



DENVER CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
Theatre Company
40th Season

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



ANNA KARENINA

Illustration by Kyle Malone

ANNA KARENINA

SYNOPSIS

“All happy families resemble each other; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”
—Leo Tolstoy

1874, Imperial Russia. The young, beautiful and aristocratic Anna, married to Alexei Karenin twenty years her senior, falls passionately in love with Alexei Vronsky, a dashing military officer. They meet at a ball in St. Petersburg, and the two run away together to Italy, Anna leaving her husband and son Seryozha behind. Bored and unhappy in Italy, the two return to Russia, and ask Karenin for a divorce. He ultimately refuses them a divorce. Anna has a daughter by Vronsky, but their affair falls apart, and finally Anna finds herself an outcast from polite society, and her life ends tragically. The story also intertwines the affairs of two other families, the Oblonskys and the Levins, as their own marriages take different paths.

LEO TOLSTOY — A BIOGRAPHY

Count Lyov (also Lev) Nikolayevich Tolstoy was born September 9, 1828, in Tula Province, Russia, into an aristocratic family.

He received his primary education at home, under the tutelage of French and German tutors. In 1843, he enrolled in an Oriental languages program at the University of Kazan. His low grades forced him to transfer to an easier law program. Prone to partying to excess, Tolstoy ultimately left the university without a degree, but had begun writing an autobiographical trilogy, beginning with *Childhood*.

While a Russian soldier in the Crimean War, Tolstoy continued to write. During that time, he composed *Boyhood* (1854), the second book in his trilogy. Also during the Crimean War, he wrote *Sevastopol Tales*, in which he experimented, like James Joyce, with stream of consciousness writing.

After the Crimean War ended, Tolstoy returned to Russia. There, the burgeoning author found himself in high demand on the St. Petersburg literary scene. Stubborn and arrogant, he refused to ally himself with any



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ANNA KARENINA

By **Kevin McKeon**

Adapted from the novel by **Leo Tolstoy**

Directed by **Chris Coleman**

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particular intellectual school of thought, the usual custom of writers of the times. Declaring himself an anarchist, he went off to Paris in 1857. Although he met and was inspired by writers such as Victor Hugo, he continued to live a riotous life, gambled away all of his money and was forced to return home to Russia. Fortunately he managed to publish *Youth*, the third part of his autobiographical trilogy, in 1857.

In 1862, Tolstoy produced the first of a 12-issue installment of the journal *Yasnaya Polyana*. That same year he married a doctor's daughter, Sophia

Andreyevna Behrs. Residing with his wife and children at Yasnaya Polyana, Tolstoy spent the better part of the 1860s toiling over *War and Peace*. By 1869 the novel was finished and the public was buzzing about the novel's historical account of the Napoleonic Wars. Among the ideas extolled in the novel is that the quality and meaning of one's life is mainly derived from one's day-to-day activities.

Following the success of *War and Peace*, in 1873 Tolstoy began working on his second best known novel *Anna Karenina*. Like his previous book, it fictionalized some biographical events from Tolstoy's life, as is evident in the marriage of the characters of Kitty and Levin, based on his own marriage. The first sentence of the book is one of the most famous lines in literature. "All happy families resemble one another; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." The royalties that Tolstoy earned from the novel contributed to his rapidly growing wealth. *Anna Karenina* is based on an incident in the life of a friend, Bibikov, who lived with his mistress, Anna Progova, but who took up with his children's German governess. Anna Progova's jealousy burst all bounds and she ran away, roaming the countryside for three days, crazed with grief. Then she threw herself under a freight train at the Yesenski station in 1872. In a note, she accused Bibikov of being her murderer.

Despite the success of *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy suffered a spiritual crisis and became depressed. Struggling to discover the meaning of life, Tolstoy first joined the Russian Orthodox Church, but did not find the answers he sought there. He came to believe that Christian churches were

corrupt; rather than following organized religion, he developed his own beliefs. He decided to express those beliefs by founding a new publication called *The Mediator* in 1883. As a consequence of espousing his unconventional — and controversial — spiritual beliefs, Tolstoy was ousted by the Russian Orthodox Church, and watched by the secret police. When his new beliefs prompted his desire to give away all his money, his wife Sophia strenuously objected. This disagreement put a strain on their marriage, until Tolstoy agreed to a compromise. He conceded to granting his wife the copyrights — and presumably the royalties — to all his writings predating 1881.

During his later years, Tolstoy reaped the rewards of international acclaim. His 1886 novel, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, was another critical and popular success. Yet he still struggled to reconcile his spiritual beliefs with the tensions they created in his home life. His wife not only disagreed with his teachings; she disapproved of his dogmatic disciples, who regularly visited — and often moved in with — the Tolstoy family at the estate.

Tolstoy and Sophia's famously tempestuous and bitter marriage reached a crisis point, and only Tolstoy's daughter Alexandra, unlike his other twelve children, was sympathetic to his anarchic philosophy. Anxious to escape his increasingly resentful wife, in October 1910 Tolstoy, his daughter, Alexandra, and his physician, Dr. Dushan P. Makovitski, embarked on a vaguely-defined pilgrimage. Hoping to keep their whereabouts unknown, they traveled incognito, hoping to dodge the press, but to no avail. Unfortunately, the trip proved too arduous for the aging novelist. In November 1910, the stationmaster of a train depot in Astapovo, Russia, opened his home to the ailing writer to rest. Tolstoy died there of pneumonia and heart failure on November 20, 1910. He was buried at the family estate, Yasnaya Polyana, survived by his wife and eight children.

<http://www.biography.com/people/leo/Tolstoy-9508518>

THE CHARACTERS

Anna Arkadyevna Karenina — a beautiful young aristocrat whose pursuit of love makes her an outcast from society.

Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin — Anna's husband, twenty years her senior, a high-ranking government minister in St. Petersburg, who is bound by social convention and the importance of appearances.

Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky — a dashing military officer whose love for Anna prompts her to leave her husband. He is an idealistic loner.

Konstantin Dmitrich Levin (Kostya) — a socially awkward but kindly landowner; he is the co-protagonist of the play. Intellectual and philosophical, he patterns

his life on practical and religious ideals.

Ekaterina (Kitty) Shcherbatskaya — she is courted first by Vronsky and then by Levin.

Darya "Dolly" Shcherbatskaya — Kitty's older sister, who is betrayed by her husband Stiva, but remains in the marriage to keep the family together and to keep herself alive.

Stepan Arkadyich Oblonsky (Stiva) — Anna's brother, a hedonistic aristocrat and minor government official, whose affair with his children's governess nearly destroys his marriage.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/anna/characters>

CHARACTERS' NAMES

Anna Karenina was written after Tolstoy immersed himself in a study of Greek language: many of the characters' names have Greek roots.

Ekaterina (Kitty) stems from the Greek *katharos*, for "pure". Her husband, Konstantin Levin (Kostya) is a good husband and steady provider; his name stems from the Greek *konstantinos*, "constancy".

Karenin and Vronsky's names (*Alexei*) come from the Greek *Alexios*, "Defender"; both men are engaged in defending Russia, one in the military and one in government service. Both try, to some degree, to defend Anna's honor.

Stiva (Stephen) comes from the Greek name *Stephanos*, "crown", to suggest Stiva's popularity. *Darya's* (Dolly) name comes from the Persian *Darius* meaning "one who holds firm the good", or "gift".

Anna's name is from the Greek *Anna*, and the Hebrew *Hannah*, from the Bible's St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, a name that means "grace", a quality that defines Anna Karenina.

Because these characters are so complex and evolve in different ways,

these names only define each of them in a general way.

In Russia, names consist of a GIVEN NAME (or first name), a PATRONYMIC, and a SURNAME. It is customary in Russia to use patronymics as middle names. The patronymic is created by taking the given name of a person's father and adding a suffix to it. This suffix means "son of" or "daughter of." Thus the patronymic takes a different form for men than it does for women. Patronymics are derived from the father's given name and end with -ovich or -evich. The female patronymics end in -ovna or -evna. In Russia, the patronymic is an official part of the name, used in all official documents, and when addressing somebody both formally and among friends. Individuals are addressed by their given name followed by patronymic (e.g., "Mikhail Nikolayevich") in many situations including on formal occasions, by colleagues at work, by acquaintances, or when addressed by someone younger in age.

Knapp, Liza and Mandelher, Amy. *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

ANNA KARENINA — IS IT A LOVE STORY?

“Love is life.
All, everything
I understand,
I understand
because I love.”

Leo Tolstoy

According to Joshua Rothman in a November 23, 2012 article in *The New Yorker*, *Anna Karenina* is a warning against the myth and cult of love. Tolstoy was writing about love as a kind of fate, curse or of judgment, as a way in which the universe distributes happiness or unhappiness, unfairly and at random. These echo the issues in *War and Peace*, in which characters struggle with fate, fortune, and powerlessness in life's circumstances.

In *Anna Karenina*, love sometimes has drastic consequences. On the one hand, we read of the integrity of Kitty's and Levin's marriage, while Anna would have been better off if she had never met

Vronsky. Her infidelity is a catastrophe for not only her, but also for Vronsky and Karenin. Anna's life spirals downward, largely because of society's judgments, laws biased against women, religious prohibitions and an outdated system of arranged marriages. Tolstoy tells us that much of the evil in this world results from ignorance rather than malice. Anna makes bad choices, not because she herself is bad, but because she cannot foresee just how far-reaching the consequences of her romantic delusions and passion will be.

<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/anna-karenina-a-love-story>

TOLSTOY AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Tolstoy's mother died when he was very young; he had no clear memory of her. From his diaries we know that Tolstoy took a passionate interest in his wife's experience of motherhood; he championed maternity as the divinely ordained role of women, and gave his wife fourteen opportunities to bear children. Luckily for the success of *Anna Karenina*, his lifelong fascination with women's roles and experiences with maternity coincided with the hot button social debates of his time.

Tolstoy appears to endorse only two roles for a woman's happiness in his major fiction: marriage and motherhood (for Kitty), or disgrace and death (for Anna). Despite this, Tolstoy seemed to feel that limiting women to only two possibilities was unjust. In his Dickensian novel *Resurrection*, Tolstoy indicts a social order that creates impossible choices for women. Even in *Anna Karenina*, the reader senses Tolstoy's empathy for all the characters' difficulties, despite their frailties.

At the time Tolstoy was writing *Anna Karenina*, Russian journals were filled with the social debates of the day: slavery, sexuality, and the rights and roles of women. The last issue of Tolstoy's journal *Yasnaya Polyana*, was concerned with

the status and proper role of women in society, whether or not women should receive higher education, access to the professions, and whether they should have the right to retain legal ownership of their children or property.

At the same time, Russian bachelors were beginning to postpone marriage, due to social conditions, leaving many unmarried women like Kitty's friend Varenka with no means of livelihood other than the charity of family and friends. Marriage was a woman's only possible escape from a life of dependency, poverty or prostitution.

Yet, the reality was that marriage itself could prove impermanent, resulting in a class of divorced women living on the margins of society, like Anna living in complete social isolation. Dolly's constant struggle to feed and care for her children would have become even more desperate if she had divorced her husband for infidelity.

Perhaps in his yearnings for the mother he never knew, Tolstoy made portraits of women that haunt us to this day.

<http://www.oprah.com/bookclub/Tolstoy-and-the-women-question/all>

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ANNA KARENINA

Anna Karenina was written during the reign of Czar Alexander II, who ruled from 1855 – 1881. He ascended the Russian throne during the Crimean War of 1855. As the sovereign of the defeated country, he was forced to negotiate peace with England and France at the Treaty of Paris, a humiliation for Russia. As well, Russia had a poor agrarian society; industry was nearly non-existent; agricultural techniques were primitive, and serfdom was the basic social institution.

Alexander, determined to improve the lot of the Russian people, began a series of social reforms. He disbanded the secret police and he permitted more public expression of opinion. Journals were published that demanded that science and rationality solve social problems rather than Orthodox dogma. Other journals argued to preserve the traditions and morality of Russia's past. There was the emergence of the Intelligentsia, a new class that opposed the patriarchal rights of the landed gentry.

Czar Alexander abolished serfdom, and issued government bonds to nobles to make reparations for the peasants'

freedom and to allot to the liberated peasantry a portion of the land they had worked. In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy, (through the character of Levin) portrays the landed gentry's dilemma: the Czar has reformed the judicial system, giving the peasantry greater legal status. He establishes due process of the law and trial by jury. Communities were now able to elect administrative bodies that supervise education, public health and infrastructure. There are parallels here with the situation in the United States after the Civil War, when turmoil resulted after the abolishment of slavery, due to the social and economic problems that were created for the Southern economy.

Tolstoy, strangely, disapproved of these modernizations and blamed them for impoverishing Russia. As a nobleman by birth, he belonged to the ruling class, and kept himself aloof from the new thinking of the Intelligentsia.

Adelman, Gary. *Anna Karenina: The Bitterness of Ecstasy*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990.

TOLSTOY'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG

Tolstoy had strong personal views about the two cities where *Anna Karenina* takes place. To him, St. Petersburg, a planned city designed by Peter the Great, was shallow and artificial, resembling a modern, cultivated European city, its inhabitants pursuing hedonistic pleasures, aristocratic society, gossip, scandal and decadent family life.

Moscow on the other hand was the heart and political capital of Russia. It was

more pious, more family-oriented and had a more spiritual and intellectual life. Still, Tolstoy found Moscow less conducive to the life he envisioned for himself and his family, and so chose to live in the country.

Knapp, Liza and Mandelker, Amy. *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

THEMES IN *ANNA KARENINA*

One of the major themes in Tolstoy's novel is the changing social mores in 19th Century Russia. A battle was raging between the old patriarchal values of the landowning aristocracy and the new liberal, free-thinking class who were subscribing to radical ideas from the West. The Conservatives believed in serfdom and authoritarian government while the liberals were espousing technology, rationalism and democracy. All this confusion leads to instability in the lives of *Anna Karenina's* characters, as well as in much of the rest of the Russian population.

Tolstoy believed in the blessings of family and the comforts of domestic life, with women in the role of wife, mother, and homemaker, subservient to her husband. However, critics of his era attacked these ideas as backward and outmoded, limiting individual freedom.

Another major theme is forgiveness. Anna begs Dolly to forgive Stiva for his promiscuous behavior when she tries to help the Oblonskys in their marital difficulties. When Anna is close to death from childbirth, she begs Karenin for forgiveness for both Vronsky and herself, and he complies, agreeing to a divorce to open the way for Anna's life with Vronsky. But later when he finds how difficult divorce can be, he retracts his decision, and the divorce matter is dropped. Meanwhile, the Karenin's conservative social circle cannot forgive Anna for her transgressions.

Novels about adultery were popular in the 19th century; there was Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Emile Zola's *Therese Raquin*, and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. To Tolstoy, adultery and the deterioration of the family posed threats to the existing order. The influence of the Enlightenment, however, would alter this

conservative attitude. The Enlightenment elevated the ideal of individuality at the expense of social responsibility and blind conformity. Romanticism glamorized the outsider. Yet Anna, standing in for the social rebel, and married to an unaffectionate man twenty years her senior, ignores society's disapproval until it is too late – she falls victim to the disapproval of society, and her own heedlessness.

Tolstoy believed that marriage established a moral center for everyone. The influence of the Russian Orthodox Church taught that marriage was the sacred joining of two persons into one by God and the Church. The civil code contained a provision that alluded to a wife's "unlimited obedience" to her husband and her duty to render him pleasure and affection.¹ "Likewise, a husband was told to love his wife like his own body and improve her faults."²

Imperial Russian law did not permit divorce. Karenin's lawyer advises him that letters between Anna and Vronsky would not be sufficient evidence of adultery, but that two or three eyewitness accounts were needed. All divorce proceedings at that time were handled by an all-male diocesan authority which would probe the most intimate details of the marriage and love affair. At the time of the writing of *Anna Karenina*, the model of companionate marriage (in which couples agree not to have children and can divorce by mutual consent) was gaining acceptance, while Tolstoy clung to the meaning of sacramental marriage.

1. Knapp and Mandelker, p. 84.

2 Ibid, p. 85.

Knapp, Liza and Mandelker, Amy. *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2000.

TOLSTOY'S LATER LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY

Despite the great success of his novels, Tolstoy later dismissed *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, hailed as possibly the greatest literary works of the 20th Century, as inconsequential and the product of wrong thinking. He continued to write at a fever pace, producing short stories, essays, and articles, as well as plays and books. He read the German philosopher Schopenhauer and was staggered by what he read there, inspiring in him an even greater devotion to the idea of the injustice of property rights and the treatment of the poor.

He became a follower of Georgism, an economic philosophy holding that, while people should own the value they produce themselves, economic value derived from land (including natural resources and natural opportunities) should belong equally to all members of society. Developed from the writings of the economist and social reformer Henry George, the Georgist model seeks solutions to social and ecological problems, based on principles which attempt to integrate economic efficiency with social justice.

Tolstoy also became more convinced of the truth of the message of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, but rejected the Church and its power as a perversion of Christ's message. Like Thomas Jefferson, Tolstoy wrote an edited version on the four gospels, titled *The Gospel in Brief*. He wrote *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, a message of Christian anarchy, (a movement in political theology that claims anarchism is inherent in Christianity and the Gospels), and as a result was excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church. Mahatma Gandhi while still living in South Africa, read *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and began corresponding with Tolstoy, who encouraged Gandhi in the adherence to non-violence as a tool for social change. Gandhi acknowledged that his

own philosophy of non-violence (and vegetarianism), was inspired by Tolstoy.

Tolstoy became more convinced of the need for celibacy in life, forgoing sexual pleasure for committing to the service of others. Tolstoy's wife Sophia became increasingly unhappy with life with Tolstoy and the fact that he wanted to give away all their money, and that he maintained a community of students and acolytes to whom he paid much more attention than he did to Sophia. She was also concerned that she and her children would be left with nothing when he died, so she convinced Tolstoy to leave her the royalties to all his writings after his death.

Tolstoy was always a controversial figure, though a beloved writer, and he became more and more committed to an ascetic life, believing that Christ's core teachings - to love thy neighbor, and to turn the other cheek - were the core of Christian philosophy, and that church, government and law were all perversions of justice and truth.

Tolstoy died of pneumonia at the Astapovo train station, after a day's rail journey south from his home. The station master took Tolstoy to his apartment, and his personal doctors were called to the scene. He was given injections of morphine and camphor.

The police tried to limit access to his funeral procession, but thousands of peasants lined the streets. According to sources, Tolstoy spent the last hours of his life preaching love, non-violence, and Georgism to his fellow passengers on the train. In 1932, the name of the community and railway station of Astapovo was changed to Leo Tolstoy to honor the man.

A towering figure in world literature, a controversial figure, and by all accounts a force of nature, Tolstoy's legacy lives on today as a writer, philosopher, and social critic.

ANNA KARENINA IN FILMS

1927 — Greta Garbo as Anna and John Gilbert as Vronsky in this silent movie titled *Love*.

1935 — Garbo again as Anna and Frederic March as Vronsky. This time the film was a talkie.

1948 — French director Julien Duvivier directs Vivien Leigh as Anna, Kieron Moore as Vronsky and Ralph Richardson as Alexei Karenin.

1967 — Soviet version starring Russian actress Tatyana Samojlova in the title role.

1997 — Bernard Rose directs Sophie Marceau as Anna, Sean Bean as Vronsky, and James Fox as Karenin.

2012 — Keira Knightly as Anna teams up with director Joe Wright. Aaron Johnson co-stars as Vronsky while Jude Law is Karenin. The adaptation is by Tom Stoppard.

<http://www.indiewire.com/2012/anna-karenina-through-the-film-ages-2402911o>

STUDY QUESTIONS

Pre-Performance Questions

1. Do you consider status when falling in love? Why do different cultures place different values on love and status? What is “real love”? What is more important to you; love or status?
2. What does the following quote mean to you: “All happy families are alike. Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”

Post-Performance Questions

1. How do the scenic elements of set design, costuming, lighting, and sound help tell the story? Which are the most effective and why?
2. Describe Anna and Karenin’s marriage and family life.
3. What are the similarities and differences between the opinions on relationships, love and marriage of Anna and Karenin, Stiva and Dolly, and Levin and Kitty?
4. How do the parents of Anna fit into the story? How does their generational view differ from the younger generation?
5. How are the views about religion and worship portrayed in the story?
6. How is societal position and status portrayed in the story?
7. How would you describe Levin and his views about the economic world of Russia?
8. How would you describe the men surrounding Anna; Karenin and Vronsky?
9. How do each of the relationships between characters reflect Anna and her relationships?
10. How is love and passion portrayed in the story?
11. How is institution of marriage portrayed through the play? Why is getting a divorce difficult and what factors need to be weighed before undertaking the process?
12. How would you describe the relationship of the brothers, Nikolai and Levin? What is their part of the story?
13. How is Anna treated by the Society Women when she returns to St. Petersburg?
14. How are women treated in the Russian society? What modern parallels are resonating in today’s culture?

ACTIVITIES

Page to Stage: Adapting *Anna Karenina*

1. Start by picking a short excerpt from the novel *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. After reading the excerpt, find some key themes and character choices that you can adapt into a monologue or scene of dialogue for the stage.
2. Having paid close attention to the dialogue and action found in the excerpt, adapt what is written in the novel into theatrical dialogue or monologue.
3. After writing the first draft, have students cast their theatrical adaptations and read them aloud.
4. Discuss the differences between the novel and the theatrical adaptations. What did the playwrights do to convey the characters and plot found in the literary example? Did they have to invent, delete, or change anything to better communicate the story from page to stage? How does hearing the words spoken differ from reading the words on the page?
5. Raising the bar: Following the first theatrical adaptation, instruct the playwrights to change a point of view. What changes would have to be made to clearly show that the events found in the first draft are now being described from a different character's perspective?
6. After seeing the production, what did the adapting playwright, Kevin McKeon, modify to tell his version of Leo Tolstoy's story? What were the differences between the scenes that were written in class? Does a play adaptation limit or expand a literary work's possibilities?

Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

Perspective Writing | Monologue: Personal Narratives for Characters

1. Select an important moment from the play. This should be a moment that has more than one person in attendance. For example, the first meeting between Anna and Vronsky.
2. From this moment, the students are to pick a character from the story and to give the character's perspective and attitude of what transpired. Explanations of how they felt about this moment and what affects them should be explored.
3. Each student will write a short monologue describing the moment from the character's perspective of what they experienced.
4. Compare the monologues about the event from other characters that were involved. Discuss the similarities and differences that arose during the writing process. Was there general agreement of what happened or marked differences? Why were the moments similar or different? Were the variations subtle or obvious? Did the class agree on what was important to include and why? If not how would the elimination of some elements change the way the story would be understood when read?

Colorado Model Content Standards

Writing PG: Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic.

Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

PERSPECTIVES

Make your time at the theatre unforgettable when you join us for one of these added experiences:

Pre-Show Creative Team Perspectives

Fri, Jan 25 at 6pm | The Jones

Get an exclusive insider's perspective before the show when you join us for a free, professionally moderated discussion with the creative team.

Spanish Audio Translation

Sat, Feb 2 at 1:30pm

We are testing a new service to offer Spanish translation at this performance. Patrons may listen to a live Spanish translation using our personal Audio Description headphones. If you would like to take advantage of this service, please reserve a translation device when you book your tickets for this show. Reservation option will appear during the purchase process in a pop-up window.

Estamos probando un nuevo servicio para ofrecer traducción al español en esta presentación. Los usuarios pueden escuchar una traducción al español en vivo usando nuestros audífonos personales con descripción de audio. Si desea aprovechar este servicio, reserve un dispositivo de traducción cuando reserve sus entradas para este espectáculo. La opción de reserva aparecerá durante el proceso de compra en una ventana emergente.

Cast Perspectives

Sun, Feb 10 at 1:30pm

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors after the matinee.

Higher Education Perspectives

Wed, Feb 20 at 6:30pm

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community after the performance.

Accessible Performance

Sun, Feb 17 at 6:30pm

Before selecting seats, use the appropriate code noted below for the services you require in the Promotional Code box when purchasing online. For optimal service, call the box office at 303.893.4100.

Sign Language Interpretation: **ASL**

Audio Description: **AUDIO**

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends:

Read!

The Anna Karenina Fix: Life Lessons From Russian Literature by Viv Groskop. Let's face it, Russian literature can be heavy. Luckily, Viv Groskop does all the lifting for us in this fun and breezy self-help memoir. It's said that the answers to life's most difficult problems can be found in Russian literature because the heroes and heroines have experienced it all, from extreme suffering to indescribable joy. In each chapter of *The Anna Karenina Fix* Groskop compellingly describes a different challenge from her own life and explores a solution offered by one of the Russian greats. Groskop brilliantly uses personal anecdotes to provide quippy, modern, and accessible summaries of some of history's most famous and complicated texts in a way that will appeal to Tolstoy newbies as well as Russian literature's biggest fans.

Watch!

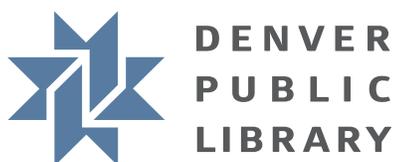
The Last Station (Sony Pictures, 2010) starring the incomparable Helen Mirren and Christopher Plummer as Sofya and Leo Tolstoy *The Last Station* tells of Tolstoy's tumultuous last year. Tolstoy had his own religion and cult of people who followed his espoused beliefs of poverty, vegetarianism and celibacy, even though he was titled and had 13 children. But nearing the end of his life he finally renounced his lavish lifestyle to live the more 'noble' Tolstoyan way of life, going so far as signing away the copyright to his works. The Countess Sofya feels a bit betrayed by this and does all in her power to maintain her family's inheritance.

Listen!

Hausfrau by Jill Alexander Essbaum. Essbaum pays homage to *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary* in this contemporary domestic noir about an unhappily married woman. Anna Benz feels bored, unfulfilled, and lonely living abroad with her husband and children. Even her therapist thinks she acts like a woman who lived 100 years ago. In an effort to counter this she chooses three new adventures, including having an affair. When that ends badly, she tries to find comfort and answers in more men as her bad choices snowball. Perfect for listening in front of a fireplace— the writing is appropriately moody and lyrical, considering the author is a poet. Listen to this compelling audiobook read by award winning narrator Mozhan Marnó.

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For those seeking the Russia of yesterday, little can match the power of music to deliver the bygone and faraway. A romanticized Russia can be found in the archived music collection hosted by the **Music Online Database by Alexander Street**. With your Denver Public Library card and an internet connection, you can take a deep dive into this curated treasury. Begin your musical exploration with the *Songs of Old Russia (LP edition)* and a draft of kvass, then let serendipity lead the way from there. You can create custom playlists, making it possible to soundtrack your own immersive Tolstoy experience. The only thing missing? A fine chicken kiev served in the dining car with the taiga slipping past the window.



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