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The Good Doctor: Exploring and Designing a Journey through Simon and Chekhov's Russia

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The Good Doctor: Exploring and Designing a Journey through Simon and Chekhov's Russia

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
In
Film Theater and Communications Arts
Theatrical Costume Design

By

Melinda Bruns

B.A. University of New Orleans 2010

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploratory look at the process for designing the costumes for Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*. This production was produced at the University of New Orleans as part of its 2012-2013 season. Within this thesis we explore the multifaceted journey of the costume design process. As a designer, it is one's job to use both historical and textual analysis in order to create a design that supports the thematic structure of the play. The following journey begins with initial research on the complex relationship between Neil Simon and his subject Anton Chekhov. It continues to include individual character concepts, as well as a re-telling of the production process. Finally, it concludes with an analysis of the validity of the design as a whole.

Costume Design, Neil Simon, Anton Chekhov, *The Good Doctor*

Introduction

The Good Doctor covers a wide range of both comedic and satirical styles in a light-hearted journey through the satirical writings of Anton Chekhov, framed by the modern, witty observations of Neil Simon. At its heart, *The Good Doctor* strives to be what the character of the Writer describes it as: “charming and clever.” The show is built out of 11 different one-acts, most adapted from some of Chekhov’s short stories, and two originals written by Simon. What follows is a journey through my process as the costume designer for this show. The chapters are organized in such a way as to take you through every step of my process from research to design to production to hindsight analysis.

First, I analyze the complex relationship between Simon and Chekhov. I address both Simon’s inspiration for adapting these particular shorts stories, as well as the historical context in which Chekhov wrote these stories. I take an analytical look at the stories outside of the context of the play and explore their themes and literary structure as they were originally written.

Secondly, I analyze the script and look at how the various themes from both Chekhov and Simon are explored in my design, and offer an individual detail of character and their design. Included in the character design is the historical background of clothing of the late 19th century.

Next, I describe the build and production process of the show: how the design came to be, and how it changed over the short three-week period in which it was built. It includes recounts of my meetings with the director, as well as a look at the collaborative process between the other designers on the show and myself.

The final chapter is a look back on my design of the production: what could have been done better as well as what was done well. I highlight some aspects of my process which I feel need improvement. Essentially, I give the final account of my personal journey through *The Good Doctor*.

Chapter 1: A Historical Perspective for *The Good Doctor*

Neil Simon's relationship with his play, *The Good Doctor*, is somewhat vague and distant. Throughout both of his autobiographies and various critical studies, this play seems to be conspicuously short on detail—to the point of almost not being mentioned at all. Simon touches on the play's production in his autobiography, *And the Play Goes On*, but only so much as it pertains to his meeting and marrying his second wife, Marsha. It seems that the only real mention of the play's inspiration is in his first autobiography *Rewrites*. It is one paragraph:

“I was reading a book of short stories and anecdotal tales by Anton Chekhov, written when he was a young man and still in medical school. They ranged from bitingly humorous to outrageously funny, and as I sat there reading them in the summer of 1972, I thought how contemporary these pieces still were. I thought it might be fun, just as an exercise, to dramatize these pieces and make an evening with Chekhov and me, his uninvited partner.”

The play itself is comprised of nine scenes: seven adaptations of Chekhov's short stories and one act plays, one musical number whose music is composed by Peter Link, and one scene written by Simon for his wife Marsha. The seven stories adapted from Chekhov are: “The Sneeze” (*The Death of a Government Clerk*); “The Governess” (*The Nincompoop*); “Surgery”, “The Seduction”, and “A Defenseless Creature” are all named from their original work; and the exact origins of “The Drowned Man” and “The Arrangement” have been lost to time. The two scenes of original work are: “Too Late for Happiness” (the musical number) and “The Audition” (the scene Simon wrote for his wife). The scenes are woven together by the humorous and insightful narration of the Writer, a character who is the thinly-veiled caricature of Chekhov.

It seems that writing *The Good Doctor* was less a well thought out effort, and more, perhaps, a way to just get back on the horse. The previous year had been an extremely traumatic one for Simon and his family. He and his first wife were struggling with her cancer diagnosis, while trying to keep it hidden from those around them, including the couple's young daughters.¹ Simon writes that he had taken a break from writing due to the fact that he wanted to be there to support his wife through her hard time. It was

¹ Neil Simon *Rewrites* 1996

only after his wife was told that her cancer was in remission that he was able to return to his craft.² In many ways his attachment to Chekhov's works and writing *The Good Doctor* helped to revive Simon's passion for writing, even if the play itself was not very remarkable.

So where exactly does this play fit into the plethora of Simon's works? Perhaps the book, *Neil Simon: a Critical History* can best sum up *The Good Doctor* and its effect on the theatrical world:

“There is an interesting parallelism between the two playwrights: Chekhov and Simon, but aside from clarifying this relationship, the play can be taken only as an amusing evening in the theater, and not as one of the major works of either man. There is fun with farce: there is some social critique: and there are some interesting characterizations. When compared with some of Neil Simon's other plays, however, *The Good Doctor* is not outstanding.”

In truth, Simon approached this play as an experiment. The most memorable part about the play in Simon's eyes seems to be that he met and married his second wife while in production.³ This is, most likely, the reason for the lack of information, as well as Simon's seeming lack of enthusiasm about the production as a whole. He admits as much in his 1999 autobiography saying,

“I never expected this play to be a huge hit, but rather something to occupy me in the aftermath of Joan's passing. Since plays then did not cost a million six hundred thousand dollars to mount on Broadway, as they do today, it was not too expensive an indulgence.”⁴

The Good Doctor had many factors working against its success. The play as a whole has a very odd composition. It has no real through line, its comedic styles are in constant conflict, and its emotional tones suffer through almost more peaks and valleys than the Rocky Mountains. Once all of these factors are added up, it is not hard to see why this play seems to be little more than a footnote in Simon's oeuvre.

Simon writes a fair amount in *And the Play Goes On*, about the time period surrounding the production of *The Good Doctor*. He does not, however, talk about the play itself, but rather the budding relationship with his future wife, Marsha. Essentially, the play serves as the backdrop to his own private love story. This affection for his new wife prompted him to write her a special scene in which she could shine. This original scene is entitled “The Audition.” Although, it somewhat mimics Chekhov's short

² Neil Simon *Rewrites* 1996

³ Neil Simon *And the Play Goes On* 1999

⁴ Neil Simon *And the Play Goes On* 1999

story “The Play,” it is obvious that this particular scene is meant to be Simon’s comment on the world of the working (or sometimes not-working) actress.

In the scene, the Actress, who has walked all the way from her hometown of Odessa, is coming to audition for her favorite author, Anton Chekhov. The character of Chekhov is very dismissive of the young girl, telling her repeatedly to go home. However, like most actors, this young girl is tenacious and stubborn. She insists on finishing her audition and ends up getting the part. It is obvious when reading this particular part of the play that Simon had a deep love for his subject. Even before I knew that this scene was explicitly written for Marsha, I always felt like this scene stood out among the others. Unlike many of the other characters in the show, the Actress is not simply a stereotype or a caricature; she is a real human being with real hope and ambitions. There is no farce in this scene, just honest humor that speaks to the world of the everyday.

The same can be said about the other original scene as well. This scene is entitled “Too Late for Happiness,” and it is a musical duet between two elderly people. In the song, they ask the universe whether they have enough time left in their life for just one more love. Both this scene and “The Audition” are perhaps the most jarring scenes in the context of the play as a whole as both seem disconnected from the others. Although it may not be readily apparent, there is something in the writing of these two pieces that cues the audience onto the fact that they are not based on Chekhov’s writings. The depth of the characters, as well as the scenes’ notable absence of the ridiculous, leads the audience member to the conclusion that these two pieces are written by a different author altogether.

Perhaps by writing about the people that he loves most, Simon was trying to comment on Chekhov’s outspoken support of writing as an observer. The characters in these scenes are interesting foils to the rest of the cast. They are, in essence, Simon’s take on writing as an observer. He makes a point to show that not all observed characters needed to be a farce, they could exist just as they do in everyday life: sweet, simple, and occasionally hilarious.

These two scenes are by far the most believable and honest, although I have never felt that the placement of “Too Late for Happiness” in the show was a great decision. I feel that it takes the wind out

of the sails of the first act and sets the wrong tone right before intermission. Despite their somewhat disjointed nature in context to the production as a whole, I appreciate the honesty that Simon writes into these characters, they feel like the only relatable people in a very foreign world.

It is this honesty that forms the foundation for the link between these two men. I don't think that Simon had an infatuation with Chekhov's writing, but I believe he respected him and the way that he wrote about his subjects. In one quote of Simons, he refers to wanting to give tribute to the young man who wrote funny stories to get himself through medical school,⁵ but what Simon failed to mention was that Chekhov always fancied himself a funny man. Chekhov was noted to say that *The Cherry Orchard* was "a jolly comedy, a vaudeville, almost a farce...the last act is gay and light."⁶ Simon describes the *Good Doctor* in much the same way.

The character of the Writer perhaps, best exemplifies the link between the two men. In the play he muses to himself:

"I look out the window and think that life is passing me at a furious rate. So, I ask myself the question...what force is it that compels me to write so incessantly, day after day, page after page, story after story...And the answer is quite simple...I have no choice...I am a writer."⁷

This love for their craft is what drove Chekhov to write over 400 hundred works, and what propelled Simon to become one of the most successful playwrights of the 20th century.⁸ The Writer is never named as Chekhov, and perhaps that is because Simon wanted to draw the parallel between, not just himself and Chekhov, but between every writer who feels compelled to write about the world around them.

The Writer often refers to the fact that he acquires many of his stories through observation of the people around him: "I'm engaged in conversations where I hear nothing and see only the silent movement of lips and answer a meaningless, 'yes, yes, of course' and all the time I'm thinking, 'He'll make a wonderful character for a story, this one.'"⁹ It's hard for me, sometimes, to decipher when Simon is

⁵ Neil Simon *Rewrites* 1996

⁶ Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

⁷ Neil Simon *The Good Doctor* 1973

⁸ Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

⁹ Neil Simon *The Good Doctor* 1973

speaking as Chekhov and when he is speaking through Chekhov; however, I think this particular quote, whether he meant it or not, is yet another parallel between the two men. Chekhov held a firm belief that a writer needed no greater philosophy in his writing than simply writing about what he saw going on in the world around him.¹⁰ In Simon's case this translated into hilarious comedies pointing out the pitfalls of everyday life such as *The Odd Couple* and *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*. In Chekhov's case, his observations led him to write several stories that took a very uncomfortable, if humorous, look at the great injustices of 19th century Russian society.

Perhaps it is this similarity in the two men's writing that led Simon to the conclusion that Chekhov's stories (written roughly between 1880 and 1895) were still relevant in the world of the early 1970's America. Although many of these stories seem fanciful and unrealistic, they are a fairly accurate reflection of the tumultuous climate in which they were written. Fortunately for Simon, the early 1970's was equally as tumultuous.

With the increasing uproar over the Vietnam War and Watergate, America was pitted against itself in much the same way that Russia was in the late 19th century. Having just ended the virtually enslaving institution of serfdom and poised on the precipice of a revolution, Russia was seeing some of the hardest, yet most inspirational years of existence. This period in Russian history would shape not only Russia, but also the rest of the world for years to come. The revolutionary atmosphere, coupled with the political turmoil of the day, was a perfect breeding ground for some of the greatest writers to ever grace the cultural landscape. Tolstoy, Gorky, and, of course, Chekhov spoke beyond, and often despite, the iron hand of the Czar and his board of literary censures. These writers, and many other artists, spoke not only for themselves, but also for the common people of Russia, whose plight they observed every day.

However, before we dive into the socio-economic policies of late 19th century Russia, we should take a look at Chekhov, and the circumstances that led him to be the great author he became. Although currently we mainly remember him for his literary brilliance, Anton Chekhov began his career in a rather unusual place...medical school. Chekhov was the son of a former serf who had been lucky enough to buy

¹⁰ Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

his freedom.¹¹ Chekhov grew up in a poor household with several brothers and sisters, and he wanted nothing more than to be able to provide for his family. When he got into medical school it seemed that his family's financial situation would finally be stabilized. Chekhov received a scholarship of 300 rubles a semester, and all of that money was sent back to his mother to help pay the household expenses.¹² Since all of his scholarship money went to his family and not his tuition, Chekhov was forced to find another means of supporting his education. In order to pay his bills, Chekhov turned a love of funny magazines into a writing career. He did this by writing several short humorous stories for many of the small comedy magazines of the time.¹³

At the time there were several small publications that would pay a quarter of a cent per word for funny short stories. Writing these stories had become somewhat of a career for many people who were looking for a job or extra money to put food on the table. Not only did these magazines accept short stories, but also other forms of the comedy such as sketches, political cartoons, captions for photos, jokes, and other sundry humor-based forms of literature.¹⁴

Chekhov did not limit himself solely to the genre of the short story. He was known to write one-act plays, jokes, sketch comedy scenes, one-line puns, and novellas. The longer the piece, the more serious it was considered, hence the magazines' encouragement that the stories be short and to the point. Chekhov submitted several different humorous antidotes to the various magazines. The first year that he was submitting stories he only submitted 32. However, soon he was able to establish himself, and he hit his stride as a writer. The next year he submitted over 100 different pieces to various publications. By the time he stopped writing for humor magazines he had written over 400 pieces.¹⁵

Unlike many writers of the time, Chekhov's humor arose from his ability to be quite bold in his honesty. Chekhov believed that the measure of a man's intelligence was built on his ability to call things like he saw them: "You hold that I am intelligent. Yes, I am intelligent in that I...don't lie to myself and

¹¹ Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

¹² Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

¹³ Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

¹⁴ Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

¹⁵ Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

don't cover my own emptiness with other people's intellectual rags."¹⁶ At the time of Chekhov's writings it was trendy to fill your stories with stock characters that inhabited a stock world. These characters were fundamental to humorous writings of the time, and they included such figures as cuckolded husbands, damsels in distress, young fops getting married, bribe-taking officials, bungling doctors, and over dramatic actors and artists.¹⁷ The situations in which these characters found themselves were as formulaic as the characters themselves. For better or worse, no matter how trite they might appear, they were the backbone of Russian humor at the time.

Chekhov was not entirely immune to this trend and would often resort to using these stock characters in his short stories; however, he also expanded the cast of characters accepted in his stories to include several other characters and character types that represented the various social classes.¹⁸ Although this was not a particular convention of the time, Chekhov's stories made the people laugh, so the magazines kept on buying them. His writing existed at an extremely volatile time in Russian history, and many looked to his writings to be an outspoken cry against the establishment. However, that was simply not the way in which Chekhov chose to participate in politics. Chekhov was friends with some of the most radical writers and intellectuals of his day, but when asked by his friends why he didn't associate himself with some political party Chekhov simply answered: "I should like to be a free artist and that is all...I consider a label or a trademark to be a prejudice."¹⁹ This was the beauty of Chekhov; he kept his opinions to himself and his writing simple. Of course, that doesn't mean that the man did not write pieces that had political leanings—quite the contrary. Chekhov's stories showed a range of problems with Russia: the corruption of the higher classes, the hardships of the peasants, the pitfalls of bureaucracy, the futility of trying to stick up for yourself, etc. However, in a time when you could not speak out without fear of punishment, Chekhov—due to the fact that his stories were simple and unpretentious—was able to get away with it.

¹⁶ Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

¹⁷ Ralph E. Matlaw *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories* 1979

¹⁸ Ernest J. Simmons *Chekhov* 1962

¹⁹ Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

Like many of his peers, Chekhov believed that the best stories came out of strict observation. That's not to say that his writings were without form or refinery, however Chekhov enjoyed showing his audiences glimpses of the humor that arose from everyday life.²⁰ Unfortunately the humor that is often exhibited in stories such as "The Nincompoop", and "The Death of a Government Clerk" arise from the very real social disorder that existed in late 19th century Russia.

For centuries, the landowners and the upper echelons of Russian society ran the country. Representational government was non-existent, and everything from the local police up to the highest-ranking officials was controlled by the Czar.²¹ The Czar had complete say in the lives of the people of Russia. Many leaders feared that, given the opportunity, the uneducated would rise up and disband the upper levels of society. This system was so ingrained in the subconscious of every Russian citizen that it was not often challenged.²²

This reprehensible system began in the 13th century when many peasants lost their homes during the Tartar wars. These homeless peasants were forced to settle on the land of wealthy landowners, and they soon became what we know today as serfs. By the 17th century serfs had not only lost their freedoms as individuals but they had also become the property of the landowners.²³ They could be bought and sold, and their movements were severely restricted. For centuries serfdom was the dominant relationship between the rich and the peasants. It may have continued to be if not for another war. The devastating loss of the Crimean War forced Alexander II to realize that Russia was no longer the great power it had been, and he decided that change was needed.

His first attempt at reform was the Emancipation Manifesto of 1860. This manifesto was circulated throughout Russia, even the parts of the country that did not participate in the social construct

²⁰Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

²¹Michael Hughes "State and Society in the Political thought of the Moscow Slavophiles" *Studies in European Thought* 2000

²²Russian Serfs and Russian Nobles *Illustrated Magazine of Art* 1854

²³Steven L. Hoch "Did Russia's Emancipated Serfs Really Pay Too Much for Too Little Land? Statistical Anomalies and Long-Tailed Distributions" *Slavic Review* 2004

of serfdom.²⁴ This law freed the serfs that did exist, and it also established small local governments that were representational.

This freedom, regardless of how tenuous it must have seemed, opened up the world for the peasants and the lower classes. As Russia reformed her ways, commoners became more accessible to outside concerns. Many peasants moved to the cities to pursue work on the railways or in the factories in a desperate hope to finally find security within this ever-expanding, ever-changing world.²⁵ Perhaps it was this hope that made Chekhov's stories so appealing to those who read them. For in all the tribulations that his characters faced, they always have hoped that things will get better.

Although his writings started as a simple way to make money, they quickly became a passion for the young writer. Chekhov was very prudent when writing even the shortest of stories, as can be seen in a letter he wrote to his brother in 1883 in which he explains the ingredient list for a good short story:

- “1. The shorter the better
2. A bit of ideology and being up to date is most a propos
3. Caricature is fine, but ignorance of civil service ranks and of the seasons is strictly prohibited²⁶”

Later the list would grow to include such things as absence of any lengthy verbiage of political-social-economic nature, truthful descriptions of persons and objects, audacity and originality, total objectivity, and compassion.²⁷ As you can see, Chekhov took great pride in his stories and the way in which he presented his characters. Chekhov took an extremely scientific approach to his work; he did not simply take a slice of life and write about it, but instead took all the layers of the world he observed and placed them side by side in order to create a full view of the world.

You might see this description as an overly analytic view of what are, most simply, short stories told for the amusement of the masses, and perhaps that is true. However, Chekhov's stories exist in such simplicity and social reflectivity that they are perhaps some of the best representations of Russian culture at the time. There is no alternative motive to his writings. Although Chekhov did mention in his list that

²⁴ Edvard Radzinsky, *Alexander II: the Last Great Tsar*

²⁵ Frank W. Thackeray *Events that Changed Russia Since 1855* 2007

²⁶ Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

²⁷ Lillian Hellman *The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov* 1955

a person should have a bit of ideology, he never felt like that ideology would be the sole foot on which a story stands. Chekhov is notoriously known for “writing about nothing²⁸,” and this is mainly said because, unlike other writers at the time, his stories never had the malice of someone who needs desperately to convey his point. In fact, Chekhov hated when critics or intellectuals over analyzed his stories. “The people I am afraid of are the ones who look for tendentiousness between the lines and are determined to see me as either a liberal or a conservative.”

. Chekhov used the most natural of comedic conventions to tell his stories: irony. This would often make Chekhov’s stories appear much more juvenile than those of his contemporaries. Never before had irony played such a huge role in the world of the story, yet this irony never came off as the writer’s indifference to his subjects. Instead, Chekhov’s objective nature led to a very sad, but still very compassionate look at the world around him.

Chekhov’s objective nature often made his stories somewhat uncomfortable to read. The humor that comes out of social class tensions, seemed very funny in Russia at the time, but modern readers tend to cringe at the unadulterated abuse of the lower classes. For example, in “A Nincompoop” we see the Mistress of the household in a meeting with her governess. The Mistress is explaining to the Governess why she will not be receiving her full pay for two month’s work. The Mistress continually refers to her fake ledger, and makes up different reasons to take money out of the Governess’ pay. This understandably leads the young Governess to tears, which she desperately tries to hide from her employer. No matter how untrue or outlandish the Mistress’ claims are, the Governess simply agrees with her and quietly sobs. The Governess even goes so far as to thank her mistress for giving her 10 rubles, even though she earned 80 rubles. In the end, we learn the Mistress was just playing “a cruel joke” on the young lady, and that she will actually be giving her the full salary.

The subject matter, as well as the narrative structure, of this particular story, goes to great strides to confront the reader with the uneven nature of the relationships between the very rich and the very poor.

²⁸ Carole Flath “Writing about Nothing: Chekhov’s ‘Ariadna’ and the Narcissistic Narrator” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 1999

This point is so strong that it seems Chekhov was ignoring his own rule about not being too opinionated when telling a story.

The first clue that Chekhov is making a statement about the rich is the fact that the story is told from the viewpoint of the Mistress. This fact alone gives more power to her character. As she recounts the events of her meeting with her governess the reader begins to pick up on the fact that she seems to be recounting these details with much enjoyment. Throughout the story the Governess is shown to be increasingly more distressed. As the Governess' distress grows, the Mistress' reactions become increasingly outlandish. The Mistress stomps around and huffs and puffs in order to frighten the young Governess. Even after driving the girl to tears, she continues with her deception, which she claims it's all in the name of teaching the Governess to stand up for herself. The end of the story is perhaps the most telling of the social relationship between the two characters. After the Mistress has confessed her joke, she dismisses the Governess, but not before asking her, "Is possible to be such a nincompoop?" The Governess looks her employer in the eye and simply says, "Yes ma'am, it's possible."

The unequal relationship between the two characters is what drives the humor in this story. Even if the reader is unaware of the Mistress' joke, the very nature of the Governess' silence while taking such a belittling seems oddly humorous. Chekhov's observation may, at times, seem as a mere hyperbole. However, it was not uncommon for workers at the time to work without pay, or to simply be denied their pay at the end of the day. The Governess points this out to her mistress when asked why she thanked her even after so much of her pay was deducted. This conversation also points out the oblivious nature of the upper-class Russian. The Mistress is not in any way aware of the world her governess lives in, or the struggles she might face every day. To the Mistress her conversation with the Governess is simply a prank, but to the Governess it is yet another reminder of her lowly social status.

A perhaps even more cruel humor exists in the story "The Death of a Government Clerk." In this particular story Chekhov tells the tale of a government clerk who saves all his money so that he might attend the theater for an evening. He just so happens to be sitting behind his superior, the General. Unfortunately, during the show the poor clerk happens to accidentally sneeze on his superior. This sneeze

causes the clerk to become quite paranoid about the reaction of the superior officer. He attempts to apologize several times, but the General just tells him to forget about it, because it really wasn't important. The General's dismissive tone to the clerk causes him to become petulant. He feels completely disrespected by the General, and plans to write a stern letter explaining his outrage.

It is interesting to note that in Simon's dramatization of this particular story, the clerk actually gives a long-winded speech to the General in which he points out the several inequalities within the system. This speech leads up to a grand finale where, instead of completely telling his superior off, the clerk instead profusely apologizes. At this point the General blows his top and tells the clerk that he is a worthless piece of nothing, and that he should leave and never come back. This is much the same ending as in the original story; though the reactions of the General and the clerk in Simon's version are much more intense. In a later scene entitled "The Actress" Simon references the original story, when he has the Actress tell the Writer that the story made her laugh for days. The Writer then informs her that he had "meant it to be sad." The Writer's assessment of his own work could be interpreted as Simon's own words spilling out of the Writer's mouth.

Simon's interpretations are, in the modern age, spot on. The interaction between the General and the clerk at the end of the story is much less dramatic in Chekhov's version. However, the fate of the clerk is equally as sad in both instances. As you can probably guess based on the title, the clerk dies in the end, but perhaps it's the nature of his death that is most disturbing about this story. After his interaction with the General, the clerk's spirit is broken. He simply returns home, lies down on his couch, and dies. The ending is brief and final, and to many Russians in the 19th century, it might have even been considered funny. The modern reader, however, is plunged once again into an awkward confrontation with the blatant inequalities within the Russian social structure. This awkwardness facilitates some of the humor, but rather than it being a laugh-out-loud kind of funny, it is instead a quiet, nervous laugh kind of funny.

Perhaps it's this self-conscious reaction from modern readers, which led to this particular story's inclusion in *The Good Doctor*. As previously stated, Simon felt that all of the stories included in *The*

Good Doctor were still quite relevant, even in modern times. Simon seemed to see in the America of 1972, a willingness to sit back and watch the world come crashing down, while sipping their cocktails and making small jokes amongst themselves. When you look at the characters that continually appear in Chekhov's short stories, you must assume that he shared the same opinion of the public of his time. The oblivious Mistress and the General, who are constantly annoyed by the gibbering of the lower classes, all are just stereotypes of what Chekhov observed in his world.

The overall feeling of apathy which seems to be expressed in Chekhov's works takes on a subtler theme in some of the other stories of *The Good Doctor*. Case in point is Simon's scene of "The Drowned Man" wherein the titular, lively vagabond character offers to simulate drowning in order to make some extra money. In this scene, the vagabond, or Drowned Man, is negotiating with a gentleman about how much he would pay to see a man drown. At first the Gentleman is appalled at the suggestion and calls for a policeman. When the Policeman approaches, he informs the Gentleman that he should be less appalled at the suggestion of paying to watch a man drown and more appalled at the price he was quoted. "Eighty?! Eighty, you thief?! You conniving, wretched, deceiving little thief, I won't pay more than sixty!" The Gentleman still thinks the idea is ridiculous, but he finally relents and offers to pay the Drowned Man 60 kopecks to watch him drown. The Drowned Man takes his money and proceeds to jump in the water, but not before telling the Gentleman to call out the name Popnicheski at the end so that he can come into the water and save him, you see the Drowned Man cannot swim. The Gentleman agrees and the Drowned Man proceeds to jump in, but as the Gentleman watches, he gets more and more involved in observing the spectacle, so much so that he forgets the name of the man who was to come and save the Drowned Man. The scene ends with the Gentleman realizing that he has forgotten the name.

For much of this scene the audience is led to believe that the Drowned Man is taking the Gentleman for a ride. This is especially apparent when the character of the Policeman tells the Gentleman that the price he was quoted was too high. The scene seems to be the rebuff in a show that has seemingly rejoiced at the suffering of the underclass. However, the entire perception of the relationship between the Gentleman and the Drowned Man is reversed at the end. The Gentleman's demeanor is aloof and

detached when he utters his last line, “Good heavens, now what was that fellows name?” Then it is over. This abrupt ending is completely purposeful, as it leaves the audience with the impression that the Gentleman cares about as much for the Drowned Man’s impending death as he does about the gum on the bottom of his shoe. One could speculate that after this realization the man called out for help from anyone that would hear him, but it seems unlikely. What the man may or may not do is irrelevant, because the audience has been trained to believe that he will simply walk away without giving it another thought. This scene does not need to be as grueling as “The Governess”, or as obvious as “The Sneeze”, because the audience is ready to believe that this is the status quo of Russian society by this point in the production; the audience’s assumption for each scene is that the poor get put down by the rich, and the rich could care less.

The only original Chekhov short story included in *The Good Doctor* that seems to break the mold is the story entitled “A Defenseless Creature.” In this story a poor woman, simply called the Woman, whose husband has been laid off appears at a local bank attempting to receive money that was withheld from her husband’s last pay check. However, it is continually pointed out to the Woman by the Banker, that his bank has nothing to do with her husband’s claim. This very shrewd woman continually dodges his rebuffs and claims that people often try to trick her because she is a defenseless woman. When the Banker tries to kick her out of the bank she performs a variety of distractions from wailing, to threatening to scream, and finally to pretending to hexing the bank. Finally the Banker is on the brink of being driven mad by her, and he chooses to yield to her demands and give her the money as well as a recommendation for her husband so that he can get a new job.

What makes this story so unique is the character of the peasant Woman; she is smart enough to get the upper hand when it comes to the Banker. This is not uncommon in his other works, mind you. Chekhov has many intelligent peasant characters who are able to win the day due to their cunning nature. However, the Woman in “The Defenseless Creature” is the only one of these characters to make an appearance in *The Good Doctor*. It is an interesting foil to “The Drowned Man”. Much like the Woman in “The Defenseless Creature”, the Drowned Man in “The Drowned Man” possesses a cunning nature that

seems to give him the upper hand, but in his story, it backfires and he is accidentally left to die. Unlike the rest of the stories where the peasants are subjected cruel treatment by the upper class or outright humiliation, “The Defenseless Creature” creates a context in which the downtrodden can rise above.

You could look at the simple fact that she needs to go to such dramatics to get her way as a comment on the desperation of the lower classes, but the simple truth is this woman is a con artist. Her husband was wronged by a member of the upper class, and by God, they will pay. This scene could also comment on the lengths to which a poor person must go in order to be treated the same as an aristocrat, but I prefer to look at it as Chekhov’s love letter to the oppressed. Not only is the character poor, but she is a woman—a woman who uses her brains to outsmart those who look down on her. This description makes the story sound much more heavy-handed than it is actually written, but that is the case with all of Chekhov’s short stories.

When we investigate the reality of these people’s lives and how they interact within the social constructs of their society, we modern readers find the treatment of these characters depressing, unacceptable, and an epitome of what many Westerners have come to think of as typical Russian life. However, Chekhov never wanted his stories to be taken too seriously or too literally. Yes, Chekhov believed in writing as an observer, but that never hindered him from taking artistic license in order to bring joy into the reader’s world. Simon took much the same kind of license when he chose to resurrect these stories for a modern audience.

As I dive deeper into the different, yet often overlapping worlds of the two men, it makes me believe that Simon really was trying to write a love letter to the forgotten Chekhov—the Chekhov that thought his plays were “jolly,” and who got in constant arguments with his directors over the tone in which they presented his plays. When many think about Chekhov today, they see his plays as a sad reminder of the old Russian world. For good or ill, in many ways they have defined what it means to be Russian in many Western minds. Perhaps that is why Simon chose to bring a new life to them. Although Simon never said as much, I like to think that with *The Good Doctor* Simon was trying to remind us of

the humor that Chekhov gave to the world, and to remind all theater-goers out there that a writer's ultimate intentions, like any true artist, are in the eye of the beholder.

Chapter 2: Designing *The Good Doctor*

Script Analysis

When I start with a show I like to ask myself several questions about what the play is about, and how that transfers into a visual world. *The Good Doctor* was not as easy for me to pin down as a more linear show would be. The production and design for *The Good Doctor* was a very interesting experience. I use interesting because it neither defines the experience as bad or good, although at times it was both. I received the news that my thesis show was going to be *The Good Doctor* in August of 2012, and I promptly read the script and started my preliminary research. What struck me the most about this play is how incredibly funny I found it. I was aware that the humor in the play was based around class struggles resulting from the abhorrent socio-economic inequalities of 19th century Russia, but it still cracked me up. I felt no uneasiness about its characters' blatantly arrogant nature towards those whom they believed to be below them. However, I did feel a little guilty when I had a discussion with my father after he saw the show. "It's just so uncomfortable to watch," My father said, "You see these poor people being abused in such a lighthearted manner that you just can't help but squirm in your seat." Honestly I had never seen the show in this light, and perhaps it was because I didn't want to.

There are several different ideas that are brought up throughout the show. The skits themselves point at the classism that is rampant in the world, while the character of the Writer seems to be hitting on a different point. The Writer seems to be a representation of the creator in all of us. He is passionate, quirky, and very self-conscious. Even though his work is always being compared to others who might be better, he still loves what he does, and he loves his creations. This, to me, spoke of the real message of this play, which was that even in the worst of times we, as artists, must embrace our passions and creations no matter what others may say. Throughout the show you see the Writer struggle with his ideas, always pointing out how horrible they are, but that never stops him from doing what he loves.

This idea of creation even in the face of failure intrigued me. It seemed to me that the Writer would rather live in his own imagination with his characters than the world outside. I think that many artists long to live in their imaginations, because only in their imaginations can their biggest dreams exist.

The Good Doctor is a multi-world play. You have the world of the Writer's imagination and the actual world. This idea of escapism is the first thematic idea that I could represent in a visual aspect. Yes, the skits tell their own stories of both plight and accomplishment, but there is a bigger story being told in this play by the Writer, and that is what I chose to focus on.

The Writer's Imagination

I started looking at Russian art, not just from the 19th century but also throughout Russian history. What struck me the most about much of this art was how radiant the colors were. Even though I had been to Russia and seen much of this art in person, when looking back I was surprised at the vibrant use of colors and how that had slipped my mind. So often we Westerners think of Russia as a country in permanent winter, a world of bleak colors and drab, fur-lined clothing. However, Russia is quite the opposite; it had perhaps one of the most colorful cultural histories in the world. When you look at the elaborate designs and colors used in the folk art of Russia, you gain an entirely new perspective on the country.

I choose this world of color and life to represent the world of the Writer's imagination. The colorful art of Russia speaks to the ever-optimistic side of the Russian people: the side that always looks towards spring, even in the depths of winter. This optimism reminded me of the Writer, and I designed the characters' costumes in such a way that the audience could see this side of Russia, even if it was just in his imagination.

After compiling various images of Russian art and several other images of 19th century clothing, I was ready to start talking with the director, David Hoover, about his interpretation of the play. The only problem was that David was directing another show at the time and would not be ready to talk to me for a couple of weeks.

When the director has ideas of how he likes things to look, I can add those to my own or flip his concepts to create alternative looks that will strengthen the visual quality of the production. I am a firm believer in the fact that the best designs are reached through a close collaboration between designers and directors. By allowing me a sounding board and brain storming space, being able to have an open dialogue with the director is extremely helpful to my design process.

The Good Doctor was to be our second production on the fall, so I had time to wait. Every day I arrived at the costume shop I was hoping that I would be able to get something done. Alas I had yet to talk to David, so I had no idea where to even begin. About the third week into school the semester's first production of *Race* was over, and I was finally able to get a meeting with David.

The meeting was not so much a discussion as it was David exhaustedly staring at me with much the same expression as a deer in the headlights while I was running a mile a minute with ideas and images. David did the best he could in this first encounter. He looked over my research, pointed out what he liked and what he didn't like, and even talked about some small ideas that he had. However, these ideas were very base level and most of them I had already assumed. I was thankful to have the time with him, and the ability to iron out a few crucial details that I needed to know before I started the actual design process.

I started rendering as soon as I got done with the meeting with David. I like to take a fair amount of time in the pre-production process. I like to render and re-render for some time. However, I didn't have the time so I got one shot to render these characters before I had to start building. This was incredibly inconvenient as it lead to several hours of designing and redesigning on the fly while in the course of building the show.

Before I rendered any of the scenes I looked at several different aspects: the characters, where the scene took place, what the relationship between the characters was, and where the humor was coming from. The scenes in *The Good Doctor* are very short, so all of the information about a character has to be apparent the minute they walk on stage. In many of the scenes I used texture to help tell the story of the downtrodden. In essence I used texture to tell Chekhov's story while using color to tell Simon's story.

Character Design for *The Good Doctor*

“The Sneeze”

The first scene of the play is “The Sneeze” and was comprised of four characters: Cherdyakov the clerk, Sonya his wife, the General, and his wife Madame Brassilhov. The scene takes place at the opera and the main humor from this scene arises out of Cherdyakov’s unfortunate sneeze that happens to land on the back of the General’s head. The scene starts with the Writer informing the audience that Cherdyakov had saved his money so that he could get the best seats in the theater. The intense and funny dynamic between the General and Cherdyakov is built solely on the fact that the General is Cherdyakov’s boss, and therefore has the power to make Cherdyakov’s life miserable.

I knew that there had to be a clear-cut visual distinction between the two couples. I chose to have the General and his wife be very over the top. For example, the General’s wife has only seven lines in the entire scene and most are no more than a single word, so I knew her outfit had to tell her story. I chose an elaborate evening gown in bright colors for her. The bright reds and golds of her dress were inspired by the many works of Russian folk art that I had found in my research. The warmer hues of the color wheel are a constant throughout the Russian art tradition. By putting her in these bright colors I was hoping to show a stark contrast to Cherdyakov and his wife who were to be in simpler duller clothes.

This color scheme worked well with the various general’s uniforms that were in use during the late 19th century. Russian general’s uniforms were generally blue with red trim, so I decided to do Madame Brassilhov’s dress in red and gold. This would help to pair them together visually. The elaborate ball dress that I designed for Madame Brassilhov was based off of popular ball dresses of the time, and her accessories were based on various fashion plates from the time period. Evening dresses of the late 1870’s had a very similar silhouette to the daytime dresses. However, evening dresses were often adorned with an elaborate train that would be decorated with ribbons and flowers. Quite often real flowers were attached to the dress, while fake flowers were placed in the hair. The primary difference between eveningwear and daywear was the cut of the sleeve and the fabric in which it was made. Many women had two bodices made for each skirt; the evening bodice would often have no sleeves or off the

shoulder sleeves and would have richer adornments. Necklines for evening bodices were often V-shaped or low and rounded.²⁹ I needed to fuse at least two different fabrics into the dress as it was the style at the time. “There is no such thing as a dress made out of a single material,” reported *The Queen*, a Victorian magazine, “take two materials, one of which shall represent the principal and the other the accessory, and out of these compose a costume, trimming the principal with the accessory and the accessory with the principal,”³⁰ It was also quite typical for women to wear extravagant fake hair pieces, most often adorned with various flowers that matched the dress. With this particular character I went a little over the top with the jewelry as well as with the flowers in her hair. I felt that it was necessary in order to convey the ridiculous nature of these characters. I employed this same idea when decorating the General’s uniform; I adorned his coat with lots of gold trim and medals. I also chose more expensive looking fabrics in order to further distance the rich characters from the poor characters.

I chose to have Cherdyakov dressed in a simple sack suit that was a dull color, either brown or green. Sack suits were a very common item for men of the time to be wearing. Their popularity rested in the fact that they were extremely versatile and comfortable. The jacket and pants were cut straight, with the jacket having no waist seam. Adding to their versatility was the fact that sack jackets also came in both single and double-breasted versions. I thought that a sack suit would be a perfect fit for this character as it could play so many different roles in a poor man’s wardrobe. His necktie and shirt were to be simple, but still nice enough that it looked like he had dressed up for the opera. I ended up finding the perfect dull, camel colored suit in our stock that didn’t have a sack jacket, but rather a somewhat out of date morning jacket.

The morning coat was similar to the frock coat in that it often hung lower than a traditional sack coat. The most distinguishing feature of the morning coat was the curved front. The curve for the morning coat would start well above the waist and would extend to the back or side of the coat, this

²⁹ Alison Gernsheim *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion A Photographic Survey*

³⁰ *The Queen Magazine* via Alison Gernsheim *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion A Photographic Survey*

would allow for the exposure of the waistcoat underneath.³¹ I chose a waistcoat that was of a different color and pattern of the suit, as I hoped it would make the ensemble look patched together. Although wearing a mismatched waistcoat was common at the time for daywear, it was not seen in men's evening attire. Eveningwear for men mainly consisted of knee length tailcoats, waistcoats, and pants. The waistcoats were often the same color as the rest of the suit, and were usually double breasted.³² By dressing him in an odd mixture of evening and day attire I hoped to emphasize the fact that he belonged to the lower class. The color and out of date look of the suit did very well to help separate him from the rich General. Cherdyakov's wife was to be similarly simply dressed. I chose a simple blouse and high collared shirt with a wrap. Her outfit was designed to give the impression that she too had put on her very best for the theater, but her very best was still very simple.

³¹ Phyllis G. Tortora and Keith Eubank *Survey of Historical Costume Fourth Edition*

³² Alison Gernsheim *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion A Photographic Survey*

Madam Brassilhov



Figure 1: Inspirational Image for Madam Brassilhov



Figure 2: Inspirational Image for Madam Brassilhov



Figure 3: Rendering for Madam Brassilhov

The General



Figure 4: Inspirational image for the General



Figure 5: Inspirational image for the General



Figure 6: Rendering for the General

The Cherdykovs



Figure 8: Rendering for Cherdykov

Figure 9: Rendering for Sonya



Figure 7: Inspirational image for Cherdykov and Sonya

“The Governess”

The second scene was “The Governess.” This scene was much simpler than “The Sneeze” as it only had two characters, the Governess and the Mistress. The humor is built around the Mistress’ cruel joke on the young Governess. The entire scene builds up to the eventual punch line, so instead of a campy look I had this one be a little subtler. Instead of having the Mistress in red I decided to downplay her color scheme and have her in plum and gold. Since the humor is quiet and uncomfortable, the colors for the scene needed to be as subtle as the humor.

The Governess’ outfit was a simple servant uniform from the time. This was an interesting role to do research on. Some governesses would come to the home wearing their own clothing and would teach the children and return home at the end of the day. Since they were a kind of independent contractor they did not have to wear a uniform. However, I also found research where the Governess wore a uniform because she was technically an employee of the house. I decided the latter would be the best option for the young Governess. The Governess’ dress had a slight stripe pattern to it. I liked this look as it gave more texture to her costume. I felt that by dressing her as an employee it emphasized the power that the Mistress had over her. This power over the Governess would help to emphasize the punch line at the end of the scene, as well as make the Governess’ last defiant remark of “Yes ma’am, it’s possible,” seem even more potent.

The Mistress’ dress was inspired by a painting I had found of Maria Feodorovna who was the Empress Consort of Russia from 1865 until her death. In my research I had seen several different bustles and overskirts. The bustles of the late 1870’s had a much different look than the bustles of the 1880s. The Mistress’ dress is based off of the more draped bustles of the late 1870’s as opposed to the shelf-styled bustles of the 1880. I particularly like the front draped overskirt that the Empress Consort wore in my inspirational painting, as it was elaborate, yet simple. Since Maria Feodorovna was the wife of the Czar, I felt that she would be someone the Mistress would look up to both in fashion and demeanor. I chose to have the color scheme of the Mistress to stand out next to the Governess. However, I did not feel like the scene needed as much color as “The Sneeze,” so I dressed the Mistress in plum and gold. The plum color

was for the majority of the dress, and was in the same satin fabric as the dress. I used the gold brocade to add the front drape and bustle to the dress. I had used a similar brocade for the bustle of Madame Brassilhov's dress in "The Sneeze." I felt that these two elements would help to draw a parallel between the rich characters in the play as well as help to establish the Mistress' power over the Governess.



Figure 10: Inspirational image for the Governess

The Governess



Figure 11: Rendering for the Governess

The Mistress



Figure 12: Rendering for the Mistress



Figure 13: Inspirational image for the Mistress

“Surgery”

The third scene in the play is “Surgery.” It tells the story of a Russian priest, or sexton, with a toothache who goes to a young and inexperienced dentist. This scene has a huge physical humor element to it, and, unlike many of the other scenes, there is not a much of a class component. The humor comes from both the physicality of the characters and the Sexton being in pain. This scene was a little tricky to design. Both characters had obvious positions in society so they had to wear the uniforms of their professions. The Sexton had to be in a traditional Russian Orthodox robe and hat, and the dentist had to be in a suit with a white coat. Since the scene had such a physical component to it, I kept the costumes fairly straight forward, with little hints of the ridiculous. For example I gave the dentist plaid pants, although they were worn at the time, we in the modern era think it a bit garish to wear such pants. I gave the Sexton red and black striped socks that you only saw when he picked his robe up and ran around the stage. I felt these ridiculous, small details would help to communicate in a subtle way how unrealistic these characters were, yet still allow the physical humor to be the true indicator of their childlike nature.

The Sexton



Figure 14: Inspirational Image for the Sexton



Figure 15: Rendering for the Sexton

The Dentist



Figure 16: Rendering for the Dentist

Figure 17:
Inspirational Image
for the Dentist



“Too Late for Happiness”

The third scene in the show was an original musical number entitled “Too Late for Happiness.” As I stated before, this was an original scene written by Neil Simon and is a complete departure from the rest of the show. This scene takes place between two elderly people out in a park. It’s not funny, rather sweet and calm. The colors for this scene needed to be reminiscent of winter, which I felt was the world that these two people were living in. Their spouses had passed away several years before, and they were living out the last, coldest years of their life. However, when they see each other their world has hope again.

I didn’t think that bright colors or ridiculous details would work at all for this scene. These characters aren’t caricatures; they are the most realistic interpretations of humanity in the show, therefore their color scheme and clothing had to represent that. I found a cream-colored dress that had a lace trim. It was light and heavy at the same time, and it instantly reminded me of a grandmother. I dressed the man in a blue suit with a grey top hat. They were not devoid of color, but their colors were softer and more realistic when compared to the scenes that came before them. I had a very hard time working this scene into the overall look of the show, and I was never truly happy with the result that I got. However, like I said, I never really thought this scene worked in the context of the play as a whole, which is probably why it is usually left out completely of many productions.

The Elderly Woman



Figure 18: Inspirational
Image for
the Elderly Woman

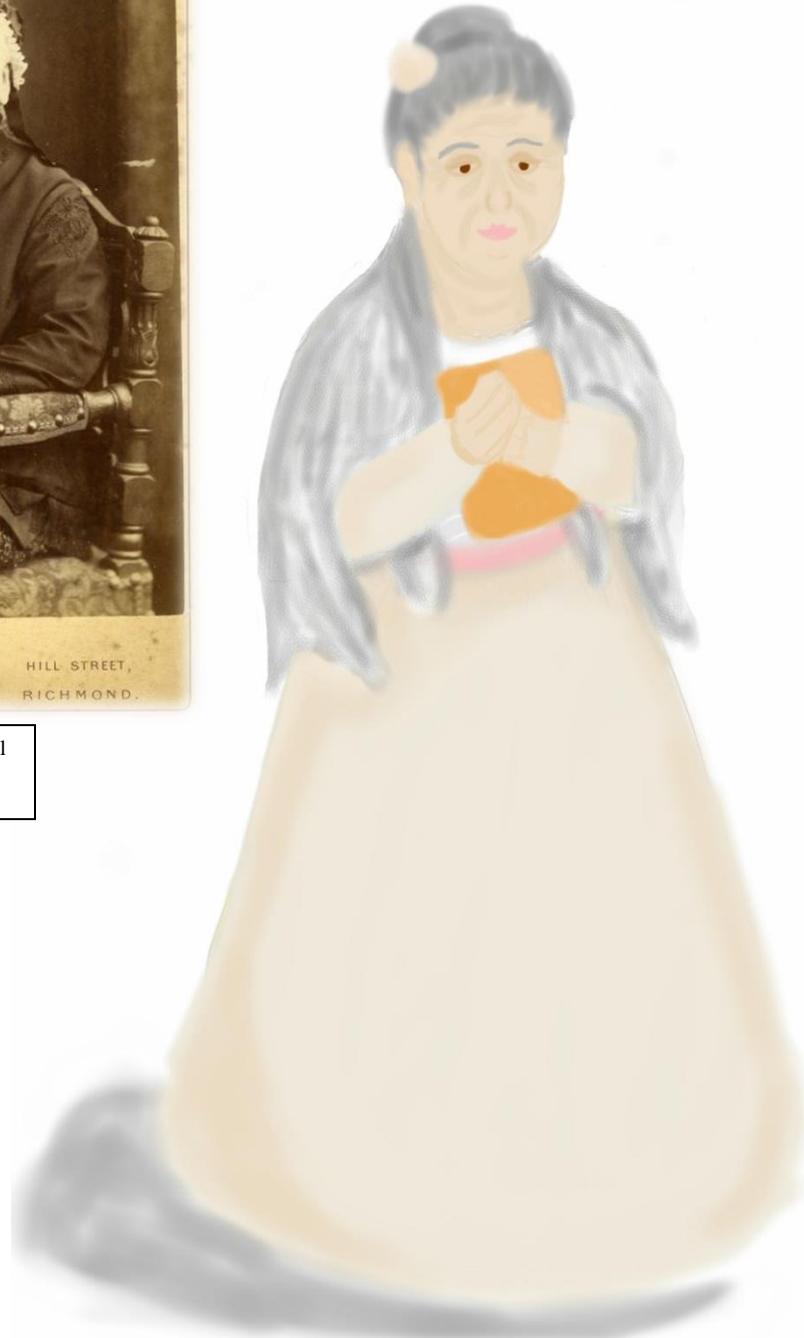


Figure 19: Rendering for
the Elderly Woman

The Elderly Man



Figure 20: Rendering for the Elderly Man

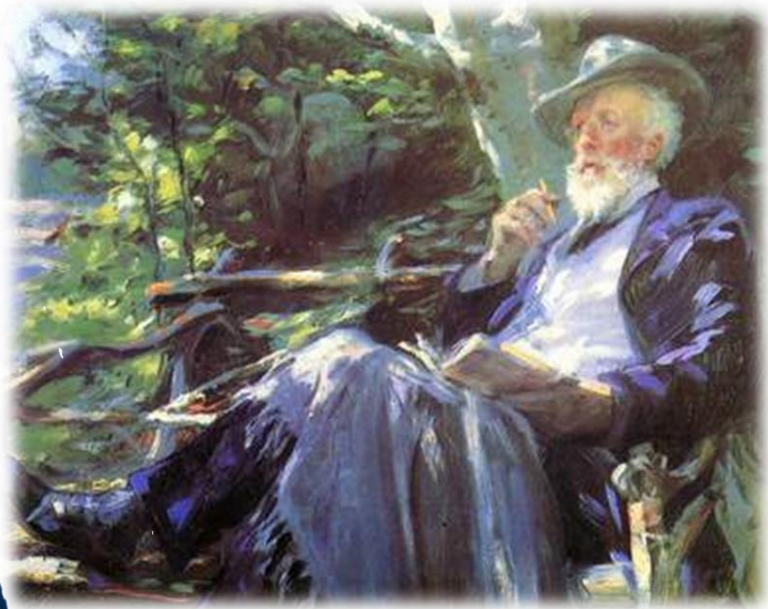


Figure 21: Inspirational Image for the Elderly Man

“The Seduction”

The final scene of the first act is “The Seduction.” This particular scene is based on one of Chekhov’s one-act plays. It is by far the longest scene in the first act, and it has three characters: Peter the seducer, the Husband, and the Wife. Peter was a very fun character to design, because he is so smarmy, yet he pretends to be so virtuous. His costume had to always reveal the real man. I felt that by having him look the part of a trickster it would further emphasize the naiveté of the Husband. Throughout the scene, Peter gives the audience pointers on how to seduce wives away from their husbands. Because red is a great color for expressing intense passion, which he does have, even if it’s just for seducing, I chose to bring red back into this character. I chose to put him in a black frock coat with a mismatching waistcoat that had red details. Frock coats were a staple of many men’s wardrobes throughout the 1800’s. Frock coats were always knee length and had a waist seam that was attached to a skirt-like bottom. It was straight in the front and was most often single breasted. To finish off the ensemble I added a top hat. The top hat was one of the most popular and versatile hats for men. By having him in black, I was hoping to give him a slick look and to subtly connect him to the elegant world of evening wear. By mixing in the red color I was able to emphasize his passion as well as some of his more devilish attributes.

For the Wife, I created a bright but sophisticated dress. Part of this scene takes place in the park, so I decided to put her in a walking dress from the late 1870’s. The mid to late 1870’s saw the rise of the narrower, fishtail skirts. In order to create this look, the skirt’s front panel was stretched by using three to five ribbons inside the skirt to hold it flat against the body. There were often bows or other draping around the knees that synched in the bottom of the skirt, restricting the woman’s movements. The back of the skirt was adorned with ribbons and other trims, which would most often end in a train.³³ I declined to include these details in this dress as I felt it would look odd, as well as hinder the actress’ movements. I decided instead to add pleating at the hem of the skirt and the bodice. The bodice for this dress was elongated and was quite typical in the late 1870’s. These bodices’ basques were often extended beyond

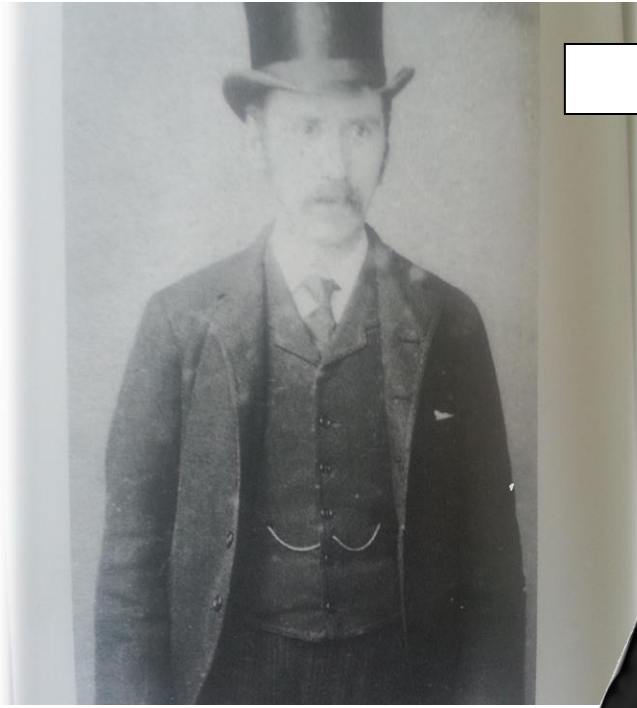
³³ Alison Gernsheim *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion A Photographic Survey*

the waist and were often used to form an overskirt in the back. Some cuirass bodices had up to 17 seams in order to insure that they held close to the body. Charles Blanch, a French art critic of the time, was heard to remark about the cuirass bodice, “[It is meant] to hide, yet to display, or rather to indicate and yet disclose.”³⁴ Since this bodice did not require a large bustle I thought it would be perfect since the actress sat for most of the scene.

Regarding the color of the dress, I brought back the blue, red, and gold colors that I had used in the first scene for the General and his wife. I made the majority of the dress blue while incorporating the red and gold in the pleating at the hemline. I thought this helped to connect her with the already established rich class within the world of the play, as well as giving her a certain sophisticated look.

The Husband was dressed in a nice, but subtle suit and hat. I brought back the morning jacket. Since this character is well off, I had the entire suit match. The color of the suit was champagne, and this ensured that every time he was next to the seducer, he almost faded into the background, much like he did in the eyes of his wife. It was also a nice duality when just the Husband and Peter were on stage, as it was reminiscent of the angel and the devil so often associated with our conscious. The suit, much like the character, was simple and unobtrusive, and ended up looking quite boring when next to the debonair black and red combination of Peter.

³⁴ Charles Blanch *Art and the Ornament of Dress* via Alison Gernsheim *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion A Photographic Survey*



Peter

Figure 22: Inspirational Image for Peter



Figure 23: Rendering for Peter

The Wife



Figure 24: Rendering for the Wife



Figure 25: Inspirational Image for the Wife

The Husband



Figure 26: Rendering for the Husband



Figure 27: Inspirational Image for the Husband

“The Drowned Man”

The Second Act opens with “The Drowned Man.” During my research I came across the work of the photographer William Carrik. Carrik was known for his photographs of Russian peasants taken in the 1860’s and 1870’s. These photos helped shape my costume design for both “The Drowned Man” and “A Defenseless Creature.” When I was first developing the costume for the character of the Drowned Man, I was lucky enough to be able to discuss the character with the actor. The actor felt that the character was the kind of man who lived on the streets but still shined his shoes every day. This led me to the idea of having him in a mixture of peasant clothing and an upperclassman’s suit jacket that had been distressed to the point of being threadbare. In my research of Carrik’s pieces I came across a picture of a Russian peasant wearing a dilapidated folding top hat. Top hats were the most popular option for eveningwear, and the folding variety was used specifically for the opera or the theater. I felt like this was a perfect fit for this particular character, because it gave us an idea of what he thought he was, while still communicating what he truly was. Between the mismatched pants and jacket and the dilapidated top hat, the Drowned Man came together perfectly. The combination added the necessary texture. I find that, on stage, texture can work to help communicate the idea of being dirty, and since this man dives into the river every day for money I figured this would be perfect.

The Gentleman and the Policeman in this scene needed to be fairly standard, as they were not the real focus of the scene. I dressed the Gentleman in a standard frock coat and hat, complete with a walking cane. I added in a hint of the ridiculous by giving him a somewhat oversized necktie. His clean cut and matching outfit was a nice contrast to the ragged and mismatched look of the Drowned Man. The cop was equally simple and was based off of a picture I found of a Russian police officer in the 1880s.

The Drowned Man



Figure 28: Inspirational Image for the Drowned Man



Figure 29: Rendering for the Drowned Man

The Gentleman



Figure 30: Inspirational Image for the Gentleman



Figure 31: Rendering for the Gentleman

The Policeman

Figure 32: Rendering for the Policeman



Figure 33: Inspirational Image for the Policeman

“The Audition”

The second scene in Act II was “The Audition.” As I mentioned before, this scene was an original scene that was written by Simon for his wife, Marsha. Much like with the scene “Too Late for Happiness,” the girl in this scene is more realistic and less of a caricature. This character is much deeper and grounded in reality than the rest of the characters in the show, and I chose to have her outfit express this reality. I dressed her in a simple blouse and skirt that a young country girl might wear in the Victorian era. Her blouse was a simple cream-color with a high collar and front ruffle, both of which were popular at the time. I would have loved to add a small jacket or hat, however, I did not have either readily available, and I did not have time to make either. I kept the Actresses’ color scheme fairly simple with a plum taffeta skirt and a simple off white Victorian shirt. The subtle colors were a nice connection to the subtle colors that were used in “Too Late for Happiness.”

The Actress



Figure 34: Inspirational Image for the Actress



Figure 35: Rendering for the Actress

“A Defenseless Creature”

The third scene is entitled “A Defenseless Creature.” This scene takes place in a bank and has three characters. Much like the scene “Surgery” in the first act, most of the humor in this scene comes from the physical comedy of the Woman and the Banker. I had the Woman, who is supposedly a defenseless creature, to look like a typical Russian peasant woman. Because she is somewhat of a trickster, I thought that the more poor and helpless she looked the better. I was excited because I was able to put some more ethnically Russian elements into her costume, such as a colorful head scarf that was very reminiscent of traditional Russian flora print scarf’s worn at the time. Much like with “The Drowned Man,” I was heavily influenced by the pictures of William Carrick, particularly the one of an older woman sitting by her cart selling her wares on the streets. Although I could not add too much color into the Woman’s outfit since she was a peasant, I was still able to infuse some color in the scarf. The Woman’s outfit was mainly a story about texture, with her wool skirt and knit cardigan.

Another element of the Woman’s costume was a long braid that was able to be detached from her head. During the scene she laments to the Banker that she is so stressed her hair was falling out. When she said this line she pulled out the braid and placed it on his table in order to belabor her point. I felt that this was not only a fun gag, but was also another indication of her trickster ways. Since this character is so over the top throughout the scene, I felt that the fake hair was a nice touch.

As in “The Drowned Man” I decided to have the other characters in the scene, the Banker and his Assistant, to be much more put together and simple. I put the Banker in a simple sack suit with a striped shirt and necktie. The Banker is suffering from an outbreak of gout, so I built a padded sock with bandages attached to give his foot the appearance of being swollen. For the outfit of the Assistant, I picked a simple dress that was nice, but not too nice as to place her in the upper classes. I ended up finding a dress in our stock that had a cream top and purple skirt with black trim. I felt that it was simple, but still nice. Since the character of the Assistant was only in the scene for a few moments I needed her to stand out as a member of the bank staff while still not stealing focus from the other two characters.

The Woman

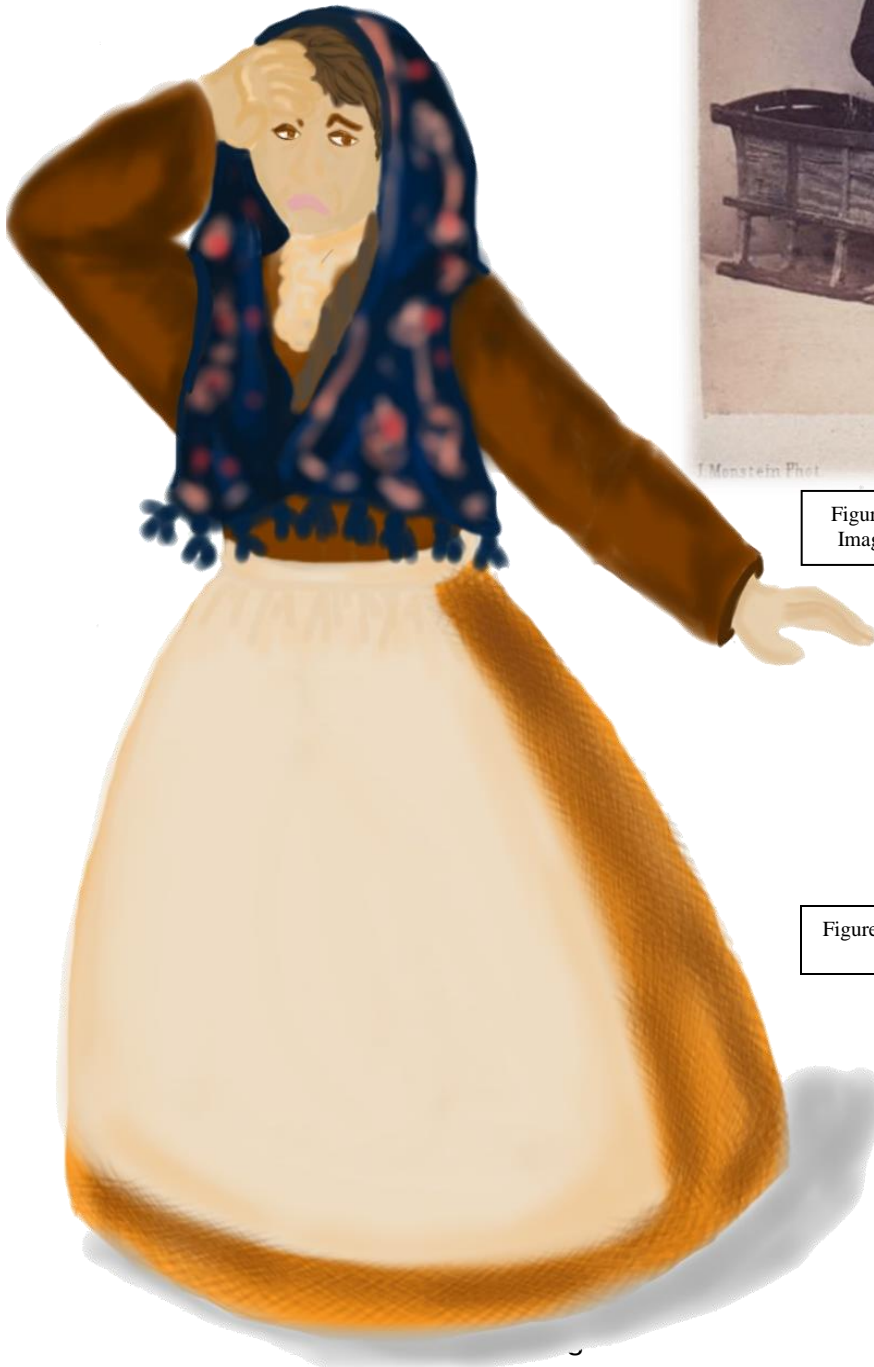


Figure 37: Inspirational Image for the Woman

Figure 36: Rendering for the Woman

The Banker



Figure 38: Inspirational Image for the Banker



Figure 39: Rendering for the Banker

The Assistant



Figure 40: Inspirational Image for the Assistant

Figure 41: Rendering for the Assistant

“The Arrangement”

The final scene of the show is “The Arrangement.” During this scene the Writer enters the scene in order to play the character of his father. He is telling the story of the first time his father attempted to take him to a prostitute and teach him about pleasing a woman. In order to create a simple transition, I had the Writer put on a top hat in order to denote that he was now playing another character. I felt this was appropriate, because the hat worked as a symbol for the father. I find quite often that there are one or two defining characteristics that always pop up in our memories that help us to distinguish characters. Perhaps for Anton Chekhov the defining characteristic of his father’s memory is his father’s hat.

The humor in this scene revolved around the dynamic between the young Antosha and his loving father. Antosha is supposed to be 19 in this scene, but I thought it would be fun to dress him much younger. Antosha is painfully unaware of the world around him and would much rather take a bath and play with his toys than go have an evening with a lady of the night. I decided to give him a sack suit jacket, vest, and button up shirt, but instead of suit pants I put him in short pants. In the 19th century, once young boys became teenagers there were expected to wear suit pants like a man; however, this character is not ready to put on his big boy pants, both figuratively and literally. I topped off the costume with a little newsboy hat that was very typical for boys at the time. All together he gave the appearance of a scared little boy.

The last character in this scene is the Prostitute that the man tries to hire for his son. In order to do research for this character I looked at several of Edgar Degas’ paintings of prostitutes in Paris, and decided to simply dress her in undergarments of the time: a corset, camisole, underskirt, and stockings. I distressed the camisole and underskirt by dyeing them. This made them slightly blue-tinged and gave them an old and worn look. I also gave her a knitted shawl to pull over her shoulders in order to help convey the fact that they were out on the street, and to give the actress a little cover just in case something slipped out of her corset while she was on stage.



Figure 42: Inspirational Image for Antosha

Antosha

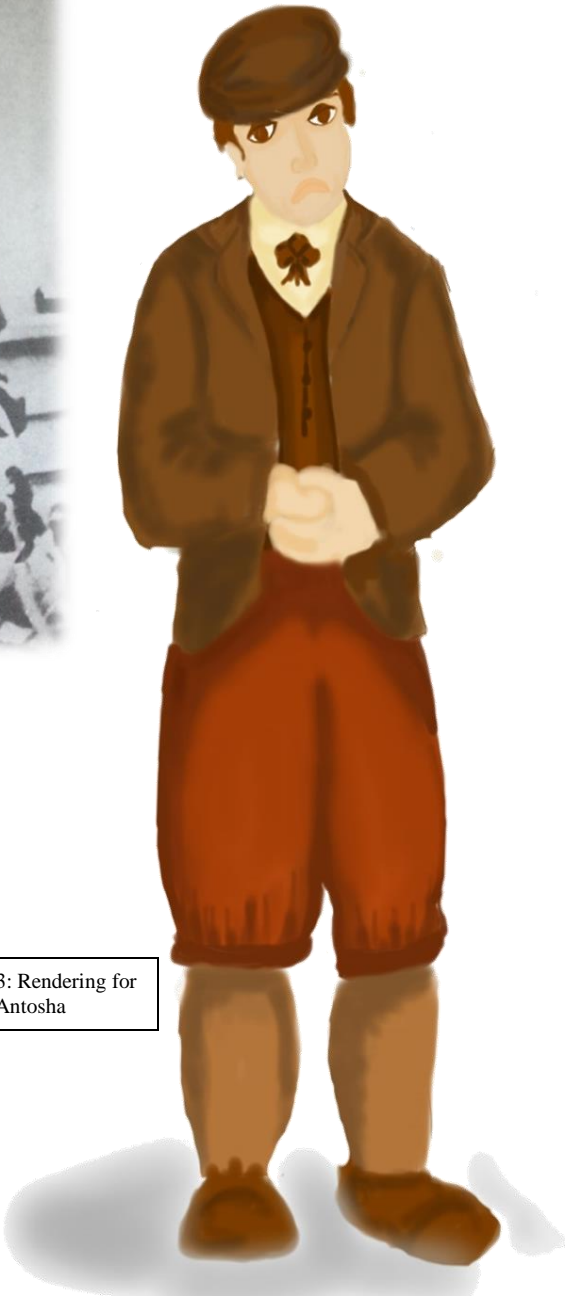


Figure 43: Rendering for Antosha

The Prostitute



Figure 44: Inspirational Image for the Prostitute

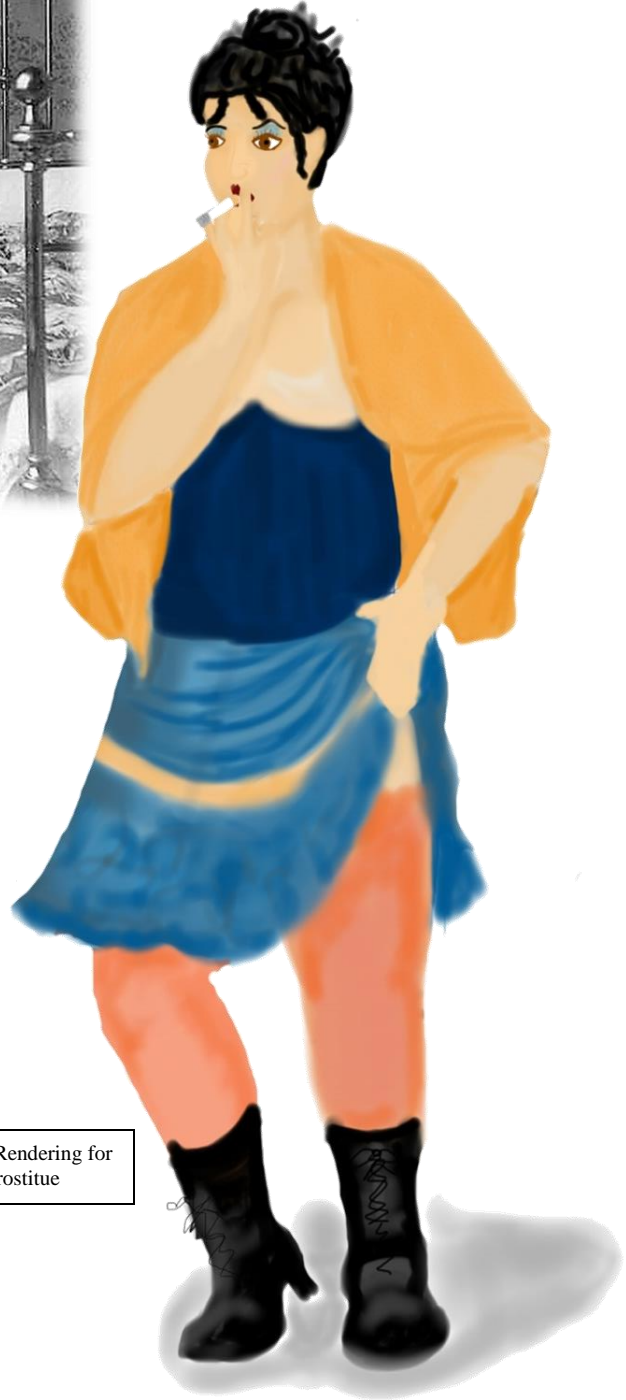


Figure 45: Rendering for the Prostitute

The Writer

The only character to remain onstage throughout the play was the Writer. Originally I imagined that the Writer would be part of the world of his imagination. In the original script the Writer freely interacts with the characters on stage, sometimes acting out some of the roles himself. However, in our production the Writer only participated in one scene and that was the last one. Other than that, he stayed mainly separated from the world within his head. David wanted the Writer to represent the real world, while the rest of the production was in his imagination. Therefore, I decided to have him in a plain sack suit with little elaboration that would make him stand out so that he looked as though he didn't belong in the world of his imagination.

I dressed him in a simple brown suit with matching pants and jacket and mismatching waistcoat. I kept everything very brown and very dull. I never ironed the suit so that it would become progressively more wrinkled which I felt helped communicate the fact that he spends all his days sitting and writing at his desk. I worked him into the world of Chekhov by having some texture in the suit. I also helped to separate him from the rest of the characters by incorporating absolutely no color other than the dull brown of his suit.



Figure 46: Inspirational Image for the Writer

The Writer



Figure 48: Rendering for the Writer



Figure 47: Inspirational Image for the Writer

Chapter 3: Building the World of *The Good Doctor*

In the midst of a show, the costume designer is the first and last word on everything that happens with the costumes. They pick everything from the fabric to the stitching to how many buttons are sewn on an article of clothing. Whenever a question comes up, it is the designer's responsibility to produce the answer. Some of the smoothest costume builds I have been a part of were ones where everything was meticulously planned out. Every stitch was discussed and re-discussed several times over, and any points of confusion with the other shop workers often concerned nothing more than whether to fasten the skirt with a large snap or two smaller ones. In the hands of a well-organized designer, a costume shop can run like a highly-maintained sports car. During this show, however, the costume shop ran more like an old Chevy that's muffler was held in place by a wire coat hanger. I'll be the first to admit, it wasn't pretty, but we got the job done.

Building *The Good Doctor* was a very stressful, but rewarding period for me. Usually you have 6 weeks to build a show, yet in half that time we were able to build a period production with 23 different characters, each with different costumes. This shortened development time forced me to make decisions quickly—to act on instinct more than careful logic. Actors are often taught to “get out of their heads” and “be in the moment.” Designers can also find new perspective by occasionally giving themselves over to just “being in the moment.” This sense of time—or, rather the lack thereof—was my constant companion on this show.

The bumpy ride that would unfold over the next 3 weeks was evident at the production's first design meeting. David Hoover (the director), Kevin Griffith (the set designer), Diane Basse (the lighting designer), and myself, chatted briefly about Russian history, and then switched our focus to fleshing out ideas, any ideas at all. At this point, however, ideas were generally lacking across the board, and it became clear to us all that we needed more time to work out our ideas before being able to have a productive discussion of them.

For instance, when David asked about ideas for the set, Kevin simply said, "I just see a floor." That led to a somewhat heated debate about the floor and what, if anything would go on that floor. David drew up a rudimentary, somewhat abstract floor plan and handed it to Kevin and Diane. After a little more discussion, Kevin took a deep breath, looked at the drawing, and declared, "Well all I can do is go down to the shop and start trying to build...this." I, too, left the meeting and retired to my own shop to try to build...this.

With the completion of my initial design ideas, I proceeded to start the rendering process. When I discussed my initial renderings with Tony French, my advisor, he pointed out some very understandable problems—most notably that all the male characters' costumes looked exactly alike. After further discussion, I started to think outside the sack-suit box. Originally, I had tried to avoid frock coats or morning coats as much as possible when rendering, for the sake of the time it would take to create them. I initially thought we did not have any in our stock, but upon a deeper search of the stockroom, I discovered we actually had quite a few tucked away.

Even after the initial renderings were completed, we were still a week away from having a cast. Every day without a clear path forward increased the pressure on the crew, most of whom were already doubtful that we were going to get everything done in three weeks. In lieu of live

actors to measure and fit, Tony advised me to just start pulling anything I thought could work for the show. I promptly dove into our stock and was surprised to find a fair amount of Victorian clothing. Unfortunately, there was one major problem with them: the colors.

My design vision for the characters in the Writer's stories was that they inhabited a bright and vibrant world. Their clothes needed to reflect that brighter spectrum. However, most of our Victorian stock had been designed for shows with much more morose tones to them. I was inundated with dark purple and dark grey dresses that had been used for various modern adaptations of productions like *Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *A Doll's House*. The costumes in stock were representative of their designers' bleak imaginings of the arguably depressing world that Ibsen describes in his plays. Furthermore, I noticed that our Victorian women's clothing seemed to have been made for very petite ladies—of whom we were in short supply. I could only find a few pieces that would accommodate the “normal-sized” women in our department.

Fortunately, pulling the men's clothing went a little better. Thankfully I was greeted with several different varieties of Victorian period men's clothing. I had morning coats and frock coats coming out of my ears. Although they were not quite the right colors either, I could always add a flash of color from a vest, tie, or other accessory to liven them up. After an extensive week of pulling, I was finally blessed with a cast list.

I quickly got as many of the actors fitted as I could, and could start to see how to transform some of the pieces pulled to suit this actor or that one. However, despite the number of stock pieces we had, I knew that some of the costumes were going to have to be made from scratch.

From day one, Tony and I had discussed making three dresses: the Mistress, the General's Wife, and the Wife in "The Seduction." Knowing this, I had long been trying to secure patterns that I could use for these particular dresses. However, most of the Victorian patterns I was able to find were upwards of \$50. The finite budget allotted for costuming made me uncomfortable with spending that kind of money before I knew exactly what essentials I was going to have to buy. Tony's solution to this problem was that we drape the dresses. Though I had never draped anything in my life, and I knew that this would leave me somewhat useless for a good chunk of these dresses construction, I reluctantly agreed for the sake of the budget.

Most of my sewing ability has been gained on a trial-by-fire basis. The purpose of working in the costume shop—and pursuing this degree—after all, was to learn the skills I lacked, and hone the ones I had. Draping was similarly a sink or swim scenario. Unfortunately, I was forced to give up the learning process quite often in exchange for much needed time. I hate not knowing how to do something I want to do, and even more I hate not having the ability to slow down and work it out—something that the show's time constraints left little allowance for. As we met for our second production meeting, the pressure of a three-week turn around was starting to visibly wear on all of us. The tension in the room was high and any talk of tweaking the design elements of the show were immediately shot down. At the end of the day, the show must go on, whether the designer personally drapes the dresses or not, and things continued to proceed at a rather boulder-rolling-down-the-hillside kind of pace.

Left to my own devices, I am an "in the head" kind of person. I like to think about things for a while—analyze them from various angles—before I decide on exactly what course of action I want to take. With this show, I had no such luxury, and was forced outside of my comfort zone. When asked how I wanted something to look, whether it was a skirt or a

neckline, my first answer was often “I don’t know.” This response was often met with exasperation as my resistance to making snap decisions was eating into our already non-existent timetable. Those first few of days, I felt that even when I would make a quick decision, I would receive a, “Are you SURE that’s what you want?” Initially I would just relent in order to save myself the frustration of not knowing how to get my ideas expressed. As time went on, though, things got better and the bumps in the road started to smooth out.

By the time we would meet for our last production meeting, the other designer’s anxiety had turned into quiet resignation as they all realized what we had was what we had, and at this point there was nothing to be done about it. It was then, with a week left to go before we opened, that I finally found my stride. I realized that I was in a good place with the costumes and felt as if the design was coming together—and coming together better than my original expectations. Yes, we still had things to finish and details to iron out, but I was happy with what we had been able to piece together. With only a week to go, I could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

With the costumes well on their way, hair and makeup came into focus—specifically wigs and old age makeup. Thankfully Tony took the helm when it came to teaching the two actors for “Too Late for Happiness” how to do their elderly make-up. I was thankful that he was able to take this added pressure off my hands and felt I was finally starting to learn that delegation can be a wonderful thing. When I had originally discussed the hair and make-up design with David, he had wanted the old man to have a large beard. However, after talking to the actor, I determined that a moustache would be less of a hindrance on his singing. I decided that instead of greying their natural hair, a wig would be more expedient. I found a wig in stock for the old woman and ordered a wig for the old man.

While on the subject of wigs, David brought up an idea he had about the show's first scene, "The Sneeze." David felt that it would be funny if we had the General in a toupee that could fly off of his head when Cherdykov sneezed on him. More specifically, he wanted a toupee that could fall off but then right itself on his head again.

It was during this meeting with David that he and I first grappled with the idea of cohesion between all of the scenes. It was my worry that having such a large sight gag within the first scene would set too high of a bar that some of the other scenes could not live up to. David felt the script was too loosely strung together to allow for much inherent cohesiveness. He felt there was no real way to get around this as the scenes are so varied in their subjects and comedic delivery. Honestly, I agreed with him on this point and always had; we could only fight the script so much. Still, it was good to know that David had come to the same conclusion about the nature of the script as I had.

So Tony started experimenting with different toupee techniques. He rigged two pieces of toupee tape that would attach to the actors head in the front. When the actor threw his head forward the toupee would come off, but not all the way off. That way when he threw his head back, the toupee would sit itself back on the actor's head. Unfortunately, we could not get the toupee tape to stick on the actor's head. Try as we might, the actor's head would not participate in the toupee sight gag as designed. In the end, we decided to just go with a wig that would fall off during the last bit of the scene.

As the last few days passed and the show started to take its final shape, the mood in the costume shop became decidedly more relaxed. I was amazed that the show was basically on its feet by this point. I had anticipated spending long hours in the shop while trying to finish the last

pieces. Instead it was simply sewing on buttons and trim. We all finally realized that everything would get done, and we were well on our way to having the three dresses we had committed to building patterned and cut. The last week and a half of the build was devoted to getting that final little detail work done.

I had finally learned to approach this show with the attitude that things would get done, because they had to get done. Necessity replaced any frustration and self-doubt, and as the production progressed I found myself less stressed and more excited every day. While working on previous shows I had allowed myself to dwell on my own anxiety and frustration, in part because I had the time to do so. *The Good Doctor* left me no time for such self-indulgence. As I fell into the routine of fittings and adjustments, the costume shop became an almost Zen, transcendent space.

This became the first show I've done where the first dress rehearsal was not a stressful experience for me. Sure, that first night was a little rough; some of the men's ties were not tied right, some of the skirts were not on the correct way, but I was mostly happy with how the costumes looked. I was actually able to sit back and enjoy the show instead of worrying about the long list of adjustments I was going to have to make the next day. Despite the time crunch and my initial frustrations, this show had been the smoothest running show I had ever designed. For the first time, I walked into the theater on opening night feeling confident and proud of the work I had done.

Chapter 4: In Conclusion...

When I look back and ask myself what I could have done better, it is difficult for me to organize all of the different elements that I felt could be improved upon. Some of these elements are inherent to my process as a designer, and some are more specific to the show itself. Overall I think the show looked put together, and I was pleased with some of the more subtle elements that I worked into some of the scenes. As with any show, there were some scenes that I enjoyed more than others. For example, I really enjoyed how the characters for “The Seduction” ended up looking. On the other hand, I never felt like “A Defenseless Creature” came together visually. Over all I think there were three areas, in particular, that I needed to improve upon: consistency, details, and leadership.

By far the hardest element of this show was making it look consistent. As Tony said, “It needs to look like one play, not 12 different ones.” For the most part I feel like I succeeded in this endeavor. However, looking back I can see some places where I either switched up my design concept, or forgot it all together. For example in “Surgery,” I feel like I had too much texture on the Dentist and not enough on the Sexton. Up until that point I had used texture to establish powerlessness, but in that scene I switched the dynamics of the design. I felt that it worked for this particular scene and the texture added a clown like element to the dentist, but it’s an inconsistency when it is placed next to the rest of the show. I also wish that I had kept the bright colors from the first scene more consistent so as to draw more of a correlation between the higher-class characters. I feel like I succeeded in this in the first Act, but it was not consistent in the second act. For example, I wish I had incorporated some color into the Gentleman’s costume in “The Drowned Man” or into the Banker’s costume in “A Defenseless Creature.”

Secondly I wish that I had paid more attention to details in the beginning of the process. Quite often I get too caught up in the biggest parts of a design puzzle and forget to deal with the smaller things. For example, the Governess’ sleeves were not the right period in “The Governess.” The sleeves had a slight gather and fullness at the top, which places them in the early 20th century rather than the late 19th

century. I would have also removed the straps on her apron, as many staff aprons at the time were devoid of them. It was also pointed out to me during the KCACTF response that none of my men had wedding rings on. While I know that the fashion of men wearing wedding rings was not established until the 20th Century, I realized that I hadn't even thought about it. In that respect, I was justified in not having done it, but it wasn't because I had made a conscious choice. It was because I had forgotten about it altogether. This kind of forgetfulness all stems from my problems with picking out certain details in my research. I have found over the years that I can look at a piece of research and miss some of the very important details that define a certain period. For example, I might miss how the dress closes, or how a hemline should sit; there are many dresses in *The Good Doctor* that should have had higher hemlines, as that was the fashion of the day.

Working on *The Good Doctor* taught me that these historical details are vital when constructing period clothing. If you cannot identify how and why a garment is fit then the entire piece does not look right. I continue to learn what to keep my eye out for, but I still have trouble sometimes. When constructing the dress for the Mistress, I repeatedly put the bustle too high on the skirt. In that case, I missed where, exactly, the skirt hung in relationship to the bodice. When trying to make the bustles, I constantly had problems with where and how precisely they needed to hang in respect to the silhouette. I feel like that is something I can improve on.

Lastly, I wish I had been able to be a better leader in the shop. I felt like I was not as good of a leader as I should have been when it came to the build of this show. Some of that could have been taken care of by having more precise renderings and more organized research. My process is still a little more unorganized than I would like. I feel that, had I been more prepared on my end, the costume shop could have run better as a team. It was frustrating to me when I didn't have an answer, and it was embarrassing when I didn't know what I wanted. I have spent so many years just organizing for myself that I was ill prepared to incorporate other people into my process. I think this is the greatest lesson I learned on this show, although it was not directly reflected in the design itself.

When I saw the show on stage I felt that the costumes, set, and lighting all worked well together. However, I am still unsure of how this happened. Part of me believes that we got lucky, as *The Good Doctor* allows for a certain disconnect between the design elements. I can't say that I would drastically change any of the design elements of this show; I just wish there had been more collaboration. I say this mainly for myself, because I would have felt more secure in my design had we, as a design team, talked more than three times.

I don't think anyone has ever put a show on stage that they thought was perfect. I have chosen to let the little stuff go and just be proud of the work I did. It took me a while to come to this conclusion. Even though not everything was perfect, I do believe that I showed a marked improvement in many areas. Most importantly *The Good Doctor* was a huge learning experience for me. I can't even begin to list all of the little things that I learned throughout this process that will help me improve overall as a designer.

In the end this show did for me, personally, exactly what it was supposed to do: it made me examine my process. This was my first period show I had ever designed to production. This meant that throughout the production I had to learn a lot about the reality of a period show that I had never had to deal with before. The things I had talked about before: details, consistency, and leadership are important in any show, but they are especially important in a period show. Through writing this thesis I was able to see some of the breakdowns in my process. For example I need even more research, and my renderings need to be more detailed and period accurate. This is just some of the things I learned through this process, and I can say with full certainty that the next show I design will be a much smoother, and this will be due much in part to my experience on *The Good Doctor*.

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Figure 1: Inspirational Image for Madame Brassilhov

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Figure 2: Inspirational image for Madame Brassilhov

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Figure 4: Inspirational Image for The General

Dmitriev-Orenburgsky, Nikolai *General M.D. Skobelev on His Horse* 1883. Oil on Canvas. Irkutsk Regional Art Museum Siberia, Russia. *Irkutsk Regional Art Museum Online Collection* <http://www.museum.irk.ru/catalog/1/showGroup.php>. August 2012

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Figure 7: Inspirational Image for The Cherdykovs

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Figure 18: Inspirational Image for The Elderly Woman

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Figure 22: Inspirational Image for Peter

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Figure 25: Inspirational Image for The Wife

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Figure 27: Inspirational Image for The Husband

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Figure 28: Inspirational Image for The Drowned Man

Carrick, William *Russian Peasant Man in Top Hat* 1860. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland. *National Gallery of Scotland Online Archive*
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Figure 30: Inspirational Image for The Gentleman

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Figure 33: Inspiration Image for Policeman:

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Figure 34: Inspirational image for The Actress

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Figure 38: Inspirational Image for The Banker

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Figure 40: Inspiration Image for The Assistant

Gernsheim, Alison. *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey*. New York: Dover Publications, 1981. Print page 225

Figure 42: Inspiration Image for Antosha

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Figure 44: Inspiration Image for The Prostitute

Anonymous *Two Prostitutes* 19th Century. The Kinsey Institute Gallery. *The Kinsey Institute Gallery Online Gallery*.

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Figure 46: Inspiration image for The Writer

A.P. Chekhov. 1891. The Anton Chekhov Museum, Moscow Russia. *The Anton Chekhov Museum Online Picture Gallery*. <http://www.my-chekhov.com/foto.shtml> . August 2012

Figure 47: Inspiration image for The Writer

A.P. Chekhov. 1891 The Anton Chekhov Museum, Moscow Russia. *The Anton Chekhov Museum Online Picture Gallery*. <http://www.my-chekhov.com/foto.shtml> . August 2012

Appendix A

Production Photos

Courtesy of the University of New Orleans' Film Theatre and Communications Arts Department



Figure 49: The General and Cherdyakov (“The Sneeze” - Act I)



Figure 50: The General, Madame Brassilhov, Cherdyakov, and Sonya at the opera (“The Sneeze” - Act I)



Figure 51: Cherdyakov and Sonya walking home from the opera (“The Sneeze” - Act I)



Figure 52: The Governess and the Mistress (“The Governess” - Act I)



Figure 53: The Dentist and the Priest (“Surgery” - Act I)



Figure 54: The Elderly Man and Woman (“Too Late for Happiness” - Act I)



Figure 55: Peter the Seducer (“The Seduction” - Act I)



Figure 56: Peter and the Husband in (“The Seduction” - Act I)



Figure 57: The Husband and the Wife walking in the park (“The Seduction” - Act I)



Figure 58: The Drowned Man and The Gentleman in (“The Drowned Man” - Act II)



Figure 59: The Drowned Man (“The Drowned Man” Act II)



Figure 60: The Policeman and The Gentleman (“The Drowned Man” - Act II)



Figure 61: The Woman and The Banker (“A Defenseless Creature” - Act II)



Figure 62: The Woman, The Banker, and The Assistant (“A Defenseless Creature” - Act II)



Figure 63: The Prostitute and The Writer (“The Arrangement” - Act II)



Figure 64: The Writer and Antosha (“The Arrangement” - Act II)



Figure 65: The Writer sitting at his desk Act I

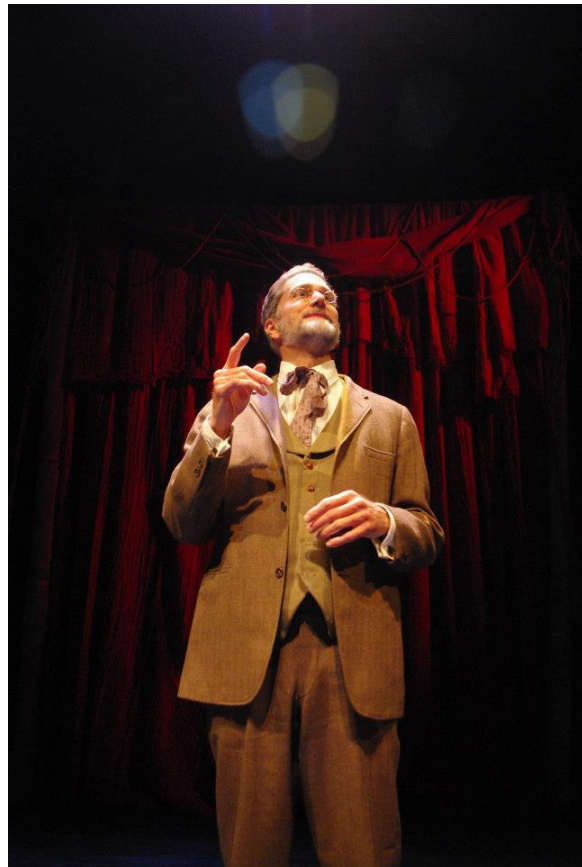


Figure 66: The Writer telling his stories Act II

Appendix B
Rehearsal Schedule for *The Good Doctor*

The Good Doctor – Rehearsal Schedule (new)

We should be “off book” from here on

| | | | |
|--------|-------|---|---|
| Mon. | 10/29 | – | 6:30 – Too Late for Happiness 7:15 – The Defenseless Creature |
| Tues. | 10/30 | – | 5:00 – Surgery 7:00 – The Seduction |
| Wed. | 10/31 | – | OFF |
| Thurs. | 11/1 | – | 1:00 – The Audition 5:00 – The Sneeze (w/ John, Sarah, and Jeff) 7:00 – work thru transitions with Sarah and Jeff |
| Fri. | 11/2 | – | 1:00 – The Governess 6:30 – Run Act I |
| Sat. | 11/3 | – | 1:00 – The Drowned Man 2:00 – The Audition 3:00 – The Defenseless Creature |
| Sun. | 11/4 | – | 5:00 – The Arrangement 5:30 – Run Act II |
| Mon. | 11/5 | – | TBA |
| Tues. | 11/6 | – | 6:30 – Run-thru |
| Wed. | 11/7 | – | 6:30 – Run-thru |
| Thurs. | 11/8 | – | 6:30 – Run-thru (crew view) |
| Fri. | 11/9 | – | 6:30 – Tech (actors off) |
| Sat. | 11/10 | – | 10:00-6:00 – Tech/Run/Dress – all called |
| Sun. | 11/11 | – | 1:00 Call – Dress 2:00 Go |
| Mon. | 11/12 | – | 6:30 call – Final Dress 7:30 Curtain |
| Tues. | 11/13 | – | Opening |

Vita

Melinda Bruns was born and raised in San Diego California. She received her high school diploma from La Jolla High School in 2004, and promptly moved to New Orleans. She received her degree in Film, Theater, and Communication Arts, with an emphasis on film, from the University of New Orleans in 2010. She has spent the last three years designing and studying as part of The University of New Orleans Film Theater and Communication Arts Department. Through these years she has also designed for various theatrical and film projects.