**Anton Chekhov**

My favourite writer is Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. In my opinion, he is the greatest Russian dramatist and short-story writer. I'm never tired of reading and rereading his plays and humorous stories. Chekhov was born in 1860 in Taganrog. In 1879 he went to Moscow, where he studied medicine. Though he practiced little as a doctor in his lifetime, he was prouder of his medical knowledge than of his writing talent. While in college, Chekhov wrote humorous sketches for comic papers to support his family. He collected the best ones into a volume, Motley Stories, in 1886. The book attracted the attention of the publisher of the Novoje Vremja, Russia's largest paper, and Chekhov was asked to contribute stories regularly.

Chekhov, as an established writer, was able to develop a style of his own. Though he never gave up writing comic stories, he began working in a more serious vein. In 1887 Ivanov, his first play, established Chekhov as a dramatist. From then on, he concentrated on writing plays, as well as short stories. Chekhov was seriously ill. He had tuberculosis and knew what it meant. By 1892 his health was s6 bad that he was afraid to spend another winter in Moscow. He bought a small estate near a village Melikhovo, 50 miles from Moscow. He spent 5 years there, and those were happy years in spite of the illness. He wrote some of his best stories there, including Ward No.6, several well-known one-act comedies and two of his serious dramatic masterpieces, The Seagull and Uncle Vаnуа. The Seagull was first staged in the Alexandrinsky Theatre in Petersburg. It was a complete failure because of the dull and clumsy production. It was a cruel blow to Chekhov. However, the play was successfully performed as the first production of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898. From then on, Chekhov was closely connected with this theatre and with its founder, K.S. Stanislavsky. In 1901 he married an Art Theatre actress, Olga Knipper, who acted in his play The Three Sisters the same year. Chekhov's health went from bad to worse and he had to spend the remaining years in the Crimea and other health spas. The Cherry Orchard, Ms last play, was produced in 1904. Soon after the first night Chekhov died. He was 44. several generations of writers both in Russia and abroad studied and imitated Chekhov to perfect their own literary style. Chekhov had an immense influence on the 20th century drama.