



The Cherry Orchard

Anton Chekhov (1860 - 1904)

Read by:	Anton Chekhov	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	2 hours and 1 minute	Catalog:	DB-1217
Language:	English	UPC:	0701236969368
Style:	Dramatic reading	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Fiction, Plays		

The Cherry Orchard is the last of Chekhov's four major plays. Written at a time of social change and upheaval, a few decades after the emancipation of the serfs and before the Bolshevik Revolution, the play concerns the fate of a family estate that contains a noted cherry orchard. Madame Lyubov Andreievna Ranevskaya is an aristocratic landowner who returns to her estate in the provinces after having fled to Paris in despair after the drowning of her son. A proud woman with a genuine love of her home, she lacks the financial acumen or practicality necessary to keep the estate from being sold at auction to retire family debts. Of course, the estate is sold to a prosperous merchant who is the son of a former serf. Chekhov thought of the play as a comedy

and found farcical humor in the futility of the gentry to adapt and of the bourgeoisie to find meaning in its material improvements. Stanislavski, who produced its premier in 1904, thought of it as a tragedy. Directors have wrestled with this duality ever since. The play was an immediate success and was presented immediately throughout Russia and other countries. It is considered a classic of 20th century theatre and has been translated into many languages and produced around the world. It has been a challenging vehicle for actors and directors to tackle and an important influence on playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and David Mamet, to name a few.

Anton Chekov (January 29, 1860 – July 15, 1904) was a Russian physician, playwright and author of short stories. He is considered one of the finest writers of short fiction in history and, along with Ibsen and Strindberg, one of the founders of modernism in the theatre. He was born the third of six children in the port town of Taganrog on the north shore of the Sea of Azov in southern Russia. His father, a grocer, declared bankruptcy in 1876 and moved the family to Moscow, leaving Anton behind to liquidate the property and complete his schooling. Anton joined his family and entered medical school in 1879, supporting the family by writing short vignettes and humorous sketches for the newspapers and gaining both popular and literary attention. He became a doctor in 1884 but practiced little. At about the same time he contracted tuberculosis. Noted author Dmitry Grigorovich helped him win the Pushkin prize in 1888 for his short story collection *At Dusk*. He settled in a small country estate in 1892, where he wrote his first major play, *The Seagull*, in 1894, and then built a villa in Yalta after his tuberculosis worsened. He married actress Olga Knipper in 1901. *The Cherry Orchard*, his last major play, received accolades when it was produced a few months before his death in 1904 and established his reputation a great Russian writer, second only to Tolstoy, which stands to this day.