Summerfolk

by Maxim Gorky

The Penthouse Theatre
54th Season
401st Production
May 5 - 15, 1993
SUMMERFOLK

Written by Maxim Gorky
New American Translation
by
Lora Bratoff and Aaron Levin

The Cast

Sergei Vasilyevich Basov
Varvara Mikhailova
Sasha
Pyotr Ivanovich Suslov
Vlas Mikhailovich Chernov
Nikolai Petrovich Zamyslov
Kaleria Vasilyevna
Olga Alexeyevna
Marya Lvovna
Yulia Filippovna
Pavel Sergeyevich Ryumin
Sonya
Kirill Akimovich Dudakov
Yakov Petrovich Shalimov
Pustobaika
Kropilkin
Semyon Semyonovich Dvoyetochiye
A Nanny
Mr. Semyonov

Rock Reiser*
June Christy Burch*
Lora Lindsey
Jim Anzide*
Michael J. Miller*
Craig Myers*
Jo Ellen Constine*
Leyla Modirzadeh*
Johanna Nemeth*
Kelly Going*
Douglas Scholz-Carlson*
Caroline McNeeley
James Haskins*
E. Walter Stanford*
Michael Perrone
Cory Herndon
Bruce M. Holmes*
Nancy Vordahl
Gerson DACANAY

Place and Time

1904. Russia. Summer.
In and around the Basov's Dacha.

-- There will be one fifteen-minute intermission --

† M.F.A. Directing Candidate, Thesis Production
* Thesis production in partial fulfillment of a Master of Fine Arts degree*
* Member of the Professional Actor Training Program

This production is dedicated to Galina Volchek
It's 1904, one year away from the first outbreak of the Russian Revolution. The country is in turmoil; unrest can be seen and felt everywhere; starvation and homelessness abound. And in this precarious world, Russia's new middle class is trying to make it's way.

It's commonly thought that Gorky's *Summerfolk* picks up where Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* leaves off. At the end of Chekhov's masterpiece, Lopakhin, the self-made businessman, has bought the orchard from the poverty stricken aristocrats and is chopping it down to build summer cottages for the new, rising middle class.

The summerfolk of the title are products of Russia's nineteenth century reforms that made it possible for the children of uneducated, poor workers to receive a proper education. The children of cooks and washerwomen would become lawyers, doctors, writers and engineers.

Gorky's summerfolk have pulled themselves up from the hardships and miseries of the lower class. They are no longer religious and no longer believe in the old customs and superstitions. They have money, leisure time, status and servants, but they lack the cultured lifestyle of the aristocracy who found meaning for their lives by involving themselves in the arts and philanthropic charitable work. In achieving what they thought they wanted, these summerfolk have lost track of what they came from and who they've become and so have lost all purpose in life.

With his plays, Gorky, like many other writers of his time, set a challenge before his audience; a challenge for them to take an active part in creating a new world where greed and deprivation and fear and discrimination would no longer exist. A society where everyone would be well-fed and well-educated and have purpose.

I hope you'll be as moved as I was when I first came upon Gorky's magnificent tapestry of turn-of-the-century Russian summerfolk.

-- Aaron Levin

**SUGGESTED READING**


**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**