

PRE-SHOW IN-THE-KNOW

FAST FACTS

TITLE

The Present after Anton Chekhov's *Platonov*, by Andrew Upton

ABOUT THE PLAY

Love will tear us apart

Anton Chekhov's first play was a sprawling, unstructured epic but it marked out the style and themes he would return to in his later masterworks from *The Seagull* to *The Cherry Orchard*. It remains a mysterious, unpolished gem.

The manuscript, left unpublished until almost two decades after Chekhov's death, lacked a title. Over the years it has inspired various adaptations – *Wild Honey*, *Fatherlessness*, *The Disinherited* – but it is most commonly referred to as *Platonov*, the name of the man at its centre. And yet, the play has always contained another extraordinarily rich and complex character – that of Anna Petrovna.

Taking on these roles are the fearsome talents of Cate Blanchett and Richard Roxburgh. Irish director John Crowley, renowned for his work on the West End and Broadway, brings his lean and precise theatrical vision. And, as with his 2010 adaptation of *Uncle Vanya*, Andrew Upton lends his distinctive voice, brimming with vitality, to this tale of yearning, vodka and shattered dreams.

CAST

Anna Bamford, Cate Blanchett, Andrew Buchanan, David Downer, Eamon Farren, Martin Jacobs, Brandon McClelland, Jacqueline McKenzie, Marshall Napier, Susan Prior, Richard Roxburgh, Chris Ryan, Toby Schmitz

STYLE

Naturalism, Comedy

RUNNING TIME

3 hours

ACTIVE AUDIENCE

THINK ABOUT

- The character's inability to live life in the present - the now
- The character's disenchantment with life
- The tangled web of love and relationships in the play
- Russia in 1995

WATCH AND LISTEN FOR

- Andrew Upton's uniquely Australian comic wit incorporated into the text
- The unfolding of a theme or idea across the course of the play as opposed to a series of overt events creating the plot
- The naturalistic set of Act 2 and Act 4 and the more simplistic sets of Act 1 and Act 3

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

- The wild dancing in the folly (the summer house)
- Anna, dynamite and the summer house
- Act 3 where Mikhail is sitting outside and is visited by several characters in what seems to him like a "train station"