

For Immediate Release

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Groundswell Theatricals, Inc
In association with Cherry Orchard Festival & ShowOne Productions
Presents

Arlekin Players | (zero-G) Lab's production of



Conceived & directed by Igor Golyak
Based on *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov as translated by Carol Rocamora

Featuring Jessica Hecht as Lyubov Ranevskaya

With Juliet Brett, Darya Denisova, Seth Gore, Jeffrey Hayenga, Elise Kibler,
Nael Nacer, Gene Ravvin

And Mikhail Baryshnikov as Firs

November 4 – 13, 2022

A HYBRID PRODUCTION - EXPERIENCE THIS LIVE PERFORMANCE TWO WAYS:

- *The Orchard* - in person at the Robert J. Orchard Stage, Paramount Center, ArtsEmerson, Boston
- *The Orchard /an auction/* - online through a live virtual, interactive experience available worldwide

Tickets On Sale September 20 at www.TheOrchardOffBroadway.com

Needham, MA – September 20, 2022 – Arlekin Players, an award-winning, artist-driven theater company helmed by Ukrainian-born artistic director Igor Golyak and known for its inventive productions and internationally acclaimed virtual theater projects, is excited to announce the Boston Premiere of ***The Orchard***, featuring Jessica Hecht and Mikhail Baryshnikov, following rave reviews and sold out performances Off-Broadway in New York. Groundswell Theatricals, in association with Cherry Orchard Festival and ShowOne Productions, presents Arlekin Players | (zero-G) Lab's production of this piece, Golyak's new adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov as translated by Carol Rocamora. ***The Orchard*** invites us into the strange, fragile and beautiful world of a family yearning for connection and struggling with the end of their world as they know it. Threatened with foreclosure and the loss of their beloved orchard, they face unstoppable, destructive forces that dismantle their lives like the breaking of a string.

Developed throughout the pandemic in Arlekin's Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab, **this newest work is a hybrid piece of theater, including opportunities to experience the production two ways: *The Orchard* live and in-person, or *The Orchard /an auction/*, a virtual experience online.**

***The Orchard* - Live & In-Person at the Emerson Paramount Center**

The Orchard is a fully staged live performance of *The Cherry Orchard* as translated by Carol Rocamora and adapted by Golyak, including new material. The cast is helmed by Jessica Hecht (*Friends, Breaking Bad, Fiddler on the Roof*) as Lyubov Ranevskaya, and features Juliet Brett, Darya Denisova, Jeffrey Hayenga, Elise Kibler, Nael Nacer, and Gene Ravvin. Mikhail Baryshnikov plays Firs. To create the rich, immersive world of ***The Orchard***, Golyak worked with an international team of collaborators from across the globe, spanning gaming, film, theater, robotics and emerging technologies, with Scenography by Anna Fedorova, Lighting by Yuki Nasake Link, Costumes by Oana Botez, Sound Design by Tei Blow, Projection Design by Alex Basco Koch, and Robotics by Tom Sepe of dotdotdash.io. In both the in-person and online versions, audiences enter the ephemeral, blue, lost world of the orchard which is inhabited by a giant, Kuka robot arm and layered with vivid live video elements, where they meet a fragile family trying to keep their lives from coming apart.

"It's a dream to be bringing *The Orchard* to Boston on the heels of our run in New York. And it's exquisite having Jessica and Misha leading our beautiful cast. This is a story about the delicate relationships at the center of a family facing the end of the world as they know it. We are living through an unimaginable time of change and upheaval with the war in the Ukraine and the pandemic. The loss of the cherry orchard is the loss of our world as we desperately try to stay connected and keep things from falling apart. Creating this in New York was an incredible launch for *The Orchard*, and it means so much to share it in our home city at this exact moment," says Golyak.

The Orchard /an auction/- An Online Virtual Experience

The Orchard /an auction/ is a unique online experience, available worldwide. Audiences from around the globe are invited to gather in real time for the auctioning of our cherry orchard, and to travel with the characters of the live performance of *The Orchard* at Emerson Paramount Center, taking an interactive journey with this family in crisis as they face the loss of their home, their land, and the world as they know it. The virtual experience was conceived by Golyak and is a new, updated iteration of a version shared in New York in May/June 2022, with a virtual set was designed by Anna Fedorova, direction of photography and video effects by Alan Mandelshtam, and interactivity narrative by Tom Abernathy.

The in-person and online versions will run live and simultaneously. **Ten in-person performances will take place November 4 – 13, with virtual experiences available worldwide for six shows only, Wednesday November 9-Sunday November 13.**

"The Orchard is fascinating because we keep iterating it. It has been a true labor of love and an adventure to produce, and it is evolving as we share more performances in person and online. I have honestly never been part of a team like this and it is thrilling to work with such incredible collaborators pushing the edges of theater, film, gaming, robotics, projections, narrative, video effects, and with such a stellar cast. It's visceral, and high tech... and human; I promise it is like nothing you have experienced before," says executive producer Sara Stackhouse.

The Orchard is produced by Groundswell Theatricals, Arlekin and its (zero-G) Lab, in association with The Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation, ShowOne Productions, and Jessica Sporn/Leah Michalos, with additional support from ArtsEmerson, Fooksman Family Foundation, Michalos Management, Russian Jewish Community Foundation, dotdotdash.io, Birddog, Dolby-Millicast, NetGear, Robin Hanley, Robert and Shari Thurer, Aximmetry, the official software provider for (zero-G), GRAISIN Robotics, Moonlight Motion Pictures, & Marteamo.

Tickets for both the in-person and live experience go on sale September 20 at noon at www.TheOrchardOffBroadway.com, or by calling the ArtsEmerson Box Office at 617-824-8400 (Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET).

Performance Dates

10 PERFORMANCES IN PERSON

November 4 – 13, 2022

Press Night: November 4 at 8:00 pm

Wed-Thursdays, 7:30 pm

Fridays, 8:00 pm

Saturdays, 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm

Sundays, 2:00 pm

6 PERFORMANCES OF THE LIVE VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

November 9 - 13, 2022

Press Night: Wednesday November 9 at 7:30 pm

Wed-Thursday, 7:30 pm

Friday, 8:00 pm

Saturday, 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm

Sunday, 2:00 pm

Cast

Lyubov Ranevskaya, Jessica Hecht

Anya, Juliet Brett

Varya, Elise Kibler

Leonid Andreevich Gaev, Jeffrey Hayenga

Yermolai Alekssevich Lopakhin, Nael Nacer

Pyotr Sergeevich Trofimov, Seth Gore

Charlotta Ivanovna, Darya Denisova

Firs, Mikhail Baryshnikov

Creative & Production Team

Conceived, adapted and directed by Igor Golyak

Based on The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov as translated by Carol Rocamora

Scenic & Properties Design, Anna Fedorova

Lighting Design, Yuki Nasake Link

Costume Design, Oana Botez

Sound Design, Tei Blow

Projection Design, Alex Basco Koch

Music Composition, Jakov Jakoulov

Photography & Video Effects, Alan Mandelshtam

Robotics Design, Tom Sepe, dotdotdash.io

Interactivity Narrative, Tom Abernathy

Director of American Sign Language (D)ASL, Seth Gore

Hair & Makeup Design, Anna Hrustaleva

Executive Producers, Sara Stackhouse & Staci Levine

Associate Producers, Maria Shclover, Irina Shabshis, Svetlana Dvoretzky

Associate Producer/General Manager, Leah Michalos

Associate Producer of Virtual Experience, Zach Meicher-Buzzi

Production Manager, Katya Kellblau

Streaming Technical Direction, Leanna Keyes

Production Stage Manager, Kyra Bowie

Igor Golyak, *Director/Adapter*, is the founder and artistic director of Arlekin Players Theatre & Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab, “Best Director” Elliot Norton Winner 2020, “Best Director” Broadway World 2021, and Special Citation for Innovation in Virtual Theater from the Boston Theater Critics Association 2022. Recent projects include *The Orchard* Off-Broadway in New York, *WITNESS*, as well as *chekhovOS /an experimental game/* and *State vs. Natasha Banina* which became international virtual theater sensations, both earning New York Times Critic’s Picks. Golyak is from Ukraine and leads Arlekin, an award-winning company of immigrants, which has performed all over the world, including Moscow Art Theatre, and festivals in Yerevan, Armenia, New York City, Chicago, Lviv, Ukraine, Monaco, the US, Canada and UK.

Sara Stackhouse, *Executive Producer*, is Managing Producer at Arlekin Players Theatre & Zero-Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab where she executive produced *The Orchard* Off-Broadway in New York, produced *WITNESS*, and co-produced *chekhovOS /an experimental game/* and the international tour for *State vs Natasha Banina*. She is the Creative Director of The Mama Project (South Africa), and was a founder of BroadBand Collaborative. She was Founding Executive Producer of Actors’ Shakespeare Project, Chair of Theater at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Supervising Producer of *INSIDE This Old House* at A&E/Time Warner, and Project Manager for cellist Yo-Yo Ma where she was on the producing team for nine films, including the award-winning film series *Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired by Bach*.

Staci Levine, *Executive Producer*, is founder and president of Groundswell Theatricals, Inc, a NYC-based producing and general management company. Groundswell has produced on Broadway, Off-Broadway, across North America, London’s West End, Australia, and New Zealand. Productions include the new podcast *Radio Play Revival*; Arlekin Players Theatre Off-Broadway production of *The Orchard*; the national tour of Patti LuPone’s *Don’t Monkey with Broadway*; Lisa Lampanelli’s touring production *Losin’ It; An Evening with Patti LuPone and Mandy Patinkin* (Broadway, tour); John Lithgow’s *Stories By Heart* (Broadway, tour); the new musical *A Taste of Things to Come* (Off-Broadway, Chicago); *The Last Two People on Earth: An Apocalyptic Vaudeville*, starring Mandy Patinkin and Taylor Mac with direction & choreography by Susan Stroman (Off-Broadway, tour); the tour of *An Evening with Mandy Patinkin & Nathan Gunn*; Mandy Patinkin’s solo concerts: *Dress Casual* (Broadway, West End, tour), *Mamaloshen* (Broadway, Off-Broadway, tour), *Celebrating Sondheim* (Broadway, tour), and *Diaries* (Off-Broadway, tour). Staci cut her teeth in commercial theater with Dodger Theatricals, working on numerous Broadway productions including *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Titanic*, *The King & I*, *Footloose*, *The Music Man*, *42nd Street*, *Wrong Mountain*, *Into the Woods*, *Urinetown*, *Dracula the Musical*, and *Good Vibrations*, as a member of Dodger Management Group. Staci is a member of The Broadway League.

Jessica Hecht, *Ranevskaya*, received an Emmy Award nomination for her performance in the Netflix series *SPECIAL*. She has been seen on television in the limited series *SUPER PUMPED* and *THE LOUDEST VOICE* and in her recurring roles in *THE SINNER*, *DICKINSON*, *THE BOYS*, and *SUCCESSION*. She is also recognizable to television audiences as "Susan Bunch" on the iconic television series *FRIENDS* and "Gretchen Schwarz" on *BREAKING BAD*. She has also played memorable roles on *BORED TO DEATH*, *HIGH MAINTENANCE*, *FALLING WATER*, *THE SINGLE GUY*, and *RED OAKS*. Her film performances include *A+*, *ANESTHESIA*, *J. EDGAR*, *THE GREY ZONE*, *THE SITTER*, *MY SOUL TO TAKE*, *DAN IN REAL LIFE*, *SIDEWAYS*, *THE ATLANTIC CITY STORY* and *THE SUNLIT NIGHT*. An acclaimed stage actress, Hecht has appeared on Broadway in productions of *THE PRICE* opposite Mark Ruffalo, *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* opposite Danny Burstein, *THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES* opposite Judith Light, *HARVEY* opposite Jim Parsons, *AFTER THE FALL* opposite Carla Gugino, *THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO* opposite Paul Rudd, *BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS* opposite Laurie Metcalf, *JULIUS CAESAR* opposite Denzel Washington, and *A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE* opposite Liev Schreiber and Scarlett Johansson for which she was nominated for a Tony Award for her performance. Off-Broadway, she has appeared in *KING LEAR* opposite John Lithgow and Annette Bening, *STAGE KISS* opposite Sandra Oh, *THREE SISTERS* opposite Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard, and at Lincoln Center Theater in *ADMISSIONS* for which she received an Outer Critics Circle Award nomination and an Obie Award.

Mikhail Baryshnikov, *Firs*, was born in Riga, Latvia and lives in New York City. Baryshnikov has distinguished himself as an extraordinary dancer and performer in theater, television and film. In a career spanning more than 50 years, he has worked with George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins and many other illustrious choreographers and directors. On Broadway: *Metamorphosis* (Steven Berkoff). Off-Broadway: *Beckett Shorts* (JoAnne Akalaitis). National and international tours: *Forbidden Christmas*, or *the Doctor and the Patient* (Rezo Gabriadze), *In Paris* (Dmitry Krymov), *Man in a Case* (Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar), *Brodsky/Baryshnikov* (Alvis Hermanis), *The White Helicopter* (Alvis Hermanis), *The Old Woman* (Robert Wilson), *Letter to A Man* (Robert Wilson). Current film installation *NOT ONCE*. (Jan Fabre). Baryshnikov is an Academy Award and Tony Award nominee and Emmy Award recipient, the Kennedy Center Honors, and the National Medal of Arts. He was Artistic Director of

American Ballet Theater (1980-89) and co-founder and dancer of White Oak Dance Project (1989-2000). He is the founder and artistic director of Baryshnikov Arts Center.

Juliet Brett, Anya, (she/her) was most recently seen in the feature film DEEP WATER (starring Ben Affleck & Ana de Armas). Theater: NAPOLI, BROOKLYN (Roundabout), THE JACKSONIAN (The New Group), WHAT I DID LAST SUMMER (Signature), DESIRE (59e59), MR. WOLF (by Rajiv Joseph, world premiere Cleveland Playhouse). Select TV/Film: Nicole Fosse in FOSSE/VERDON (FX), THE WALKING DEAD (AMC), RED OAKS (Amazon), Noah Baumbach's MISTRESS AMERICA, J.C Chandors' A MOST VIOLENT YEAR, CSI: NEW YORK, LAW & ORDER: SVU. Socials: @julietbrett

Darya Denisova, Charlotta, is a Boston based actor known for her work with SpeakEasy Stage Company, Actors' Shakespeare Project and Arlekin Players, and has been recognized by The New York Times (Critic's Pick) and leading Boston critics for her roles at Arlekin Players. Recipient: 2022 Special Citation for Innovative Performances in Virtual Theater; 2020 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Actress for Arlekin's *The Stone*. Select Lead Roles: *Memorial Prayer*, *Natasha's Dream*, *Tales of the Last Wednesday*, *Dead Man's Diary*, *Mbl-US*, *The Stone*, *The Seagull* and *State VS Natasha Banina* (all Arlekin Players productions). Select National/ International theatre: United SOLO festival (New York); SOLO Festival (Moscow, Russia); and HighFest Theatre Festival (Yerevan, Armenia) with her award-winning solo performance *Natasha's Dream*. She studied acting at the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts in Moscow. She has taught documentary theatre at the Startalk School at Harvard University and the Stanislavsky method at the Igor Golyak acting studio.

Seth Gore, Trofimov, is a Deaf bilingual creative house. Specializing in interplay between English and ASL languages, arts, teaching and technology, Seth allows his deafness to permeate and influence his work. His work is centered around signed language and effective and authentic human communications. As Director of ASL and ASL Coach for several Hollywood and Broadway productions, including Paramount's *A Quiet Place 2*, *Freestyle Love Supreme* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* in MSG, Seth ensures the signed message gets through to the audience. He lives in New York City and currently is developing signed script collaboration solutions (Visual Script) and English grammar learning (Grammar Shapes) and teaching workshops (Unlearning Words) that aim to unlock people's signed thought and make their communications more whole.

Jeffrey Hayenga, Gaev, New York: The Lehman Trilogy, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Junk, The Elephant Man, The Man Who Came to Dinner, Harvey, The Importance of Being Earnest, Jeffrey, Two Rooms, Patient A, Book of Wren, Fire on Babylon, Hamlet, Hapgood, As Bees In Honey Drown, Film and TV: Bones, Blacklist, Law and Order(s), Star Trek NG and Enterprise, Center Stage, Other People's Money, The Prince of Pennsylvania, Memron, The Unborn, And The Band Played On. Regional Favorites: Salome (DC Shakespeare) Circle Mirror Transformation (Actors Theatre Louisville) The Winslow Boy and Nonsense and Beauty (St Louis Rep) Dream of the Burning Boy (Malibu Playhouse) Pride's Crossing (Old Globe) The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby (Missouri Rep) Love! Valour! Compassion! (Intiman & Berkeley Rep) Good Boys (ACT) National Tour: Twelve Angry Men.

Elise Kibler, Varya, has appeared Off-Broadway in *Is Edward Snowden Single?* (The Pool Plays), *All the Natalie Portmans* (MTC), *Mies Julie* (Classic Stage Company), *Napoli, Brooklyn* (Roundabout Theatre Company), *Indian Summer* (Playwrights Horizons), *London Wall* (Mint Theater). She has also been seen on Broadway in *The Heidi Chronicles* and *This is Our Youth*. She trained at NYU Maurice Kanbar Institute of Film & TV. Elise is also a writer and filmmaker.

Nael Nacer, Lopakhin, made his New York debut in *The Orchard* Off-Broadway, with Regional credits that include: *Our Town* (dir. David Cromer), *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Doll's House*, *Bedroom Farce* (dir. Maria Aitken), *Awake and Sing!* (Huntington Theatre); *The Merchant of Venice* (dir. Igor Golyak), *Macbeth* (Actors' Shakespeare Project); *People, Places & Things*, *Small Mouth Sounds*, *Tribes* (SpeakEasy Stage); *The Tempest* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *The Seagull* (dir. Igor Golyak), *ChekhovOS* (Arlekin Players); *The Return* (Israeli Stage), *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *True West*, *The Flick* (Gloucester Stage); *Constellations* (Central Square Theatre); *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play*, *Intimate Apparel* (Lyric Stage), *A Number*, *Lungs*, *The Kite Runner* (New Repertory Theatre); *The Aliens*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Company One).

Carol Rocamora, Translator, is an educator, translator, playwright, and theatre critic. Her three volumes of the translations of Anton Chekhov's complete dramatic works have been published by Smith & Kraus. She is also the author of the biography entitled Anton Chekhov: A Life in Four Acts. Her dramatic adaptations of 20 Chekhov short stories have been published in a two-volume collection entitled Rubles. Her play "I take your hand in mine...", based on the correspondence between Chekhov and Olga Knipper, has been translated in numerous languages and produced around the world. She serves on the faculties of New

York University's Tisch School of the Arts and the Juilliard School. She is a member of the American Theatre Critics Association, the International Association of Theatre Critics, Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk.

Arlekin Players Theatre was founded by Artistic Director Igor Golyak in 2009 and has since toured to New York, Chicago, and Hartford, as well as to international festivals in Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Monaco. Arlekin received world-wide acclaim, including two New York Times Critic's Picks, for their groundbreaking virtual theater projects during the pandemic, including of *State vs Natasha Banina* and *chekhovOS /an experimental game/* featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov. Arlekin has received multiple awards for its work including four 2020 Elliot Norton Awards from the Boston Theater Critics Association for recent productions of *The Stone* and *The Seagull*. Arlekin takes strong pride in their emphasis on self-identity; they are a company of immigrants performing works that play on the ideas of cross-culture, home, and traditions, challenging the idea of nationality, and finding common themes that unite us all. In 2020, Arlekin launched its Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab to explore new theater possibilities for a new time. The company makes its home in Needham, MA. In response to the war in Ukraine, Arlekin launched #Artists4Ukraine, an initiative to engage artists and audiences to raise funds for humanitarian aid and stand in solidarity with artists in Ukraine. For more information, visit www.arlekinplayers.com and www.zerogravity.art.

Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation (www.CherryOrchardFestival.org), a registered 501c (3) arts organization, is a leading independent international arts organization with a solid reputation for presenting musical performances, theatrical productions, multidisciplinary performing and visual arts attractions by a stunning array of global artists to audiences in the US. Founded by executive producer Maria Shlover and artistic director Irina Shabshis in 2012, the festival has presented over 60 unique world class events, concerts, and theatrical performances to over 150,000 audience members across the US. The presentation of *The Orchard* at the Baryshnikov Arts Center was the second collaboration between the Festival and Arlekin Theatre, after the successful online run of [*The State vs. Natasha Banina*](#) in 2020. The ongoing mission of the Cherry Orchard Festival is to introduce and promote global cultural activity and exchange of ideas, aiming to enlighten and engage audiences through educational entertainment programs and events. For more information about the festival, please visit cherryorchardfestival.org.

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