

## ARTS

# University Theatre tackles Chekov

By Ming Rodrigues  
Emerald Reporter

Anton Chekov's classic drama about the hopes and yearnings of a Russian provincial family at the turn of the century comes to modern theater as familiar and moving as when it first opened 90 years ago in 1901.

This Friday, University Theatre presents *Three Sisters*, the tragi-comedy masterpiece exploring Chekov's favorite subject — the universal human experience of frailties, longings, thwarted dreams, laughter and tears.

"This is a play about the search for a purpose and direction in life," said Robert Barton, the play's director and an associate professor in theater arts. "It examines why living can be so torturous and why we suffer so much in life. (These are) questions mankind will always be able to relate with. Anton Chekov is the father of contemporary realism. His plays are not a social statement, instead, they capture real life."

Covering a span of three and a half years, the play revolves around the Prozorov sisters, Olga, Marsha and Irina, who find they are lost in life without the influential helping hand of their father, a general in the provincial army who died a year earlier.

Raised in the kind of aristocratic lifestyle no longer existing in Russia, the sisters and their friends long for change and to make something different in their lives, but they don't know how to go about it.

In the end, however, the characters emerge from their compelling and sometimes painful quest for the meaning



Photo by Jeff Paslay

**Three Sisters, a play by the Russian master, Anton Chekov, will be performed by the University Theatre Feb. 22, 23 and 28, and March 1, 2, 8 and 9.**

of life with the resolve to go on living.

"*Three Sisters* is at once funny, moving and sad. It's hard not to get involved with it especially when the characters are so real and lovable," Barton said.

"It's difficult to summarize Chekov's works. They're just so full of subtle nuances that at one level, it seems as if there's really nothing much going on, but if you look closer and deeper, there's the powerful element of humanity."

Barton, who often directs Shakespearean plays, picked

*Three Sisters* for a change in dramatic styles and also for the rich and varied roles it offers women.

"I wanted to do something that contrasts with the larger-than-life, heroic flavor of Shakespeare where the theme is often what life might be instead of what it is, which is Chekov's focus," Barton said.

*Three Sisters* starts Friday night at 8 in Robinson Theater. Extra performances are scheduled for Feb. 23 and 28 and March 1, 2, 8 and 9. Tickets are \$4.50 for students and \$6.50 general admission and are available at Robinson Theater.

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In a career of writing for *Time*, the *New York Tribune*, the *National Observer*, the *Nation*, *Ramparts*, *Rolling Stone* and author of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, among five other books, Dr. Thompson is known for his brilliant, unusual stream of consciousness writing style. He is the model for "Uncle Duke" in the *Doonesbury* comic strip as well as the inspiration for the movie, *Where the Buffalo Roam*.



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