Chekhov's Sea Gull

By Niki Miasisian

Russians should write novels, not plays. It seems that whenever a new play is produced, the audience suffers from plodding prose, underdeveloped characters, and dead-end sub-plots. However, The Sea Gull by Chekhov is one of the better Russian attempts at the play form and a competent production by the MIT CommUnity Players helps it succeed.

The story is classical: a mother who is a great and fa- mous actress, and her son, a young playwright, live in a world where they try to find substitutes for their missing mother- son love. She substitutes for the unsuccessful young writer-son, whom she cannot control, a suc- cessful young novelist, whom she can control. He substitutes for the absent actress-mother a young girl who wishes to be an actress. Her love for him is not there; she acts in his play but lends whatever he can to the parts

The son, Treplev, is well- played by Lee Barton, who ably catches the early idealism and later disillusionment of the char- acter. His part suffers from the common difficulty of trying to display a tragic character with expressions and motions which usually do not match the undelated dialogue. His mother, Arkadina, does not seem to have this air of tragedy. Sara Colletos plays Arkadina well, seemingly inaccessible to the audience as a model of an image-conscious actress. Between them there is no communication. The other characters are vehicles for them, helping them to avoid con-
fronting each other.

These characters are all unfulfilled and underdeveloped. They make up a Peyton Place of a town centered around Sorio (Treplev's uncle, Arkadina's brother), and the people around his estate. Sorio is brilliantly played by Lewis Morton, and although his mannersisms and manner of speaking wear a little thin at the end, his reason and lightness show out in the group. Dorn, a doctor, played by Mark Watts, is also refreshing, but his histrionic and seemingly irra-
tional entanglement with the wife of Sorio's steward only serves to further complicate the situation, and put a load on the part.

The play loses a lot of its potential impact also due to the weakness of the parts of Trig-
oin, the novelist, and his youth-
ful love Zarechnaya, the young aspiring actress. Brian Smita
rrends better on the character of Treplev, but his dialogue is not much to work with, and is poorly devel-
oped. Giselle Oelbaum as Zar-
achenya is required to convince us that she is a poor young actress, supported by her wealthy family; while not having great dialogue, still she is unconvincing, delivering her lines with Russian-like formality, not with grace.

The direction and production are a good effort doing Chekhov perhaps more justice than he deserves. It's too bad that they cannot undo the ending. Actors whose changing characters could have been developed in a good novel.

Funk & Zep: sincerely loud

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E Pluribus Funk—Grand Funk Railroad (Capitol) New Led Ze-
pelin (Atlantic)

Well, I know you don't, but there are a hell of a lot of people who like Led Zeppelin and Grand Funk Railroad. Their rec-
ords sell millions without the benefit of much radio play. Their concerts sell out without publicity.

But you don't like these groups? You've heard a ran-
dom song or two by Grand Funk that grooved you out and you stopped listening to Led Ze-
pelin after the second album. If the conversation turns to either of them, you produce the most con-

ging, descriptive jargon you can muster, knowing full well that you’ve got most of your friends, the rock press, and countless rock music polls behind you in your opinion. The group’s popularity you attribute to mass bad taste.

But there has to be a better reason than that. The first one is very obvi-
ously volume. There is still a very large following for groups that can tear the ceiling and shake the seats at a concert. And at home with the headph-
ones on, the ears still ring for an hour after the record is finished. All the music needs is a beat, and at that volume, the power of the rhythm flows through and charges up the whole body.

Grand Funk Railroad is infi-
nitely accessible music. The

The lyrics are uncomplicated, (they're enclosed with the re-
cord so you can see) the kind you could have written yourself. The music is a lot like an instru-
ment some-