for his production of **Michael James Manaia** which toured to Edinburgh in 1991, and directed Ibsen's **The Vikings** for the National Theatre of Norway and **The Master Builder** for the Dutch National Theatre.

Colin directed **Daughters of Heaven**, the highly successful Auckland Theatre Company production at the Watershed in 1993.

Recently Colin has directed Shaw's **Mrs Warren's Profession** for the Dutch National Theatre and the highly successful **Nga Tangata Toa/The Warrior People** for Taki Rua Theatre in Wellington.



## TONY RABBIT

### Set & Lighting Designer

For the past 19 years Tony has worked in theatre, film and television, initially as a lighting designer then as a Set & Lighting Designer for theatre and film.

The Seagull is the 27th production that Tony and Colin McColl have collaborated on.



## ELIZABETH WHITING

### Costumes

Elizabeth was Wardrobe Supervisor for Theatre Corporate and Mercury Theatre. Elizabeth is now a freelance designer and wardrobe supervisor with many outstanding productions to her credit. Most recently Elizabeth was wardrobe supervisor for Auckland Opera's **Magic Flute**, and the Harry M Miller production of **Jesus Christ Superstar**, Designer for television series **Homeward Bound**, Designer for Auckland Theatre Company's **Angels in America** and Wardrobe for **By Degrees**.

**AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY**  
in association with  
**HEWLETT PACKARD & SMIRNOFF VODKA**  
presents

# THE SEAGULL

by **Anton Chekhov**

in a new version by Colin McColl

Designer ~ Tony Rabbit    Costumes ~ Elizabeth Whiting  
Opening Herald Theatre, Aotea Centre, August 25, 1994

### SETTING

Sorin's Country Estate, Russia.

#### Act I & II

#### Then a 15 Minute Interval

#### Act III & IV

<b>Arkadina</b> - an actress	Bridget ARMSTRONG
<b>Konstantin</b> - her son	Craig PARKER
<b>Sorin</b> - her brother	Martyn SANDERSON
<b>Nina</b> - a young girl, the daughter of a wealthy landowner	Sophia HAWTHORNE
<b>Shamrayev</b> - Farm Manager	Mark HADLOW
<b>Polena</b> - his wife	Carmel McGLONE
<b>Masha</b> , - his daughter	Alison BRUCE
<b>Trigorin</b> - a famous writer	Simon PRAST
<b>Dorn</b> - a doctor	Geoffrey SNELL
<b>Medvedenko</b> - a schoolteacher	Stephen LOVATT
<b>Yakov</b>	Ryan McFADYEN

<b>Director</b>	Colin McCOLL
<b>Set &amp; Lighting Designer</b>	Tony RABBIT
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Elizabeth WHITING
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Bolke WATER
<b>Artistic Coordinator</b>	Simon PRAST
<b>Production Manager</b>	Teresa SOKOLICH
<b>Wardrobe Supervisor</b>	Brett GARTON
<b>Publicity &amp; Marketing</b>	Diana Goudling Publicity
<b>Production Assistant</b>	Julie SMITH
<b>Set Construction</b>	P C, Andy and Joe
<b>Assistant Stage Manager</b>	Michelle ARMSTRONG

#### Theatre Foundation Trust Board Members

James Macaulay (Chairman)  
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Judith Tizard MP  
David Stubbs  
Hinemoa Holmes  
Simon Prast

#### Auckland Theatre Company

Artistic Coordinator, Simon Prast  
Production Manager, Teresa Sokolich  
Business Manager, Matthew Whiting

# THE SEAGULL

## CAST

### **Bridget Armstrong** *Arkadina*



Bridget is one of New Zealand's most accomplished actors. Bridget trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and her illustrious career has included leading roles on the West End, London and New Zealand. Of the many outstanding film, television and stage roles, here are only a few highlights: Melanaine Klein in *Mrs Klein* (Mercury), Alice in *Joyful and Triumphant* (Television), Maryanne in *Desperate Remedies* (Feature), *Platonov* - BBC TV (Opp. Rex Harrison), *Katherine Mansfield Series* (BBC-TV), *Half Way Up the Tree* (West End - Director: Sir John Gielgud).

Bridget's new home is in Wimbledon, UK. We welcome her back to Auckland to play Arkadina in Auckland Theatre Company production of *The Seagull*. Apart from acting, Bridget's other passion is designing and making exquisitely unique hats.

Her last New Zealand stage appearance was, *Olivia* in *12th Night* (Watershed Production 1992).

### **Craig Parker** *Konstantin*



Craig is probably best known in New Zealand as Guy Warner in *Shortland Street*. However, prior to landing this core cast role, Craig had successfully worked on stage and screen. Craig played the lead in a 1993 short film *Manmade*, and the lead Daniel Rosel in a made for TV drama *Mother Tongue* (1992). Craig's pre-Shortland Street television credits include a guest lead role in *Gold* and Justin Grigg, a core cast role in *Gloss*.

Craig was last seen at Herald Theatre as Malcolm in *Macbeth* (1992). Craig is a Company Member of Auckland Theatresports.

### **Simon Prast** *Trigorin*



Simon graduated from The Theatre Corporate Drama School in 1984.

He has acted at Theatre Corporate, Mercury Theatre and Downstage Theatre in such plays as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Sex Fiend*, *Hamlet* and *M. Butterfly* and the Auckland Theatre Company's production of *Daughters of Heaven*.

Television credits include, *Gloss*, *Erebus: The Aftermath*, *The Sinking of the Rainbow Warrior* and *Shortland Street*.

Simon is a founder and the Artistic Coordinator for Auckland Theatre Company.

### **Sophia Hawthorne** *Nina*



Sophia's first professional engagement was at the age of ten when she played the role of Brigitta for 80 consecutive performances in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The Sound of Music* at the Mercury Theatre.

In 1990 she was Betty Paris in a season of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, also at the Mercury, directed by Miles Taylor. In 1993 Sophia played Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Herald Theatre. Recently Sophia played Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, directed by Simon Bennett.

### **Mark Hadlow** *Shamrayev*



Mark has enjoyed huge success with his one-man show *Sensitive New Age Guy*, directed by Colin McColl and designed by Tony Rabbit. This multi-talented performer most recently played Herod in the national tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. On television, Mark played Ilona Rodgers brother, opposite the late, great Billy T. James, and has appeared in many other television shows including *Close to Home*, *McPhail & Gadsby*, *Black Beauty* and *Shark in the Park*.

Theatre roles have spanned the classics, *Uncle Vanya* by Chekhov and the comedic *Privates on Parade*. Then there is the unforgettable 'ripped pants' Ansett NZ television commercial!

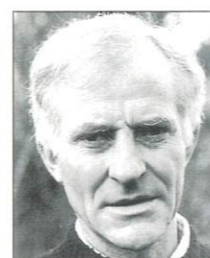


### **Alison Bruce** *Masha*

Alison has a wealth of experience in theatre performance and had worked regularly at Mercury Theatre. Her theatre credits include *King Lear*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Les Liaison Dangereuse*, *Ladies Night I & II*, *Henry 8* with Theatre at Large as Henry, 1994 Winter Shakespeare as Ophelia in the Watershed production of *Hamlet*, directed by Michael Hurst.

Alison has played lead roles in two features *User Friendly* and *Old Scores* and had support roles in *The End of the Golden Weather*, *Alex, Angel at My Table*. Her television work includes the lead in *Star Runner*, single episodes of *Shark in the Park*, *Marlin Bay III*, a key role in *Sinking of the Rainbow Warrior* and many episodes of *Shortland Street*.

### **Martyn Sanderson** *Sorin*



Martyn was educated at Christ's College in Christchurch, Keble College, Oxford and also read theology at Cambridge. He has done almost everything in performing arts! Martyn was founding director of Downstage Theatre in Wellington, and is a freelance writer, director and producer, he had also set up an independent film production company, Scratch Pictures. As an actor, he has appeared in many outstanding stage, television and feature film productions, such as: *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, *Desperate Remedies*, *Sinking of Rainbow Warrior*, *Utu* and the soon to be released *The Last Tattoo*. For television: *Star Runner*, *Shortland Street*, *Marlin Bay*, and stage: *Think of a Garden* (Watershed).

### **Geoffrey Snell** *Dorn*



Geoffrey's first Chekovian role was in *Three Sisters* at Bristol Old Vic while at Drama School in the '70s. He has since played Vershinin in *Three Sisters* at Theatre Corporate and Yepihodov in *Cherry Orchard* at the Mercury. Geoffrey has had an extensive career in theatre, film and television in the U.K. and New Zealand. Productions include *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *View from the Bridge* and *Crucible*. Modern New Zealand works include *Foreskins Lament*, *Weed*, *Ladies Night* and *Squatter*. Geoffrey has appeared in *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* at the Herald Theatre and most recent television appearance was as Don McKinnon in the political docu-drama *Fallout*.

### **Stephen Lovatt** *Medvedenko*



Stephen trained at New Zealand Drama School and now has a successful career in film, television and theatre. For television Stephen has played Ethan Gill in *Shortland Street*, Cliff Summers in *Marlin Bay III* and is a core cast member of the soon to be released television series *Plain Clothes*. And has recently completed the feature film *The Last Tattoo*. Stephen's theatre experience has been extensive: *Theatre*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Macbeth*, *End of the Golden Weather*, *M. Butterfly* for Downstage, and more recently Lucius in *Titus Andronicus* at Maidment.

### **Carmel McGlone** *Polena*



Carmel returned to New Zealand recently after spending the last four years in Australia as a member of Simon Phillips ensemble of actors at the State Theatre Company of South Australia and a season at the Melbourne Theatre Company in Louis Nowra's *Capricornia*. A wide and varied range of stage work included, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Cabaret*. Recent work in New Zealand: Gaylene Prestons' feature *Bread and Roses*, the award winning short film *Lemming Aid* (director - Grant La Hood), currently filming *Plain Clothes* for South Pacific Pictures. Recent theatre work: *Ophelia Thinks Harder* (Circa), her own piece *Digger & Nudger*, for *Hensteeth* with Lorae Parry (Watershed).

### **Ryan McFadyen** *Yakov*



Ryan left Avondale College in 1993, where he was involved with Schools Theatresports Programme for four years, twice representing Auckland. He has studied Shakespeare with Linda Cartwright at Maidment Youth Theatre. Ryan appeared in MYT's Summer Season *Alice in Cyberspace* as well as MYT's mid year production of *Stamping Ground*. Earlier this year Ryan made a guest appearance in 8 episodes of *Shortland Street*.



Anton Chekhov at Melikhovo, April 1897

## ANTON CHEKHOV

**Anton Chekhov was born 17 January 1860 in Taganrog, Southern Russia, one of six children of a grocer, and grandson of a former serf. In 1884 he graduated in medicine from Moscow University; he was already suffering from tuberculosis, which later killed him.**

**Chekhov wrote hundreds of short stories and seventeen plays, of which seven are full-length. These are:**

PLATONOV, written in the early 1880s, not published or performed in his lifetime.

IVANOV, first staged in Moscow in 1887

THE WOOD DEMON, Moscow 1889 (later converted into *Uncle Vanya*);

THE SEAGULL, St Petersburg 1896, Moscow Art Theatre 1898;

UNCLE VANYA, Moscow Art Theatre 1901

THREE SISTERS, Moscow Art Theatre, 31 January, 1901

THE CHERRY ORCHARD, Moscow Art Theatre 1904

**Chekhov died on 2 July 1904 on a visit to the German spa, Badenweiler.**

### ANTON CHEKHOV TO HIS FRIEND GRIGORY ROSSOLIMO,

*in response to a request for material for an album to be published for the Moscow University Medical class reunion 11 October 1899.*

**M**y autobiography? I suffer from a disease: autobiophobia. To read any particulars about myself, and worse still, to write them for publication, is a real torment to me. On a separate sheet I send you a few facts, very bald ones, and I can do no more.

I, A.P. Chekhov, was born January 17, 1860, in Taganrog. I studied first at the Greek school near the Church of King Constantine, then at the Taganrog Grammar School. In 1879 I entered the Moscow university, faculty of Medicine. I had then but a vague idea about the faculties generally, and I do not remember exactly why I chose the medical faculty, but I have had no reason to regret my choice since. While still in my first year I began to publish in weekly magazines and newspapers, and by the early 80s these pursuits had assumed a permanent professional character. In 1888 I was awarded the

Pushkin Prize. In 1890 I travelled to the Island of Sakhalin in order to write a book on our convict settlement there. Not counting law reports, reviews, miscellaneous articles, short news items and everything that I wrote from day to day for the newspapers, which it would not be difficult to find and collect, during the twenty years I have been active in literature I have written and published more than forty-eight hundred pages of stories and novels, I have also written plays of the theatre. There is no doubt in my mind that the study of medicine has had an important influence on my literary work. It significantly broadened the range of my observations and enriched me with the knowledge whose value to me as a writer only another doctor can appreciate. It also served as a guiding influence, and thanks probably to my knowledge of medicine, I have managed to avoid many mistakes. My acquaintance with the natural sciences and with the scientific method has always kept me on my guard, and I have tried, where ever possible, to take the scientific data into consideration,

and where this was impossible I have preferred to not to write at all. Let me note that passing that the conditions of artistic creation do not always admit of complete agreement with scientific data, it is impossible to represent on the stage a death from poisoning as it occurs in reality. But agreement with the facts of science should be felt even within the boundaries of artistic convention, that is, it must be clear to the reader or spectator that it is only a convention, but that he is dealing with a writer who is well-informed. I am not one of those fiction writers who negate the value of science, nor would I belong to the order of those who arrive at everything by their wits. As for my medical practice, as a student I worked in the Voskressensk Zemstovo hospital (near the New Jerusalem Monastery), under the well known Zemstovo doctor, PA Arkhangelsky, and then for a short time I practised in the Zvenigorod hospital. During the years of the cholera epidemic (1892 and 1893) I headed the Melikhovo Region of Serpukhov District.

"I am writing a play ... excerpts from *The Birth of The Seagull*"

**To Alexei Suvorin (Chekhov's publisher) 21 October 1895**

I am writing a play which I probably will not finish until the end of November. I am writing it with considerable pleasure, though I'm flagrantly disregarding the conventions of the stage, it is a comedy with three female parts, six male, four acts, a landscape (view of a lake), lots of talk on literature, little action and tons of love.

**To Suvorin**

21 November 1895

Well, I have now finished the play. I began it *forte* and finished it *Pianissimo*, against all the rules of dramatic art. It came out like a story. I am more dissatisfied than satisfied with it, and, reading over my new-born piece, I become once more convinced that I am not a playwright at all. Although it is so far only a skeleton, a project, which before next season will be changed a million times. I have ordered two copies to be typed on a Remington (the typewriter produces two couples at a time!) and I'll send you one. Only don't let anyone read it. . . .

**To The Same**

1 December 1895

I sent my play to Moscow long ago, but I can get no sound nor smell of it. The Remington and the typist have evidently given me the slip. My head aches. If monasteries admitted unbelievers, and if it were not the rule there to pray, I would become a monk. I am weary of this spinning round.

**To The Same**

6 December 1895

The girl with the Remington let me down cruelly. On going to Moscow I counted upon my play having been typed and sent off whenever it was due, it's now a fortnight since I sent it to the girl. It turns out that the piece and tell me what and how. There is still much time before the next season, so that very fundamental changes are possible. You will get the piece on Friday. Order the flags to be hung out that day.

On 17 October 1896 the play was first staged at the Empress Alexandra Theatre in St Petersburg. Chekhov allowed the actress Yelizaveta Levukeyeva, to use *The Seagull's* opening night for her benefit performance. She was in her nineties, a popular comic actress specialising in broad farce. The house was filled with her admirers, who failed to appreciate the play.

**To Michael Chekhov, his brother**

18 October 1896, St Petersburg

The play fell flat and flopped with a bang. The audience was bewildered. They acted as if they were ashamed to be in the theatre. The performances were vile and stupid. The moral of the story is: I shouldn't write plays.



Chekhov reads *The Seagull* to the company of the Moscow Art Theatre, 1898.

**From Michael P Chekhov, Anton's Brother, *Chekhov and His Subjects* 1923**

**I do not know for certain the source of the subject of *The Seagull*, but these details are known to me. In a rich manor, somewhere near the Rybinsko-Bologovo railway, (the artist) Levitan was spending the summer. He became involved in a very complicated love affair, as a result of which he attempted to commit suicide. He actually did shoot himself, but the bullet merely grazed his head without touching his skull. The alarmed heroines of the love affair, knowing that Chekhov was a doctor, and friend of Levitan's and not wishing to make the affair public, telegraphed urgently to Chekhov asking him to come. He immediately took the train and went there. What happened I do not know; but Anton later told me that he was met by Levitan with a black bandage on his head, which the artist, during the explanation with the ladies, tore off and threw on the floor. Levitan then took a gun and went to the lake. He returned to his lady with a shot seagull which he threw at her feet.**

**To Chekhov from Vera Kommissarzhevskaya (who played Nina, writing after the second performance):**

I've just returned from the theatre, dear Anton Pavlovich. Victory is ours. The play is a complete unanimous success, just as it ought to be, just as it had to be. How I'd like even more is for you to be present and hear the unanimous cry of "Author".

The production closed, however after five performances.

**To Suvorin**

14 December 1896

Stanislavski proposed to use sound effects – the croaking of frogs, the barking of dogs – to recreate a rural atmosphere, Chekhov scoffed at Stanislavski's concern for realism "The theatre has its own conventions," he told him. "There is no fourth wall. Besides, the theatre is art and reflects the quintessence of life, it wants nothing superfluous."

**The play opened on 17 December 1898 after 12 weeks rehearsal, and was a resounding success. To this day, a seagull is painted on the curtain of the Moscow Art Theatre in gratitude to Chekhov.**

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**Message from the sponsor**

Hewlett-Packard is proud to be associated with the Auckland Theatre Company and their production of Anton Chekhov's classic play "The Seagull"

"The Seagull" is widely acknowledged as one of Chekhov's finest plays, with each performance bringing to light new dimensions of this intricate work.

Hewlett-Packard's involvement with this play is fitting, as similar to the way "The Seagull" has become a timeless classic in the theatre, Hewlett-Packard products such as the HP LaserJet printer family, have become enduring classics in the office.

On behalf of Hewlett-Packard I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Auckland Theatre Company for allowing us the opportunity to be involved with this marvellous play and contribute to supporting the arts in New Zealand.

This production of "The Seagull" features some of New Zealand's finest acting talent and an extremely talented director so I'm sure you can look forward to a most spectacular and memorable evening.

**ENJOY!**

Margaret Anderson  
Marketing Manager



Smirnoff vodka and the plays of Anton Chekhov are undisputedly Russian classics which have enjoyed international acclaim. Now they are on stage together in the Auckland Theatre Company's production of "The Seagull".

Like Chekhov, Smirnoff vodka was born in Russia and the history of the brand is a 'real life' drama. The famous recipe developed in 1818 quickly became the toast of the Russian people and received the highest accolade from the Tzar himself - "Purveyor to the Imperial Russian Court". The purity and distinctive taste of Smirnoff may never have reached the market place if Vladimir Smirnoff, condemned to death by firing squad during the Russian Revolution, hadn't managed to escape. He left Moscow in the nick of time, carrying with him the secret formula of his prized vodka.

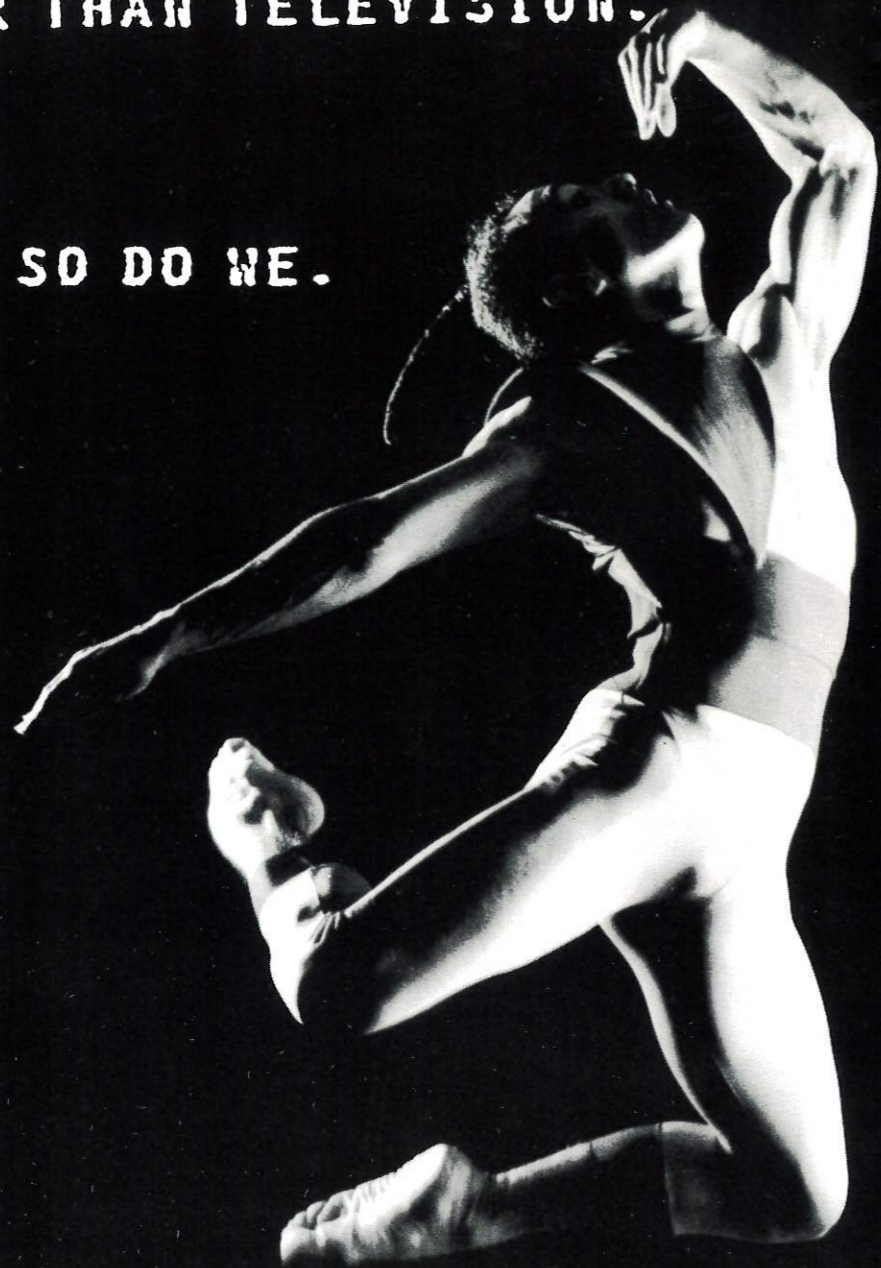
Today Smirnoff is the largest selling vodka in the world and the story has turned a full circle. Smirnoff is once again sold and produced in Russia for the local market.

We hope you enjoy this wonderful production - one of Chekhov's greatest accomplishments - and later a glass of Smirnoff vodka from the bar.

Kate McHardy  
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