

This is my favorite Russian joke. If you ask a Frenchman, "What do you wish for your country," the Frenchman will say, "I wish for my country the poetry of Rimbaud, the beauty of Paris, the majesty of Napoleon." If you ask a German the same question, the German will say, "I wish for my country the greatness of Goethe, the grandeur of Wagner, the philosophical insights of Nietzsche." If you ask a Russian, "What do you wish for your country," the Russian will say, "I wish that my neighbor's cow should die!"

It's been argued that the reason Russia and its people have always felt a bit backwards in comparison with their more cosmopolitan counterparts in Paris, London and Vienna is because the Renaissance and the Enlightenment skipped them completely. Nobody came by to give them the word. This tends to be blamed on the country's vast expanses and terrible weather - destiny as defined by geography and mud.

This may explain why Russia, be it Tsarist, Soviet, or Putinesque, has such a wobbly respect for good government, civic standards and the law, and why the west has always looked down its nose at Russia. You can bring up Dostoevsky, Chekhov and The Nutcracker as much as you like, but it all gets trumped by Mrs. Khrushchev's style-sense.

Why then is The Government Inspector - surely one of the most à la Russe examples of Russia's culture - such a universal play? In one sense, it's the classic case of a very original and specific idea - a hapless nobody is mistaken for a powerful government official by a group of corrupt, small town officials. But it's also because its characters are so recognizable to any person in any country in any age who has attended a city council meeting, met a contractor, or had an inflated opinion of himself.

I first encountered The Government Inspector in college, in 1977. I played the Judge and knew at the first read through 30 years ago that in The Government Inspector, Gogol had come up with one of the great, original comic situations - on a level with Volpone, Tartuffe, The Importance of Being Earnest and The Odd Couple. When I became a playwright and started to do adaptations, I often wished I could get a crack at The Government Inspector, so doing this new version at the Guthrie in 2008 was a kick.

Last, a question I would expect from the study guide: "Does The Government Inspector have contemporary significance?" I could answer that question with specific reference to some recent politicians and events, "but it would be wrong, that's for sure."^{*}

— Jeffrey Hatcher (With apologies to the entire Russian people. And their cows.)

^{*} Richard Nixon, telling John Dean he could come up with a million dollars to pay the Watergate burglars hush-money, and then suddenly remembering that his tape recorder was on.



THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

ADAPTED BY JEFFREY HATCHER

FROM THE PLAY BY NIKOLAI GOGOL

PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., NEW YORK

CAST: (in Alphabetical Order)

ABDULLIN	Brielle Brown
ANNA ANDREYEVNA	Erika Gallo
BOBCHINSKY	Robert M. Leija
CHERNAEYEV	Randy Lynn
CORPORAL'S WIDOW	Allisa Johnson
DOBCHINSKY	Ora Cevallos
DOCTOR	John Paul Woda
GRUSHA	Samantha Bradley
HLESTAKOV	David Soop
HOSPITAL DIRECTOR	Whitten Helton
IMPERIAL MESSENGER	Trey Davis
INNKEEPER'S WIFE	Britt Leone
JUDGE	Zac Reynolds
LOCKSMITH'S WIFE	Anna Midkiff
MARYA	Adriana Lopez
MAYOR	Christopher DeLuca
OSIP	Connor Dillon
PENTELAEYEV	Trey Davis
POSTMASTER	Ryan Beene
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL	Bryan Mittelstadt
SVETSUNOV	Matthew Schultz
WAITRESS	Brielle Brown
CONSTABLE	Luke Nelson
CONSTABLE	Samuel Ross

CREWS

TEXT ANALYSIS & DRAMATURGY
STAGE & HOUSE MANAGEMENT
SCENERY & RIGGING

Ora Cevallos, *David Soop
Christopher DeLuca, *Selina Ramirez, Peyton Webster
*Taylor Gardner, Samantha Bradley, Trey Davis,
Connor Dillon, Sarah Flores, Whitten Helton,
Jordan Morales, Zac Reynolds

LIGHTING, SOUND, & AV

*Timothy Gapinski, Brielle Brown,
Adriana Lopez, Shanice Phillips

PROPERTIES & SCENIC ART
COSTUME & MAKEUP

*Taylor Gardner, John Paul Woda, Hannah Schmidt
Jasmine Hernandez, Randy Lynn, Anna Midkiff
*Tyler Salinas, Tabatha Steakley

MARKETING & ARTS MANAGEMENT

Ryan Beene, *Erika Gallo,
Allisa Johnson, Bryan Mittelstadt

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Caroline Jordan, Robert M. Leija, *Luke Nelson,

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Professor Scott Spidell
Professor Shannon Ivey
Shelly Chance
Selina Ramirez
Timothy Gapinski
Sarah Flores
Hannah Schmidt
Taylor Gardner

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