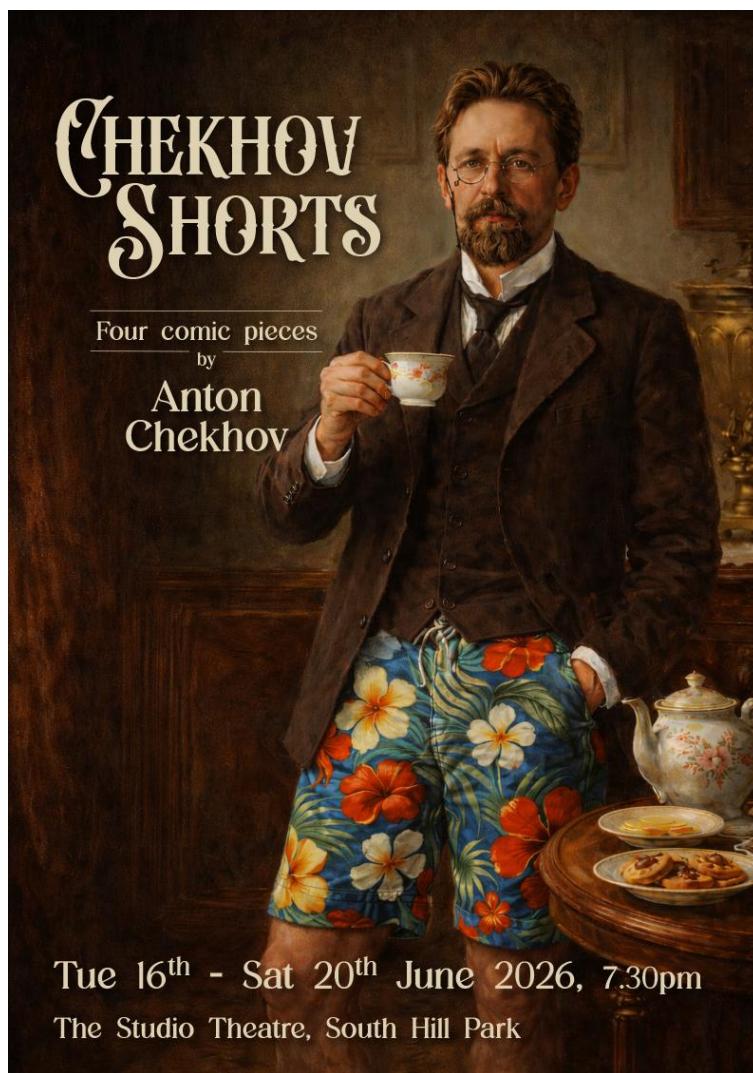


The Studio
Theatre
@ SHP



The Studio Theatre @ South Hill Park

Chekhov Shorts Audition Information



Chekhov Shorts, by Anton Chekhov

Directed by David Stacey

Show dates: Tuesday 16th – Saturday 20th June 2026

AUDITIONS: 7.30pm Tuesday 27th & Thursday 29th January 2026.

SHOW SUMMARY:

"I walked out on twelve women, nine walked out on me, but I never loved one of them the way I do you!"

We present four hysterical pieces by Anton Chekhov – a chaotic comedy that proves the quickest way from hatred to a wedding is often via a debt; a high-strung farce showing that bureaucracy and family crises are an explosive mix; a poignant look at a life in the theatre, involving a lot of vodka-fueled regret; and a frantic sketch that makes you wonder how anyone in 19th-century Russia ever managed to get married. This is essentially reality TV before cameras existed: hilarious proof that sometimes a good, loud argument over something utterly trivial is exactly what you need to keep things interesting.

AUDITION INFO:

Auditions will be in a workshop format. There is no need to prepare anything in advance, and we will provide scenes for you to work with on the day. We'll start by reading the section together and then work on it a few times to explore the characters.

Creativity thrives on diversity, and we welcome everyone, regardless of background or experience. The characters need to be big, animated, memorable and will be a lot of fun to play!

Please complete our [online audition form](#) to let us know your intention to audition.

PLAY SYNOPSSES:

Each of the pieces plays at around 25 mins (two in Act 1, two in Act 2). Actors will only appear in one piece each. There are four pieces we will audition for.

1. The Bear

Yelena Popova, a young widow, is perfectly committed to her self-imposed life of tragic, dramatic mourning. She's comfortably miserable until **Grigory Smirnov**, a loud, crude, and desperate landowner, crashes her isolation party demanding money owed by her late husband.

The interaction – observed by Popova's anxious servant, **Luka** – rapidly descends into a hilarious shouting match. When the insults inevitably lead to a challenge to a duel, the furious tension immediately snaps into passionate attraction. In mere moments, the enemies drop their guns, and decide to marry, proving that sometimes the best match is found when you are trying to annoy each other.

Please note, the plot of this piece lends itself to an exploration of gender and male-female attitudes. It would be fun/interesting to cast the characters with opposite-gender actors.

2. The Festivities

The scene is a provincial bank, where the manager, **Andrey Shipuchin**, is desperately trying to impress a formal "deputation" arriving to celebrate the bank's five-year anniversary. He's rehearsing his triumphant speech while his perpetually stressed-out bookkeeper, **Khirin**, is frantically trying to finish a complex annual report. Chaos, of course, immediately ensues.

First, Shipuchin's chatty wife, **Tatyana**, arrives unexpectedly and demands his immediate attention. This minor disruption is quickly overshadowed by the arrival of **Nastasya Merchutkina**, demanding a non-existent pension for her late husband. The more Shipuchin tries to focus on the serious, celebratory atmosphere, the more Merchutkina pleads about her pension, Tatyana chatters about her mother, and Khirin spirals into a nervous breakdown.

The play is an escalating comedy of errors where professional dignity is utterly destroyed by one very, very bad day at the office.

3. Swan Song

The play takes place late at night in a deserted theatre where **Vasili Svetlovidoff**, an aged actor, wakes up after their benefit performance to find themselves blackout drunk and alone. They're stuck in their costume, surrounded by silence, and deeply melancholic.

There is only one other person in the building: the even older prompter, **Nikita Ivanitch**, who essentially lives backstage. Svetlovidoff launches into a spectacular, self-pitying rant, lamenting loneliness, the fleeting nature of fame, and the cruel reality of a wasted life on the stage. This is a sad, funny testament to an actor who can't turn off the spotlight, even when everyone else has gone home.

4. The Proposal

Ivan Lomov, a nervous, hypochondriac landowner, arrives dressed in full evening attire ready to propose to his neighbour's daughter, **Natalya**. The catch: He never actually manages to *ask* the question. Every time he tries to steer the conversation toward marriage, a trivial, escalating argument erupts instead.

First, they bicker furiously over a useless patch of land. The argument gets so intense that Lomov nearly faints from heart palpitations. After he's revived, the next topic of conversation immediately pivots to a ferocious debate over whose hunting dog—Lomov's "Spanker" or Natalya's "Winker"—is superior. Natalya's father, **Stepan Chubukov**, joins in the shouting match, and the proposal is forgotten amidst insults and accusations

CHARACTERS:

- **Yelena Ivanovna Popova:** A young widow (presenting female, but could be played by a male)
- **Grigory Stepanovich Smirnov:** A hot-tempered landowner (presenting male, but could be played by a female)
- **Luka:** Popova's loyal servant (any age/gender)
- **Andrey Andreyevich Shipuchin:** A bank manager.
- **Tatyana Alekseyevna:** Shipuchin's wife.
- **Khirin:** The bank's head bookkeeper (male, played older).
- **Nastasya Fyodorovna Merchutkina:** An old widow.
- **Vasili Svielovidoff:** An aging actor (played older, any gender).
- **Nikita Ivanich:** The theatre's elderly prompter (played older, any gender).
- **Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov:** A landowner and the father of Natalya (older).
- **Natalya Stepanovna:** Chubukov's strong-willed daughter (playing age 20s).
- **Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov:** Their nervous and hypochondriac neighbour (playing age 20s).

PRODUCTION TEAM:

We're always looking for back-stage volunteers too. Whether it's operating the lights & sound or stage management, please let us know if you want to get involved! We'd be very keen to hear from anyone with experience working with costume and wigs.

DATES AND COMMITMENT:

REHEARSALS: Likely to be one or two weekday evenings and/or some Sunday daytimes from mid-February 2025. You'll only be called for the piece you are in until nearer show week.

TECHNICAL REHEARSAL: Sunday daytime/evening, 14th June 2026

DRESS REHEARSAL: Monday evening, 15th June 2026

SHOWS: Tuesday 16th - Saturday 20th June 2026 (7.30 PM) (5 performances)

For more info, please contact David Stacey (Director & Studio Theatre Manager).

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Images from past Studio Theatre productions.

