

## *Our Town*

By Thornton Wilder  
Directed by Sean Byrd

**Sean Byrd** is a Twin Cities based actor/director/educator. He has most recently directed *String* for Yellow Tree Theatre, the world premiere of *Sam's Son* for Bucket Brigade Theatre, and *Plaid Tidings* for Lyric Arts Theatre. In 2012, he directed the world premiere of the original musical *Stay Tuned* which was written by the creators of the local smash hit *Take It With You*. Sean was recently seen as John Dodge in DalekoArts Theatre's production of *Middletown*. Other roles include the Ivey Award winning production of *The 39 Steps*, *Sylvia* (twice), and *Expecting Isabel* at Yellow Tree Theatre. Additionally, he appeared in Walking Shadow Theatre Company's production of *Compleat Female Stage Beauty* that won the Ivey Award for Production Excellence. Along with his professional work, Sean is a faculty member in the Department of Theatre at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, MN. Recent directing projects for the college include *Noises Off*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Dr. Seward's Dracula*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *All Shook Up*, *Red*, *Known But to God* (a World Premiere), *Working*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, and *Urinetown: the Musical*. Sean is also active with the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, serving the upper Mid-West region as the Vice-Chair for National Playwriting Programs – which helps young playwrights find their voices in the landscape of 21<sup>st</sup> century American Theatre. For more information, visit [www.seanwbyrd.com](http://www.seanwbyrd.com).

### **AUDITION INFORMATION**

AUDITIONS: Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM (***sign up for 5-minute slot – see below***)

CALLBACKS: Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, time TBA

***Sign up for a 5-minute time slot for the Saturday auditions. Sign up sheet is available in the Playhouse Administrative Office at the Depot or call the office for assistance at (218) 733-7555.***

- Auditions will be held at the Playhouse Conservatory  
(230 West Superior Street – entrance on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave W between Superior and Michigan St)  
***If you cannot make these auditions, contact Shad Olsen  
([solsen@duluthplayhouse.org](mailto:solsen@duluthplayhouse.org), 218-733-7555) to arrange another time.***
- Bring a picture and resume.
- The Duluth Playhouse auditions are open to all actors and actresses, including those who may be auditioning for the first time and professional or Equity actors and actresses.
- **Please read the script if you are interested in a role.** Scripts are available for rent (\$5.00 deposit for 3-day rental) at the Playhouse Administrative Office in the main lobby of the Depot. You will be asked to read from the script at the audition.

## **REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**Rehearsals** will begin April, 2018

**Performance Dates:** May 24<sup>th</sup> – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

### **SYNOPSIS**

#### **Act I: Daily Life**

The Stage Manager introduces the audience to the small town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, and the people living there as a morning begins in the year 1901. Professor Willard speaks to the audience about the history of the town. Joe Crowell delivers the paper to Doc Gibbs, Howie Newsome delivers the milk, and the Webb and Gibbs households send their children (Emily and George, respectively) off to school on this beautifully simple morning.

#### **Act II: Love and Marriage**

Three years have passed, and George and Emily prepare to wed. The day is filled with stress. Howie Newsome is delivering milk in the pouring rain while Si Crowell, younger brother of Joe, laments how George's baseball talents will be squandered. George pays an awkward visit to his soon-to-be in-laws. Here, the Stage Manager interrupts the scene and takes the audience back a year, to the end of Emily and George's junior year. Emily confronts George about his pride, and over an ice cream soda, they discuss the future and their love for each other. George resolves not to go to college, as he had planned, but to work and eventually take over his uncle's farm. In the present, George and Emily say that they are not ready to marry—George to his mother, Emily to her father—but they both calm down and happily go through with the wedding.

#### **Act III: Death and Eternity**

Nine years have passed. The Stage Manager opens the act with a lengthy monologue emphasizing eternity, bringing the audience's attention to the cemetery outside of town and the characters who have died since the wedding, including Mrs. Gibbs (pneumonia, while traveling), Wally Webb (burst appendix, while camping), Mrs. Soames, and Simon Stimson (suicide by hanging). Town undertaker Joe Stoddard is introduced, as is a young man named Sam Craig who has returned to Grover's Corners for his cousin's funeral. That cousin is Emily, who died giving birth to her and George's second child. Once the funeral ends, Emily emerges to join the dead; Mrs. Gibbs urges her to forget her life, but she refuses. Ignoring the warnings of Simon, Mrs. Soames, and Mrs. Gibbs, Emily returns to Earth to relive one day, her 12th birthday. The memory proves too painful for her, and she realizes that every moment of life should be treasured. When she asks the Stage Manager if anyone truly understands the value of life while they live it, he responds, "No. The saints and poets, maybe—they do some." Emily returns to her grave next to Mrs. Gibbs and watches impassively as George kneels weeping over her. The Stage Manager concludes the play and wishes the audience a good night.

## **CHARACTER BREAKDOWN**

### **Stage Manager** (M – 35-55) – (This role is pre-cast.)

The Stage Manager is the audience's guide and the conductor of the play's action. An omniscient narrator, the Stage Manager knows both past and future. He is a calm force, focused, sometimes funny, sometimes serious. The audience should feel safe that they are in good hands with him as their guide through the world of the play.

### **Dr. Gibbs** (M – 45-55)

"Doc" Gibbs is husband to Julia Gibbs and father to George and Rebecca. He is a stalwart member of the community, sometimes stern with his children, but also gentle and humorous. He loves his family and he loves his role as the town's doctor.

### **Joe Crowell** (M – 10-15)

The paperboy. Joe takes pride in his job and enjoys his regular interactions with the other townspeople. He is polite and courteous, a quintessential 'good boy'.

### **Howie Newsome** (M – 20-30)

The local milkman. Gregarious and likeable. Enjoys the routine of his morning deliveries and keeping up with the goings on around town. His appearances really help to point out the continuity of life in Grover's Corners.

### **Mrs. Gibbs** (F – 35-45)

Wife to Doc Gibbs and mother to George and Rebecca. A loving but no-nonsense mother. Has high expectations of her children and is fierce in her loyalty to her family. She is also a romantic, who dreams of traveling to Paris, but also realizes that everything she needs is right here in town.

### **Mrs. Webb** (F – 35-45)

Wife to Mr. Webb and mother to Emily and Wally. Like her good friend and neighbor, she is no-nonsense and chooses to hide her emotions sometimes in order to remain strong for her family. We see glimpses of her softer side from time to time, and it is obvious that she takes her role as mother very seriously.

### **George Gibbs** (M – should be able to convincingly play 16-25)

A typical teen/young adult of the period, George is upstanding, thoughtful, smart and sincere. His friendship and eventual love for and marriage to Emily are central to the narrative of the play. His desire to always do the right thing and please those around him are at the core of who he is.

### **Rebecca Gibbs** (F – 11-14)

George's younger sister. She is curious, insightful, smart and tenacious. Her relationship with her brother both annoys and delights her. She thinks the world of him. In her character, we see the potential for what all young girls can become through changing societal expectations.

**Wally Webb** (M – 11-14)

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Webb and Emily's younger brother. A typical pre-teen. A procrastinator in school. Takes great pleasure in teasing his sister.

**Emily Webb** (F – should be able to convincingly play 16-25)

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Webb and Wally's sister. Emily is a conscientious and excellent student. She likes helping others, especially George, be the best they can be. She loves her family ferociously. She loves life ferociously. The play centers on Emily's journey to a realization that life is precious and fleeting.

**Professor Willard** (M – any age)

A professor at the state university. Smart, articulate and a good representative to share the statistical data relative to the town of Grover's Corners.

**Mr. Webb** (M – 45-55)

Husband to Mrs. Webb and father to Emily and Wally. Publisher and editor of the Grover's Corners Sentinel. He is well-read, congenial, thoughtful and loves his family very much. He enjoys his life in Grover's Corners and is proud of his work.

**Simon Stimson** (M – 30-40)

While a minor character, his struggles with hidden alcoholism and depression represent many important things in the thematic fabric of the play. He is the choir master at the church, and truly wants his choir to be good. He wants to be a better man than he is, but, ultimately can't escape his demons.

**Mrs. Soames** (F – 35-45)

The town gossip who sings in the choir with Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb. She is highly energetic, almost frenetic sometimes. Her presence gives the audience a sense of other goings on in the town. She loves a good wedding.

**Constable Warren** (M – 40-50)

The local policeman and a moral compass of Grover's Corners. He is prideful, loyal and enjoys his role as 'protector' in his town.

**Si Crowell** (M – 11-14)

Joe Crowell's younger brother, who takes over the paper route in later years. He possesses the same politeness and courteousness of his older brother.

**Sam Craig** (M – 25-35)

Cousin to the Webbs. Sam returns home for Emily's funeral. He has the air of an educated 'outsider'. He left Grover's Corners years ago and his unawareness of the things that have happened in the town mirror that of the audience at the top of Act III.

**Joe Stoddard** (M – 50-60)

The town undertaker. A sensitive and compassionate man who takes his role very seriously – knowing that he has to help families do one of the hardest things that they will ever do.

# Playhouse Audition Form

Please bring this completed form with you to the audition along with a **resume** & current **photo or headshot**. The photo/headshot can be in an upper corner of the resume or attached separately.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address (Including Zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Hair Color \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a particular role in the show you are most interested in? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which role(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you accept another part if not offered any listed above? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not get a part, would you be interested in working on tech crew or backstage?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you sing, dance, play piano or have other special talents? If so, please explain level of skill:

*(Please list any musical instruments that you play and skill level)*

Do you have **ANY** conflicts with the rehearsal/performance schedule? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list ALL conflicts below (be as specific as possible to dates, times). Additional conflicts after being cast may not be accepted.**