

Anna Karenina

by Leo Tolstoy
in a version by Helen Edmundson

23 – 25 Nov 2023
Rose Theatre



Anna Karenina

by Leo Tolstoy in a version by Helen Edmundson

Director **Gabriella Bird**
Set and Costume Designer **Sorcha Corcoran**
Lighting Designer **Cian Feasey**

Sound Designer **Lou Venn**
Music Director **Tali Lund**
Assistant Music Director **Amelia Bright**

To try and define what Tolstoy's 800 page epic is about sort of feels like trying to define the meaning of life, and my favourite thing about Helen Edmundson's beautiful adaptation is that it doesn't shy away from the novel's complexity.

Anna Karenina appears to be Anna's tragic love story of a woman stuck in a loveless marriage forced to choose between her son and a man who sets her world on fire. But of equal importance, essential to the story is Levin, a man searching for love and purpose. With Levin, this story is so much more. Spanning over two years of 19th Century Tsarist Russia, crossing from Moscow to St Petersburg, to the country and back via the newly established railway, the story delves deep into questions of love, life and reasons to live while highlighting the chasm between the lives of men and women. It doesn't offer answers, but asks the big questions on life and death: What is the reason to live? Why do we love? What holds us back? What keeps us going?

The characters that inhabit their worlds are full of knotty human complexity - full of contradictions, double standards, making decisions driven by emotion rather than logic. This adaptation, narrated by Anna and Levin, both haunted by a figure of death, moves in and out of consciousness and has a dreamlike quality. Asking "where are you now?" takes us to a new time, a new place, a new memory, a new dream where anything can happen and surrealism thrives.

Working with Rose Bruford's brilliant actor-musicians has given us an extra layer of expression, with the music capturing what cannot be shown or expressed in words. Anna's cello and Levin's guitar blend with Vronsky and Kitty's piano in ways that are beautiful, terrifying and surprising. Songs cut through scenes, instruments distort and seduce, and music reveals secrets and passions in and move us from noble society to the country fields with ease. All music that you see performed has been composed, arranged and rehearsed by the company over the past four weeks.

I've been astonished by the talent, dedication and hard-work shown by everyone involved in this production, including the remarkable students working on technical, design and stage management courses. If this is only the start of their careers, I can't wait to see what their futures hold.

Director Gabriella Bird

- Click on the headshots and underlined names to access student profiles -

Cast



*Music composed, curated and arranged by Actor Musicianship students

Production Team

Production

Production Manager **Olga Morisse**
Technical Manager **Alfie Turner**
Deputy Technical Manager **James Taylor**

Stage Management

Stage Manager **Jess Verri**
Deputy Stage Manager **Daniel Paget**

ASM Support from:

Maisie Mundy
George Ablewhite
Indigo Atkin
Amy Gelnar

Technical

Lighting Programmer **Alfie Turner**
Crew/Fly Operator **Amy Gelnar**

Costume

Costume Supervisor **Lizzie Tookey**
Costume Maker/Assistant/Dresser **Katie Layson**
Costume Maker/Assistant/Dresser **Kazra Welsh**
Dresser **Calina Nair**

Scenic

Ella Goodier
Abi Harrison
Ripley Richards

Intimacy Director **Robbie Taylor Hunt**

This production contains depictions of
suicide, frequent discussions of suicidal ideation, illness and death, pregnancy and childbirth,
mental illness, drug use, sex, loud sudden noises, violence, flashing lights, loud noises.
Recommended age 16*

This amateur production of *Anna Karenina* is presented by arrangement with Nick Hern Books.

Special thanks to first year Creative Lighting Control & Light in Performance MA students for helping with the LX rigging and Hampstead Theatre & Young Vic for lending us props.