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The University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, Department of Theatre & Drama presents

Our Town

By Thornton Wilder

Director Jerald Schwiebert
Scenic Designer Gary Decker
Costume Designer Christianne Myers
Lighting Designer Andrés Holder
Choir Master Ken Sieloff
Assistant Director Roman Micevic
Stage Manager Michelle Bryan

Setting:
The entire play takes place in Grovers Corners, NH.
Act I — Daily Life
Act II — Love and Marriage
Act III — Life and Death

Our Town will be performed with two intermissions

Our Town is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc., New York City.

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change. As a courtesy to others, please set pagers to silent mode and refrain from texting during the performance. Cellular phones and electronic watch alarms should be turned off so as not to interrupt the performance. Photography, audio recording and videotaping of any kind are not permitted due to copyright restrictions. Flash photography endangers performers by causing momentary blindness.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Stage Manager .............................................................................................................. Joey Richter
Doctor Gibbs ............................................................................................................... Paul Koch
Joe/Si Crowell .......................................................................................................... Nick Skardarasy
Howie Newsome ......................................................................................................... Josh Berkowitz
Mrs. Gibbs ................................................................................................................ Laura Lapidus
Mrs. Webb ................................................................................................................ Bridget Gabbe
George Gibbs ............................................................................................................ Casey Hanley
Rebecca Gibbs ............................................................................................................ Shannon Eagen
Wally Webb .............................................................................................................. Derek Joseph Tran
Emily Webb ............................................................................................................... Carrie Fisk
Professor Willard ..................................................................................................... Max Artsis
Mr. Webb .................................................................................................................... John Samela
Simon Stimson .......................................................................................................... Myles Mershman
Mrs. Soames ............................................................................................................. Tedra Millan
Constable Warren ..................................................................................................... Seon Britton
Assistant Stage Managers .......................................................................................... Jeffery Freelon, David Kaplinsky, Brian Rosenthal, Matt Socha
Sam Craig .................................................................................................................. Jordan Rochelson
Joe Stoddard .............................................................................................................. Jesse Peri
People of the Town .................................................................................................... Emma Donson, April Moreau, Allison Stock, Brittany Uomoleale

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

THORNTON WILDER (Playwright, 1897-1975) was an accomplished novelist and playwright whose works explore the connection between the commonplace and the cosmic dimensions of human experience. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1928 for The Bridge of San Luis Rey, the second of his seven novels, and received the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for Our Town (1938) and The Skin of Our Teeth (1943). His hit play The Matchmaker (1954) was adapted as the musical Hello, Dolly! and he enjoyed enormous success as a teacher, lecturer, translator and adaptor, actor and librettist. His screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock’s Shadow of a Doubt (1943) remains a classic psycho-thriller to this day. Wilder’s many honors include the Gold Medal for Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the National Book Committee’s Medal for Literature.

— Biography courtesy Barrow Street Theatre
— Portrait of Mr. Wilder as Mr. Antrobus in The Skin of Your Teeth in 1948
Photo by Carl Van Vechten, Library of Congress Van Vechten Collection
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

In the fall of 2009 my youngest, my daughter, left my home to go to college and in so doing closed a chapter in my and my wife’s life. In my office there is a picture of my directing mentor Alan Schneider and Thornton Wilder aboard an ocean liner bound for Europe.

Alan is gone and now in a different way also is my daughter. It was in this context that I began my preparation to direct Our Town.

Wilder found solace in these cycles of life, from the basement of time, to the Greeks, to now and to the eternal. For Wilder, there is something human that endures, and it is found in the little passages of existence. As Mrs. Gibbs says to Emily, “take the least important day of your life, that will be important enough.”

The Stage Manager tells us that the play is being produced by the University of Michigan and all the actors are students in the BFA Theatre program. The characters that the students portray are not just the characters of the play but symbols of the roles we all play.

In casting the play, I decided to cast all the roles young and old with our students. If I was going to ask some of our students to play older, it seemed only fair also to ask others to play the younger roles (it is customary to use children in these roles).

You will not see young people made-up to look like old people in this production. You will see our actors playing the roles they’ve been assigned, letting their actions and the words they speak create their characters with simple truth.

Welcome to Grover’s Corners, Sutton County, New Hampshire, the United States of America, Continent of North America, Western Hemisphere, the Earth, the Solar System, the Universe, the Mind of God.

—Jerald Schwiebert

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover: “Red Chimneys”(1918). American painter Charles Demuth (1883-1935), distinguished for intimate watercolors and geometrized urban scenes, was one of the leading artists of precisionism, an American idiom of cubism in the 1920s.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater productions. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.
ABOUT THE CAST

MAX ARTSIS (Professor Willard) senior, BFA Perf., Chatsworth, CA
JOsh BERKOWItZ (Howie Newsome) junior, BFA Perf., West Bloomfield, MI
SEON BRITTON (Constable Warren) senior, BFA Perf., Southfield, MI
EMMA DONITON (Townsperson) sophomore, BFA Perf., Ossining, NY
SHANNON EAGEN (Rebecca Gibbs) first-year, BFA Perf., Southfield, MI
CARRIE FISK (Emily Webb) first-year, BFA Perf., Grosse Pointe, MI
JEFFERY FREELON (Asst. Stage Mgr.) first-year, BFA Perf., Chicago, IL
BRIDGET COYNE GABBE (Mrs. Webb) senior, BFA Perf., New York, NY
CASEY HANELEY (George Gibbs) sophomore, BFA Perf., Mill Valley, CA
DAVID KAPLINSKI (Asst. Stage Mgr.) first-year, BFA Perf., Chicago, IL
PAUL KOCH (Doctor Gibbs) junior, BFA Perf., Mill Valley, CA
LAURA LAPICTUS (Mrs. Gibbs) senior, BFA Perf., Westport, CT
MYLES MERSHMAN (Simon Stimson) sophomore, BFA Perf., Shelby Township, MI
TEDRA MILLAN (Mrs. Soames) senior, BFA Perf., Bryn Mawr, PA
APRIL MOREAU (Townsperson) sophomore, BFA Perf., Cape Coral, FL
JESSE PERI (Joe Stoddard) sophomore, BFA Perf., Stinson Beach, CA
JOEY RICHTER (Stage Manager) junior, BFA Perf., Laguna Niguel, CA
JORDAN ROKENSON (Sam Craig) sophomore, BFA Perf., Great Neck, NY
BRIAN ROSENTHAL (Asst. Stage Mgr.) junior, BFA Perf., Harrisburg, PA
JOHN SANELA (Mr. Webb) senior, BFA Perf., Winsted, CT
NICK SKARDARASY (Joel/Si Crowell) first-year, BFA Perf., Grosse Pointe Shores, MI
MATT SOCHA (Asst. Stage Mgr.) sophomore, BFA Perf., Naperville, IL
ALLISON STOCK (Townsperson) junior, BFA Perf., East Brunswick, NJ
DEREK JOSEPH TRAN (Wally Webb) first-year, BFA Perf. Temple City, CA
BRITTANY UOMOLEALE (Townsperson) first-year, BFA Perf., Westport, CT

The performers in this production are undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre & Drama. The designers are undergraduates and faculty in the Department of Theatre & Drama. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the SMTD.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MICHELLE BRYAN (Stage Manager) is a junior BFA candidate in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama studying lighting design and stage management. UM: See Rock City and Other Destinations, Pride and Prejudice (1st ASM), Carousel (ASM), Evita (ALD); Basement Arts: Baltimore Waltz (SM), Animal Farm, Baltimore Waltz (LD). Other: Interlochen Center for the Arts (Prod. Crew LD).

GARY DECKER (Scenic Designer) has designed more than 100 productions. In Michigan, he has worked at the Gem, Attic, Birmingham, Boarshead, and Purple Rose Theatres. Recent designs include the national tours of The Sunshine Boys and Same Time, Next Year. His scenic design for Fully Committed at The Century Theatre earned the Detroit Free Press 2002 Theatre Design Excellence Award. He has designed interiors or lighting for commercial projects including: The Elwood Grill in Detroit, The Fashion Cafe in New York, and The Arndale Centre in Manchester, UK. He has been a member of the Theatre Department faculty since 1984.

ANDRÉS HOLDER (Lighting Designer), a native of Panama, is a senior BFA candidate in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama studying lighting design and stage management. UM: (Re)Visionary Dances, Evita, Madmen and Specialists (SM); Stravinsky Revisited, Our Lady of 121st Street (1st ASM); The Who’s Tommy (ASM). MUSKET: Parade (Newt Lee); Basement Arts: Adventures In Mating (SM), Sunday Morning (SM). Regional Theatre: Berkshire Theatre Festival (ASM), Catch, Cinci Fringe Festival (SM), Don Giovanni, Arbor Opera Theatre (LD).

CHRISTIANNE MYERS (Costume Designer) is an Asst. Professor in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama. UM: The Marriage of Figaro, Tartuffe, Ella Minnow Pea, Rent, As You Like It, She Stoops to Conquer, The Cradle Will Rock, The Coronation of Poppea, Tartuffe, and Don Giovanni among others. Off-Broadway: Running Man, Oedipus, American Dreams: Lost & Found; Theatreworks/USA; The Public Theatre & Ma-Yi Ens.; Irondale Ens.; Lincoln Center Institute. New York: The Juilliard School. Regional Theatre: Purple Rose Theatre; Indiana Rep; Vermont Stage Co.; Clarence Brown Theatre; Syracuse Stage; Caldwell Theatre; Pine Mountain Music Festival. Other: BFA, Pace Univ.; MFA, New York Univ.

JERALD SCHWIEBERT (Director) For the opening of the UMMA, he wrote and directed the ten-minute comedy Bonsoir Françoise. He directed Line in the Arthur Miller Theatre last semester and later as an experimental multi-media event as part of Arts and Bodies arts lab in the Duderstadt. Next week, he will direct Barrio Bohème for the Syracuse Opera. As a performance coach, he is on the faculties of The Anatomy of Sound, Energize (Wind Conducting), The Conductors Retreat at Medomak, and the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris. His book on physical expression and the performing artist, which he also illustrated, will be published by the University of Michigan Press this spring. MFA Directing, UCSD.
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Production Manager ........................................ Amanda Mengden
Production Stage Manager ......................... Nancy Uffner
Technical Director (Power) ......................... Douglas Edwards
Master Carpenter (Power) ......................... Michael Braico
Carpenter (Power) ........................................ Brandon Carruth
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Charge Scenic Artist ................................... Toni Y. Auletti
Scenic Artist .................................................. Beth Sandmaier
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Asst. Properties Master ......................... Patrick Drone
Properties Artisan .................................. Michelle Bisbee
Master Electrician ................................. Mark Allen Berg
Costume Shop Manager......................... Lynn Holbrook
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First Asst. Stage Manager ................. Emily Stromberg
Asst. Stage Managers ............. Andrew Lott, Kathryn Weidmaier
Dramaturg ................................. Matthew Bouse
Asst. Lighting Designer ......................... Sarah Petty
Asst. Master Electrician ................. Laura Cohen
Scenery (Walgreen) ....................... Brittany Cooper, Kendall Dorie*,
Amélie Garcia, Elizabeth Griebel, Edward Hanlon,
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Paint .............................................. Richard Grasso, Gee Hoon Lim*, Adam McCarthy,
Alicia Moore, Carolyn Reich, Laura Riggins,
Dan Rubens, Nicholas Ward, students of Theatre 250
Props ............... Rachael Albert, Daniel Behnais, Michelle Bryan,
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