

The Good Doctor, Connaught Theatre, Worthing, Friday, October 3 First published Monday 6 October 2014 in [The Critic](#) by [Louise Schweitzer](#)

Chekhov proves that human nature alone is a story teller's richest resource. Nothing is more effective than the good doctor's beady focus on our absurdity, poignance or desperation: our hopes, desires, sneezes or our teeth.

Playwright Neil Simon's dramatisation of 12 episodes highlight the great Russian writer's lighter side - there are moments of pure farce and surreal comedy as well as a Pythonesque command of dazzling invective. The short scenes require players of extraordinary versatility who must switch in seconds between manic dentists, street walkers, school teachers, bickering war veterans and – in a nice touch – auditioning actors for an actual Chekhov play.

The Conn Artists Theatre Company do it more than justice with a great deal of bounce and sparkle, singing and dancing around a minimal set with a handful of props. Peter Faulkner has rare comic gifts, nicely sparring with the beatifically daft performances of Isaac Finch: Chrysanthe Grech was a superb penny pinching mistress, while Helen Louise Parker and Neil James became everyone else instantly with enormous charm.

Peter Link wrote the music which Michael Wooldridge performed and Ross Muir directed. "I've robbed my friends," Chekhov confessed, "and I've had a wonderful time." We did too.