

# CHILDREN OF THE SUN

Directed by Timofey Kulaybin



## TIMOFEY KULYABIN, DIRECTOR

*"A complex psychological drama, with an interweaving of conflicts within an exhausted world"*



Timofey Kulyabin

Children of the Sun is, for a variety of reasons, rarely performed in Russia today. For me, though, it is an unusually interesting drama - bright, large and complex, filled with contradictions. Obviously, the play is strongly influenced by Chekhov: his psychologism, types, problems. I am very interested in this particular dramatic tradition - and, so, my task was to make the text feel relevant to today's world.

In Gorky's play, the scientist Protasov, his sister, his wife and their friends live on a remote estate, around which a

epidemic is gradually gathering. The heroes are busy with themselves, not noticing anything around them. This is reminiscent of the world today, populated primarily by our dreams, problems and dramas and on the cusp of change. This is a very important component of Children of the Sun, which, in fact, interests me most. It's clear that for Gorky this is the main theme as the play was written literally during the first Russian revolution and on the eve of all the cataclysms of the beginning of the twentieth century. To me, this complex psychological interweaving of conflicts within an exhausted world seems not only very sharp, but also extremely recognizable - and not in a historical, retrospective sense. The sensation of this watershed moment, the millennium, the threshold, the premonition of a sharp jump is familiar to me; it lives in me as a clear and close memory.

This milestone has given rise to a huge number of apprehensions, fears, and expectations. The end of the 1990s and the upcoming 2000s was the beginning of a different revolution, a technological one that has changed and continues to change our lives. Our ideas about time and space have completely changed, and the possibilities for overcoming them are radically changing.

Pavel Protasov, the protagonist of Children of the Sun, is a scientist trying to find a formula that can transform humanity and make it better. He is a visionary, a dreamer, very similar to those visionaries who really change our world - only today they are mostly programmers, people associated with digital technologies. In general, in the 21st century, the world is no longer radically changed by politicians and financiers, but by the creators of high technologies. Steve Jobs, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are more influential than any politicians - what they do affects the lives of almost every person.

As in Gorky's original version, the characters live in an airtight world, each surrounded by their own tiny

personal space. The subject of my interest, then and my search in this case was this game with time and space, where everything, on the one hand, is individual, and on the other, pieces of a mosaic interconnected into one picture in which there is mutual deafness and mutual dependence, extraordinary sensitivity and enormous cruelty, stupidity and genius, doom and hope. It seems to me that this nonlinear, mosaic nature of conflict and drama is directly related to how the modern world is arranged, and Mr. Gorky somehow has already written all this.

## OLGA FEDYANINA, DRAMATURG

*"The future will be formed - not one that everyone expects, but one that no one can escape."*

Children of the Sun is a drama of people who are on the verge of the future. For some, it means great opportunities not to be missed. For others, it's an unpredictable dark danger, where one dreads that time is moving too quickly, and that the "moment" is about to come, after which the void will become irreversible, incurable. All these thoughts, pride, fears and ambitions converging in time and space, beget a psychosis, a point of general disruption from solid soil. And from this disruption, the future will be formed - not no one can escape. The feeling of the turn of the times, the collective breakdown of individual destinies, is the real supporting construction of the play. And I think this feeling is familiar to most of us - not from books, but from a very recent personal experience.



Olga Fedyanina

In this new production, then, we surrounded our heroes with signs and circumstances of a specific time, which in some way is the immediate past of our present. At the same time, we proceeded not from the malice of the day and not from the logic of opposition, but from the logic of conjugation, from the fact that today's circumstances should be connected with the plot and language of the original play, thanks to a single central theme.

## ABOUT STAGE RUSSIA

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## CHARACTERS



Actor Pavel Polyakov

### **Pavel Protasov**

Born in 1973 in Leningrad. At age 12 Pavel received a gold medal at the International Mathematics Olympiad. In 1988, he externally graduated from high school and entered the Institute of Information

Technology, Mechanics and Optics. In the early 1990s, he received an invitation to an internship at Stanford University. After the internship he remained in Palo Alto where he met his future wife. In 1997, Pavel's parents die in a quick succession in St. Petersburg. He brought his sister Liza, who survived the attack, from Russia. In 1999, Pavel received a university grant for the development of a cloud storage algorithm.

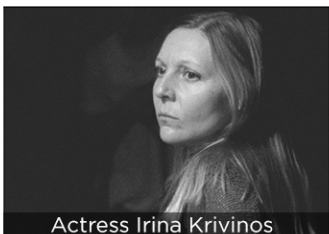


Actress Daria Emelyanova

### **Elena Protasova**

Born in 1974 in Moscow. Elena's father is a diplomat. Her Mother, a fashion designer. In the mid-1980s, the family moved to Los Angeles. Soon thereafter the parents divorced, Elena lived with her father.

She entered Stanford University in the biology department. In 1995, she was awarded the title of Miss Stanford. She received a bachelor of science degree in 1996, and in the same year married Pavel Protasov. Elena is gradually moving away from her scientific career.



Actress Irina Krivinos

### **Elizaveta Protasova**

Born in 1970 in Leningrad. In 1991, on her fourth attempt, she entered the Leningrad Institute of Theater of Music and Cinematography in the Faculty of Acting. She completed the course in 1995.

On June 11, 1996, she was on a train on the Moscow metro at the Tuskaya station, when an improvised explosive device was detonated. As a result of the attack, she suffered a permanent leg injury. In November 1996, Liza was sent to the St. Petersburg City Psychiatric Hospital No7 with a diagnosis of post-traumatic syndrome, where she remained for almost a year. After the death of her parents in 1997, Liza's brother Pavel brought her to join him and his wife Elena in Palo Alto.

### **Boris Chepurnoy**

Born in 1958 in the city of Oboyan, Kursk region. Boris graduated from high school in 1975 with a silver medal and entered the First Moscow Medical Institute named after K.M.Sechenov.



Actor Andrey Chernykh

in 1981 he became a graduate student of the institute. In 1988, as part of a bilateral US-USSR agreement, he was invited for an internship in the United States. There, Boris participated in the program "Space Without Borders", as well as in the creation of a biomedical complex for NASA. After the curtailing the program, Boris decided to stay in California and secured the position of associate professor at Stanford University of Medicine. In California, he met his half-sister Melania, the illegitimate daughter of his father.



Actress Ekaterina Zhirova

### **Melania Kirpicheva**

Born in 1977 in Yaroslavl (after her mother's brief romance with engineer Nikolai Chepurny). From the age of 4, after the death of her mother, Melania was brought up in her uncle's family, in the villages of the Yaroslavl

region, where he graduated from high school. In the early 1990s, Melania moved to Moscow and began working in an escort agency. There she started a relationship with a 70-year-old Texas multimillionaire, the owner of a network of gas stations and road restaurants, and married him and moved to California. By chance, she found her half-brother, Boris. After the death of her husband in 1998, Melania became the sole heir of his fortune and lives as she likes.

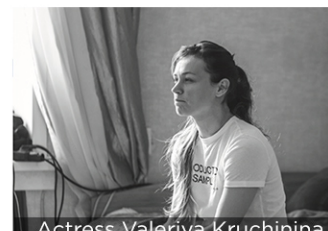


Actor Konstantin Telegin

### **Dmitry Vagin**

Born in 1964. Dmitry's real name is Dietrich Wagen. He grew up up in the GDR in a Russian-German family. In 1978, the family moved to West Berlin. After high school, Dietrich eager for

new experiences, lived in many countries, working as a waiter, a fashion model, a loader, and a fundraiser. Eventually he found himself in America and began studying at Stanford, where he met Pavel Protasov. Dmitry soon gave up studying and moved to New York and received a master's degree from the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU. He successfully worked there as a designer and fashion photographer. In the fall of 1999, he was invited to give a lecture course on contemporary art at the Stanford School of Design, where he again met Pavel Protasov and his wife Elena.



Actress Valeriya Kruchinina

### **Fima**

Born in 1974 in the city of Vyborg, Leningrad Region. Fima graduated from the Leningrad Medical School. After the death of her mother, she left for the USA in the early 1990s, joining her aunt who had previously emigrated. She found work as a cleaner on the campus of Stanford University. In the evenings Fima moonlights as a waitress in a local bar.