2-21-1979

Our Town
Taylor University Theatre presents

THORNTON WILDER'S

OUR TOWN

AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

February 21, 22, 23, and 24, 1979
Little Theatre
Taylor University
PROGRAM NOTES

THORNTON WILDER was born in 1897 in Madison, Wisconsin. In 1906 his father, a newspaper editor, was appointed to the Hong Kong, and subsequently the Shanghai, consulate. This Wilder spent some of his childhood in the Orient though his experiences were confined to foreign-colony schools. Eventually he returned to America and finished high school in California. He attended Oberlin College and then Yale University. He completed his B. A. in 1920. In that year Yale Literary Magazine concluded serial publication of his first full-length play THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND. After Yale, Wilder went to Rome on a fellowship and studied archaeology at the American Academy there. Upon his return in 1921 he taught French at the New Jersey preparatory school and completed his master's degree in French at Princeton University.

Wilder first achieved literary importance with the publication of a novel, THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY. The novel quickly became a best seller and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1928. Following this success Wilder and his sister toured Europe where he spent most of his time in theatres whose productions he reviewed for Theatre Arts Monthly. Wilder was particularly interested in studying "presentational" drama, with which he had already experimented in his short works and which he was to develop in his most distinguished full-length plays.

Between 1914 and 1927 Wilder wrote some forty, three minute dramatic sketches, sixteen of which he published in 1928 as THE ANGEL THAT TROUBLED THE WATERS AND OTHER PLAYS. In 1931, Wilder published a collection of one-act plays under the title THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER AND OTHER PLAYS IN ONE ACT. His growing literary reputation brought him many lecture invitations, including an appointment at the University of Chicago where he taught literature one semester a year from 1930 to 1936.

Wilder was first produced on Broadway with LUCRECE, a translation of Andre Obey's poetic play LE VIOL DE LUCRECE. Wilder's translation of Ibsen's A DOLL'S HOUSE opened on Broadway in late 1937, less than two months before his Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece OUR TOWN. His second Broadway play, THE MERCHANT OF YONKERS, was subsequently revised as THE MATCHMAKER. During the war Wilder's reputation as a dramatist grew with THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH for which he won his third Pulitzer Prize. He continued writing, lecturing and traveling but produced few important works following the novel THE IDES OF MARCH in 1948. In 1950-51 he was the Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard and published his lectures on American writers and his researches on early Spanish drama.

Wilder had a unique capacity for studying and recreating a place, any place he chose, for a story. His various works reveal him to be a great admirer of plot, although he had great interest in happenings as they reveal human values and motives. His plays are highly theatrical, experimental and eclectic (as are his novels), but the language is as homespun as the attitudes that are expressed. Such traditionalism made Wilder one of the important playwrights of his age. Thornton Wilder died in his sleep from a heart attack December 7, 1975.

OUR TOWN

Directed and Designed by Ollie Hubbard

THE CAST

(In the order of their appearance)

Stage Manager ............................ Ollie Hubbard
Dr. Gibbs .............................. Gregg Francis
Joe Crowell ............................. Jeff Wallace
Howie Newsome .......................... Ken Delp
Mrs Gibbs .................................. Paula Town
Mrs. Webb ............................... Karen Wolf
George ................................. Mark Sumney
Rebecca Gibbs ......................... Becky Hubbard
Wally Webb .............................. Mark Ringenberg
Emily Webb .............................. Edie Rader
Professor Willard ...................... "Brad Hicks"
Mr. Webb ................................ Dave Shipley
Woman in the Balcony ................ Laura Lee Binder
Man in the Auditorium ............... Quentin Nantz
Lady in the Box ......................... Jane Vanderbelt
Simon Stimson ......................... Dan Norris
Mrs. Soames ............................. Rhonda Jeter
Constable Warren .................... Mike McGinnis
Si Crowell ............................. Jeff Wallace
Baseball Players ...................... Tom Albinson
Dave Harden, Tim Johnson
Sam Craig .............................. Terry Haines
Joe Stoddard ............................ David Murray
First Dead Woman ................... Karol Svane
First Dead Man ....................... Mark Collins
Second Dead Woman ................. Cathy Breen
Second Dead Man ................... Monte Sander
Farmer McCarthy ....................... Doug Oliver
Townspersons .......................... Lynn Ann Livergood
Maureen Waldron, Joy Wilson
Stage Hands ............................ Catherine Curtis
Teresa Cress, Sue Schuneman

The play takes place in Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, 1901 - 1913.
There will be a ten-minute intermission between each act.
A Communication & Theatre Arts Department Production

MUSICAL SELECTIONS HEARD THIS EVENING

Blest Be the Tie That Binds .......... Hans G. Nageli (1773-1836)
Love Divine All Loves Excelling .... John Zundel (1815-1882)
Wedding March ....................... Felix Mendelssohn (1896-1951)

Largo ................................. George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
Wedding March from Lohengrin Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our appreciation to Dr. Frederick Shulze for providing the organ music required for this production.
PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director .......................................................... Ollie Hubbard

Set Committee .................................................................
  Harold Blum
  Brenda Conway
  Colleen Coughenour
    Ken Delp
    Rhonda Jeter
    Doug Marlow
  Kim Montgomery
  Randy Treu
  Bill Wallace

Lighting ................................................................. KEVIN CONKLIN
  Rich Bailey
  Paul Chapman
  Mary Lou Griffith
  Doug Marlow
  Bill Wallace

Sound ................................................................. BRIAN RISHAW
  Shaun Campbell
  Harold Shafer

Properties ................................................................. CATHERINE CURTIS
  Teresa Cress
  Sue Schuneman

Assistant to the Director ........................................... Debby Cox

Costumes ................................................................. Laura Lee Binder
  Bonnie Veenstra
  Debbie Watson

Make-up ................................................................. DOUG OLIVER
  DAWN GWIN
  Karen Garner
  Laurice Groenier
  Terry Haines
  Jan Harris
  Tammy Lane
  Jennifer Leonhard

House ................................................................. JOY MANDA
  Kay Brewer
  Vicki Cruse
  Elaine Hepler
  Beth Jacober
  Lori Magby
  Becky Norris
  Lori Weber

Cover Program/Design ........................................... Robert Todd

During intermission we invite you to visit the Senior art exhibits of Karen Rohde and Mary Spencer in the Chronicle-Tribune Art Gallery on the main floor.

OUR NEXT PRODUCTION

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL ........................................... April 25-28, 1979

As a courtesy to the actors, please do not use cameras during the performance.