

A Month In The Country

By Ivan Turgenev

Play: 579

Opening: 16/12/2004

Hebrew version, Adaptation & Direction: Hanan Snir

Designed by Bukki Shiff

Music by Yossi Ben-Nun

Lighting by Felice Ross

Movement by Marina Beltov

CAST

Arkady Sergevich Islayev, a rich landlor: Ofer Zohar

Natalya Petrovna, his wife: Osnat Fishman

Kolia, their son: Ran Buxenbaum, Yoav Hovav

Vera Aleksandrovna, Natalya's ward: Hila Feldman

Anna Semyonovna Islayeva, Arkady's widowed mother: Dvora Kedar

Elizabeth Schaaf, a German tutor: Lirit Balaban

Michaeil Aleksandrovich Rakitin, the family's friend: Ygal Sade

Alexy Nikolayevich Belayayev, Kolia's tutor: Yuval Segal

Afanasy Ivanich Bolshintsov, a neighbouring landlord: Dvir Benedek

Ignaty Ilyich Shpigelsky, a local doctor: Dov Reiser

Katya, a maid: Tal Zidkony

Matvey, a servant: Nezer Aloni

A Month in the Country was written in Paris between 1848 and 1850. The play was originally to have been called *The Student* but this had connotations that were too openly revolutionary. Turgenev then changed the title to *Two Women* before finally settling on the present version.

The play was thought to be an attack on marriage and immediately ran into problems with the Russian censor. It was not allowed to be printed until 1855 and only then in a mutilated version which made Natalya Petrovna a widow. The original text was not published until 1869 and the play had to wait until 1872 for its first performance. It is possible that had it not been for the strict theatrical censorship Turgenev's career might have taken an entirely different course and he would have come down to posterity as a playwright rather than as a novelist. The first successful production of *A Month in the Country* took place at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in 1879, when Mariya Savina took the part of Vera for her benefit performance. The play was revived several times in Turgenev's lifetime and was playing in Petersburg on the day of his funeral. Stanislavsky directed it for the Moscow Art Theatre in 1909 with Chekhov's widow Olga Knipper as Natalya Petrovna, and since then it has taken its place as part of the international repertoire. The role of Natalya Petrovna has been played by actresses as diverse as Ludmilla Pitoeff, Peggy Ashcroft, Uta Hagen, Delphine Seyrig and Margaret Leighton.