

Nothing like a little light theatre to cap off an exceptional day of art in London. Well, light theatre is not what the Old Vic had in store for L and I last night. *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov is currently in repertory with *The Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare as part of **The Bridge Project** put together by Sam Mendes, director, and Kevin Spacey, Artistic Director of The Old Vic, along with Brooklyn Academy of Music and Neal Street Productions.



The large international cast includes people Americans would find familiar, such as Ethan Hawke and Rebecca Hall, as well as those familiar to Brits, such as Simon Russell Beale and Sinéad Cusack.

The script, in a new version by Tom Stoppard, is accessible and fluid. The acting is superb and top notch. The costumes, by Catherine Zuber were an absolute delight. Paul Pyant's lighting lovely. Anthony Ward's set, however, left me cold. The house at *The Cherry Orchard*, where all of the action takes place, is as much a character in the play as anyone on stage, and yet in Ward's set it is cold and distant. Why, I find myself wondering, are these people so in love with this house? I would be glad to be done with it. Oh well, write it off to the constraints of repertory, I suppose.

It was a brilliant night at the theatre, in any event, and well worth the price of admission. We had tenth row seats, which were a great vantage point.

I must mention the creative use of an "Aluminium Harp" by the musical team. This instrument is basically a selection of aluminium rods of varied length and is played by the harpist sliding their resined finger tips up and down along the length of the rods. This produces a ghostly continuous tone, used to great effect within the soundscape of the production.

Homeward after the show, stopped for a quick pint at the Lord John Russell before last call.