

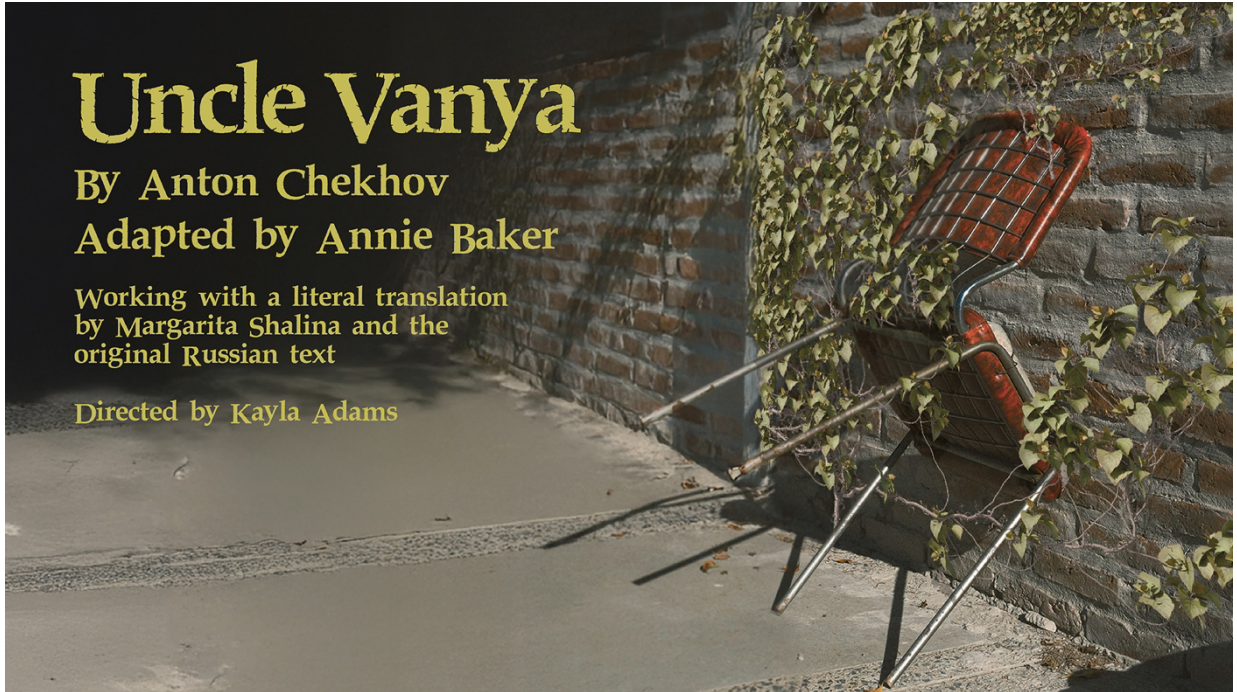
# Uncle Vanya

By Anton Chekhov

Adapted by Annie Baker

Working with a literal translation  
by Margarita Shalina and the  
original Russian text

Directed by Kayla Adams



Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact Department of Theatre Arts in advance at 319-335-2700 or [theatre@uiowa.edu](mailto:theatre@uiowa.edu).

**IOWA**

Theatre Arts

## ***Uncle Vanya***

By Anton Chekhov

Adapted by Annie Baker

Working with a literal translation by Margarita Shalina and the original Russian text

Directed by Kayla Adams

David Thayer Theatre | UI Theatre Building

Approximate run time is 2 hours, with a 10 minute intermission.

***Please be advised this play contains gunshots, theatrical haze, portrayals of suicidal ideation and attempted suicide, alcohol abuse, nonconsensual sexual touching, and smoking.***

*You know, I used to think that being a creep meant you were sick or abnormal, but lately I've come to the conclusion that we're all creeps. Everyone in the world, behaving naturally, is a complete creep.*

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Annie Baker brings her observational prowess and razor-sharp wit to an intimate adaptation of Chekhov's beloved dark comedy. Written with the "goal of creating a version that sounds to our contemporary American ears the way it sounded to Russian ears during the play's first productions in the provinces in 1898," Annie Baker's *Uncle Vanya* captures the timeless longing, absurdity, and beauty of human relationships.

### Performances:

Friday, April 17, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 18, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 19, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

Friday, April 24, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.

### **Tickets:**

Purchase your tickets in advance through Hancher Box Office by calling 319-335-1160 or online through [their website](#).

The Box Office at the Theatre Building opens one hour prior to the performance, with tickets on an as-available basis, unless the production is sold out.

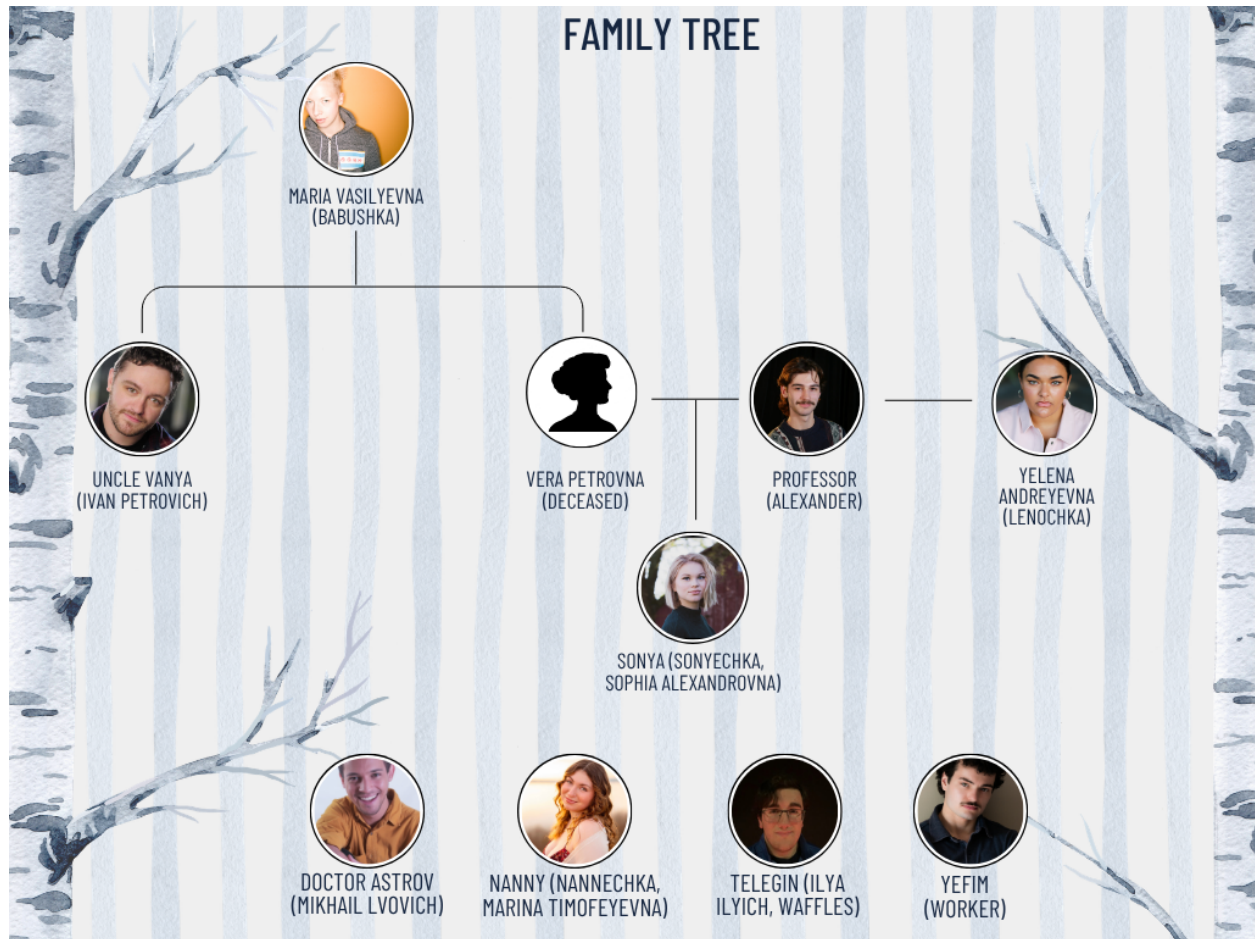
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"Uncle Vanya (Baker, trans.)" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

# Uncle Vanya – Dramaturg's Note



The family tree is organized into three generations.

At the top is Maria Vasilyevna (Babushka, grandmother).

In the middle are her two children: Uncle Vanya (Ivan Petrovich) and Vera Petrovna (deceased). Vera is married to Alexander (the Professor), who later remarries Yelena Andreyevna (Lenochka).

At the bottom is Sonya (Sonyechka, Sophia Alexandrovna), the daughter of Vera and Alexander.

Also shown alongside the family are four additional characters: Doctor Astrov (Mikhail Lvovich), Nanny (Nannechka, Marina Timofeyevna), Telegin (Ilya Ilyich, Waffles), and Yefim (a worker)

## Uncle Vanya – Meet the Cast



Telegin "Waffles" | LUCAS DE LA ROSA\*



Marina | ZOE HOFFENBERG\*

From a young age, Zoe adored all aspects of performance from playwriting to singing. She is a sophomore from Seattle, Washington and is double majoring in English & creative writing and music theatre. Most recently she played Maya in *Myocardium; Graphite* with Dreamwell Theatre, *1/2 Man 1/2 Woman* in *Side Show*, and Bob in *Earthus Terminus*. Zoe is elated to have gotten to work with such a passionate cast and crew on "such a special, special" show. She is grateful to her parents for their unwavering support, and their tolerance of her incessant singing.

\*Undergraduate student. \*\*Graduate student.

†Member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 412.

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**Sonya | JORDAN KINNEY\***

Jordan could not be more excited to be a part of *Uncle Vanya* adapted by Annie Baker at the University of Iowa. Her love for theater began in middle school. Jordan's college production credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet, Iowa City Community Theatre), *Lil G: A Gatsby Remix* (Peaches, University of Iowa), *Dance Nation* (Maeve, University of Iowa), *Indoctrination of Bananas* (University of Iowa), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Lady Montague, University of Iowa). Jordan would like to thank her family and friends for their endless support in her theater journey.



**Vanya | HUNTER MEYER\*\***

Hunter Meyer is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the MFA acting program. Recent University of Iowa credits include Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Rossa in *salt tongue*, and Tom in *Tom & Eliza*. Other favorites are Howard in *Moon Over Buffalo* at Tent Theatre, Doug in *Gruesome Playground Injuries* at the 50<sup>th</sup> Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Des Moines, and Miles in *She Kills Monsters* at Missouri State University. He is so grateful that you made your way to this production and hopes you enjoy the show!

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**Yelena | ALICIA PHILADELPHIA\*\***

Alicia is a second-year MFA acting candidate. Favorite credits include the Nurse in *Romeo & Juliet*, Katrine Stockmann in *An Enemy of the People*, Beatrice in *Sigh No More*, Elizabeth Lavenza in *Frankenstein*, Norma Valverde in *Hands on a Hardbody*, and Shrek in *Shrek the Musical*. Special thanks to her supportive and loving friends and family, as well as the entire cast and crew of this production.

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**Serebryakov "The Professor" | EPHRAM SINNWELL\***

Ephram is a third-year undergraduate at the University of Iowa studying theatre arts. He was seen recently in UI's productions of *Marie Antoinette*, *Far Away*, and *Romeo & Juliet*. Ephram is thrilled to be playing Serebryakov in *Uncle Vanya*, a character so similar to himself that he's found it difficult throughout the rehearsal process to distinguish where Ephram ends, and Serebryakov begins. I mean their shared traits are endless. Late sixties? Rheumatism and/or gout? User of an orthopedic cane? Renowned scholar and professor struggling to maintain relevance in his remaining years? Ephram's

having a hard time *not* thinking he was type cast. This show has created some serious cognitive dissonance and identity issues for him... Oh, also, Ephram would like to thank his family, friends, and community who have supported him throughout this process... though, in all honesty, it hasn't been *that* hard because, again, Ephram really is just playing himself.

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**Astrov | RAPHAEL THOMÉ\*\***

Raphael Thomé is a second-year MFA acting candidate. Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, he worked in TV shows and movies such as *Pelé – Birth of a Legend* and *The Text*, a Coca-Cola short. In 2018, he came to the United States to pursue an undergraduate degree in Film Production at Cal State Northridge. There, he got involved in stage productions and had a chance to play Tartuffe, Laertes in *Hamlet*, and direct Ionesco's *The Killing Game*. At Iowa, he was seen as Fersen in *Marie Antoniette*, Hovstad in *An Enemy of the People*, Lord Capulet in *Romeo & Juliet*, Nathaniel in *Stained Glass*, and now he is thrilled to play Astrov alongside such

passionate actors.



**Maria | LEAH URZENDOWSKI\*\***

Leah was seen on the University of Iowa stage in *Marie Antoinette*, *An Enemy of The People*, and *Romeo & Juliet*. Leah was an ensemble member of The Neo-futurists from 2011-2021. She regularly wrote, directed, and performed in *Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind* and *The Infinite Wrench*. Some performer/choreographer/devisor credits include: *Burning Bluebeard*, *Miss Neo Pageant*, *The?Unicorn?Hour?* (Neo-futurists). Choreography includes *Lord of The Flies* (Steppenwolf), *The Magic Play* (Goodman), *Ivywild* (Hypocrites), and Jeff award winner for *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Red Tape). Performer credits

include: *500 Clown Trapped*, *500 Clown Frankenstein* (500 Clown), *Hunchback* (Redmoon). Thank you for witnessing live theatre. Now, do it again.

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**Yefim | DANNY WEBER\***

Danny is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student in theatre and informatics at the University of Iowa. This will be his 3<sup>rd</sup> production with the university. He is super excited to bring this adaptation of *Uncle Vanya* to life. He thanks his family and friends for all the support throughout the years.

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# Uncle Vanya – Meet the Creative Team



## Playwright | ANTON CHEKHOV

Anton Chekhov (1860–1904) was a Russian playwright and author. He is considered to be one of the greatest writers of short fiction in history. His career as a playwright produced four classics, and his best short stories are held in high esteem. Chekhov practiced as a medical doctor throughout most of his literary career. "Medicine is my lawful wife," he once said, "and literature is my mistress."

Chekhov renounced the theatre after the reception of *The Seagull* in 1896, but the play was revived to acclaim in 1898 by Konstantin Stanislavski's Moscow Art Theatre, which subsequently also produced Chekhov's *Uncle*

*Vanya* and premiered his last two plays, *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*. These four works presented a challenge to the acting ensemble as well as to audiences, because in place of conventional action, Chekhov highlighted the depths of human nature, the hidden significance of everyday events, and the fine line between comedy and tragedy. Chekhov died of tuberculosis on July 15, 1904, in Badenweiler, Germany.

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#### Adapter | **ANNIE BAKER**

Annie Baker's full-length plays include *The Flick* (Playwrights Horizons, OBIE Award for Playwriting, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Playwrights Horizons, OBIE Award for Best New American Play, Drama Desk nomination for Best Play), *The Aliens* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, OBIE Award for Best New American Play), *Body Awareness* (Atlantic Theater Company, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Play/Emerging Playwright), and an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, for which she also designed the costumes (Soho Rep). Ms.

Baker's plays have been performed at over 100 theatres across the USA and in England, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Latvia, Sweden and Russia. She is a Residency Five playwright at Signature Theatre and a member of New Dramatists, MCC's Playwrights Coalition and EST. Recent honors include a New York Drama Critics Circle Award, a Susan Smith Blackburn Prize nomination, a Lilly Award, a Time Warner Storytelling Fellowship, a MacDowell fellowship and a Master Artist Residency at Atlantic Center for the Arts. A published anthology of her work, *The Vermont Plays*, is available from TCG books.



#### Director | **KAYLA ADAMS\*\***

Kayla is an MFA directing candidate at the University of Iowa. She holds a degree in theatre arts from Western Washington University. She is currently an ensemble member at The Artistic Home Theatre in Chicago, IL where she also teaches in their Meisner-based acting studio.

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**Fight Director | PAUL KALINA**



**Dramaturg | ANI JILAVYAN\*\***

Ani Jilavyan is from Yerevan, Armenia and graduated from the University of Iowa's MFA in literary translation. Currently she is doing her MFA in dramaturgy. She was the dramaturg for *The Words of Ants* by Xiaoyan Kang (directed by Meredith G. Healy) in the Iowa New Play Festival 2025. She also was the dramaturg for *Jellyfish Baby* by Darrin Terpstra and *How to Defend Yourself* by Liliana Padilla (both directed by Meredith G. Healy). She is thankful to Kayla for the opportunity to work on this wonderful production with an amazing team! Also, she is thankful to her family and friends for their continuous support!

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**Stage Manager | ABBIE TALKEN\***

Abbie Talken is a fourth-year undergraduate studying theatre arts with focuses on stage management and technical theatre. Past credits include assistant stage managing UI's productions of *Tom & Eliza* and *Tell Sad Stories of the Death of Queens*, as well as Cedar Rapids Opera's production of *Die Fledermaus*. She has also stage managed UI's productions of *THE (T- )RE(X)FORMATION* and *The Words of Ants*, along with Iowa City Community Theatre's production of *Inspecting Carol*. She wants to thank her friends, family, and cats for their never-ending support, as well as the cast, crew, and creative team, especially Vivian, for

making this wonderful production come to life.



**Scenic Designer | SAM RUDY\*\*†**

Sam Rudy is a first-year MFA candidate in scenic design at the University of Iowa. Before joining the MFA program, she spent the last decade working with different summer stocks, regional theatres, national tours, Feld Entertainment and is a proud member of IATSE Local 412. Iowa design credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (assistant scenic design) and *Jellyfish Baby* (scenic design). She would like to thank Jason and the design faculty for this opportunity, Rob and the scene shop for their guidance, her husband Trevor for going on this wild ride and finally her daughter Juniper who assisted more than she knows! Sam's work can be found

at [www.samrudydesigns.net](http://www.samrudydesigns.net)

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**Costume Designer | CJ JOHNSON\*\***

Cecil "Cj" Johnson is a third-year MFA candidate. This is their first time doing costumes for a mainstage, and they are very excited! Some of their past scenic credits include *How to Defend Yourself*, *An Enemy of the People*, *salt tongue*, and *American Rusalki*. They are incredibly honored to have been a part of this process, and they would like to thank everyone on the team for making this show come to life!



**Sound Designer | MOLLY COSTELLO**

Molly Costello is a sound designer and technician, a recent graduate of the University of Iowa. Currently working as a sound engineer in California, she is so excited to be back at Iowa for *Uncle Vanya*. Recent credits include *Measure for Measure* (Sound Designer, PCPA); *Quetzali and the Comic Book Queen...* (Sound Designer, PCPA); *Iowa Director's Festival 2025* (Sound Designer, University of Iowa). As always, listen with care and enjoy the show!

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**Lighting Designer | COURTNEY GASTON**

Courtney Gaston (University of Iowa MFA '20) is the Assistant Professor of Lighting/Media Design at Wesleyan University. As a lighting, scenic, and media designer, their work focuses on integrating new technologies with live performance including motion-tracking and wearable lighting technology. Their research and design work has been featured at the Prague Quadrennial, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Live Design International, and SheLA Summer Theater Festival. Recent work includes the design of a large-scale, immersive, interactive installation at Wesleyan University titled *An Oceanic Journey* and designs for new works

*Westphalia* by Helen Banner (Luna Stage, NJ), *You Must Wear a Hat* by C. Meaker (TheaterLAB, NYC), and Sunny Jain's *Love Force* (Symphony Space, NYC).



**Intimacy Director | CRISTINA GOYENECHÉ**

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**Assistant Stage Manager | VIVIAN BONDE\***

Vivian is a third-year theatre arts and communications double major. Her recent work includes stage managing *Love Pentagram* by MK Shultz and directing for Ten-Minute Play Festival. She would like to give big thanks to Abbie Talken, as well as her mentors and friends for their endless encouragement. Three down, one to go!



**Assistant Scenic Designer | JACKSON KNEFLEY\***

Jackson Knefley is a third-year at the University of Iowa on the scenic design track. This is his first time designing for a mainstage at the university. He has designed for galleries such as *Earthus Terminus* and *Stained Glass*.

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# Uncle Vanya – Meet the Crew

Position	Name
Wardrobe Crew Captain	Chloe Schwab*
Deck Crew Captain	Nicolette Mayer*
Light Board Operator	Zoe Nolte*
Q-Lab Operator	Soren Martin*
Run Crew – Wardrobe	Ro Kivett* Katelyn Trimble*
Run Crew – Deck	Zach Douglas* Nicky LoSasso*
Production Lab TA	Reed Davis**
Wardrobe Associate	Sasha Hildebrand

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