

LA JOLLA LIGHT

ENLIGHTENING LA JOLLA SINCE 1913

WoW! It's Back! 'Without Walls' theater festival returns to La Jolla Playhouse, Oct. 9-11

by Lonnie Burstein Hewitt / *La Jolla Light*



Chekhov's 'The Three Sisters' will be staged on an off-campus tennis court by local theater group The Trip. *Courtesy of State Library of New South Wales*

... There will also be in-site-ful offerings from local theaters, like Ion, Moxie and Sledgehammer, as well as The Trip, an alt-theater company known for putting a wildly contemporary spin on classic plays. At the first WoW Fest, they re-imagined Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" as a backyard BBQ. This time, they're staging Chekhov's "The Three Sisters" on a tennis court at The Scripps Research Institute on North Torrey Pines, a free shuttle-ride from Festival Village.

Tom Dugdale, The Trip's co-founder, director, play-adaptor and composer, is an award-winning UC San Diego grad now teaching directing at Texas State University; he brought his troupe there to work on the show. How did he come up with the idea of Chekhov on the court?

"Tennis is very specific to San Diego and La Jolla; it captures the idea of leisure, and it's such a fierce, well-behaved contest, with competitors expending huge amounts of energy, but always with a net they can't cross," he said. "I thought that was like the Three Sisters and their rivalries — fierce, but always with a veneer. They're a protected, privileged group of people, living in a protected zone — like the tennis court."

Will the actors actually play tennis? "Some," Dugdale said. "We've been working on our game!"

There will also be live music, and more comic riffs than Chekhov ever imagined. "It's a heavy piece," Dugdale said, "but we're mining it for its comic potential." They'll have an extended run, through Oct. 18.