

## Southern Daily Echo - Review

### **The Cherry Orchard, West Meon Theatre, The Thomas Lord,**

The Cherry Orchard

West Meon Theatre, The Thomas Lord,

Chekhov's melancholy comedy, performed inside a splendid marquee, with costumes (by Fran Wellby) fitting the 1904 setting, tight direction (Mary Dawson), effective music by Peter Theobald, and an excellent cast portraying the variety of family, neighbours, friends and retainers gathered in the final days of the Ranevskaya estate, doomed to be sold off, its cherry orchard flattened.

Rachel Wells gives a luminous performance as the widowed Madame Ranevskaya, admired by all but harbouring a private heartbreak from her time in Paris. Anna Gooch and Becky James as Anya and Varya reflect the sisters' contrasting characters, Varya tougher, perhaps with a harder path to follow.

Mick Keegan's sweet as the feckless brother, Peter Barber's Lopakhin powerful but with a hint of doubt. Fine comic turns from Suzanne Hall and Glynn Williams, and an impressive debut by Barry McGonagle as Yasha, who cruelly rejects Fi Beresford's likeable Dunyasha.

Ham Quentin