

La Mama Theatre presents

TCHEKOV AT THE HOUSE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE

Written by R. Johns and Directed by Alex Menglet

The audience is frequently dragged back and forth between light-hearted antics, thrills of a Romeo and Juliet style romance with the realities of war and riotous revolution...

In Review, 8.5/10



Photo by Laura Owsianka

The Reds once the powerless now the powerful. The Whites once absolute rulers now the powerless. The former Tsar and his family are imprisoned by the Bolsheviks in a provincial house where the Romanov girls perform Chekhov to pass the time under house arrest. Running from 28 August to 8 September at La Mama Courthouse, *Tchekov at The House of Special Purpose* written by AWGIE nominee R. Johns and Directed by Green Room Award Winner Alex Menglet, poses what may have happened in this last house – of existential chaos, youth versus age, hope versus paranoia, and love versus fear.

Based on the story of the Romanov girls, *Tchekov at The House of Special Purpose* is an exciting and experimental project. It advances Chekhov's theatrical form, into the Russian revolution exploring love, belief and family values in a time of war and chaos, asking the question what makes us human? The Zeitgeist of the 21st Century is civil war and violence worldwide. A cast of 12 culturally and linguistically diverse actors tell a Russian story as seen through contemporary Australian eyes, exploring the resonances of that story and what it means to us.

Set in the last century in a claustrophobic room full of travelling cases, with a family seemingly in transit, the production includes live music, silent movie and dance. Produced in partnership with the La Mama Learning Program, the play is on the 2019 VCE Theatre Studies Playlist.

Director Alex Menglet, himself from an esteemed Russian theatrical family says, "We explore broad humanity in the play not statements of power, victory or broad ideology. The play's strength lies in its questions not in didactic answers. We are interested in the vibration of the human heart, not the politics of who was right or wrong in that time. We are interested in the humanity of the characters and that despite what fate awaits each, their willingness to fall in love, put on a play, and celebrate life!

Writer R. Johns says, "Students have much to examine in the contradictory emotions the play raises. Many students are interested in "her-stories" of the past. We ask audiences to consider that the issues the play examines, emotional, social and familial are never black and white".

Writer: R. Johns

Director: Alex Menglet

Cast: Jim Daly, Roxana Păun Trifan, Gregory. J. Fryer, Anita Torrance, Adam May, Phil Roberts, Joanna Halliday, Huw Jennings, Maria Paula Afanador, Meg McKibbin, Natalia Rozpara and Kandice Joy.

Production Design: Peter Mumford

Lighting Designer: Shane Grant

Sound Designer: Zac Kazepis

Costume Designer: Michael Mumford

Stage Management: Julian Adams

Producer: La Mama

DATE 28 August - 8 September 2019

TIME Wed & Thu 6.30pm

Sat 7.30pm

Sun 4pm

MATINEES Wed & Thu 1pm

Fri 11am

DURATION Approximately 95 minutes

VENUE La Mama Courthouse

349 Drummond Street, Carlton

TICKETS \$30 Adult | \$20 Concession

BOOKINGS 03 9347 6948 or www.lamama.com.au

For all media enquiries, please contact:

Tracy Routledge

Publicist, TR PR

P: 0412 223 221

E: tracy@trpr.com.au

Sophia Constantine

Marketing & Communications, La Mama Theatre

P: 03 9347 6948

E: sophia@lamama.com.au