



For Immediate Release  
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**Arlekin Players Theatre Announces Spring Dates for**  
***chekhovOS /an experimental game/***  
**A Live and Interactive Virtual Theater Experience**  
Hosted on [ZeroGravity.ART](https://ZeroGravity.ART) through a New Partnership with [.ART](https://.ART)

**Starring Jessica Hecht**  
**And Anna Baryshnikov, Anna Bortnick, Darya Denisova, Jeffrey Hayenga,**  
**Melanie Moore, Nael Nacer & Mark Nelson**

**With Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov**

[Publicity Materials](#)

April 29, 2021 – Needham, MA – **Arlekin Players Theatre today announces** spring dates for sharings of ***chekhovOS /an experimental game/***, the latest workshop from (**zero-G**). The project will be co-presented from May to June by local, national, and international partners from the worlds of theater and gaming, including ArtsEmerson, Boston Fig, UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA), Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation, International Online Theatre Festival (IOTF)/Theatre Times, ShowOne Productions (Canada), Snowrunner Productions, with special charity screenings in Europe and the US in partnership with the charity founded by Russian actress Chulpan Khamatova, Gift of Life in the UK and Podari.Life in the US, all hosted on [ZeroGravity.ART](https://ZeroGravity.ART).

***chekhovOS /an experimental game/***, is a performance experiment in development by **Arlekin Players Theatre's** founder and director **Igor Golyak**, who has been a leading innovator of virtual theater since the start of the pandemic. His recent *State vs. Natasha Banina* was a Critic's Pick in *The New York Times* by Maya Phillips who declared "***The verdict is in: the virtual can, in fact, be an effective new stage for theater.***" Golyak's latest work fuses film, theater, and video game technology to create a new medium where viewers are able to interact with the performers. Inspired by Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and drawing from recordings of Chekhov's letters and dreams, this interactive online theater experience accesses the operating system behind both Chekhov's computer and the world in which his characters live, searching for happiness.

***"The Post-pandemic theater has to reexamine and reimagine itself. Through this experiment we are finding out how humankind can find each other in the virtual while continuing to treasure the in-person encounter, which makes for a new kind of site-specific theater,"*** says Golyak. ***"And I find myself in constant dialogue with The Cherry Orchard—during a time of loss and recovery, it helps us explore connection, transition, loss, and the human yearning for happiness. We are grateful to our co-presenters for sharing this internationally with a broader audience and for the opportunity to do so on***

*the incredible [.ART](#) platform. It is thrilling to be developing work in this new genre with these visionary partners."*

*"We are proud to continue our partnership with Igor Golyak and Arlekin Players Theatre over the past year as they quickly reinvented themselves with imaginative, timely online theater projects like *State vs. Natasha Banina*, which we presented last August, and now *chekhovOS /an experimental game/*. They are doing important work using traditional Russian theater approaches while exploring technologies to create a new form of theater in their new (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to share this latest project with our audiences." says David C. Howse, Executive Director, ArtsEmerson.*

Arlekin is also thrilled to announce a new partnership between [.ART](#), the Art World's Digital Domain, and Arlekin's Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab. Beginning with *chekhovOS /an experimental game/*, (zero-G)'s virtual theatre productions will be hosted on [.ART](#) at the address [ZeroGravity.ART](#) as the two companies work together to cultivate an international hub for virtual theater performance.

*"We are pleased today to announce our new partnership with Arlekin's Zero Gravity (zero-G) Lab. As the world shut down a year ago in the midst of the global pandemic, artists and the creative community, especially the ones in the live arts such as theatre, dance and music, had to reinvent themselves. Arlekin Players Theater didn't shy away from the occasion. Instead, they converted their black box into the Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab and they are now a world leader in digital theater innovation. We are excited to invent and innovate with them as this new genre continues to develop." says Ulvi Kasimov, Founder of [.ART](#) and nominee ART POWER 50 by Observer.*

The cast of *chekhovOS /an experimental game/* comprises a cadre of well-known stage, television, and film actors including Tony-Nominee [Jessica Hecht](#), who performs the iconic role of Ranevskaya. Hecht says, *"I have been longing to explore *The Cherry Orchard* with Igor and our company in a way that gives us the most intimate and relatable portrait of a family in crisis. I believe we can create something raw and modern, without losing an authenticity to Chekhov's vision."*

The presentation also features other celebrated performers, including [Anna Baryshnikov](#) (Apple TV+'s *Dickinson*) as Varya; Arlekin's [Darya Denisova](#) as Natasha Prozorov; Boston's [Anna Bortnick](#) as Charlotta, [Jeffrey Hayenga](#) (*The Elephant Man*) as Fiers; [Melanie Moore](#) (*Finding Neverland, So You Think You Can Dance*) as Anya; [Mark Nelson](#) (*Angels in America, The Invention of Love*) as Gaev; and acclaimed Boston-based actor [Nael Nacer](#) as Lopakhin. Baryshnikov Arts Center Founder and Artistic Director [Mikhail Baryshnikov](#) makes a special appearance in the role of Anton Chekhov. The work was developed and filmed, in part, at Baryshnikov Arts Center in January with strict adherence to COVID health and safety protocols.

*chekhovOS /an experimental game/* is a work-in-progress created during the pandemic, a way for artists to work through the themes of the play, the encroaching virus, and a moment of change in the world around us. The project was developed in the new and emerging genre of virtual theater at Arlekin's (zero-G) from a small but mighty group of collaborators, helmed by Igor Golyak. This international team of designers and technical engineers collaborated with Golyak both virtually and onsite in Arlekin's new **Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Performance Lab** in Needham, MA for several months to create the functionality and online environment for this project, which includes software support from [Aximmetry Technologies Ltd.](#), the official software provider for Arlekin's Zero Gravity Lab and a new platform called "The Soft Layer" from [Will Brierly of Snowrunner Productions](#), with back-end/design work from Vladimir Gusev, Anna Fedorova, and Anton Nikolaev.

This experimental sharing constitutes Phase One of a larger hybrid (live/virtual) **chekhovOS** project in development for 2022, and is made possible with generous support from producing sponsor [.ART](#), [ArtsEmerson](#), [Baryshnikov Arts Center](#), [BroadBand Collaborative](#), [Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation](#), [Fooksman Family Foundation](#), Meghan Coleman, Robin Hanley, [ZiphyCare](#), gifts from Arlekin's [Zero Gravity Kickstarter Campaign](#) and [Aximmetry Technologies Ltd.](#), the official software provider for Arlekin's [Zero Gravity \(zero-G\) Lab](#).

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## AT A GLANCE:

**Arlekin's Zero Gravity (zero-G) Lab & The Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation present**

### ***chekhovOS /an experimental game/***

Inspired by *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov

Conceived & Directed by Igor Golyak

Produced by Igor Golyak & Sara Stackhouse

*Featuring Jessica Hecht as Ranevskaya and Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov*

**Hosted on ZeroGravity.ART**

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Sunday, May 16 at 8:00pm ET - Gamer Night**

Co-presented by Boston Fig & Snowrunner Productions

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast & creative team*

*Moderated by Tom Abernathy, Studio Narrative Director at ArenaNet*

### **Sunday, May 23 at 5:00pm PT/8:00pm ET - Los Angeles**

Co-presented by UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA)

*Followed by live talkback with Jessica Hecht (Ranevskaya) & Igor Golyak (Director)*

*Moderated by Sara Stackhouse, **chekhovOS** Co-Producer*

### **Thursday, May 27 1:00pm ET | 7:00pm BST | 6:00pm CEST - Europe | UK**

Co-presented by Gift of Life (UK and Europe)

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast & creative team*

*Moderated by Sara Stackhouse, **chekhovOS** Co-Producer*

### **Sunday, May 30 at 11:00am ET | 5:00pm CEST - Europe**

Co-presented by International Online Theater Festival/Theatre Times

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast & creative team*

*Moderated by Magda Romanska, Editor-in-Chief, [TheTheatreTimes.com](#)*

### **Sunday, June 6 at 8:00pm ET - Boston**

Co-presented by ArtsEmerson

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast and creative team*

*Moderated by Rob Orchard, Founder & Creative Consultant, ArtsEmerson*

**Sunday, June 13 at 8:00pm ET - US**

Co-presented by Podari.Life US

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast & creative team*

*Moderated by Joyce Kulhawik, Emmy Award-Winning A & E Critic*

**Sunday, June 20 at 8:00pm ET - New York | Canada**

Co-presented by Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation & ShowOne Productions

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast & creative team*

**Thursday, June 24 - 8:00pm ET - New York | Canada**

Co-presented by Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation & ShowOne Productions

*Followed by live talkback with members of the cast & creative team*

**[INFO & TICKETS](#)**

**Creative Team**

Conceived & Directed by Igor Golyak

Producers: Igor Golyak and Sara Stackhouse

Virtual Performance Technical Director: Vladimir Gusev

Game Engine & Interaction Design: Will Brierly, Snowrunner Productions

Narrative Writer: Tom Abernathy

Assistant Director: Blair Cadden

Virtual Set & Environment Designer: Anna Fedorova

Web Developer: Anatoly Krivonos

Composer: Jakov Jakoulov

Properties Assistant: Irina Vilenchik

Live Production Technicians: Anton Nikolaev and Igor Golyak

Platform: The Soft Layer by Snowrunner Productions

**Cast**

Ranevskaya

Jessica Hecht

Gaev

Mark Nelson

Varya

Anna Baryshnikov

Anya

Melanie Moore

Lopakhin

Nael Nacer

Fiers

Jeffrey Hayenga

Natasha Prozorov

Darya Denisova

Charlotta

Anna Bortnick

***With Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov***

**Film Crew**

Director of Photography: Guillermo Cameo

Associate Producer: Joshua A. Friedman

2nd Camera and Editor: Anton Nikolaev

Sound: Sebastian Holst

Gaffer: Sashank Sana

Assistant Editor: Anna Gruman

Production Assistant: Violet de Besche

**Arlekin Players Theatre**, founded by Artistic Director Igor Golyak, was created in Boston in 2009 and has since toured to New York, Chicago, and Hartford, as well as to international festivals in Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Monaco. It's production of *State vs Natasha Banina* has received world-wide acclaim, including the New York Times Critics' Pick. Arlekin has received multiple awards for its work including four 2020 Elliot Norton Awards from the Boston Theater Critics Association for its 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 it's Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab to explore new theater possibilities for a new time. The company makes its home in Needham, MA. For more information, visit [www.arlekinplayers.com](http://www.arlekinplayers.com) and ZeroGravity.ART.

**.ART** is the art world's digital domain of choice. Not bound by geographical location or industrial constraints it aims to support, empower and generate value for the creative community. It is also intending to be an innovation activator with its own solutions as well as promoting the ones of others creative community members. .ART is a space where artists, institutions, professionals and creative can register a clear and concise website address that reflects their passion, occupation and belonging to the art world.

**Cherry Orchard Festival Foundation** ([www.CherryOrchardFestival.org](http://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 Shclover 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 "Cherry Orchard" at the Baryshnikov Arts Center will be 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](http://cherryorchardfestival.org).

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