

CHEKHOV X 4

New Recommended

It's taken the classical theater Antaeus Company over a decade to find a permanent home, where it launches this quartet of the Good Doctor's one-acts ("The Proposal," "The Bear," "The Anniversary" and "Swan Song"), all in new translations (by Nicholas Saunders and Frank Dwyer) with a different director (respectively, Sabin Epstein, Stephanie Shroyer, Michael Michetti and Andy Robinson). Chekhov's love of vaudeville streaks across the tiny stage in an evening brimming as much with humor as with reverence. Chekhov's humor, however, comes from the Urals, not the Catskills, and there's a subtle difference. On this bill, the directors who grasp that distinction give us entertainments that are transcendently funny while the others, well, fall off the mountain, revealing just how deceptively slippery Chekhov's landscape can be. Antaeus Company at the NewPlace Theater Center, 4900 Vineland Ave., N. Hlywd.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 7 p.m.; thru March 21. (818) 506-5436. See Theater feature in two weeks. **Written 02/26/2004** (Steven Leigh Morris)