

MY CHEKHOV LIGHT

BLURB

". . . Oh, Martin, where has it all gone? My life, my youth, my loves, my artistry, my joy."

In a University Studio theatre, a television star returns to give his alma mater a large donation for a new theatre, and confronts his former mentor— the now embittered, desparate and betrayed lighting designer, Professor Peter Paradise.

In this one-performer, theatrical star turn, and in an orgy of words and over-the-top emotions, Professor Peter Paradise lacerates himself for his failed relationships and career, berates his student for selling out, and creates a multi-media extravaganza of image, sound, and light — his “Chekhov light” — which, he’s sure, will get him to transcend all his pain — and break free from all of the “bottom-line shit down here.”

". . . an edgy theatrical play. . . an orgy of words . . . repeatedly interrupted by staccato-like sentence fragments and myriad reflections. . . One could endlessly debate the parallel to Chekhov's 'Cherry Orchard,' with its reflection on the societal end of an era and its melancholic farewell:" Frankischer Tag; Bamberg, Germany.

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT APPEARS IN
“THE BEST MEN’S MONOLOGUES
For The 21st Century

(Ed. Henry, Jaroff, Shuman; Applause Books, NYC, 2008)

PETER PARADISE

—What?!—"Bitter?" Moi? "—Insulting?" Wherever did you get that?
—Of course I'm bitter! Of course I'm insulting! I had dreams for you,
Martin; hopes for you, Martin. You were one of those rare student actors;
with talent and brains! And I knew you were going to make it and you
knew you were going to make it and when you made it—you said—you'd
pump the "obscene TV bucks"
—your phrase, not mine—back into a theatre of substance and language
and startling visions; into what I used to call—and in a phrase you would
love to hear —what I used to call, "the entertainment that confronts";
and you also said--No! Promised!
— that you would keep your stage talent sharp, even while making your
"obscene TV bucks;" and I believed you! because I needed to believe
you, because I had stopped making "entertainment that confronts" and
so—and, oh, how I do understand the five-and-dime psychology of it all—
I needed to believe it from the person I was living through; the son,
perhaps? I was depending on, perhaps? to fill out what once had been my
vision? Perhaps.
Because I could feel that whatever vision--not to mention "energy" I still
had,
was going,
 kept going,
 had gone.

But you did not keep your talent sharp, and you held onto your "obscene
TV bucks"—until now! And I know why you've come back to Bodoni
County, Martin Starr, neè Starovich—to your alma mater, Martin Starr,
neè Starovich. You're here, Martin, to talk about giving the school a large
check—a very large check, I'm told; to build a new theatre here—to tear
down this space—this very space we're in—my space—my space where
we've been programming my Chekhov-Kaleidoscope —tear it down to
build a new space, a new theatre—to be called —what?—The Martin Starr
Theatre?— Oh! Cheap shot?! You don't have that kind of an ego? Hm.

We'll see. And if I'm wrong I'll apologize. But understand! I don't want you to give your obscene bucks to this institution! So that my space can be torn down--and I intend to stop you!!!

NO! don't come down "to calm me down"—not in here, I said!—the door! —Don't open—! —the light! THE LIGHT! Blinding! I'll slip! —back in!—get back up there!

. . .yes. better. keep eyes closed. just for a second.

. . .yes.

Now I'm coming down!

—NO! Stay in there! Stay up there! —I'll MANAGE ALONE!

. . .There.

You see? I'm doing fine.

I'm coming

down fine.

I can do it without your help—

with

out

any

one's

help.

—NO, CARL! YOU, TOO! YOU STAY UP THERE!

There.

Feet on

the stage—on my stage!

. . . Good.

. . .—Now, Martin, you stay put in that observation room. I don't want you in my Chekhov light.

—But don't leave this building!

—don't you dare! Now that I've been able to get it out in the open

—this thing that's been eating at me all these years—we've got to sort it out, you and I!