The Diary of a Scoundrel
or Too Clever by Half

UM School of Music
Dept. of Theatre and Drama
Mendelssohn Theatre
November 20-23, 2003
The University of Michigan School of Music
Department of Theatre and Drama

presents

The Diary of a Scoundrel
or Too Clever By Half

Written by Aleksander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky
Translated by Stephen Mulrine

Director: Malcolm Tulip
Scenic Designer: Gary Decker
Costume Designer: Elisabeth Tholen
Lighting Designer: Michelle Epel Sherry
Wig Designer: Sarah A. Opstad
Assistant Director: D. Ross
Dramaturg: John Hill
Stage Manager: Erin A. Whipkey

Setting:
Act I: Glumov’s apartment in Moscow
Act II: Mamaev’s house
Act III: Turusina’s country house
Act IV, Scene 1: Krutitsky’s house
Act IV, Scene 2: Glumov’s apartment in Moscow
Act V: The garden of Turisina’s house

There will be an intermission between Act III and Act IV,
and a brief pause between Act IV, Scene 2 and Act V.

Too Clever by Half translation © Stephen Mulrine
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Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change. As a courtesy to others, please set pagers to silent mode. Cellular phones and electronic watch alarms should be turned off so they will not interrupt the performance.

The School of Music acknowledges the generosity of McKinley Associates, Inc. whose support has helped make this production possible.
Cast of Characters

Glumov, a young man .................................... J. Theo Klose
Glaufira, his mother .................................... Leigh Feldpausch
Kurchaev, a hussar ...................................... Brad Fraizer
Golutvin, a young man without a job ............ Zach Dorff
Andrei, Mamaev's servant ............................ Nathan Ciccolo
Manefa, a wealthy gentleman ....................... Brian Luskey
Manefia, a fortune-teller .............................. Kathryn Thomas
Krutitsky, an old and important person .......... Nathan Petts
Kleopatra, Mamaev's wife ............................. Erin Farrell
Masha, Turusina's niece ............................... Lauren Roberts
Turusina, a wealthy widow ......................... JoAnna Spanos
Grigory, Turusina's servant ......................... Kevin Kuczek
Gorodulin, a young and important person .. Adam H. Caplan
First Hanger-On .................................... Stephanie Sullivan
Second Hanger-On .................................. Beckah Gluckstein
Footman, Krutitsky's servant ....................... Daniel Strauss

About the Playwright

ALEKSANDER NIKOLAYEVICH OSTROVSKY (1823-86) A Russian realistic dramatist whose work takes its place beside the novels of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Turgenev, he shed light on the merchant class, an important side of Russian life those novelists left practically untouched. The son of a lawyer, Ostrovsky was familiar with mercantile society from his childhood. After a stint at the University of Moscow, he entered the civil service in 1843. His first play, A Family Affair, appeared in complete form in 1850. A mordant but true picture of commercial morals, the play aroused bitter feelings among the Moscow merchants, and was the cause of Ostrovsky's dismissal from the civil service in 1851. Despite censorship and scandal, A Family Affair established Ostrovsky's reputation as a dramatist of undoubted talent. He devoted the rest of his life to writing and wrote some 50 plays. Ostrovsky’s masterpiece, The Storm (1860), is the tragedy of a woman driven to suicide and is the basis for Janácek’s opera Katia Kabanova. Rimsky-Korsakov used his Snow Maiden (1873) as the libretto for an opera and Tchaikovsky drew upon several plays by Ostrovsky as inspiration for musical works. Other major works include Poverty is No Crime (1854), Sin and Sorrow (1863), The Diary of a Scoundrel (1868), and The Forest (1870). From 1874 until his death, Ostrovsky was the president of the Society of Russian Dramatic Authors, and in the last year of life, was appointed Artistic Director of the Moscow government theatres.

Celebrating St. Petersburg

The history of St. Petersburg is an extraordinary tale of arts transforming and arts transformed. Founded by Peter the Great 300 years ago, the glorious city redefined Russia’s idea of itself. St. Petersburg, with its architectural splendor and its magnificent public institutions, embodies the ambition of Peter’s vision to forge a new national identity. Included in the tale of St. Petersburg is its transforming power on the West. Artists of genius, inspired by St. Petersburg, infused visual arts, music, dance, and theater with a Russian flavor that fundamentally changed the face of Western and world arts. “Celebrating St. Petersburg: 300 Years of Cultural Brilliance” includes more than 60 free and ticketed cultural and educational events by the University of Michigan Museum of Art, the University Musical Society, the Center for Russian and East European Studies, the University of Michigan School of Music, and University Libraries. For complete information, visit www.umich.edu/stpetersburg.

Acknowledgments

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater productions. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

The performers in this production are undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre and Drama. The designers are faculty and undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre and Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music.
Aleksander Nikolayevich Ostrovsky was Russia's most prolific dramatist. Three of his plays are included in the national school curriculum, and in Moscow alone, productions of his dramas are part of the repertory of dozens of theaters. While Soviet generations enjoyed their Ostrovsky served up as social critic and sympathetic to the revolutionary struggle, even with all the recent changes in ideas and values in today's Russia, there is no sign that the dramatist's popularity is waning. Part of his success must be due to his brilliant, authentic dialogue: the ability to portray nuances of different economic and social groups as well as a flair for all that is most colorful and striking in spoken Russian. One of the myths about Ostrovsky, however, is that his dramatic gift does not transcend the narrow appeal to his fellow Russians. While something is lost in translation, there is much that remains in his plays to challenge people on both sides of the footlights even today, even far from Moscow. Another myth is that all of Ostrovsky's almost fifty plays are about the Moscow merchant class. The playwright did, indeed, conjure that parochial milieu that formed at the junction of nouveau-riche aspirations and salt-of-the-earth sensibility in a number of works, especially in his early period. Liberal critic Dobroliubov lionized the early Ostrovsky in seminal essays like “The Dark Kingdom,” a metaphor for the closed, tyrannical merchant world. Turgenev called Ostrovsky the “Shakespeare of the merchant class.” In the West, this conventional wisdom was challenged even less frequently than in Russia. His most famous play here, The Storm, has to do with merchants, albeit in a provincial city and not Moscow. In fact, though, the slice of life to be found in Ostrovsky's plays is wider and deeper than just the merchant layer. He wrote historical dramas, created a verse play based on folk tales of the Snow Maiden, portrayed the life of provincial actors, explored other aspects of provincial life, and penned many dramas centered in Moscow that have little or nothing to do with the merchant class, such as the satirical look at the aristocracy: The Diary of a Scoundrel.

The Diary of a Scoundrel marks a clear break in Ostrovsky's output from the genre pictures of his early career. Experiencing something of a crisis in the mid 1860s, ideas for plays about contemporary life and current social problems dried up. He tried to keep the creative fires burning by composing historical plays about the distant 17th century and writing opera libretti, as well as translating Italian comedies. At one point he even considered quitting the theater altogether. When Ostrovsky the social critic was ready to return, he found that the world of his early plays was gone for good. There had been a sea change in Russian life. The Emancipation Manifesto of 1861 was the pivot point of 19th century Russian history. Everything that came before it — from the Decembrist's hopes to transform Russia based on progressive, Western European ideas that young, aristocrat officers had soaked up in Parisian cafes in 1815 with the defeat of Napoleon, to the reaction and stagnation that followed under Nicholas I — everything was a prelude to freeing the serfs. And all that followed must equally be seen in the light of the abolition of serfdom. Masters no less than slaves had their lives turned upside down. It was a painful time for many aristocrats. While some looked back with nostalgia and hatched plans for counter-reform, others felt the way the wind was blowing and jumped onto the progressive bandwagon. Amid this uncertainty and transition, an ambitious young man could still get ahead, if he planned things carefully and ingratiated himself with the right people...
About the Artists

GARY DECKER (Scenic Designer) has designed more than 100 productions. In Michigan, he has worked at the Gem, Attic, Birmingham, Boarshard, and Purple Rose Theatres. Recent designs include the national tours of The Sunshine Boys and Same Time, Next Year. His scenic design for Fully Committed at The Century Theatre earned the Detroit Free Press 2002 Theatre Design Excellence Award. He has designed interiors or lighting for commercial projects including: The Elwood Grill (Detroit), The Fashion Cafe (New York), and The Arndale Centre (Manchester, UK). He has been a UM faculty member since 1984.

D. ROSS (Assistant Director) is a Ph.D. student in theatre studies and an instructor in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama. UM: Director: Molly Sweeney, The Possibilities; Dramaturgy: The Balcony, Compleat Female Stage Beauty, Regional Theatre: Director: Kiss Me Kate (Champaign-Urbana Theatre Co), The 1940’s Radio Hour (Station Theatre, IL), Women and Wallace (Pandora’s Players).

MICHELLE EPEL SHERRY (Lighting Designer) is a senior BFA student in design and production in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama. UM: The Rimers of Eldridge, stage manager and lighting designer; numerous dance concerts at the Media Union and Power Center; resident lighting designer: Michigan Pops Orchestra, UM Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

ELISABETH THOLEN (Costume Designer) is a fourth-year student in the BFA Design and Production program. UM: A Streetcar Named Desire; Assistant costume designer: The Cunning Little Vixen, The Grapes of Wrath; costume designer: Into the Woods, MUSKET, Waiting for Lefty, Boys Next Door, Control Freaks, Basement Arts. Regional Theatre: Pine Mountain Music Festival, assst. costume designer, L’Elisir d’Amore, Michigan Shakespeare Festival, costume designer, Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?

MALCOLM TULIP (Director) is an Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama and a graduate of L’Ecole Jacques Lecoq. UM: The Imaginary Invalid, Rimers of Eldritch, The Good Person of Szechuan, The Visit, Lysistrata. Directing Regional Theatre: Art, Elizabeth Rex, Performance Network; Iowa State Univ., created a new clown show, A Poke in the Eye. Acting Regional Theatre: Purple Rose: Charles, Blithe Spirit, NJ Shakespeare Festival: Lord Byron, Toby Belch, Shastilivtsev; MI Shakespeare Festival: Falstaff, Touchstone, Dogberry. He would like to dedicate this production to the memory of his good friend Eric Black, 1966-2003.

ERIN A. WHIPKEY (Stage Manager) is a third-year student in the BFA Design and Production program. UM: Assistant stage manager, Xerxes, Children of Eden, The Balcony; Rude Mechanicals: stage manager, The Fantasticks; Basement Arts: stage manager, Spinning into Butter; M-Gination Films: make-up designer, Ellie. Regional Theatre: UM Festival of New Works: stage manager, Broadsstakes, assistant stage manager, The Love List, Dead & Kicking; Point O’ Pines, NY: stage manager/set designer, Cats, Pippin, Famous and the Beast, Snow White, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Grease.

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