



The Seagull

Anton Chekhov (1860 - 1904)

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| Read by: | Anton Chekhov | Format: | MP3 CD in DVD case |
| Length: | 2 hours 7 minutes | Catalog: | DB-1218 |
| Language: | English | UPC: | 0701236969375 |
| Style: | Dramatic reading | MSLP: | \$9.99 |
| Genre: | Fiction, Plays | | |

The Seagull, written in 1895 and first performed in 1896, is considered the first of Chekhov's four major plays. The four act play dramatizes the various romantic and artistic conflicts among the four major characters: Boris Trigorin, a famous but mediocre story writer; Nina, a young ingénue; Irina Arkadina, a fading actress and Trigorin's lover; and Konstantin Treplev, a symbolist playwright and Arkadina's son. The action, which includes various romantic triangles, often proceeds by indirection and subtext and depends on the interaction of an ensemble cast. Key actions occur offstage. Issues are sidestepped. What is not said is as meaningful as what is said. The seagull of the title is a curious gift to Nina from the emotionally awkward Konstantin. The

first performance of the play was a famous flop in Petersburg, with a hostile audience causing actress Vera Komisarzhenskaya to lose her voice and Chekhov to give up playwriting. A subsequent production by the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898 featuring famous actor Stanislavski was enthusiastically received, with the applause being described as "bursting from the audience like a dam breaking". It continues to be one of the most performed plays in the world.

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.