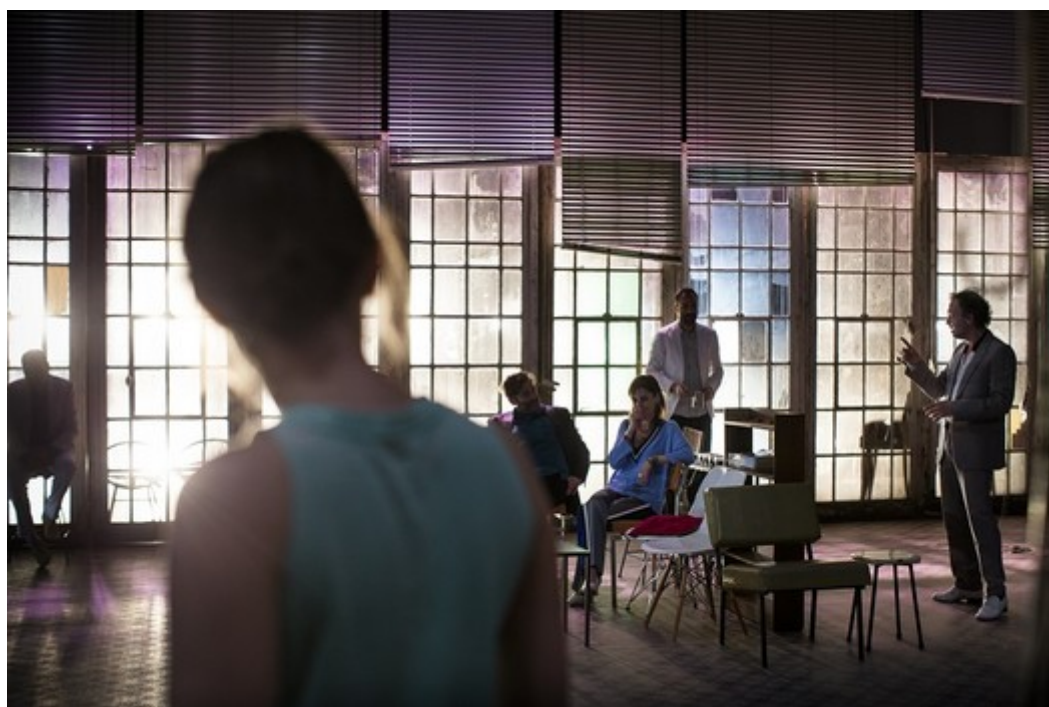

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Dublin Theatre Festival 2015: tg STAN's 'The Cherry Orchard' blossoms

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tg STAN's *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov

Photo by Koen Broos used with kind permission from Dublin Theatre Festival

tg STAN's *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov

Rating: ★★★★★

Speaking of “*The Cherry Orchard*” in a letter to his future wife Olga Knipper, Chekhov stated, “the next play I write will definitely be funny, very funny, at least in intention.” In Belgian company tg STAN’s production of “*The Cherry Orchard*” they’ve decided to honour the author’s intention and deliver a decidedly comic take on Chekhov’s ambiguous classic. Giving it a modern twist, with a self-conscious meta-theatricality, tg STAN merge Chekhov’s “*The Cherry Orchard*” with their own unique stylings, a little line dancing and a disproportionate amount of kissing resulting in a funny, clever and deceptively brilliant production.

tg STAN ensure all the Chekhovian ingredients are present. Continuous movement of characters is married to random interruptions in dialogue, veering from bookcases to billiards to saving the

cherry orchard to philosophical musing in a matter of moments. There's a sense of organised chaos to the work, which extends to the company themselves. Looking at times like the best worse ensemble of all time, tg STAN have intentionally played with the vanities of a theatre troupe, perceptively highlighting the selfishness and self-delusions at the heart of Chekhov's characters.

No respecters of the fourth wall, the ten strong cast deliberately draw attention to the theatricality on display, openly changing coloured gels while informing the audience it's sunrise, tossing confetti into a fan to simulate cherry blossoms or banging noisily as they move about the stage. They're not afraid to overact, ham it up, upstage others or play to the audience directly, always seeking to be the centre of attention in their own self-created melodramas. As "The Cherry Orchard" progresses the line between actor and character blurs as both become one, and a strange honesty is found. Moments such as the argument between the estate owner Mrs Ranevskaya and the perpetual student Trofimov, or the possible proposal between Lopakhin and Varya, resonate with a humanity and subtle intensity that transcends the humour with an understated power.

Created and beautifully performed by Jolente De Keersmaeker, Evelien Bosmans, Evgenia Brendes, Robby Cleiren, Minke Kruyver, Rosa Van Leeuwen, Scarlet Tummers, Stijn Van Opstal, Bert Haelvoet, Frank Vercruyssen and Lukas De Wolf, tg STAN's English language version of "The Cherry Orchard," which premieres at The Dublin Theatre Festival, is a wonderful production of Chekhov's last play, first performed in 1904 a few months before he died. It's also a wonderful example of tg STAN's belief in the "living" power of theatre, where "performance is not a reproduction of something that is learned, but is being created afresh every night, along with the audience." At two hours twenty minutes without an interval it asks a lot of its audience, which the occasional lull and difficulties with vocal projection didn't alleviate. But if it feels a tad long in places, it never feels like an endurance test. Rather, like a fine wine, it lingers long on the palate, revealing hidden flavours you might not have noticed at first. tg STAN's "The Cherry Orchard" is both true to the original whilst being distinctly its own unique thing, where simplicity in execution and obvious humour hide a complexity and depth underneath. One suspects Chekhov would have been pleased.

"The Cherry Orchard" by [Anton Chekhov](#), produced by tg STAN, runs at The O'Reilly Theatre, Belvedere College as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival until Oct 10th.

Show begins at 7.30 p.m.

Tickets: €25-€30

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For further information visit [Dublin Theatre Festival](#)



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