

# *Anna Karenina* and Lydia Yavorska in the Theater of Edwardian London

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The early years of the twentieth century were culturally profitable ones for actresses on the London stage. The arrival of the New Drama, with productions of plays by newcomers such as Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Galsworthy and Shaw, provided roles for women that went beyond the conservative norms of late-Victorian England. While the commercial theaters continued to flourish under the control of actor-managers, providing long runs of popular plays that entertained large audiences, the smaller arts theaters such as the Court and the Little Theatre encouraged experimentation and often controversial dramas. Feminist production companies such as Edith Craig's Pioneer Players staged works mainly written and produced by women with the female *matinée* audiences in mind. While not intentionally a vehicle for the suffragette movement, their plays were frequently associated with the cause and offered an alternative viewpoint to the traditional fare presented in the larger theaters of the West End. Although not universally popular, the expression of such controversial opinions in public was part of the social and political climate of the time. Women had stepped out of the roles written for them by men and onto the center of the theatrical stage.

In December 1913 a play based on an adaptation of Tolstoy's novel, *Anna Karenina* (1877) was staged at the brand new Ambassadors Theatre just off Shaftesbury Avenue by Lydiya Borisovna Yavorskaya. According to John Pollock, who was later to become the infamous Russian actress-manager's third husband, the production was the culmination of her life-long ambition (*Time's Chariot* 210).

Having left her own country four years before, Yavorska, as she was known in England, was popular in London at a time when audiences regarded Europeans such as Sarah Bernhardt from France and Eleanora Duse from Italy alongside English actresses Ellen Terry and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as the greatest female dramatic performers. Every actress with pretensions to international recognition and stardom included performances on the stages of the West End of London. It was only natural therefore that Yavorska should choose London for her greatest acting challenge. Yet who was Lydia Yavorska and what was her connection to Tolstoy and *Anna Karenina*? Furthermore, what was her place in the theater of Edwardian London?

Lidia Borisovna von Giubbenets was born in Kiev in 1869 or 1871 into a wealthy, aristocratic family.<sup>1</sup> (Sources differ, the majority citing 1871 as Yavorska's birth year.) She had been a popular actress in the theaters of Moscow and St Petersburg until the end of the nineteenth century, modeling her acting and life styles closely on her heroine, Sarah Bernhardt.

Yavorska's choice of role-model was in many ways apposite in view of her future career development. Tolstoy included references to the French actress in two of his works: directly in his short story, *The Death of Ivan Ilich* and indirectly in *Anna Karenina*. In the former, Ivan Ilich takes a box for his friends and family at the theater because Sarah Bernhardt is visiting their town. Initially believing it would be "an instructive and aesthetic pleasure for the children" he loses enthusiasm and

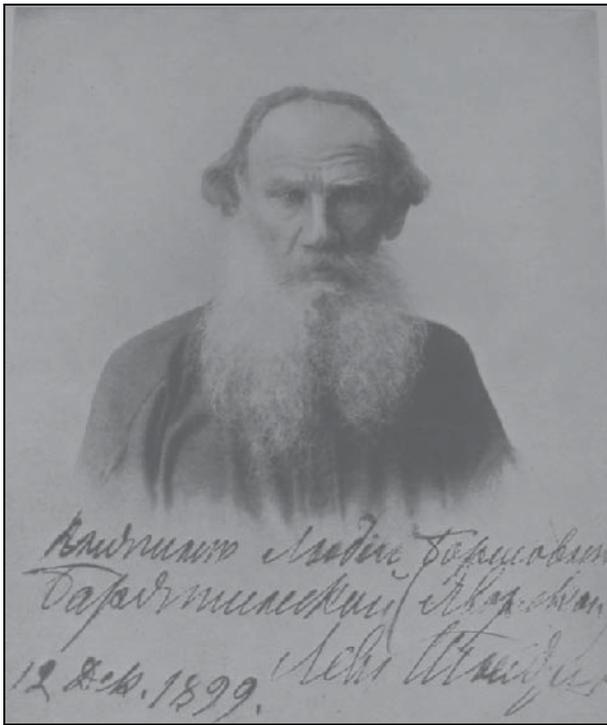


Fig. 1: The photo of Tolstoy is inscribed “To Princess Lydia Borisovna Bariatinsky, from Leo Tolstoy” and dated December 12, 1899. (Source: Program, Hundred-and-first Performance) (V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum)

the subsequent conversation is lukewarm about the talents of the actress (273–4).

In *Anna Karenina*, Vronsky’s mare in the famous horserace episode is named Frou–Frou. The unfortunate animal falls and is destroyed after the race, an event traditionally accepted as a metaphor for Vronsky and Anna’s relationship. The name Frou–Frou would have had particular significance to Tolstoy as it was the nickname of the heroine and the title of a play by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy which was a “stock item” in the theaters of Europe. The title role was one of Sarah Bernhardt’s most famous parts (Stevens 64).

Yavorska numbered both Chekhov and Tolstoy amongst her acquaintances. During the 1890s she set up a Parisian–style salon in Moscow which was visited by many of the actors, artists and writers of the day. As a vehicle for self–publicity, such a gathering was ideal. It was here that she met and subsequently enjoyed a brief affair with Anton

Chekhov. Recognizing the potential benefits of attaching herself to such a rising theatrical star, the twenty–two year old Yavorska saw a means of advancing her career and feeding her “naked ambition” (Callow 213). Her reward came when Chekhov immortalized her as the prototype for Arkadina in *The Seagull* (Miles 25).

In 1895 she married her second husband, the amateur playwright, Prince Vladimir Bariatinsky. The Prince was a frequent visitor to Tolstoy’s home and, according to John Pollock, it was while staying at Yasnaya Polyana that Bariatinsky heard the news that *The Northern Courier*, the progressive newspaper he and Yavorska had founded and edited, was being suppressed. Tolstoy himself received the telegram and broke the news to Bariatinsky (*Time’s Chariot* 207). In 1899 Tolstoy gave Yavorska an autographed photograph of himself (Fig. 1) and in 1902 he supplemented this with a volume of his works.

Yavorska’s personal relationships were fraught with difficulty and attracted extremes of emotions. Even her own husband, Prince Bariatinsky, was heard to comment that “[y]ou either adore her or you can’t bear her” (Pollock, *Time’s Chariot* 208). Her fellow actors loathed her for her self–promotion at their expense and her confusing improvisations on stage. Most Russian critics disliked her for her European mannerisms, her aristocratic and intellectual pretensions, her left–wing politics and her gross over–acting. The public loved her for her eccentricity, her unpredictability and the aura of glamour she brought to the stage (Schuler).

Her idiosyncratic and erratic behavior made her position impossible even in her own theater in St. Petersburg: It closed down in 1907. The Bariatinskys then travelled extensively throughout the Russian Empire and Europe, arriving in England in 1909. There they befriended John Pollock, the “stage–struck” son of a baronet who numbered several dramatists and actors amongst his acquaintances (James 294). Their appearance in London

coincided with the cultural love affair the English were enjoying with everything Russian (Hynes 344). In literature, Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoevsky were in vogue at various times between 1910 and 1914. Singers and balalaika groups played in the music halls, Russian post-impressionist paintings were being exhibited at the art galleries and even Russian modes of dress were becoming fashionable. The arrival of Diaghilev's Russian ballet in 1911 (with Nijinsky and Pavlova) changed English attitudes and the place of ballet forever: Prior to 1910 ballet in England was a phenomenon of the variety theaters and music halls,

a form of popular entertainment, to be fitted into a program between the cycling act and the performing dogs. No full length ballets were danced, and the dancers were more likely to be chorus girls than ballerinas. (Hynes 340)

Enthusiasm for Russian drama, however, was more ambivalent. Three of Tolstoy's plays in English translations (*The Power of Darkness* (*Власть тьмы*), *The Cause of It All* (*От ней все качества*), and *The Man Who Was Dead* (*Живой труп*)) managed only a total of five private performances in total between 1904 and 1912. The review in *The Times* of the 1904 production of *The Power of Darkness* described it as "disgusting[...] we feel after seeing it as though we ought to go into quarantine" (*Stage Society: Power* 13). The 1912 matinée performance of *The Man Who Was Dead* (translated by Pollock and including Yavorska in the cast) was "unfamiliar in form to English playgoers, to many of whom the frank childishness of Tolstoy's machinery must seem almost comically simple" (*Court Theatre* 8).

The works of Anton Chekhov fared little better. In 1911 during one of only two performances of the Adelphi Play Society's production of *The Cherry Orchard* at the Aldwych Theatre, half the audience walked out bored, indignant or simply baffled. The reviews of this first appearance of the play in England were hostile. One newspaper de-

scribed it as "queer, outlandish, even silly" (*Stage Society: Cherry* 13). While the English admired the glamour and color of Russian culture, they found the unfamiliarity of Chekhov's style and subject matter less palatable. Even as late as 1914, Chekhov's plays appealed largely to intellectuals. Despite an attempt to stage *Uncle Vanya* in 1914, it took several more decades before he became the popular dramatist he is today in England.



Fig. 4: Act I.

Vronsky: "Why are you so cruel to me?"

Anna: "Cruel?, I?" (Source: Program, Two-Hundredth Performance) (V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum)

In contrast, an English stage adaptation of Tolstoy's novel, *Resurrection* (1899) appeared for three months at His Majesty's Theatre in 1903. Although the review in *The Times* described the play as a "second-best drama" (*Resurrection* 10), a run of ninety-three performances in a West End theater indicated the success of the adaptation. This may in

some part have been due to the star-studded cast that included Lena Ashwell, Herbert Tree and Oscar Asche or to the appropriateness of the adaptation by Henri Bataille and Michael Morton for English audiences. The critic in *The Athenaeum* commented that the play “must be regarded as a success and as one of the most stimulating and intellectual of modern dramas” (*Drama* 252).

The Bariatinskys had chosen a fortuitous time for their arrival in England which coincided with an unprecedented enthusiasm for Russian culture. Their true motives, however, had more to do with Yavorska’s unpopularity in Russia than any cultural expediency. From 1909 onwards Yavorska acted regularly on the London stage, initially performing in the Russian language with a company of her fellow countrymen. In 1910 she appeared in two one-act plays; one written by her husband at the time, Vladimir Bariatinsky, *The Career of Noblotsky*, and one by her future husband, John Pollock, *Rosamond*. During the intermission Bariatinsky enthralled the audience with “a charming little account, in first-rate English, of two visits he paid to Tolstoy for the purpose of getting an article from him for his paper [*The Northern Courier*]” (*Little Theatre* 13). As her English improved, Yavorska gathered together her own company of English players although her parts were restricted to non-British plays because of her strong foreign accent, something she strove to eradicate with coaching.

Writing in 1919, Miriam Franc in her doctoral thesis for the University of Pennsylvania observed that “[Yavorska’s] strange, fierce type of acting made her a theatrical sensation” (97). Franc’s contemporary study of the actress provides a particularly valuable viewpoint, coming as it does from a female academic, in an age when such women were an exception. A theater reviewer in *The Academy* said of Yavorska’s performance as Nora Helmer in Ibsen’s *The Doll’s House* (1879): “Her fire, her passion, the wonderfully rapid and convincing changes of her expression, her quick, lithe move-

ments, make a sensation to which we are hardly accustomed in this country” (*Doll’s House* 298).

The Russian princess adapted well to English life and gathered a full circle of friends and acquaintances around her. Unlike her husband, however, she loved socializing and her success gave her confidence to stage a dramatization of *Anna Karenina* in English and to play the title role. Why would Yavorska empathize so closely with her heroine, Anna Karenina? Perhaps because some features of her own life were akin to aspects of Anna’s story. Her liaison with Prince Bariatinsky had also scandalized the elite of St Petersburg and she was never received by her husband’s family. The prince lost his inheritance and place in society and was forced to leave his regiment. Yavorska was subjected to gossip and her reputation was damaged, although this did not affect the crowds who flocked to see her theatrical performances.

She gave the task of creating an English adaptation of *Anna Karenina* for the stage to their trusted friend, John Pollock, a well respected Russian translator and avid fan of the theater. In 1913 there were thirty-six Russian versions (all judged mediocre by Pollock) and one French translation. Although Yavorska had played the part of Anna in Russian and French adaptations, this was to be the first (and only) English version ever to be performed on the West End stage. While one attempt had been made to stage an English language adaptation in New York in 1907, this American version seems to have descended into farce. *The New York Times* reported how, on one night, an overturned lamp set fire to a table (*Small Stage* 11). During another performance, an actress stumbled and almost fell, causing much hilarity in the audience. In a later scene a Russian entered with his beard loose and “standing about an inch from his face” to which the audience “laughed itself hoarse” (*When Laughter* X2). Yavorska’s adaptation, however, was a more serious rendition and it opened on December 1, 1913 at the Ambassadors Theatre. The production ran for nearly a year and 221 perfor-

mances, transferring to the bigger Scala Theatre in April 1914. Yavorska then took the play on tour to the rest of England and to Scotland in June 1914, intending to return to London in the autumn.

During the West End run a selection of letters, purporting to come from Russians living in London, appeared in the daily newspaper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*. In these the adaptation was hailed, as “authentically Russian” in its setting and atmosphere. One letter, written by “V. Obodorsky” and reproduced as promotional material in a souvenir program, states that: “[...] the ‘atmosphere’ is Russian in every detail, and the play made me think I was back in my own country again. I know the book, but I like the play better—it is more exciting” (*Souvenir*).

Many favorable reviews and letters were repro-

duced in the brochure; closer examination, however, reveals a remarkable consistency in the praise lavished upon the production. It would perhaps not be inappropriate to speculate that the source of these letters may not have lain too far from Yavorska herself. During her time in Russia she was known to have “stimulated an artificial appetite for her performances by publishing anonymous eulogies to herself in various St. Petersburg newspapers” (Schuler 138).

Pollock’s adaptation deviates significantly from Tolstoy’s original intent. While Tolstoy’s masterpiece has often been described using superlatives (“the greatest novel ever written”), Pollock’s adaptation falls short of this high standard, both structurally and aesthetically. In his attempt to condense over 800 pages of novel into an entertaining and



Fig. 2: Act I. “Impromptu dance in small salon off the ballroom at Prince Cherbatsky’s house.” (Source: Program, Hundred-and-first Performance) (V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum)

audience-pleasing three-hour stage production, many key aspects of the Russian original are abandoned.

Perhaps most importantly, the parallel strands of plot that balance Anna and Levin's dilemmas with equal levels of significance are thrown out of kilter by an over-emphasis on the more graphic aspects of Anna's affair. In doing so, Pollock relegates Levin's search to define his own identity and understanding of faith to a pretty "will she or won't she" courtship of Kitty. Although it would be easy to condemn Pollock for his one-dimensional approach to the novel, it is a strategy adopted repeatedly by subsequent scriptwriters as an obvious means of shortening and simplifying the text. While the early film version starring Greta Garbo as Anna only allows Levin a thirty-second appearance (Jahn 70), the 1937 stage production at the Moscow Art Theatre relies on the "Anna-Karenin-Vronskij triangle, excluding all other narrative lines" (Muza 469). A similar treatment was given in the 1948 film version starring Vivien Leigh.

With this in mind it is perhaps understandable that such characters as Levin's brothers, Madame Stahl and Varenka are omitted from the play. More surprising, however, is the omission of Vronsky's mother, who is mentioned but does not appear. Similarly, Anna and Vronsky's relationship remains childless, thus releasing an entire strand of emotional involvement from the plot. Indeed, the censor's letter that accompanied the original play script submitted for licensing prior to performance, indicated that there was "needless insistence upon the heroine's refusal to have children by her lover-in speeches ...which should be omitted" (Bendall). The inference that Anna's character was using contraceptives would have been regarded as scandalous at the time, thus all reference to avoidance of child-bearing were excluded in order to satisfy the Lord Chamberlain's office. Despite the adaptation's shortcomings, however, the success of the play may be measured by its popularity with audiences who continued to fill the auditorium at

evening and matinée performances for over six months. Independent reviews—not generated by Yavorska herself—were less favorable. *The Times* described Pollock's adaptation as "a gallant attempt" at an "emotional and lachrymose play" (*Anna* 12); *The Athenaeum* commented that "the memory of Tolstoy's work overshadows the stage, and the actors, like unhappy ghosts, echo words which in their mouths sound meaningless." The reviewer stated that "the plot moves in jerks from act to act, and the sympathy of the spectators is never gained" (*Dramatic Gossip* 667). *The Sketch* was equally uncomplimentary, describing the production as "Tolstoy translated into very ordinary melodrama[...] a very uninspired play" (*Things New* xxvi).

Drawing-room dramas were extremely popular in late-Victorian and Edwardian London and Pollock utilized this model for his adaptation. Every scene is enacted either in a drawing-room or a location which could easily be interpreted as one (Fig. 2). Even the horse racing scene in act two takes place in an elegantly furnished box overlooking the racecourse. The spectators are dressed in silks and morning suits more in keeping for a party than a sporting event (Fig. 3). The only outdoor scene is the final one which takes place in a well-furnished garden.

Closer analysis of the Pollock adaptation shows that this version follows the genre of the French well-made play (*la pièce bien faite*) which the English adopted and popularized in the nineteenth century. The invention of the well-made play has been attributed to Eugène Scribe during the first half of the nineteenth century. In England its greatest proponent was Oscar Wilde who embraced the technique enthusiastically in plays such as *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *The Ideal Husband*. The term, well-made play has subsequently become derogative, implying a lack of imagination and repetition of plot.

The following examples demonstrate some of the structures and codes (see Cardwell) apparent in

the Edwardian stage production of *Anna Karenina*, although the list is far from exhaustive.

In Pollock's adaptation, Anna and Vronsky's affair is underway by the time the curtain rises (Fig. 4). Unlike the novel, in which their relationship develops gradually, Anna and Vronsky are already passionately in love by the time they have their first public encounter at the Cherbatskys' [Shcherbatskys'] ball. The first scene of the play thus opens *in media res*, suggesting Pollock's assumption that his audience was already familiar with Tolstoy's novel. The foreshortening of this most important element of the plot is characteristic of a well-made play, in that significant events always take place before the curtain rises.

Another common feature is the use of an early exposition that explains the events that have gone

before. The opening scene of the play finds Prince and Princess Cherbatsky discussing their daughter Kitty's marital prospects. Count Vronsky is viewed with favor; Constantine Levin with distaste. Within a few moments this conversation is replaced by one between Oblonsky and Levin discussing the former's serial adultery. These exchanges, taking place before the arrival of Vronsky and then Anna, lay the foundation for the two key sub-plots of the story. It is not unusual for such scene-setting to last for the first quarter of a well-made play (Cardwell 878); the entire first act of Pollock's four-act version fulfils this expository function.

Kitty's refusal of Levin's proposal, rapidly followed in turn by her own rejection by Vronsky, foregrounds events to come. These actions conform to the code that an event or events occur near



Fig. 3: Act II, scene 1. "The Karenin's (sic) box in the Grand Stand at the steeplechases where Vronsky's mare, "Frou-Frou," breaks her back." (Source: Program, Hundred-and-first Performance) (V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum)

the beginning that precipitates a crisis in an already unstable situation. The first act ends with Kitty overhearing the passionate declarations of love between Anna and Vronsky. The curtain falls on a desolate Kitty who “shrinks back against the door and is left forlorn” (Pollock, *Anna Karenina* 21).

Subsequently, the linear progress of the play, according to the formula of a “well-made play,” should be moved forward by causally related events. Pollock skillfully utilizes a conversation between Vronsky and his friend Serpenhovsky [Serpukhovsky], which appears less than half way through the novel, as a prelude and instigator of Anna’s suicide in the final scene. While the conversation in the book is a relatively mild diatribe concerning the stumbling block women present to a man’s career, its transition towards the end of the final act presents a different perspective. Anna’s eavesdropping on the men’s discussion fills her with horror as Vronsky fails to defend her to her satisfaction and a quarrel results.

Anna: (*fiercely*) Why didn’t you answer him, stand up to him, hit him?

Vronsky: (*after a pause of astonishment*) Anna!

Anna: How dared he say that to you?

Vronsky: To think that you could descend to that! You-eavesdropping!

Anna: And you, how dared you let him? That’s how you defend my honor!

Vronsky: The honor of a woman who listens to a private conversation. Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?

Anna: I don’t care. No, no, no! I’d do anything, I’d listen anywhere! There’s only one thing that matters—for you and me—to know if we love each other. The rest is nothing. I love you, and I don’t mind anything, if you haven’t changed towards me. Why don’t you look at me? (Act IV 7)

Thus the wheels are set in motion for Anna’s leap under a train that follows shortly after.

Almost every well-made play includes letters or documents falling into the wrong hands as a significant ploy within the evolution of the plot. While Karenin’s motives for demanding Vronsky’s love letters to Anna are clear in the novel—he believes them to be required as evidence for a divorce—their discovery may be seen as a structural code in Pollock’s play.

Anna: (*jumping up*) What do you want?

Karenin: Your lover’s letters.

Anna: (*in front of the desk*) They’re not there. (*He forces her aside, opens the desk, and seizes on a bundle of letters.*) Ah! (*She tries to take them back*)

Karenin: Ha! Yes. Sit down. I want to speak to you. (*He takes her wrist and forces her into a chair*) (Act II 3)

The letters are not referred to again and their relevance to the drama is questionable.

The technique of the “near-solution” is employed to tantalize the audience and stimulate excitement that “all will be alright in the end.” Here, Karenin agrees with her brother to release Anna if she consents not to annoy him or try to see her son again. On the point of signing the papers, Anna arrives and accidentally meets her son who has run away to his uncle’s house in an attempt to see her. Karenin believes that Anna intended the meeting to take place and so changes his mind about the divorce. It is a foreshadowing of the final resolution.

Sub-plots are essential to the well-made play and, while Pollock’s play employs far fewer than Tolstoy in his novel, they are present. As already mentioned, Levin’s story was relegated to a sub-plot for the purposes of dramatic expediency on the stage in 1913. Similarly, the play refers tantalizingly to Oblonsky’s serial adultery and its impact upon his family, but fails to explore their ramifications. Such treatment might be indicative of the double standards of English attitudes to adultery in comparison to Tolstoy’s more feminist approach. While

Tolstoy chose to foreground male adultery and explored the obvious disparities between the way men and women were punished for their actions, Pollock concentrated on Anna's "crime." In doing so he accentuated the seriousness of her anti-social behavior.

Finally, a climactic ending, just before the curtain falls, is crucial to a well-made play. Usually this should be a happy ending but even Pollock would not have been brave enough to alter Tolstoy's original story. Anna's suicide occurs as the curtain falls in Pollock's play. Unlike the 1937 stage production at the Moscow Art Theater and later cinematic versions which utilized the dramatic impact of the train crushing Anna's body, Pollock's treatment is more subtle. Anna's suicide takes place, out of sight, on a railway line at the bottom of her garden. The stage is set with a summer house, table and chairs—a far cry from the busy railway station of Tolstoy's intent and more in keeping with Chekhov's naturalist settings. The stage directions indicate:

*The bell rings more insistently, and the train can be heard moving. As the red glow of the fire on the steam is seen moving across the stage, Anna rushes up to the back, crying. She passes through the gate on to the line and is lost to view. A shriek is heard; sudden voices calling; with a roar and a clank the train is stopped.*

While, perhaps unintentionally, presenting a metaphor of the intrusion of modern technology into the pastoral idyll, Pollock's motives for changing the location were probably pragmatic. Substituting the ugliness of a busy railway station with the prettiness of a summer garden pandered to the expectations and tastes of English audiences. It may only be a coincidence that Pollock echoed Tolstoy's own treatment of the railway's destructive intrusion into Russian life.

Tolstoy's novel continues for a further fifty pages beyond the fatal leap and Anna's final words imply an end of life is an act of revenge. "There, into the very middle, and I shall punish him and

escape from everybody and from myself!" (757). Pollock's play, in contrast, ends with Anna's cry from the heart, "I must go, I must—the only way—my shame, Sergius' dishonor, my death will pay for everything! Alexis will regret me then, he'll cry for me, he'll love me!" (Act IV 18). The suicide is unambiguous and is Anna's final attempt to immortalize Vronsky's love for her.

While the well-made play was not a uniquely English genre, the use of upper-class characters was a peculiarly British feature of Edwardian drama. Pollock ignored all elements of the novel that did not pertain to the aristocracy or upper classes, except for the infrequent servant employed as adjuncts or occasionally to make a modest exposition of the plot. Ironically, it is Annonshka, Anna's maid that has the final word of the play.

Annonshka: (*running in from the right*) My dove! Anna! Anna!

*The Curtain falls.*

Having taken the play on tour in June 1914, Yavorska was never to return for the anticipated recommencement in London in the autumn. In August, the majority of managers agreed to close their theaters for the duration of the war and she set off to join her husband in St Petersburg, where he had returned in late 1913. Ironically, due to the demands of the dedicated London playgoers, most of the theaters reopened within weeks.

A further blow awaited Yavorska in Russia: Her husband refused to see her and had instigated divorce proceedings. Her indignation and sorrow were tragic. She stayed in Russia for the greater part of the war and throughout the Revolution, only returning to England in 1919 and marrying John Pollock in 1920 (Pollock, *Time's Chariot* 212). Her final appearance on the West End stage took place in March 1921 in a special matinee to raise funds for the British refugees from Bolshevik Russia. She died less than six months later, as her obituary in the Times states, "from her privations under Bolshevism" (*Death* 8). These final words, almost

certainly suggested by her devoted husband, John Pollock, served to perpetuate the myth of Lydia Yavorska. A theater critic in *The World* newspaper, writing in May 1914 of the *Anna Karenina* production, inadvertently summarized her life:

Whenever this accomplished actress undertakes a part her dominating personality absorbs the whole attention of the audience, to the exclusion of everyone else. The cast of *Anna Karenina* is weak, but in the presence of Mme. Yavorsky (sic) no players would have had any chance with the audience, even if they had been the pick of the profession. (The Man in the Stalls 754)

The popularity of the stage production of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* in Edwardian London may, in no small measure, be attributed to Yavorska's unquestionable talent for self-promotion. This, combined with the expertise of John Pollock to adapt a peculiarly Russian novel into a stage play eminently suitable for English tastes, secured the production's success.

### Notes

The *Journal* thanks V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum for the use of the images that appear in this article.

1. John Pollock states in his memoirs that Yavorska's father, General Boris von Guibbenet was a descendant of the French Huguenots, the Hubigny de la Motte-les-Rouvrais; his ancestors emigrating from France at the end of the eighteenth century. Yavorska claimed that they received titles of nobility in Austria from Emperor Joseph II on their journey to Russia and on arrival from Emperor Alexander I. Her mother came from a wealthy German family (Pollock, *Time's Chariot* 207). Such claims contributed to the self-promotion for which Yavorska was notorious and may be viewed with some skepticism.

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