



The Lady Onstage
by Erin Bregman

Resource Guide for Teachers

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About Profile Theatre

Profile Theatre was founded in 1997 with the mission of celebrating the playwright's contribution to live theater. Each year Profile produces a season of plays devoted to a single playwright, engaging with our community to explore that writer's vision and influence on theatre and the world at large. This provides our community with the opportunity to deeply engage with the work of our featured playwright through performances, readings, lectures and talkbacks, a unique experience in Portland.

Our Mission realized...

We do this through large-scale professional productions, In Dialogue Series readings and lectures, and our vibrant and growing education program. We believe that live theater begins with the playwright's words. In honoring the playwright, Profile encourages its audience to recognize the creative dynamic between the playwright and live theater — the playwright is the springboard or seed from which everything else grows. The dramatists we profile always have something significant to say about humankind in all its variety, complexity, humor, tragedy, anger and goodwill. They shine a light on the desires and demons that drive us, helping us seek a better understanding of who we are, where we are going and why. At Profile, we seek to always make that search deeply enjoyable and stimulating.

About Our Inside Out Community and School Tour

Profile Theatre is proud to launch the third year of its touring program. This year we are doing something new - rather than touring a production of our featured writer, Sarah Ruhl, we are touring a brand new play which is still in development - Erin Bregman's *The Lady Onstage*, a play that we feel is in conversation with the work and ideas explored by Ms. Ruhl. Following a developmental workshop on our main stage, *The Lady Onstage* is touring to local high schools and community centers in the greater Portland area. The touring production of the play is presented in full costume with props and a soundscape. We bring only minimal set pieces to suggest surroundings. This enables us to easily transport the production to its destination, allowing us to spend longer with students and less time in set-up and travelling. The production is followed by a conversation between the students and the cast.

How to Use This Resource Guide:

This resource guide was developed to support teachers in preparing their students to see and to fully engage with Profile Theatre's Inside Out School Tour performance of *The Lady Onstage*. There are five lesson plans in the guide. The first four are intended to be taught prior to seeing the performance, and the final lesson is intended to follow.

These lesson plans are structured for Language Arts classes, though the content may be most pertinent for theatre students. Each lesson includes classroom activities, along with discussion questions to promote robust conversation in class. These questions may also be used as writing prompts for homework assignments. For any classroom exercise that makes use of text excerpts, we have included the specified material at the back of each respective lesson plan for teachers to print out and photocopy for students. Finally, each lesson plan cites the Common Core standards that are fulfilled by the exercises and analysis contained therein.

While the five lesson plans were developed as a loose progression culminating in the final reflection class, each lesson can also be a stand alone workshop, allowing teachers with limited time to pick and choose the lesson plans that they feel will be of the most benefit to their students. Additionally, the lessons were each structured to last approximately 50-55 minutes. With many schools now operating with block schedules, teachers should feel free to mix and match as they see fit. For this play we strongly urge you to share the first lesson plan with your students. Understanding the historical context and biographies of the characters are integral to your students' experience with this particular play.

Thank you so much for your commitment to bringing live professional theatre to your students, and for investing the time in preparing them to have the best experience possible. Please feel free to contact us with questions, concerns or feedback on this resource guide or the program in general.

Sincerely,
Profile Theatre

The Artists

Erin Bregman, Playwright

Erin Bregman is a San Francisco playwright and teaching artist. Her work has been produced by Just Theater, Playground, and the Washington DC Source Festival. She has been a multi-year finalist for the Princess Grace award and Global Age Project, and was a 2009 nominee for the Pony Fellowship. Her work has been developed in the Bay Area (Bay Area Playwrights Festival and Playground), Washington, DC (Inkwell and The Source), and New York (The Brick and The Lark). Erin is a company member of 2by4, PlayGround, and 6NewPlays, and a proud recipient of a 2014 Individual Artist Commission Grant from the SF Arts Commission for an upcoming musical collaboration with composer Alex Stein.

M. Graham Smith, Director

M. Graham Smith has directed at HERE in New York City and many venues in San Francisco, including SF Opera, A.C.T.'s MFA program, Aurora Theatre, and Crowded Fire. He directed the West Coast Premiere of JERRY SPRINGER: THE OPERA in SF as well as TRUFFALDINO SAYS NO at Shotgun Players which won Best Director for the Bay Area Critics Circle. He recently directed HARRY THAW HATES EVERYBODY at Shotgun Players as well as THE LIAR adapted by David Ives, at Occidental College in Los Angeles as an Edgerton Foundation director-in-residence. He is the Director of Movement & Voice in Barcelona's premiere Meisner Program (www.meisner.es). He also teaches at A.C.T.'s actor training programs and at Waterfront Playhouse & Conservatory in Berkeley. He was the Producer of Aurora Theater's international new play festival, the Global Age Project, for the last five years.

Lauren Bloom*, Actor

Lauren Bloom has been involved in theatre for over 20 years, performing in California, Alabama, New York and Oregon, as well as in England. Favorite roles include Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Celia in *As You Like It*, both at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams and Masha in *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov, both at Columbia Stages, and Catherine Givings in *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* by Sarah Ruhl at Profile Theatre. She received her Masters in Acting from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

Stage Manager: Ross Jackson

Costume, Scenic and Props Design: Sara Ludeman

Tour Manager: Lauren Bloom Hanover

Assistant Tour Manager: Jeff Denight

(*) *Member of Actors Equity Association*

LESSON 1: Who are Olga Knipper, Anton Chekhov, and the Moscow Art Theatre?

Includes:

- a basic biography of Olga Knipper, important information on Anton Chekhov and the Moscow Art Theatre, and a timeline that places them all in a historical context.
- quotes by Knipper and Chekhov, about their work and the time in which they lived.
- discussion questions and activities examining the impact of these figures

Classroom Activity #1: Biography and Context (10-15 minutes)

For Teachers: You will need to print out materials for this activity. They can be found following this lesson plan: Classroom Activity #1: Biography & Timeline

DIRECTIONS:

- Distribute the biographies of Olga Knipper, Anton Chekhov, and the Moscow Art Theatre. Have students spend a few minutes reading the material to themselves.
- Students should also look over the timeline that follows, with particular attention to getting a sense of the historical context.
- Once students have completed reading, lead them in a short discussion about their impressions:
 - 1) Within the biographies and timeline, what moments could be described as times of intense change for the Russian Theatre? How did politics and culture affect this change?
 - 2) Think of the entertainment makers of today, including musicians, filmmakers, novelists, etc. How are they influenced by political and social movements of today?
 - 3) Describe the roles of Chekhov, Stanislavsky, Nemirovich-Danchenko, and Knipper. In your opinion, who had the most influence on theatre's shift to Realism?

Classroom Activity #2: Knipper and Chekov in Their Own Words (15 minutes)

DIRECTIONS:

- Below are several quotes that can serve as an effective way of introducing students to two of the primary figures of *The Lady Onstage*.
- We recommend that the quotes be read aloud, either by students or by the teacher.
- Once the quotes have been read, discuss the following questions with the class:
 1. What are some of the sacrifices artists must make to pursue their work? How is this different or similar to other jobs?

2. Who, in the modern world, is trying to redefine cultural genres like the artists at the Moscow Art theatre? Are they succeeding? If so, what has helped them? If not, what is holding them back?
3. Based on these quotes, what are your impressions of Olga Knipper and Anton Chekhov? What was important to them? Do you have a sense of what they were like as people?

Quotes from Olga Knipper:

On **Artistry:**

"Whenever in my life I really wanted something, and really believed in the possibility of achieving what I wanted and acted energetically, I always succeeded and never regretted going my own way."

On **Popularly Accepted Acting Styles:**

"Just think of it: four acts, and during the whole of that time all the characters had dramatic, i.e. artificial, expressions on their faces and struck dramatic poses. No one said a single living human word...The impression was tedious and completely implausible."

On **Acting Technique:**

"That's all a load of rubbish! I don't understand anything about it, and I don't need to. I act as I feel."

Quotes from Anton Chekhov:

On **Characters:**

"I still lack a political, religious and philosophical world view — I change it every month — and so I'll have to limit myself to descriptions of how my heroes love, marry, give birth, die, and how they speak"

On **Inspiration:**

"In my opinion it is not the writer's job to solve such problems as God, pessimism, etc; his job is merely to record who, under what conditions, said or thought what about God or pessimism. The artist is not meant to be a judge of his characters and what they say; his only job is to be an impartial witness. I heard two Russians in a muddled conversation about pessimism, a conversation that solved nothing; all I am bound to do is reproduce that conversation exactly as I heard it. Drawing conclusions is up to the jury, that is, the readers. My only job is to be talented, that is, to know how to distinguish important testimony from unimportant, to place my characters in the proper light and speak their language."

On **Objectivity:**

"Human nature is imperfect, so it would be odd to perceive none but the righteous. Requiring literature to dig up a "pearl" from the pack of villains is tantamount to negating literature altogether. Literature is accepted as an art because it depicts life as it actually is. Its aim is the truth, unconditional and honest...the writer is... a man bound by contract to his sense of duty and to his conscience. Once he undertakes this task, it is too late for excuses, and no matter how horrified, he must do battle with his squeamishness and sully his imagination with the grime of life...he should liberate himself from everyday subjectivity and acknowledge that manure piles play a highly respectable role in the landscape and that evil passions are every bit as much a part of life as good ones."

Classroom Activity #3: The Development of *The Lady Onstage* (5 minutes)

*Teachers: Please share the information below about how **The Lady Onstage** was conceived as a project and its history prior to the Profile Inside Out Community and School Tour:*

The script for *The Lady Onstage* came about through a combination of collaboration and devising, and then a commission for the playwright, Erin Bregman (these terms will be defined in the next lesson plan). Director M. Graham Smith and actor Lauren Bloom decided several years ago that they wished to work together on creating a project for Ms. Bloom to perform. They explored several different ideas, then read a collection of the correspondence between playwright Anton Chekhov and actor Olga Knipper. Both passionate fans of Chekhov's work and of the Moscow Art Theatre, Mr. Smith and Ms. Bloom were fascinated by the idea of how an actor, whose work is impermanent and ephemeral, can have a profound but invisible impact on a writer and their work. They were also interested in exploring the idea of what it is to sacrifice in order to pursue something that one loves or one feels is important and meaningful.

Over time, Mr. Smith and Ms. Bloom did research about Olga Knipper, Anton Chekhov and the Moscow Art Theatre, as well as projects exploring various aspects of Olga's life and work. As they collected information and ideas, they knew that they would not be able to create a play on their own and sought out a playwright whom they trusted and whose work they knew.

They approached Erin Bregman, shared their work and their research and invited her to join their creative team, commissioning her to create a script for a one person play, exploring the life and work of Olga Knipper.

In March of 2015, Ms. Bloom read a draft of the script for two different audiences in the San Francisco Bay Area. In July, after some rewriting and adjusting, the team rehearsed and presented a workshop production at Profile Theatre in downtown Portland. The team met again in August to incorporate what they learned in July and finalized the workshop production that you will be seeing at your school. They are hoping for a world premiere in 2016. But before they are ready, they hope to learn more about what works and what still needs some adjustments from you, their audience.

Homework/Classroom Activity #4: Considering Contemporary Cultural Shifts (in class: 20 min)

Ask students to write a half-page to full-page response to the following question:

Choose a moment where art or entertainment culture had a major shift. Where was the culture before the shift? Where has the shift taken culture? What elements-- political, social, or otherwise-- set up for this change to take place? How has the cultural shift affected these elements?

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Reading:

Informational Texts:
-9-10: 1, 2, 3 & 4
-11-12: 1, 2, 3 & 6

Writing:

-9-10: 1, 2, 4, & 9
-11-12: 1, 2, & 9

Speaking & Listening

-9-10: 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6
-11-12: 1, 3, 4 & 6

LESSON 1 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

Materials For Classroom Activity #1: Biography and Timeline

Biography of Olga Knipper

Olga Knipper-Chekhova was a stage actress in the Russian Empire and Soviet era. Knipper is one of the original forty-four members of the Moscow Art Theatre. Knipper is best known for originally portraying roles in Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

Born Olga Leonardovna Knipper on Sept. 9, 1868, Knipper grew up in Moscow in an upper-middle class family, where she was allowed to paint, sing, and perform theatrics as pastimes; her father forbid any serious thought of pursuing such "sinful" activities as a career. When he died in 1894, he left behind a tremendous amount of debt. Knipper was twenty-five and began providing music lessons for a living. In the summers of 1894-1895, while working as a personal tutor on an estate, Knipper organized dramatic performances for the servants and workers. This experience made her determined to pursue a life in the theatre, and she joined the Maly Theatre's drama school in the autumn of 1895.

Only a few weeks after enrollment, Knipper was kicked out for "failing an examination." (It would later come to light that she was dropped in favor of a student with a wealthier patron.) Knipper's mother helped her get into the drama program at the Philharmonic school, run by Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko. In their final year, Knipper performed in *The Innkeeper's Wife*, which was seen by Konstantin Stanislavsky. At the time, Stanislavsky and Nemirovich were searching for an acting ensemble for their new company, The Moscow Art Theatre. Olga astounded both of them and was brought on board.

Chekhov noticed Knipper's skill as an actress from the first rehearsals of the Moscow Art Theatre's legendary production of *The Seagull* in 1898. They began corresponding as friends via letters; Chekhov in Yalta receiving treatment for his health, Knipper in Moscow continuing her work as an actress. This correspondence, which began as mildly flirtatious, led to deep feelings for each other. In 1899, they were reunited during the production of Chekhov's newest play *Uncle Vanya*, in which Knipper was cast as Yelena. This reunion, though brief, was filled with multiple romantic excursions into the country and solidified their courtship. Chekhov returned to Yalta and began work on a new play *The Three Sisters*. *The Three Sisters* premiered at the Moscow Art Theatre in autumn, 1900.

The role of Masha in *The Three Sisters* was heavily influenced by Knipper. She corresponded directly with Chekhov about the role as he was writing and during the rehearsal process. Masha was very similar to Olga in a variety of ways - the character spoke French, German and English, like Olga, and was highly cultured. Practically the only difference between Knipper and the character she was to portray was that Masha was married. In their letters, Knipper enjoyed teasing Chekhov about this.

In 1901, after another winter of letters sent between Moscow and Yalta, Chekhov returned to Moscow in spring. Chekhov and Knipper married on May 25th, 1901. They married in secret, with hardly anyone invited (not even Chekhov's mother or sister). Immediately, the newlyweds left to visit a health facility to care for Chekhov's worsening tuberculosis. Seeing the severity of Chekhov's illness up close, Knipper suggested that she give up the theatre and spend her days nursing him; Chekhov adamantly insisted on her not giving up her work or her art.

Over the next three years, Knipper and Chekhov's marriage continued in much the same way as their courtship. While Chekhov received treatment in Yalta, Knipper acted in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the two only seeing each other when schedules and seasons permitted. During one period of time together, Knipper worked closely with Chekhov to develop and begin writing his final play, *The Cherry Orchard*. In 1904, Chekhov returned to Moscow for the premiere of the play. After the production closed, Chekhov and Knipper left for a sanatorium in Germany. While there, Chekhov's health deteriorated rapidly. Chekhov died on July 15, 1904.

Knipper said she loved two things in her life: her husband and the theatre. After two months of mourning, Knipper returned to the Moscow Art Theatre and began work again. Though Knipper's prestige never dwindled, her sense of security in her ability as an actress did. When she turned forty, she said she knew nothing of technique, that acting only came to her naturally, and she had wasted her youth by not learning the skill behind her talent.

As the political climate changed, the Art Theatre struggled to remain relevant and afloat. In 1919, two years after the Bolshevik revolution, a small faction of the Art Theatre toured in the south to escape the worsening winter. Knipper was a member of this group. While there, conflict between the White Army and the Red Army kept them from going home. For the next three years, Knipper and her troupe toured Europe, rather than return to Moscow. In 1922, a member of the Art Theatre living in Moscow found and contacted the troupe and convinced them to return home.

Six months later, Knipper and the company began touring in the U.S. Though at first Americans were suspicious of the actors, believing them to be spies or spreading Russian propaganda, the theatre artists were eventually accepted. Ultimately, the Moscow Art Theatre's tour of the U.S. was extremely successful and has been cited as the inspiration for many of the founders of major American regional theatres.

When the actors returned to Russia, the theatre found itself struggling. The political climate had changed against them, they needed to find a way to remain relevant. Over the next years, Knipper's fame began to wane as the Moscow Art Theatre featured other actors in their productions. However, their admiration for her work never diminished. On the 60th anniversary of the theatre's opening, Knipper, the last surviving original member, received a banquet night in her honor. She died a few months later in February of 1959.

Chekhov, Stanislavsky, Nemirovich-Danchenko and the Moscow Art Theatre: A Revolution of Form

At the end of the 19th century, melodramas were the dominant form of theatre in Russia and Europe. The most famous theatre in Russia was the government operated Maly Theatre, which excelled at the sensational and showy style of performance. Uninspired by this form of theatre, actor/director Konstantin Stanislavsky and playwright/director Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko met together in 1897 to discuss how best to reform theatre. Stanislavsky was deeply concerned about the popular acting style, while Nemirovich-Danchenko was alarmed by the poor literary quality of the current work. When they first met to discuss how to create a change, their meeting lasted from 2 PM until 8 AM the next morning. By dawn, they had formulated a plan: establish a privately owned theatre where they could promote a naturalistic style of production and performance. This would become the Moscow Art Theatre, which opened in 1898. The two artists shared equal roles in managing the theatre, with Stanislavsky managing production decisions and Nemirovich-Danchenko managing literary decisions.

The Moscow Art Theatre was created with a set of core principles. The theatre was to be a team, united by a common sense of dedication to the art of theatre, and no one individual was to be regarded as more or less essential to the theatre's success than anyone else. Excellence was to be sought in all aspects of the productions: light, sound, stage, costumes, the program, acting, etc. Plays were not to be prepared hastily, but with careful deliberation. And, most important, all aspect of 'theatricality' was to be abolished.

Nemirovich was a close friend of acclaimed short story writer Anton Chekhov. Chekhov had written a play, *The Seagull*, whose premiere was a complete failure a few years before in St Petersburg. However, Nemirovich loved the script and chose it as the third play for The Moscow Art Theatre's opening season. It was their first contemporary play. In 1898, The Moscow Art Theatre opened with *Tsar Fyodor* by Aleksey Tolstoy. It's first few productions of the season received mediocre reviews by both audience and critics alike. It wasn't until *The Seagull* premiered that The Moscow Art Theatre found success. *The Seagull* was hugely influential - it changed Western Theatre forever, by shifting the style of performance from presentational to what we now call Naturalism.

Over the next eight years, The Moscow Art Theatre rose to prominence. Performing world classics, such as Shakespeare and Ibsen, as well as adaptations of Russian novels and short stories, the theatre found moderate success. But it was the original works of Anton Chekhov that brought the company into the spotlight of national culture. Each of Chekhov's plays-- *The Seagull*, *The Three Sisters*, *Uncle Vanya*, and *The Cherry Orchard* --were critically lauded, popularly praised and

effectively changed Western Theatre forever. We can still see the influence of this change in the performances - both on screen and on stage- of the most famous and respected actors of our time.

After Chekhov's death in 1904, the theatre experienced a major shift. Chekhov had intended Maxim Gorky to take over his role as the theatre's dramatist. However, Gorky's plays did not impress Nemirovich or Stanislavsky. Upon his departure, Gorky took a number of the theatre's key investors with him.

The company decided to expand their horizons outward. In 1906, the theatre embarked on their first international tour, traveling between Berlin, Prague, Vienna, and Frankfurt. The tour was a resounding success and gained The Moscow Art Theatre acclaim in the international spotlight.

Russia's political climate changed drastically in 1917, when the Bolsheviks began a revolution to remove the Czars from power and to establish a Communist state. The Moscow Art Theatre continued to thrive early on, gaining political support from Lenin and other key government figures. Due to worsening conditions in the north, in 1919 a portion of the acting company (including Olga Knipper) left to tour the south of Russia; their return was cut off by the Russian Civil war and the two halves of the troupe continued independently.





In 1922, the touring troupe was finally contacted by a member of the company still in Moscow; it was once again safe to return to the capital. With the company reunited, it was time to bolster their efforts abroad. Within six months of their reunion, the Moscow Art Theatre began their first trans-Atlantic tour and headed for the United States. Performing on Broadway, the Art Theatre began playing to Russian communities and theatre aficionados. Quickly their success expanded outward to the general population, despite the fact that the performances were entirely in Russian. This tour was highly influential on the evolution of American theatre, cited as a key moment when theatre began to transition from the vaudeville tradition toward the regional theatre model we have today.





Upon their return to Russia, the troupe was not welcomed back with open arms. Highly skeptical of the theatre's intentions, the Soviet government began to observe the theatre with more scrutiny. In 1932, the theatre was officially named The Gorky Moscow Art Theatre, and Gorky was appointed the administrator of the Writer's Union, a government agency to suppress artistic expression and promote Soviet ideals. Stanislavsky begged to maintain the naturalistic style, though in exchange had to give in to the pressures political propaganda.



In 1970, the Moscow Art Theatre experienced a new renaissance with the arrival of Oleg Yefremov. Yefremov reinstated Stanislavsky's method, placing extreme importance on studio practice. In 1987, the theatre split into two troupes: The Chekhov Moscow Art Theatre (led by Yefremov) and the Gorky Moscow Art

Theatre.


Timeline

Year	Olga's Life	Chekhov's Life	Moscow Art Theatre	Historical Context
1860		January 29- Chekhov is born. 		
1868	September 21- Olga is born. 	 Anton Chekhov's family		
1894	Olga begins to teach music, performs amateur theatre at friend's summer estate.		Stanislavsky and Nemirovich conference about the state of Russian theatre. 	
1895	Olga enrolls in the Maly Theatre's drama school. Is removed			Maly Theatre is the most famous theatre


	for poor performance a few weeks later. Enrolls at the Philharmonic School instead.			in Russia at this time.
1896		<i>The Seagull</i> premieres in St. Petersburg. Receives terrible reviews.		
1898	Olga is invited by Philharmonic acting teacher to join The New Theatre troupe. Olga performs in <i>Tsar Fyodar</i> , premiere performance at MAT. Olga first meets Chekhov in rehearsal for <i>The Seagull</i> .	 	Stanislavsky and Nemirovich start The Moscow Art Theatre. <i>The Seagull</i> opens to rave reviews at MAT. Saves theatre.	
1899	Olga plays role of Yelena in <i>Uncle Vanya</i> .	Chekhov, living in Yalta, begins to court Olga, in Moscow. They correspond through letters. 	<i>Uncle Vanya</i> opens at Moscow Art Theatre. 	
1900	Olga performs as Masha in <i>The Three Sisters</i> at MAT, receives rave reviews.	Chekhov completes <i>The Three Sisters</i>	<i>The Three Sisters</i> premieres at Moscow Art Theatre 	

1901	<p>Olga & Chekhov marry in secret. Honeymoon in health facility due to Chekhov's worsening health.</p> <p>Olga considers leaving theatre to care for Chekhov's health.</p>			
1902	<p>Olga has a miscarriage. She falls ill.</p> <p>Olga performs in Gorky's <i>The Lower Depths</i>. Some say her best role since <i>The Seagull</i>.</p>	<p>Chekhov leaves for Yalta</p>	<p>The Moscow Art Theatre moves into its own space</p> 	
1903	<p>Olga performs in <i>The Pillars of the Community</i>.</p> <p>Olga works with Chekhov in the early development of his final play <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>.</p>	<p>Chekhov is tested for tuberculosis; diagnosis: crippled lung.</p>		
1904	<p>Olga performs as Ranevskaya in <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>.</p> <p>Olga gives herself completely to the theatre: goes into rehearsal 2 month after Chekhov's death.</p>	<p>Chekhov completes <i>The Cherry Orchard</i></p> <p>Anton Chekhov dies while receiving treatment in Germany.</p>	<p>The Art Theatre premieres <i>The Cherry Orchard</i>.</p> <p><i>The Seagull's</i> re-mount fails because of political climate.</p>	<p>Start of the Russo-Japanese War.</p> <p>War is failure; The First Revolution begins.</p>
1905	<p>Olga performs in Henrik Ibsen's <i>Ghosts</i></p>		<p>The Moscow Art Theatre begins its first European tour.</p>	

1908	<p>Despite international success, Olga realizes she knows no "technique" to acting; feels as if her youth was wasted.</p> <p>Olga performs <i>A Month in the Country</i>; despite insecurity, success</p>			
1909	Olga begins to court Englishman, Gordon Craig.			
1914				World War I begins.
1915			200th performance of <i>The Three Sisters</i> . 250th performance of <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> .	
1917			Working class audience begins to populate theatres.	<p>Russian Revolution; Tsars removed from power, Communists seize control.</p> <p>Begin of Russian Civil War. White Army (Monarchy & Capitalism) vs. Red Army (Communist)</p>
1919	Olga and the Katchalov Group escape winter with tour to south.		Touring troupe becomes refugees because of White Army's occupation.	

	 <p>58. Olga Knipper</p>			
1920	Olga becomes exceedingly homesick. Even the mention of Moscow drives her to tears.		To escape civil war, the Katchalov Group flees to Georgia. They continue to tour internationally to Prauge, Berlin, etc.	White Army's continual defeat ensures Communist hold on Moscow.
1922	Olga thrilled to return to Moscow. Leaves for America after only six months.		After years of touring, the Katchalov group is invited back to Moscow. The Art Theatre has been invited to perform a season in America.	The New Economic Policy has taken hold and life in Russia returned "more or less" to normal.
1923	Olga becomes exhausted by commercial theatre schedule (eight performances in six days). Though ill, she performed all 16 shows of <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> . Olga deemed Artist of Merit of the Republic.		<i>Tsar Fyodor, The Lower Depths, The Three Sisters, and The Cherry Orchard</i> play in US.	US national culture highly skeptical of Russians, believe Art Theatre is propaganda. US theatre industry influenced by Moscow Art Theatre; inspired American Regional Theatre model
1925	Olga performs two			

	old roles, gains no personal satisfaction. Feels cast aside, unneeded.			
1927	Olga is cast as small role in <i>Armoured Train 14-69</i>		<i>Armoured Train 14-69</i> is first contemporary Soviet show for Art Theatre	
1928	Olga deemed People's Artist of the Republic			
1929	Olga performs in <i>Uncle's Dream</i> and <i>Resurrection</i> ; Olga's first non-realist shows.			
1931	Olga cast in <i>Fear</i> , is replaced from cast during dress rehearsal.			
1932				Soviet gov't replaces Chekhov's name with Gorky's in The Art Theatre's official title. Gorky founds Writer's Union; gov't agency to limit literary expression.
1943				German's invade Yalta, seize the Chekhov museum set up by Chekhov's sister, Masha.
1946	With the death of Moskvina (orig. Tsar Fyodor), Olga is the last surviving founding member of the Art Theatre.			

	 <p>Olga creates her last new role as Lady Markby in <i>The Ideal Husband</i>.</p>			
1948	Olga performs for the last time in Chekhov's <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> .			
1959	Olga Knipper dies.			

LESSON 2: The Process of Development

Includes:

- *Useful vocabulary for the discussion of playwriting and development and a description of the different ways a new play may be developed in American Theatre today*
- *Classroom activities examining script development.*
- *Creative writing exercise to explore creating the start of a play about a historical moment or individual.*

Classroom Activity 1: Where do new plays come from? (15-20 minutes)

For Teachers: *Below is information and questions to share with your students to help them think about how new plays are created and developed:*

As we explore the process of bringing a play into being, here is some vocabulary that may be helpful to keep everything clear:

Full Production: A full production is what we think of when we think of going to see a play in a professional theatre. The costumes, set, lights, props and sound are as fully realized as possible. The actors are memorized and are giving deeply explored, well rehearsed performances.

Workshop Production: A workshop production is a modestly staged theatrical performance, in which the staging of a play does not include some aspects of a **full production**. For example, costumes, sets and sound may be excluded, or may be included in a simpler form.

Staged Reading: A staged reading is a form of theatre without sets or full costumes. The actors, who read from scripts, may be seated, stand in fixed positions, or incorporate minimal stage movement.

Producer: A theatre company or individual that oversees all aspects of mounting a theatre production, providing the financial and logistical support to a play or project.

Talkback: An opportunity for the audience to engage with artists after seeing or hearing their work. This can include questions, conversations and feedback with the cast, director and/or writer of the piece.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

I) Getting Started:

Each play starts with an idea. Who has that idea and what they do with it is what determines the first steps on the path to a new play.

- 1) **The Commission:** A commission is when a theatre company, a producer or an artist hires a playwright to write a new play. The commissioning body may have an idea in mind, or a certain style, or simply wish to work with a particular playwright. The advantage of a commission for a playwright is guaranteed compensation, as well as someone else organizing collaborators (actors, directors, designers) to help develop the play. Sometimes those who commission a play will commit to do a full production, while others will only produce a staged reading or workshop production of the new play.

- 2) **Collaboration/Devising:** Collaborative or “devised” theatre is when the script originates not from a writer or writers but from collaborative- often improvisational- work by a group of people (usually, but not necessarily, the performers). It is sometimes similar to improvisational theatre but by the time a devised piece is presented to the public, it usually has a fixed form. Plays that result from using this method tend not to have a life beyond the original group who created them.

- 3) **Inspiration:** When a playwright has an idea or inspiration for a play that they decide they must write. The challenge to the playwright is finding a way to share the play with an audience - they must find a producer, or be a producer themselves, to present the script to an audience, either as a reading, workshop or full production.

II) Hearing it Out Loud/Development

Once a playwright completes the first draft of a script, the next step is to hear it out loud. A playwright may choose to organize friends and colleagues read it out loud in a casual setting. If it is a commission, whomever did the commissioning may gather a group together to read it around a table, or coordinate a staged reading. At this point, the playwright may begin to receive feedback from other artists in the room as well as from audience members, in the form of a talkback, following a public reading.

III) Full Production- World Premiere!

After the play has been read out loud in front of an audience, after the playwright has continued to tweak and adjust the script as they learn more, both from watching actors work and audiences react to the story, the playwright may get a commitment from a producer to mount the first full production of the script - a world premiere!

Producing a brand new play can feel risky to a theatre company - no audience has ever experienced the play, the play has never been a big “hit” and made a theatre company money or gotten them a lot of attention. A new play is an unknown quantity. So when a play is given its world premiere, it is a very big deal for the play and for the playwright.

IV) And beyond....

Once a play has had its world premiere, other companies around the country, and even internationally, may decide to produce it. However some playwrights say that, while getting a world premiere is difficult, getting a second full production is even harder. Many plays never go on to a second production.

Some plays may end up getting published, which increases the possibility that they will get more full productions, as more individuals can have access to the script and decide if it is a play they wish to produce.

Classroom Activity #2: Exploring a Play We Know (15 minutes)

No playwright is read by more people than William Shakespeare. His plays are published and handed out to students like textbooks, and his words seem to be written in stone. However, it turns out that there are multiple versions of several of his plays, implying that even Shakespeare spent time developing and revising his scripts. This exercise gives students the opportunity to examine three different versions of Shakespeare's most famous speech, and assess how our impressions of its meaning and of the title character are impacted by the changes.

For Teachers: *If your students are not familiar with the story of HAMLET, please take a few minutes to familiarize them with the basic plot as well as themes, etc. The internet provides a number of resources that can help you.*

For Teachers: *You will need to print out materials for this lesson. They can be found following this lesson plan: Classroom Activity #1*

Most of Shakespeare's plays have come down to us in what is known as his **First Folio**. This was published after he had died, at the request of two of his friends who had (presumably) collected his scripts and brought them to the printer to be included in a single large volume.

With some of Shakespeare's plays, other versions of the scripts, known as **quartos**, have also survived. These were versions of the play printed individually, and often during the playwright's lifetime. There are multiple quarto versions of *Hamlet*, but we will be looking specifically at Quarto 1, Quarto 2 and the Folio version.

DIRECTIONS

- Select a student to read each version of the speech, while the rest of the class simply listens.

- Have each student write down one thought or impression about how the speeches are different.

- Pass out the printed version of the speeches and allow students to examine the three different texts (NOTE: Profile has updated most of the spelling for ease of comprehension.)

- As a class, discuss how the different versions impact their impression of the meaning of the speech, as well as of their ideas about Hamlet the character.
 1. How does having that famous first line end with the word "point" instead of "question" change the tone of the speech?

2. How do you think having all of the capitalization in the Folio version affects the meaning or the emphasis of the speech?
3. Do any of the versions seem more urgent than the others? More intellectual? More emotional?

Classroom Activity #3: How to Start - the Development Process in Action **(25-30 minutes)**

This exercise looks at different versions of the opening moments of the play being presented on the tour, *The Lady Onstage* by Erin Bregman. Students will examine how the opening beat has shifted and assess the impact of those changes. They will then make some educated guesses about what they are expecting from the play as a whole, based on how the play begins and the shifts that have been made to the opening moments.

***For Teachers:** You will need to print out materials for this lesson. They can be found following this lesson plan: Classroom Activity #2*

DIRECTIONS:

-Distribute the three versions of the opening moments of *The Lady Onstage*.

-Select a student to read the **first version**, and one to read stage directions.

-As a class, discuss what students expect the play to be about and what they anticipate it will be like stylistically based on the first version of the opening moments.

-Select a student to read the **second version**, and one to read stage directions. Then select a student to read the **third version** and a student to read the stage directions.

-As a class, discuss how the opening moments have changed, and how the second and third versions affect their expectations of the play.

1. Did you feel that the new versions more compelling?
2. Based on the changes that have been made, are the students more or less interested in what comes next?
3. What do they feel is the impact of those changes?

Classroom Activity #4/Homework: Starting Your Own Play

Students take what they have learned about the impact of the opening moments of a play, and of different mechanisms of storytelling, to create the start to their own play about a familiar and well recognized event and/or famous person.

Teachers should offer a list of possible events to use as inspiration. We have provided some ideas below, but as you know your students and their interests and general knowledge best, we encourage you to be creative with your prompts:

- The Moon Landing
- September 11th
- Michelle Obama
- John Lennon
- Sonia Sotomayor

- Obama's First Election
- Lincoln's Assassination
- Thomas Jefferson
- J.K. Rowling
- Edward Snowden

Some things for students to consider: Who is in the first scene? Where are they? What are they doing? If there is more than one character, what is their relationship?

Students can begin work in class and complete the assignment as homework. They should complete 1-2 pages of dialogue.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Reading:

Informational Texts:

- 9-10: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
- 11-12: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

Writing:

- 9-10: 3 & 4
- 11-12: 3 & 4

Speaking & Listening

- 9-10: 1, 3, 4 & 6
- 11-12: 1, 3, 4 & 6

LESSON 2 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

Excerpt for Classroom Activity #1: Exploring Plays We know

Hamlet, Act III Scene i

Quarto 1:

To be, or not to be, aye there's the point,
To Die, to sleep, is that all? Aye all:
No, to sleep, to dream, aye marry there it goes,
For in that dream of death, when we awake,
And borne before an everlasting Judge,
From whence no passenger ever returned,
The undiscovered country, at whose sight
The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd.
But for this, the joyful hope of this,
Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world,
Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor?
The widow being oppressed, the orphan wrong'd,
The taste of hunger, or a tyrants reign,
And thousand more calamities besides,
To grunt and sweat under this weary life,
When that he may his full Quietus make,
With a bare bodkin, who would this endure,
But for a hope of something after death?
Which puzzles the brain, and doth confound the sense,
Which makes us rather bear those evils we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.
Aye that, O this conscience makes cowards of us all,
Lady in thy orizons, be all my sins remembered.

Excerpt for Lesson 2, Classroom Activity #1: (cont'd)

Hamlet, Act III Scene i

Quarto 2:

To be, or not to be, that is the question,
Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take Arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them, to die to sleep
No more, and by a sleep, to say we end
The hart-ake, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished to die to sleep,
To sleep, perchance to dream, I there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreames may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause, there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressors wrong, the proud mans contumely,
The pangs of despiz'd love, the laws delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietas make
With a bare bodkin; who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose borne
No traveller returns, puzzlels the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Then fly to others we know not of.
Thus conscience does make cowards,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sickled ore with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprizes of great pitch and moment,
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And loose the name of action. Soft you now,
The faire *Ophelia*, Nymph in thy orizons
Be all my sinnes remembered

Excerpt for Lesson 2, Classroom Activity #1: (cont'd)

Hamlet, Act III Scene i

Folio

To be, or not to be, that is the Question:
Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer
The Slings and Arrows of outrageous Fortune,
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end
The Heart-ake, and the thousand Natural shocks
That Flesh is there too? 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die to sleep
To sleep, perchance to Dream; I, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,
When we haue shuffle'd off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes Calamity of long life:
For who would beare the Whips and Scorns of time,
The Oppressors wrong, the poor mans Contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd Love, the Laws delay,
The insolence of Office, and the Spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himselfe might his *Quietus* make
With a bare Bodkin? Who would these Fardles beare
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered Country, from whose Borne
No Traveller returns, Puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Then fly to others that we know not of.
Thus Conscience does make Cowards of us all,
And thus the Native hue of Resolution
Is sicklied o're, with the pale cast of Thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard their Currants turn away,
And loose the name of Action. Soft you now,
The faire *Ophelia*? Nymph, in thy Orizons
Be all my sins remembered.

Excerpt for Lesson 2, Classroom Activity #2: How to Start - the Development Process in Action

Below are three different versions of the start of the new play *The Lady Onstage*.

This first version was Ms. Bregman's initial attempt at starting the script, after discussing the source material with the director and actor and doing some exploratory exercises. It was written on August 8th, 2014. Stage directions are in italics.

(Very late. Olga, fully dressed with a dressing gown on over her clothes, lays on a couch or bed. A deep breath.)

OLGA

I am going to get up in a moment, but for now
I am going to enjoy
a little bit of silence.
(She does.)

OLGA

In a moment I am going to get up,
and I am going to
drink some water.
(a deep breath)

OLGA

No, when I get up in a moment I am going to write my letter first and then drink
some water.
Better to be interrupted drinking water than writing letters.
(a deep breath)

(She sits up. thinks better of it, lays back down.)

OLGA

In a moment, I am going to sit up again.
(She lays. A moment.)

OLGA

And while I am sorry that it means a shorter letter to
be laying here a moment longer,
I know it will make it a better one.
Or, I like that as an excuse anyway.
(a deep breath)

OLGA

Reason for hasty letter, Excuse #1: 7 hour rehearsal.

Reason for hasty letter, Excuse #2: Performance.
Reason for hasty letter, Excuse #3: Appallingly dismal
performance leaves the performer unable to write in
her dressing room.
Reason for hasty letter, Excuse #4: Wine.
Reason for hasty letter, Excuse #5: The softness of
these pillows,
(A deep breath. She sits up.)

OLGA
Stand up, letter, water, onward.
*(She stands, and walks over to a small
desk. She sits, gets a fresh sheet of
paper and begins to write.)*

Excerpt for Lesson 2, Classroom Activity #2: (cont'd)

This **second** version was written in March of 2015, after more discussion and exploration with the director and actor, as well as the first public staged reading of the piece. Again, stage directions are in italics.

(A quiet, empty room, full of the detritus of the actress: vases of flowers of various age, a desk with a pile of opened letters scattered about, a couch with piles of scripts on it, all marked up and dog-eared. Near the couch, a bottle of vodka, half gone.)

(If samovars were in these sorts of rooms, then there is one of those. If it should be lit, it is. If not, Olga will light it when she comes in.)

(The sound of women's shoes coming quickly up the stairs. The door opens, and slams shut.)

(Olga leans against the closed door, so wrapped up in winter clothes you can barely see her nose. She catches her breath.)

(Olga deposits her outerwear in a pile on the couch, pours herself a small glass of vodka, drinks, and sits, utterly dejected. Despair.)

OLGA
Curse it.
Curse it to hell, curse it all to hell.
(She takes off her shoes, not gently.)

OLGA
Stupid actress.
How could you Possibly ruin a role so thoroughly that you had so completely prepared!
How could you Possibly,
(More vodka. More despair.)
(Olga grabs a script, rifles through it, finds the page, scans it.)

OLGA

No notes?

Where are your notes!

No, but of course there are no notes on this part because This Part you have always known and have always nailed from the very beginning, every time. And so you never had to know how or why because it was always right.

Every time.

So of course, no notes.

(more vodka.)

So now, when you have utterly failed in This Part, you are doomed to fail at the next, and the next, and the next because there was never anything to get you back on track once you got the smallest bit off.

Curse you to hell, stupid actress!

No notes?

Not a word. Not a single word.

Excerpt for Lesson 2, Classroom Activity #2: (cont'd)

This **third** version is from the version that was developed in July of this year during rehearsals for the staged reading/workshop production at Profile Theatre.

THE EX-PAT

A revolution
Loves
a secret.

.
It is
What
a revolution is built on.
Secrets.

.
I do not love this revolution, and I will not keep its
secrets.
So you understand why it is I live here.
Bienvenue a Paris.

(she stops pacing, comes closer.)

I saw her only once after I left. Would you like to
know where?
She was just over there,

(begins to point, lowers her arm.)

On second thought, it is better not to point.
I will go there, and then come back.

(She goes, gives a significant look,
comes back.)

Did you mark the place?
That is the place where I saw her, while I was myself
sitting-
Come, I will show you from where.
It is better not to point.

(She goes, sits. Gives a significant
look, comes back.)

So you can see, from where I was, to where she was, a
direct line of sight.

Lesson 3: One Person Plays - a Unique Challenge

Includes:

- *Introductory information on the variations within the genre of solo performance*
- *Exercises exploring different devices used by solo performers to tell their story*
- *Creative writing prompts for students to generate and present their own solo-performance.*

The Lady Onstage is a solo performance, a piece of theatre that is performed by only one actor. Though they share many characteristics, a solo-performance is different from a monologue. A monologue is a single-character speaking for an extended period of time to themselves or another character. A solo-performance may take the form of a single monologue, though may also be a series of monologues or a dialogue between multiple characters all performed by a single actor. Solo-performances can be fiction or non-fiction, humorous or serious, or a mixture of all of these. This lesson plan explores the genre and some of the variety of form and content it can contain.

Classroom Activity #1: Exploring Single-Character Monologues (20-25 minutes)

We will look at two examples of single character monologues from two well known performers, Whoopi Goldberg and Eric Bogosian.

For Teachers: *You will need to print out materials for this activity. They can be found following this lesson plan: Excerpts for Classroom Activity #1*

DIRECTIONS:

- Share the following short biographies and quotes with students, by either reading them aloud or selecting different students to read them to the class.
- Select one student to read the first monologue by Whoopi Goldberg out loud.
- Select one student to read the second monologue by Eric Bogosian out loud.
- Discuss as a class the similarities and differences between the pieces.
 1. What do they have in common stylistically?
 2. How does each playwright interact with the audience, both directly and indirectly?

WHOOPI GOLDBERG: Whoopi Goldberg is an American actress, comedian, and television personality best known for her roles in *Sister Act*, *Ghost*, *The Color Purple*, and as a host of *The View*. Before Goldberg broke onto the screen, her roots were in

solo-performances. Self-producing her solo-performance *The Spook Show* in small theatres and comedy clubs, Goldberg performed a series of character monologues that explored what it meant to be a black American. This performance showcased a variety of dialects and voices, hinging heavily on audience interaction.

Quote by Goldberg:

On solo performance

"A lot of the strength of my work is reactive. I've got these characters, and how they behave on a given night depends on a lot of things: the audience, the kind of day I've had, the mood I'm in. That's why I like to go out into the audience when I do the wino, because I want to know, as much as anyone out there wants to know, what's going to happen next... My work requires the active participation of an audience. They can't just come in and sit. How can you change people if they just sit there?"

-Whoopi Goldberg, from *Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance Texts*, ed. Fred Zollo, p. 210

ERIC BOGOSIAN: Eric Bogosian is an American actor and playwright best known for his play, *SubUrbia*, and his series of solo-performances. Bogosian's performances are a series of short monologues, usually between 12-20 monologues per show, each showcasing a different character with a different voice. Though they feature a diverse cast of characters, Bogosian's series of monologues are tied together by common themes concerning the evils of society. Bogosian began performing his work in comedy clubs and open-mic nights; though they started off extremely unpopular, Bogosian rose to prominence and is considered a major player in the development of the modern solo-performance genre.

On Listening:

"If I hear somebody say something like "it's a fried egg deal"... I don't know what it means "It's a fried egg deal", but it sounds like something a bum or a bowery would say. And then I'll keep it and I'll make a whole monologue out of something that somebody says. And that's how my characters develop... If I do a southern accent, like a real redneck, "Now, come here boy, I wanna talk tuh you." That kind of voice, now I know the next thing that guy is going to do is take out a white sheet and putting it on and puttin' up a--that's kind of racist or stereotype for me to do that, but that's where the monologues come from. Its-- I become the voice, I become the body, and then the guy starts talking and I tape record it and that's where the beginnings come from." -Eric Bogosian Interview, *Videowave*, 2010.

Classroom Activity #2: Exploring Multi-character Solo Performances
(30-35 minutes)

For Teachers: You will need to print out materials for this activity. They can be found following this lesson plan: *Excerpts for Classroom Activity #1*

DIRECTIONS:

-Share the following short biographies and quotes with students, by either reading them

aloud or selecting different students to read them to the class.

- Divide students into pairs. Have each pair read find some space in the room to work, then read the David Wright monologue aloud, with each student playing one of the roles.

- After the initial read, one student becomes the director and the other the solo-actor. Have students practice for 5-10 minutes on their performances. Then have them switch who is performing and who is directing and give them another 5-10 minutes to work.

-Gather together again as a class and select a few students to solo-perform the excerpt in front of the class.

- Discuss the similarities and differences between having the material be a dialogue between two performers or a solo performance, as well as how each team approached the challenge of a single performer presenting the story.

1. What changed when the text went from being a dialogue between two people to a solo performance by one actor?
2. What tactics did the actors have to utilize to maintain their portrayal as a solo performance? Which tactics were particularly effective?
3. How did the different performers affect the way the monologues were read? What shifted in the characters with each new performer

DOUG WRIGHT: Doug Wright is an American playwright, librettist, and screenwriter. He is best known for his one-person play, *I Am My Own Wife*, which received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2004. *I Am My Own Wife* is a docudrama multi-character solo-performance based on Wright's interviews with Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, a transgender woman who survived both Nazi and Soviet occupation of Berlin. *I Am My Own Wife* was performed originally by Jefferson Mays, who portrayed over forty characters for this single show.

On Non-Fiction Liberties:

"I do take liberties when I write about real people. That said, it varies from play to play, based on the subject. A well-known figure like the Marquis de Sade can stand up to authorial invention; he's already well known... But I felt I had a higher standard of truth with Charlotte; the world doesn't know her in the same way. So, I stuck very close to the interview tapes. I didn't want to misinform audiences who might be encountering her for the very first time. And I was loath to embroider or alter a tale that was already ripe with ambiguity."

Homework Activity #1: Writing Your Own Monologue

DIRECTIONS:

Students can complete this activity in one of two ways:

-Speak to someone knowledgeable about a topic of interest. Using the information gathered from this conversation, write a monologue or multi-character single-actor scene.

OR

-Listen to people around school. Take note of interesting phrases people say. Use one (or more) of these phrases as the basis of a short monologue or multi-character single-actor scene.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Reading:

Informational Texts:

-9-10: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

-11-12: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

Writing:

-9-10: 3 & 4

-11-12: 3 & 4

Speaking & Listening

-9-10: 1, 2, 4 & 6

-11-12: 1, 2, 4 & 6

LESSON 3 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

Excerpt for Classroom Activity #1:

Single Character Monologue Stylistic Comparison

From: **Whoopi Goldberg Live by Whoopi Goldberg**¹

(Girl enters with a white shirt draped on her head.)

This is my long, luxurious blond hair. Ain't it pretty?

Audience responds: Yeah!

I can put it in a ponytail. Wanna see?

Audience responds: Yeah!

No. You do?

Audience responds: Yeah!

Okay. Let me get it off my shoulders. Wait. See, look? See? And look, now it's in my eyes. And my mother made me go to my room 'cause she said this wasn't nothing but a shirt on my head and I said, "Nuh-uh, this is my long, luxurious blond hair." And she said, "Nuh-uh, fool, that's a shirt." And I said, "You a fool, it's my hair." And she made me go to my room.

Now I told my mother I didn't want to be black no more. I did. 'Cause she don't never do nothing exciting. She just go to work all the time. She work on Wall Street. That's all she do is work, work, work, and she don't even know nobody exciting and nobody exciting know her and she don't even look like nobody on TV, not even on *The Justice League* or *The Smurfs*. And she says she don't wanna look like no damn Smurf. And then she said, "Even if you sit in the vat of Clorox until hell freeze over, you ain't gonna be nothing but black." And she was right because I sat in the Clorox and I got burned. And she said I just have ta be happy with what I got. But look, see? *(She takes the shirt off her head and holds it at her side)* It don't do nothing. It don't blow in the wind and it don't cas... casca... casca... cascascadade down my back. It don't. And I put that bouncing and behaving stuff in it and it didn't even listen, and I want some other kind of hair that do something else. I do.

(She speaks to audience members) Hi. You got hair like mine, huh? How come you don't have your shirt on? You came outside without it? Nobody said nothing? No? Can I touch your hair? Huh? Your hair's soft. My hair's soft too, feel. It's dusty, but it's soft. How old are you? *(The woman responds: thirty-five)* I'm gonna be seven on Wednesday. Yeah. Thank you. I'm big for my age 'cause we live near a nuclear reactor. My granny said we have ta move soon or we all gonna glow in the dark.

¹ Whoopi Goldberg "Whoopi Goldberg Live," [Girl with the Long, Blonde Hair.] in [Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance Texts](#), ed. by Jo Bonney, (New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, 1999) 217-219.

Excerpt for Lesson 3, Classroom Activity #1: (cont'd)

From: ***Upgrade*** by Eric Bogosian²

Here you go, sir, you're all set. You have a seat on this flight, it's leaving in ten minutes so you better hurry up! Yes, sir, that's right, it's a coach seat. Yes, I know you had a fully-paid-for-first-class-ticket, sir, but this seat is coach. Well, let me see what I can do, OK? (*Types into keyboard*) Alright, I'm looking at a first-class seat on a 3:30 AM departure with a six-hour layover in Saint Louis. How does that sound?

Yes, 3:30 in the morning, sir, that's correct. I understand that, sir. Yes, I can see that you have a gold card. All the people behind you have gold cards, sir. Well, sir, sir, sir, why don't we do this: step aside for a sec here, let me get everyone on board, get them seated, let the flight leave and then we can see what we can do, OK? (*Signals to the next person*) Next in line?

I'm not trying to get rid of you, sir. Our gold card passengers are our first priority. Would you like a voucher for a complimentary cup of Starbucks Coffee while you wait? Sir! Sir! Sir! There's no reason to use that language. May I remind you, sir, that we are being videotaped as we speak and this video tape is admissible as evidence in any court proceedings that may arise from our conversation on this date.

Well, I'm sorry you feel that way. Yes, you may file a complaint. Just get in touch with our operations manager. He's not in right now, but if you'd like to drop by tomorrow morning around 7 A.M., I'm sure he'd love to see you.

You can't, sir, no. No, you can't sue us, sir. Well, if you read the notice on the back of your ticket you will see that it says when you fly with us you agree to abide by all the rules and regulations of this airline and any disagreements you have with the rules and regulations of this airline are subject to arbitration by an independent arbitrator. OK?

You *can* win, sir. You can win. You just can't win *today*. Have a nice flight! Next!

² Eric Bogosian, Wake Up and Smell the Coffee, "Upgrade." (New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, 2002) 23.

Excerpt for Lesson 3, Classroom Activity #2: I Am My Own Wife by Doug Wright³

Charlotte: Alfred came back to me. Naturally, I expected him to mend his ways.

Alfred: Lottchen, I've an idea. Why don't we sell the clocks out of your basement instead of the car?

Charlotte: But Alfred--

Alfred: There's no other place in all of Eastern Berlin quite so secret.

Charlotte: So Alfred brought the clocks around to my place, and we stashed them here. Right here, in this basement corridor, there were five, six, seven clocks. Standing in the darkness, like sentinals, *ja*? And then at midnight:

Alfred: Lottchen! Open the door! We're in terrible danger.

Charlotte: What now?

Alfred: They followed us. The Stasi came to my apartment. They tore through my desk, they found Western currency. Tomorrow they're coming to see you!

Charlotte: What can I do, hmm? I'll bolt the door.

Alfred: Save yourself, Lottchen. Renounce me.

Charlotte: Don't be ridiculous.

Alfred: Tell them the clocks are mine.

Charlotte: I could never.

Alfred: Why should we both go to prison?

Charlotte: I won't say such a thing--I *can't*!

Alfred: They'll force their way into your house. They'll go traipsing into the basement, into the bar. They'll confiscate your polyphones and your pianolas--they'll take your sideboard and your *Vertiko*--

Charlotte: *Quatsh! Du bist zu dramatisch!*

Alfred: Listen to me! They'll auction off your estate collection, and all to fill their own fat coffers.

Charlotte: *Das ist nicht möglich. Das konnen sie nicht tun.*

Alfred: Your museum will be finished.

Charlotte: So when the Stasi came, that's what I did. (*She sits. A light shines from above, like an interrogation. Her voice cracks and her eyes well with tears*) "These clocks, they do not belong to me. I am only a way station. The collector that you seek... the black marketeer... his name is Alfred Kirschner." (*Charlotte resumes the tale*) And they arrested him.

³ Doug Wright, *I Am My Own Wife*, (New York, NY: Faber & Faber, 2004)

Lesson 4: Chekhov Today: Translations and Adaptations

Includes:

- Vocabulary related to adaptation and interpretation of a text
- Exercises exploring the subtleties of translation and the nature of adaptation
- Quotes from the Playwright: *Regarding Secrets & Added Dimensions, On Inspiration vs. Originality*
- A creative writing exercise and a classroom activity encouraging leadership and collaboration

Chekhov wrote in Russian, a language very different in structure than English. When studying or rehearsing and producing his plays, the choice of which version or translation you wish to use is highly influential on how an audience understands his work.

Read the following definitions out loud to the class:

Translation: A type of adaptation where the primary work is in one language and the secondary work is in a different language. Many translations attempt to adhere closely to the original intention of the primary work. Translations stick to the same genre as the primary work. A major challenge of translations is that some phrases are “untranslatable,” such as idioms and other forms of wordplay.

Adaptation: A piece of work which is a direct recreation of a previously existing story. Some adaptations exist within a medium (for example, a film reboot). Other adaptations cross over to another form of storytelling (a musical version of a popular film). Adaptations, while relying primarily on the structure of the original piece, often takes liberties of its own to differentiate it from the original.

“Inspired By”: A piece of work which draws heavily from the themes, characters, or story of another work. This new piece is usually no more than tangentially related to the original piece and relies primarily on new elements.

The Lady Onstage itself is actually a hybrid of all three of these - there are parts of the script that are translations of Knipper and Chekhov’s words and of the letters of both of them. The script also adapted some of their letters to create content. And of course, the entire play was inspired and informed by not only their lives, but by Chekhov’s plays - their structure and central themes.

Classroom Activity #1: Exploring Translations - Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* & Sarah Ruhl (15-20 minutes)

Profile Theatre has a mission of featuring the work of a single playwright each season. In 2015 that playwright is Sarah Ruhl, a multiple Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award nominee. Her plays include *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*, *Clean House*, *Eurydice*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone* and *Passion Play*. *The Lady Onstage* was part of Profile's season this year through our In Dialogue program, where Profile features work in conversation with our primary playwright. In addition to doing her own translation of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, Ms. Ruhl's work often centers around female characters, asking questions about life and meaning with humor and pathos existing side by side, not unlike in the work of Anton Chekhov.

For Teachers: *You will need to print out materials for this activity. They can be found following this lesson plan: Excerpts for Classroom Activity #1*

DIRECTIONS

-Have one or two students read the quote by Ms. Ruhl aloud. (To be found in the supplemental materials.)

-Then, select three groups of three students. Have the first group read Bristow's translation out loud, the second group read Ehre's translation out loud, and have the final group read Ruhl's translation out loud.

-As a class, discuss the following:

1. How would you describe the difference in tone or style between the three versions? How would describe the difference in the use of language to convey Chekhov's ideas and story?
2. In which version, if any, did you find it easiest to relate to or understand the characters? Why? Who's translation is most clear?
3. How does Ruhl's translation compare to Ehre's translation? How does it compare to Bristow's translation?

Classroom Activity #2: Exploring Work Inspired by Chekhov: *Sonya and Vanya and Masha and Spike* by Christopher Durang (10-15 minutes)

For Teachers: *You will need to print out materials for this activity. They can be found following this lesson plan: Excerpts for Classroom Activity #2*

DIRECTIONS

-Have one student read the quote by Mr. Durang aloud. (To be found in the supplemental materials.)

-Then, ask three students to read the scene from *Sonya and Vanya and Masha and Spike*.

-As a class, discuss the following:

1. Durang's play is inspired by Chekhov. How is Durang's Masha similar to the one seen in this excerpt of *The Three Sisters*? How is she different?
2. How much inspiration does one need to draw on for a work to legitimately be labeled "inspired by"?
3. If you are familiar with Chekhov, how much of Chekhov's style or themes do you see in this scene?

Classroom Activity #3: Creating Your Own Adaptation (20-25 minutes)

For Teachers: You will need to print out materials for this activity. They can be found following this lesson plan: *Excerpts for Classroom Activity #2*

DIRECTIONS:

- Select two students to read the excerpt from the Balcony Scene of *Romeo and Juliet* out loud to the class (the excerpt is included in the additional materials at the end of this lesson plan.) Review the scene so that students are clear on the story and the relationship between the two characters.

-Give students 15-20 minutes to create their own adaptation of the scene. The adaptation can be a scene, a monologue, a short story, a poem, whatever feels right. Students should feel free to have full reign over their adaptation; changing setting, characters, or putting the scene "in a blender" (as per Durang), should be allowed and encouraged.

-Have students pair up and share their work with their partner. Ask for volunteers to present their work or their partner's work.

For Teachers: The authors may remain anonymous or the students may reveal who wrote what they are presenting (this is a decision that the students can make themselves or that you can make prior to starting the exercise).

-Once you have completed the presentations, either use the following questions to initiate a discussion in class, or assign the students the questions as a homework assignment.

1. In what ways is your adaptation a reflection of the original?
2. What kinds of challenges did you face to create that reflection?
3. What techniques did other students use? What surprised you? What did you find most inventive?

NOTE: We would love to read what your students write! If it is possible for you to collect and either scan and email us their pieces, or photocopy them so we can arrange to pick them up from the school, it would be much appreciated!

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Reading:

Informational Texts:

-9-10: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

-11-12: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

Writing:

-9-10: 3 & 4

-11-12: 3 & 4

Speaking & Listening

-9-10: 1, 2, 4 & 6

-11-12: 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6

LESSON 4 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

Excerpt for Classroom Exercise #1: Exploring Translations - Chehov's The Three Sisters & Sarah Ruhl

Quote by Ruhl:

Regarding Faithful Translations

"My sister-in-law Natasha who is a native Russian speaker sat down with me and read to me from the original... Natasha gave me literal translations of the idioms—as when Solyony says: pull my finger, meaning, just as it does in this country, make me fart, which the more polite translations usually cover, making Solyony seem completely opaque. Or when Masha says: Life is a raspberry! I wanted to keep the raspberry, even though it's not readily accessible in English. Working with Natasha, it became clear to me that getting to the root of the original Russian was what I wanted, rather than putting my own authorial stamp on the text. I wanted to get as far away from a "stamp" as possible..."

I came to this translation with no agenda, no desire to bend Chekhov to my will in any way, but instead, to learn from him. It is, then, a very faithful translation, phrase by phrase, stage direction by stage direction, comma by comma. I tried to cleave to Chekhov's original rhythms as far as I was able to."

-Notes by Sarah Ruhl, The Three Sisters ⁴

⁴<http://www.sarahruhlplaywright.com/plays/view/THREE-SISTERS-Translated-from-the-original-by-Anton-Chekhov/>

Excerpt for Lesson 4, Classroom Exercise #1 (cont'd)

[Eugene K. Bristow's Translation]⁵

Olga: Masha, you are silly and stupid. The most stupid in our family--it's you. Forgive me, please. (Pause).

Masha: My dear sisters, I've something I want to confess. It's tearing me apart inside, so I shall tell you two and then say nothing more to anyone, ever... I'll tell you now. (Quietly) It's my secret, but you must know everything... I can keep silent no longer... (Pause) I love, I love... I love that person... You saw him just now... Oh, why go no this way. To come to the point, I love Vershinin...

Olga: (Goes behind her screen) Stop it. It doesn't matter, I'm not listening.

Masha: What can I do! (Clutches her head) At the very beginning he seemed strange to me, then I felt sorry for him... then I fell in love... I fell in love with his voice, with his words, his misfortunes, his two little girls...

Olga: (Behind the screen) It doesn't matter, I'm not listening. Whatever stupid things you say, it doesn't matter, I'm not listening.

Masha: Oh, you amaze me, Olya. I am in love, that's all there is to it. It's my fate. There's no other choice... And he loves me.... It's all so frightening. Yes? It's not right, is it? (Pulls Irina by the hand, draws her to her) Oh, my dear... how is it we shall live through the rest of our lives, what shall become of us... When you read a novel this sort of thing seems old and everything in it--so, so clear. But when you fall in love yourself, then you see for yourself that no one really and truly understands, and each person must come to a decision by himself... My dear, dear sisters... I've confessed everything to you, now I shall keep silent... I shall be like Gogol's madman now... silence... silence...

⁵ Anton Chekhov, Anton Chekhov's Plays, *The Three Sisters* trans. Eugene Bristow (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1977) 142.

Excerpt for Lesson 4, Classroom Exercise #1 (cont'd)

[Milton Ehre's Translation]⁶

Olga: Masha, you're silly. The silliest one in the family. Forgive me for saying so.
(Pause)

Masha: My sisters, I have a confession to make. I'm having a bad time of it. I'll confess to you and nobody else, ever....Just a moment. (Softly.) It's my secret, but you ought to know...I can't keep it to myself... (Pause) I'm in love, I love... I love that man... He was here just now... Well, what's the use? In a nutshell, I love Vershinin...

Olga: (goes behind the screen) Don't say another word. Anyhow, I'm not listening.

Masha: What can I do? (Clutches her head) At first I found him a bit strange, then I felt sorry for him... finally I fell in love... I fell in love with his voice, the way he talks, his unhappiness, his two little girls...

Olga: (From behind the screen) I'm still not listening. Say any foolishness you like, it doesn't matter, I won't hear.

Masha: You're the silly one, Olga. I love--then that's my fate, my destiny... And he loves me... Terrifying, isn't it! Wrong of me? (Draws Irinia to her by the hand) Oh, my dearest.... How will we get through our lives? What will become of us? When you read some novel it all seems old hat, as plain as day. But go fall in love yourself and you see that nobody knows anything, each of us has to make her own choice.... My dear, sweet sisters... I've made a clean breast of it, now I'll shut up. I'll be like Gogol's madman... "Silent"... "Silent"...

⁶ Anton Chekhov, Chekhov for the Stage, *The Three Sisters*, trans. by Milton Ehre, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1992) 166.

Excerpt for Lesson 4, Classroom Exercise #1: (cont'd)

[Ruhl's Translation]

Olga: Masha, you're stupid. The stupidest one in our family: excuse me, but it's you. (Pause)

Masha: I want to make a confession, dear sisters. My soul is so tired. I'll confess to you and to no one else, never... I'll tell you this minute. (quietly) It's my secret, but you must know. I can't be silent.

I love, love... love that man... You just saw him. That's that. In a word: I love--Vershinin.

Olga: (goes off behind her screen) Stop it. Or go on, either way, I'm not listening.

Masha: What can be done? (Takes her head in her hands) First, he seemed strange to me, then I felt pity for him... then I fell in love with him. I fell in love with his voice, his words--his unhappiness... And his two girls...

Olga: I can't hear you! Keep saying stupid things, it doesn't matter, I'm not listening.

Masha: Ay, you're stupid, Olya. I love-- it's my fate. Or my one job in this life... And he loves me... It's terrifying. Yes? But is it wrong?
(Pulling Irina's hand to her) Oh, my dear... Somehow we will live through our lives... When you read a novel, it seems that everything is clear, trite and understandable. But when you yourself fall in love, you understand that nobody knows anything and everyone must decide for themselves. Sweet sisters, I made my confession, now I'll shut up... I will now be like the crazy man in Gogol... Silence, silence...

Excerpt for Lesson 4, Classroom Activity #2: Exploring Work Inspired by Chekhov: "Sonya and Vanya and Masha and Spike"

Quote by Durang:

On Inspiration vs. Originality:

"Well, it's called Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike. It takes Chekhov themes and characters and mixes them all up, as if I've put them into a comic blender. It is not [a parody]. I have written parodies, but this is not one. It is a "regular" play that is set in the present time, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. And Vanya and Masha are brother and sister, and Sonia is their adopted sister. And they had professor parents who named them after Chekhov characters. But they are not in pre-revolutionary Russia, and they don't have samovars, and they don't pay for things with rubles. On the other hand, they are filled with regret and bitterness and are busy wondering if they made the right choices in life. Vanya and Sonia, in particular, feel they have missed having a life, and they are resentful of their sister Masha who is a movie star. And Spike is Masha's new, not-terribly-age-appropriate boyfriend.

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike by Christopher Durang⁷

Masha: Dearest Vanya, dearest Sonia. How I've missed you. You both look the same. Older. Sadder. But the same. It's wonderful to see you, Vanya. Oh, and you too, Sonia.

Sonia: Yes, hello. I'm easy to miss.

Masha: You are! I often miss you! I'm in a play or a movie, and I think of my dear Sonia, and think, oh I miss her! I must call her. Then I get called to the set and months go by and I forget to call. Life happens, no?

Sonia: Not here it doesn't. We sit still a lot. We look out the window. We bicker. We long for what the world cannot give. We are in our twilight years, and we realize we have never really lived.

Masha: (lightly) Oh, that's too bad... (back to herself) Oh I wish I had time to sit still. I'm always busy, I'm always on the TV, or flying off to some foreign country to make a movie. Oh I wish I had time to read the classics, sit in a chair, and just read. Do you read the classics, Sonia?

Sonia: No. I think of it, but I have too much free time. There's so much I could fill the free time with, I can't make decisions. So I do nothing. I am a wild turkey, I am a wild turkey.

Masha: Really? How alarming. (softer to Vanya) What's the matter with her?

⁷ Christopher Durang, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (New York, NY: Grove Press 2013).

Vanya: She's referring to falling out of bed. She's fine. Masha, you look wonderful as usual. But what did you say about a Snow White costume?

Masha: Oh did I forget to tell Sonia?

Sonia: Um... Probably. Tell me what?

Masha: Well I got a lovely invitation from that extremely wealthy woman who bought the Dorothy Parker house up the road. She's one of our neighbors here, and she's dying to get to know people in the area, and so she's throwing a costume party. And she asked me to come.

Vanya: Well she hasn't asked us to come.

Masha: Well, you're not famous. She's inviting famous people and literary people, and interesting people. And, of course, you and Sonia are very interesting. And I told her that, so she wants both of you to come with me and Spike tonight.

Vanya: Spike?

**Excerpt for Lesson 4, Classroom Exercise #3:
Romeo & Juliet by William Shakespeare**

Adapt the following excerpt from the famous balcony scene into your own version of the story. Use any form of genre you choose! Be creative!

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET

What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO

By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Lesson 5: Reflecting on the Performance

Includes:

- Reflection and discussion on the play and the performance.
- Creative writing prompt taking the play as inspiration.

Classroom Exercise #1: Classroom Discussion and Reflection (20-25 minutes)

DIRECTIONS:

-Present the following questions to your class for class discussion or for written reflection. Remind students that this script is still in development and that their feedback will help the creative team finalize the script for its world premiere. If you are going to lead a class discussion, select one or two students to take notes so that you can share the feedback with Profile.

1. Was the play what you expected it to be? Why or why not?
2. Discuss how the playwright dealt with the One Person Play format? What devices were employed to tell the story?
3. Did you follow the story?
4. Were there certain characters that fascinated or interested you? Why? Were there certain characters that you did not understand?
5. What do you see as this play's strengths? What are its weaknesses?

If you elected to have students write their answers, we would love to see what they have to say! Please send us their thoughts. Contact Lauren Bloom Hanover to discuss how to get their answers to Profile staff: lauren@profiletheatre.org

Classroom Exercise #2: What We've Learned (15-20 minutes)

-Read the following quotes from the play to your students.

"What will we leave? What will we be remembered by?"

"And still I am convinced, that were I to stop working toward this thing I can not name and may never reach, I would be even more miserable."

"It is very hard to work at something when you can't tell if it has any impact."

- Lead a short discussion about the student's thoughts regarding the life of an artist and the role of the arts in society.

1. Has this play shifted their thinking in any way? If so, how?
2. In what other fields do students think people seek meaning and impact

through their work?

Classroom Activity #3: Creative Writing (Homework)

You may choose to assign this exercise as homework, or to use it as an in-class exercise.

Students compose their own pieces inspired by *The Lady Onstage* - Either another character whose life has intersected with Olga's, a monologue for Maria (whom Olga is speaking to in the play), or write a letter from Olga to Chekhov about the performance of one of his plays.

Common Core Standards Addressed:

Reading:

Informational Texts:

-9-10: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 8

-11-12: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

Writing:

-9-10: 3 & 4

-11-12: 3 & 4

Speaking & Listening

-9-10: 1, 2, 4 & 6

-11-12: 1, 2, 4 & 6