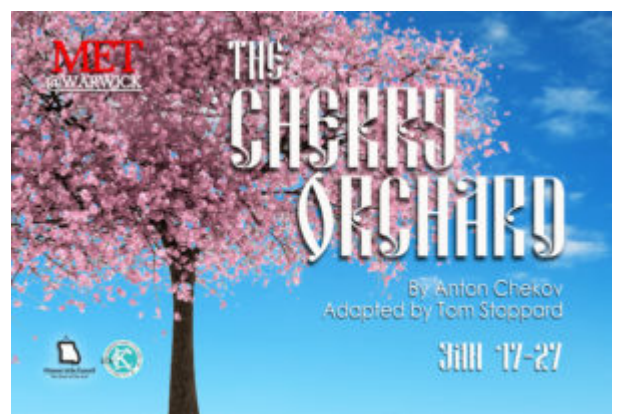




Chekhov classic opens at MET

Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre
at The Warwick on Main Street



Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre (MET) presents

***The Cherry Orchard* – Anton Chekhov's Fourth and Final Masterpiece**

The Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre presents Tom Stoppard's translation of Anton Chekhov's theatrical masterpiece *The Cherry Orchard* at the Warwick Theatre January 17-27.

Chekhov's classic focuses on a fading upper-class family returning home after years abroad who are forced to face their financial ruin. In order to save their estate and home they must sacrifice their beloved cherry orchard- their last claim of notoriety. The family, lead by matriarch Liubov Andreevna (Shelley Wyche) and daughters Varya (Dawn Youngs) and Anya (Leah Wilczewski), must decide whether to cling to the past or sacrifice their legacy to secure their future; all while the serving class, lead by Lopakhin (Andy Penn), Trofimov (Colin Fewell), and Firs (Alan Tilson), traverses the ever changing

and modern Russian landscape to discover their own value in the new world.

Stoppard's translation uses the natural humor of Chekhov's work to highlight the true tragedy at the core of the narrative. Since its debut, artists have debated whether *The Cherry Orchard* is a tragedy or comedy. The original production, which premiered in Moscow in 1904 and was directed by Konstantin Stanislavski, became a point of contention for the director and playwright. Stanislavski honed in on the tragic elements of the plot, which frustrated Chekhov, who believed the play had more laughs than tears. Director Todd Lanker (making his directorial debut at the MET after a successful starring run in *The Orphan's Home Cycle*) has focused his direction on exploring both the comedic and tragic elements on the page and creatively staging the contrast in an intimate reconfiguration of the Warwick.

The MET's production of *The Cherry Orchard* will coincide with the 115th anniversary of the original debut at the Moscow Arts Theatre on January 17, 1904. The rest of the cast includes Elaine Christensen (Dunyasha), Ryan Fortney (Yepikhodov), Peter Leondedis (Gaev), Brandis Outlaw (Charlotta Ivanova), Christopher Preyer (Yasha), Curtis Smith (Pishchik), Justin Speer (Stationmaster), and John Van Winkle (Passer-by). Ashley Pike and Tony Beasley will serve as the productions stage managers and Patricia Whitlock will serve as the assistant stage manager.

The Cherry Orchard opens Thursday, January 17 and runs through Sunday, January 27. Evening performances begin nightly at 7:30pm, and Sunday matinees begin at 2:00pm (please check the MetKC.org website for more detailed information on shows, dates and times). The plays are produced at the MET's newly acquired venue – the historical Warwick Theatre. The Warwick is at 3927 Main St, KCMO 64111 and there's plenty of parking behind the building. Tickets can be ordered online at MetKC.org or over the phone by calling the box office at (816)

569-3226.