

Sydney Reardon

INT TS 36

November 2021

Program Introduction: Seagull

From the directing perspective I had a lot to consider when choosing which production to do for our Fall 2021 quarter. I ultimately chose *Seagull* by Anton Chekhov for the fact that the themes are so relevant to what a lot of people are going through in today's society. Particularly some of these themes are extremely relevant to students on a college campus, where our play would be performed. There are various themes that present themselves in *Seagull* including: yearning to be successful, unrequited love, wanting to return to one's youth, and going after one's dreams only to discover whether or not it will actually make them happy.

The theme of yearning to be successful can be seen throughout the play. Konstantin wants to be a well known writer, and Nina wants to be a famous actress. Even though it is not a particular occupation like the other two characters mentioned, Medvedenko wants to be successful as well in the sense that he wishes to make more money and win Masha's heart. This can be easily sought out in the real world and especially on a college campus. I mean students are here at UCSB to presumably become educated in their respective fields and then get the chance to get jobs and become successful. The idea of success is what brings people to college and keeps them going. The theme is not only relevant to the target audience but also to the actors, most likely giving them something that relates them to their characters.

Unrequited love is another one of the play's themes that is truly timeless. Almost all of the characters in the play deal with being in love with another character and not receiving that love in return during the play. I find that this occurs so often in the real world that it is another

thing that connects the actors and audience to the play. Students being at a young and exciting time of their lives may gain feelings for other individuals while studying at university. Oftentimes though the feelings are not always returned, which may lead to sadness and heartbreak. This is common especially at the age that students at a university are so it is extremely relevant.

A lot of Irina's character has to revolve around her emphasizing her own importance and reminiscing about the days when she was young. While I feel this is a more common theme amongst older individuals I think that kids on a college campus may relate to it on a different way. I feel as though we are more of the age that Irina may be referencing, college kids because it is the first time they are living as adults, they may miss parts of their childhoods or lives in high school. This makes this theme also relatable to college students which is the audience of our production.

Almost a partner theme to one about wanting success, the theme of getting what you thought you wanted but not being as happy as you thought is a huge part of the plot of *Seagull*. Konstantin wanted to be a famous writer, got that, and ended up being unhappier than he was before. Trigorin was also a famous writer but wasn't living a very positive lifestyle. Nina similarly to Konstantin got the lifestyle she thought she wanted and was left extremely unhappy with the trajectory of her life. It goes to show that maybe fantasizing a life that you want may lead to unrealistic expectations. I feel like this happens a lot when people may first get to college and it may not be what they expected or they may go into a career that ends up being something different than what they thought. This really contributes to the ways that the themes of *Seagull* connected to our audience at UCSB.

I enjoyed choosing this show to be performed on the college campus. I love the fact that both the performers and the audience will be able to relate to the themes presented by Chekhov.