



T H E A T E R

Not-Ready-for-Prime-Time Chekhov

■ **THE WOOD DEMON.** BY ANTON CHEKHOV. TRANSLATED BY FRANK DWYER AND NICHOLAS SAUNDERS. DIRECTED BY FRANK DWYER. SET AND LIGHTING DESIGN BY D. MARTYN BOOKWALTER. SOUND DESIGN BY JON GOTTLIEB. COSTUMES BY HOLLY POE DURBIN. MUSIC COMPOSED BY THEO SAUNDERS. MARK TAPER FORUM/MUSIC CENTER, 135 N. GRAND AVE. (213) 365-3500. TUE.-SAT. AT 8 P.M., SUN. AT 7:30 P.M., SAT.-SUN. AT 2:30 P.M. CLOSES MAY 22.

By Paul Birchall

"It turns out to be boring, and there's nothing more boring than a boring play," lamented Anton Chekhov after the first production of his four-act 1889 "romantic comedy," *The Wood Demon*. Allowing the play to be staged only once during his lifetime, Chekhov clearly detested it, although he subsequently pilaged the piece for other purposes. Many of *The Wood Demon's* best elements subsequently appeared, in a far subtler and more mature form, in his *Uncle Vanya*.

The Antaeus Theater Company has resurrected the drama (presumably causing Chekhov to whirl in his grave like the

