



by [BWW News Desk](#) Aug. 31, 2016

Brave New World Rep to Bring Full Production of THE PLANTATION to Governors Island

Brooklyn's acclaimed Brave New World Repertory Theatre will present the world premiere of *The Plantation*, a bold new adaptation of **Anton Chekhov's** *The Cherry Orchard* set in 1870 Virginia after emancipation and the civil war, but before the onset of Jim Crow. The fully staged, site-specific production will take place on Governors Island at the same venue used last August for an SRO staged reading. Set for four FREE performances on September 18 and 25 at 1:00 and 3:30pm, *The Plantation* was designed specifically for the Commanding Officer's House on Governors Island, migrating from locations in front, behind and inside the stunning pre-Civil War house in the historic Nolan Park section of the island.

The Plantation re-imagines Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* to tell a post-Civil War story about tectonic shifts in social status of Black and White Americans during the period the South was on its knees after the war.

Set in 1870, the year African American freedmen got the vote, Chekhov's original story is universal in its humanity and humor, says adapter/director **Claire Beckman**, co-founder of Brave New World Rep. "As re-imagined in this context, the story has important historical significance for an American audience. The Plantation seeks to explore the root causes of some of America's most pressing social issues with both humor and heart, while telling a story about Race in America."

The mission of The Plantation is to raise consciousness about the ongoing backlash against African Americans in the United States, says Beckman. "We think Chekhov's voice and the play's striking parallel help illustrate the economic factors that led to the backlash so tragically linked to race in America."

Historical parallels between Tsarist Russia and post-Civil War America abound, notes Beckman. Two years before Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, Tsar Alexander abolished serfdom. Like Lincoln, Alexander the Liberator was also assassinated. In a January 1861 letter to Fredrick Engels, Karl Marx wrote that the most important things happening in the world are "the movements of the slaves in America started by the death of **John Brown** and...the movements of the serfs in Russia."

Struck by the facts of history - that Czar Alexander the Second emancipated the serfs in 1861, two years before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and was also assassinated - BNW's **Claire Beckman** and dramaturg **Leonie Ettinger** set about adapting the play in January 2015, and Beckman independently produced a free site-specific staged reading on August 16, 2015 at the Commanding Officers house on Governors Island, to a standing room only crowd. On September 18 and 25 2016, Brooklyn's Brave New World Repertory Theatre will produce the fully staged, site-specific world premiere using the same venue on Governors Island with many of the same cast.

IF YOU GO:

The Plantation, A World Premiere Production

Presented by Brave New World Repertory Theatre

Director: **Claire Beckman**

Sunday, September 18, 1:00 and 3:30pm

Sunday, September 25, 1:00 and 3:30pm

FREE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The Commanding Officer's House on Governors Island

Ferries from Manhattan and Brooklyn - govisland.com/info/ferry

TICKETS: bravenewworldrep.org

Cast: Alice Barrett Mitchell*, Marchant Davis*, Tyler Egan, Byron Freeman, Craig A. Grant, Terri Guiteau, Tereza Hakobyan, Lauren Harkins, Alice Kors, Love Lolli, **Mike Longo**, Jakob Minevich, **John Edmond Morgan***, Michael Moss, Tasmeen Nathari, Russel Norris, Eugene Osborn Smith*, **Nick Plakias***, Caroline Ryburn*, **Nathalie Thomas**

Crew:

Director/Adaptor: **Claire Beckman**

Managing Director: **Mike Longo**

Production Stage Manager: Brittany Giles-Jones*

Stage Manager: **Norman Anthony** Small*

Associate Producer/Assistant Director: **Annie Rose** Kafer

Costume Design: Lisa Renee Jordan

Sound Design: Taylor Weinberg

Music: Roy Eaton

Choreography: Chelsea Gregory

Property Master: **Emily Dalton**

Assistant Sound Design: Harley Davidson

Dramaturg: **Leonie Ettinger**

**denotes members of Actors Equity Association*

Founded by Beckman and her husband **John Morgan** in 2003, BNW has a long history of producing site-specific plays in unique and historic venues, which have often upstaged and overshadowed the central themes of Race in America. To Kill a Mockingbird on six porches in Ditmas Park, The Great White Hope and **Lynn Nottage's** Fabulation, The Tempest's colonization of Caliban and Ariel on the boardwalk of Coney Island in 2009 (the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's arrival there), and a production of Street Scene using 5th Street in Park Slope to re-imagine the play in the Harlem Renaissance of 1929. Beckman maintains that Black stories, like Black Lives-- matter deeply to the diverse borough of Brooklyn, and stories about Race, Slavery and especially Reconstruction are American stories that need to be told in order to untangle the web of mistrust and fear on both sides of a color line. Over a century ago, W. E. B Du Bois predicted "the color line" would be the problem of the 20th century, and BNW Rep's diverse company of Brooklyn-based theatre professionals looks that problem squarely in the face in this bold, human and humorous new play about the economic root causes of racial tension at the most basic, human and domestic level.

Note: Brave New World Repertory Theatre is grateful to the Trust for Governors Island Trust for hosting BNW's performances of The Plantation at the historic Commanding Officers House.