

# The Cherry Orchard

Anton Chekhov

Adapted by Libby Appel from a translation by Allison Horsley

November 14 - 18 2007

Ree Seminole

Technical Director

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# Statement of Intent

- a. Title: The Cherry Orchard
- b. Playwright: Anton Chekhov
- c. Director: Unknown.
- d. Statement of Director's Concept: Unknown.
- e. Description of work undertaken: I will be the Technical Director for the above play.
- f. Description of special problems: Having not yet seen a design, and not knowing which space this will be performed, I am unsure of any special problems.
- g. Objectives I would like to meet: I would like to meet deadlines, stay within budget, have few mistakes, and enhance myself in terms of leadership capabilities, problem solving, budgeting, and time management.
- h. Rational for doing show: Unknown.

With those questions answered, I found that I had some things to say which do not seem to fit into the above. I feel I am capable of performing this task and that it will be useful fodder for my beginning portfolio. I think it will give me an understanding of concepts I am only slightly aware, concepts I mentioned above. I am feeling some anxiety at all the unknowns, but I think that has more to do with my being seven hours ahead of you poor \_\_\_\_\_ in Fargo. And being so removed, I try to rely on what I think I know, like my own skills and how you wanted the designs due the semester before, and if this is true, will I have the designs to work with from the beginning of the summer? I am also excited about working with a guest designer, and seeing what medium will be used for the design.

# September/October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 5pm Rooth mtg	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 12pm Design mtg <b>establish deadlines</b>	<b>8</b> 3days workday
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Mark 11:45	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Kathryn 11	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 3days workday	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 5pm Rooth mtg <b>Research finished</b>	<b>20</b> Mark 11:45	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Mark 11:45	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>3 days opens</b>	<b>28</b> <b>3 days perf</b> <b>K's Drawings Due</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Evaluation	<b>29</b> <b>3 days perf</b>
<b>30</b> <b>3 days perf</b>	<b>1</b> <b>Construction Begins</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Apron Installed	<b>2</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin	<b>3</b> Go over drwg w/ shop 1pm checkin 430 checkin 5pm Rooth mtg	<b>4</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress	<b>5</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>3 days perf</b> <b>Walls Built</b>	<b>6</b> <b>3 days perf</b>

# October/November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>7</b> <b>3 days perf</b></p>	<p><b>8</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress</p>	<p><b>9</b> <b>Materials purchased</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin</p>	<p><b>10</b> Production Mtg 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress</p>	<p><b>11</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Rehearsal Screens Due</b></p>	<p><b>12</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Budget check</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Evaluation</b> <b>Moulding Installed</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>
<p><b>14</b> Fargo Theatre Work  <b>Riggers begin Work</b></p>	<p><b>15</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Riggers Paint Walls</b></p>	<p><b>16</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Riggers</b></p>	<p><b>17</b> Production Mtg <b>Rehearsal props Due</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin 5pm Rooth mtg</p>	<p><b>18</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Riggers</b></p>	<p><b>19</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Riggers</b></p>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>Riggers Finish Painting the Stage</b></p>
<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>22</b> <b>Build Onstage</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress</p>	<p><b>23</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin</p>	<p><b>24</b> Production Mtg 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress</p>	<p><b>25</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin</p>	<p><b>26</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Budget check</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Evaluation</b> <b>Ryan in Cat</b></p>	<p><b>27</b> <b>work weekend 9.30-4.30</b> Picture Progress</p>
<p><b>28</b> <b>work weekend 1-5</b> Picture Progress <b>Walls Up</b> <b>Frames up</b> <b>Masking in place</b></p>	<p><b>29</b> <b>Final Props Ryan Onstage</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress</p>	<p><b>30</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin</p>	<p><b>31</b> <b>Ryan Onstage</b> Production Mtg 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress 5pm Rooth mtg</p>	<p><b>1</b> <b>Costume Parade</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Construction Done</b></p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Ryan Onstage</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>

# November/December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Publicity Photo Call</b> <b>Paper Tech</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress	<b>6</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin	<b>7</b> Production Mtg 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Set Complete</b>	<b>8</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Level Set</b>	<b>9</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Budget check</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Evaluation</b> <b>Q to Q</b> <b>Shift Rehearsal</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Tech #1 Morning</b> <b>Dress #1 evening</b>
<b>11</b> <b>Dress #2</b>	<b>12</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin Picture Progress <b>Dress #3</b>	<b>13</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Preview</b>	<b>14</b> Production Mtg 1pm checkin 430 checkin 5pm Rooth mtg Picture Progress <b>Cherry opens</b>	<b>15</b> Mark 11:45 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Cherry perf</b> <b>Show Pictures</b>	<b>16</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin <b>Cherry perf</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Cherry perf</b> <b>Rededication</b>
<b>18</b> <b>Cherry perf</b> <b>cherry strike</b>	<b>19</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin	<b>20</b> <b>cherry open forum</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin	<b>21</b> 1pm checkin 430 checkin	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 5pm Rooth mtg	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> majors review	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Draft Portfolio</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Final Portfolio</b>	<b>15</b>

# I. Restatement of Objectives for Project

From my Statement of Intent, my objectives were to meet deadlines, stay within budget, have few mistakes and enhance myself in terms of leadership capabilities, problem solving budgeting and time management.

The experience itself would temper my abilities through the use of them. To meet deadlines, I would progress through the build in a mostly linear fashion. I would have the shop go through things in steps leading to the final product. I would use the assembly line method when constructing the scenery such as the method for building the molding. First, I purchased some material so I could put together some test pieces. Then I purchased the required materials in bulk. After cutting all the pieces to the specified dimensions, they were assembled to match the tests in terms of their profile. When this was completed they were given a base coat and then installed upon the walls in their logical place whether crown, picture rail, or base board.

To stay in budget, I scheduled regular examinations of the budget and kept good records of purchases. I checked with M. Joy Erickson to have an external source against which to gauge my own records.

To enhance myself as a leader, which seems to me to include problems solving and management, I would practice handing out tasks and working on the trust the shop staff had in my abilities, plans, and competency. To establish this trust, I had already worked in the shop for several years, so the staff knew my capabilities as a carpenter. I intended to use computer assisted drawings for my plans for its accuracy and appearance. I would also be adaptive whenever problems with the current plan arose. An example of this would be the picture frames. When they first went up, I planned to tie them together horizontally, but seeing the work this

would entail, I adapted and decided to tie them to the ground to control their moment, which is their rotation around an axis.

## Evaluation of Objectives Reached

I did well on this project. The show opened with a completed set. There is about \$300 dollars left in the budget. The few mistakes were honest mistakes. I think that my process of working evolved during the first two weeks, then once again during the penultimate week of the build. In the beginning, I was really rushing with my drawings and plans for the build. I think that perhaps I should have been more involved with Cody Symanietz, the stage manager, and Lori Horvik, the director, while they were working on the schedule. I think that being scheduled to start building 2 days after first receiving plans for the scenery really lowered the quality of my beginning work. I would have liked several more weeks, if not months, to be able to adequately plan for the scenery. I understand the time constraints with this particular project in that Kathryn Kawecki, the designer, along with the other designers did not have time to design the show any earlier. Kathryn, being the guest artist, was not here during the spring semester of 2007. If I had had more time, I would have been able to plan more effectively and less sporadically for the build in terms of materials and time. I would not have needed the solid time block, but I would have liked to spread the time I needed out to give my brain a chance to digest my plans. This might have let me think of other strategies to build the scenery.

I would have been able to explore other materials and different building methods for constructing the scenery. For example, the picture frames which I discussed before and in detail here. They were set pieces which hung in mid air, with no visible connection either above or below them. The first plan I came up with involved tying all the frames together horizontally and then vertically while they were on the floor. While this plan never came to fruition as I

thought it would be cumbersome and difficult to accomplish, I came up with a better plan, because I had more time to think about this problem as the carpenters were struggling with the molding. What I ended up doing was tying one string from each frame to the batten, and then tying 2 strings down to the ground to hold them both in the same plane and level.

The ability to be able to have an idea in my head and then giving it time to germinate and unfold into a beautiful flower of simplicity and ease is a wonderful thing to be able to do. In the case of the walls, the first plan was also the last plan. Fortunately, my experience as a carpenter was able to carry me through those first weeks, and the walls were able to accomplish their task, structurally and visually.

I enjoyed putting the test pieces together, trying out new things; solving the problem of achieving the profile of the molding designed by Kathryn.

Several weeks after my project ended, I still commanded the respect of the shop workers, and could lead them in projects. They still listened to me and took my direction. This is testament to the distance I have come from when I was at the beginning of the process of becoming a leader. It began when I was a student leader for Trollwood Performing Arts School, where I was not able to direct the crew assigned to me. I would do all the work while the crew of several people would stand by, awaiting my never coming instructions. Eventually they would wander off or be reassigned.

I think I did fairly well, but most of my evaluations have not come in, and the ones that did come in point in that direction.

I will also be submitting my work for review, to the people at KCACTF, as well as to both my coworkers and those whom I admire. My friend DJ Haugen, MFA in Technical Direction from Florida State University, gave me some examples of some paperwork, and as a requirement, is having me send pictures of my work to him. Having these kinds of reviews will

also make my work better, as I will not be dependant upon the standards of where ever I might be working, whether lower or higher than mine.

## II. Discussion of Process of Incorporating Research

I researched all about Chekhov, realism, and what was going on during the turn of the century. At first, I was hesitant to even begin research, and my first attempt was only online, but after I checked out some books, I started to enjoy researching these topics. I learned about artists of this same period, and how they viewed light, and what they thought made up color. I enjoyed reading about Paul Cezanne, and I remembered seeing his paintings while I was in Europe. In fact, one of his favorite subjects was the Mt. Saint Victoire, which was about 20 minutes away from where I was staying. It really brought me back to France, and I realized how much I missed that place, and the presence of the mountain.

Chekhov's plays were performed by the Moscow Art Theatre. Constantine Stanislavski founded the Moscow Art Theatre. Stanislavski's system taught realism, which is having performances grounded in real life. Impressionist painting is a further development of realism. An impressionistic painter would see the way Chekhov imagined the light from the morning or the sunset hitting the cherry orchard. This led me to look at the works of realistic painters and impressionistic painters, such as Cezanne, Gustave Courbet, and Claude Monet.

My research into Chekhov's life included biographies and critics of his work, including that of the Russian historian Ernest Joseph Simmons. Some of the basics which I found are below. Chekhov was born in 1860, went to Moscow fleeing debt, and went to medical school. While in school, he supported himself and his family with money earned from writing short stories for the news paper. In 1884 he graduated from medical school. He continued writing throughout his life. I read some of his letters, of which he is quite famous. I researched his

mixing of the comic and tragic elements in his stories. I would go into more depth, but I cannot seem to remember all the information which I neglected to write down. I remember reading that Chekhov did not like verbose writing styles. He would not say “the slightly overweight man sat pondering his fate upon the grass”, but rather “the man sat upon the grass.”

Another aspect of my research happened after I received the final plans. This included going to Menards and retrieving a poster with profiles of the molding they sold. I also found the prices for lumber at Crane Johnson Lumber Company.

### III. Analysis Incorporation

I find this topic harder to discuss as the meat and potatoes of my project, in my mind, was supervising the build. My project advisor Rooth Varland had mentioned at the beginning of the project that my analysis and research would subtly influence my decisions.

I did my best to stay out of the way of the designer and the director while they were creating the design. I did this because I did not want to mess with their concepts. Kathryn had a pretty good understanding of the budget allowed, so I did not have to police her on that front.

My analysis led me in directions which the director and scenic designer did not go. As I was not able to be at all the design meetings, I am not so sure exactly where they decided upon going with a nonrealistic setting, but that is not the direction I would have gone had I been designing. I would have looked to the painters of that period as an inspiration, which I am not sure happened for this design, although it could very well have. I would have followed the descriptions of the setting more closely, which probably would have slowed the show down. Having done the research and the analysis, I wanted to really show off my craftsmanship with the set. The quality of the work and the clean lines created were Kathryn’s product, but I built them.

## IV. Unanticipated Difficulties

One of the first difficulties I found was with my own availability for work during the normal shop times. I had several classes that I needed to attend which were offered during the afternoon. This difficulty led me to develop my daily to-do lists and to check in at the beginning of shop time as well as the end of shop time in order to have some control over the shop.

One difficulty I found that was unexpected was in dealing with a lack of preparatory time for my sake, as the show had not been designed yet. While in France planning this project, I remember thinking that we as a company had wanted to have the final designs in place at the start of the semester, but that was a misunderstanding on my part. Only the first show of the semester was to be designed by the end of the previous semester. At any rate, I was expecting to start the semester designs in hand, so that I would be able to research material costs and calculate the costs of each set piece. As I found out, however, that was not to be the case. I dealt with this by relying on my skill set as a carpenter to be able to think how things should be built, without testing other possibilities. This was an unfortunate result of the lack of time available with the drawings. I would have liked to have more time to mentally digest the information.

I eventually made mockups for the screens and the paint samples after the design had been completed. I made the paint samples about 3 days into the build and the screen samples 11 days into the build. These were useful for the lighting designer Ryan.

Another difficulty was the availability of the Genie lift. However, the genie belongs to Festival Concert Hall, and we were required to borrow it. I only needed it for several things, but Ryan needed it to focus his lighting instruments. We worked out a schedule of when he would use it and when I could.

Another unanticipated difficulty occurred during work weekend, which is where those involved with the show along with several majors help the show along by assisting with the build. I was walking into the shop before Saturday's work call, and I thought I noticed something wrong with the molding on the walls of ABEF, but I dismissed it and went on stage. Coming back into the shop with my crew in tow, I looked closer and noticed that the crown molding had been installed backwards. It took me all day to redo the one set, as well as installing the crowns on the other set. This set me behind where I had wanted to be, because I was not able to devote myself to assisting my crew. My crew was inexperienced, and so needed a lot of guidance, and I was only able to provide this superficially, and was not able to get the most out of them. This also set behind the painting schedule by a day, which in turn set behind the installation, which occurred another day later, but was accomplished by the shop staff before the end of that day.

Another unexpected difficulty was found in the chandelier. The initial design included 3 chandeliers, but as the shop did not possess 3 similar looking ones, we cut it back to one. And for this one, I, having received a hint from Don Larew, Professor of Theatre Arts, contacted the Lighthouse. Fortunately we were able to borrow one, without a deposit, and we returned it in excellent shape.

The third show of the season also presented an unexpected event. That show's designer, Gabriel Gomez, wanted to keep the walls intact to use in his own show. This made my strike very easy, which let me distribute people to other areas to accomplish their tasks, but I was the last one to finish out of costumes, props, lights, and set.

During strike, the Director, Lori Horvik, came up with a list of things which needed to get done. While both helpful and necessary, I feel this information could have been passed on during the production meeting. Toward the end of strike, I was about to paint the stage, when

Ryan, the lighting designer, needed to add some lights to the upstage batten for Mark, the technical director. I told my people to wait, but Lori came up and took half of them and assigned them to costumes or makeup, even though they had no need of them. I in turn had to recruit more hands to paint the stage after Ryan had finished. This could have been prevented if I had told my people that their waiting was necessary while Ryan was finishing his task.

Another event was that the stage reversed direction. This only affected the screens as they were the only things which needed to be reversed. About the time I learned of this, I also learned that Lori and Kathryn wanted the screens to be staggered in height at three different sizes. This did not take long to fix, as we had not yet covered them with the fabric.

The fabric is something I had not even thought about in terms of cost, and when Kathryn emailed me with the price, she put 435 instead of \$35, so I thought we had gone over budget by about \$60, even though she had mentioned to me in person earlier that day it was only \$35. We resolved it over email however, so there was not really a problem, except my embarrassment.

## V. Strengths and Weakness of Project

A very clean set, but because it is so clean, all the little mistakes had to be lived with and were noticeable, at least to me, such as the downstage walls. They did not get sanded as well as they should have, and so, there were some lines that showed where the seams of the luaun were under the muslin.

Cody liked my promptness, whenever he had something that he wanted done on my part, I tried my best to fulfill it the next day.

Mark liked my budget sheets, basic as they are. They display the required information clearly.

I was not able to be in the shop constantly, and when some mistakes happened, I did not always catch them as I checked out at the end of the day. An example of this would be the crown molding on Walls ABEF, the downstage pairs, which I mentioned above.

Another weakness I possess is my inability to communicate. At times, I assume everyone knows what is going on, and if they don't, they might get left behind. I started to address this later in the build, about 2 weeks before the show opened, by posting a to-do list in the back hallway which listed everything left to be finished. Kathryn suggested this in one of her evaluations, and I think that if I had done this earlier, people would have had more of an idea of the work being done in the shop. It also let Kathryn know what was on my mind and let her know that I knew what needed to be finished.

I feel a strength I had was making daily to-do lists for the shop. This let them know what I wanted to achieve in the days work. It also let me explain an order of importance of projects. Getting into the habit of making lists also helped me prepare plans for people's times during strike and work weekend.

## VI. What I have learned

I have learned several important skills. I learned that I am able to adapt to a work environment. I learned how there seemed to be a lack of concern of how effectively I spend shop time in that it seemed as if I were really in charge. I learned of a difference between Academia and Professional theatre companies in that the materials matter more than the time it takes to build something. My advisor, Rooth, had a very good example of this during her costume construction. They needed a garment, so they hired a person to construct it. It ended up taking more time than they had expected, so they were spending lots of money on this person's time, when they could have bought a new garment instead. This is a special case as far as Academia is

concerned. Normally we pay people quarters to the dollar for their time, so they are dirt cheap. Materials however go up in worth, as the budget for them is usually the only mutable expense. If you use the last 2x4, and you need more but are out of money, you would still have the time of the employees to glue sticks together to make a post. The shop staff would be working no matter if they were gluing sticks, framing flats, or changing light bulbs. Their expense is already paid for. In professional theatre however, I think it is like the case Rooth gave about the garment. If I were paying fifteen dollars an hour for a carpenter, I would not worry about spending three dollars for a new 2x4.

I learned that people can make mistakes even if they are very experienced, and that I should take time to make sure everyone knows what they are working on. I can accomplish this by making accurate and detailed drawings, having plans of actions, and working on my ability to communicate. My drawings will get better as I do more, refining my knowledge of the program, as well as finding out what works on a page and what needs to be added to be built by the carpenters or welders. The same is true for my plans and build orders. My communication ability will have to be improved by practice and learning what the staff needs to hear in order to understand what I am trying to convey.

I also learned that walls are quick to build, but putting molding on can be very time consuming. After the first week, I accelerated when I wanted things to be finished, but the molding took one more week than I expected it to. This could be attributed to the lack of skill for doing such work, but it also could be that it all had to be custom cut for where it was installed. This means that building something takes little time, but finishing it can be tiring. I like to think of building walls, then chasing a mouse to do all the detail work. Planning for this detail work in the future will prevent my expectations from being dashed.

I learned to develop plans of action, and that I often forget about little things in these plans. An example of this is the screens and their fabric backing, as well as the roll of paper Kathryn needed to make the negative space of her painting of the orchard on the walls. As a means to developing plans, calendars and daily lists will help a lot. To show curious parties where I am in the build, I will have a list of everything to be completed as well as when it is expected to be completed.

I found that I was uncomfortable trusting in the shop staff with the chandelier, and with putting up the rigging for the center wall. I think this was because I was unsure of their ability to do such work, as well as my desire for the experience of doing it myself. I really think that this is an area that I would like to do, but it is stressful considering what could happen if I am not rigorous or if I am negligent. I think that at this point in my career, I am so concerned about it that I will not make any mistakes, but I will have to maintain my discipline as well as learning new techniques in order to insure the quality of my work. If, in the future, the rigging is required to a broader extent, I will have to take time to show the shop staff how to do this kind of work.

I will also keep in contact with people both whom and with whose work I admire, so that I will be able to show them what I am up to. This will let me get critical feedback as to the quality of my work.

This was a pretty simple show, with some problems, but it leads me to believe that I will be able to be a technical director, even though I am not yet at the level of professionalism that I would like to attain. I think attending graduate school will assist with this upward movement. While I did not work with anything too complex, as there no scenery was moving, no set pieces flying out; nothing revolving; nothing revealed with the scenery. I think I had the proper support and guidance for this project.