

## OUR TOWN Audition Pack

Thanks for expressing your interest in being a part of Amerrycan Theatre's production of OUR TOWN to be performed at Theatre@41 in York.

If you would like to take part in this production please see the casting breakdown on the next page, then choose your character(s) and then look at the instructions on page 4.

Want to work behind the scenes?

In many ways, that's where the real creativity lies. Get in touch if you'd like to help with stage managing, set & lighting design, props, costumes or publicity.

<b>Rehearsals</b> will start:	Mid May
<b>Get in and Tech:</b>	Sunday, 9 July
<b>Production Dates:</b>	Tuesday, 11 July – Saturday, 15 July 2023

## About OUR TOWN

Written by Thornton Wilder

Directed by Bryan Bounds

Music Director: Sam Johnson

OUR TOWN is a mystical drama where girl meets boy, they get married and life happens. On the surface it seems very simple, but if done honestly and passionately, it will give the audience a precious gift. The character of Emily hints at it in the play: *"Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it?"* By the end of this immersive, radical, funny, heart-wrenching and uplifting play, the audience will certainly realize Life in a way they possibly hadn't.

Although it premiered in 1938 and won the Pulitzer Prize that year, in our digital age, it's even more topical, with its themes of true connection, belonging, love, loss and the crucial need to appreciate the small, seemingly insignificant but actually wondrous moments of life.

It's often played as sentimental and syrupy, but as the subversive American playwright Edward Albee said, "Our Town is one of the toughest plays ever written. Why is it always produced as hearts and flowers?" Not in this startling, magical production.

### DIRECTOR'S APPROACH

Sitting in traverse-staging, the audience will be treated by us as members of our town who are simply eavesdropping. We'll include them in confidential moments of the play and interact with them during the wedding ceremony.

Consequently the acting style will be very intimate in order for the audience to join us. This may call for a more naturalistic style than you're used to, but don't worry, there's a 'Method' to this (pun intended) and it will all feel absolutely natural.

If you are cast in Our Town you will be invited to join the Actor's Studio in Harrogate. These are drop-in sessions on Saturday afternoons which include acting exercises and scene work to prepare you for the style of the production. So if you've always wondered what Method Acting is like, this will be a chance for you to try it in a casual environment.

## Production details

- **Accents:** The characters will speak in General American accents. Bryan will give accent training.
- **Rehearsals:** will be at Stage@41, and for cast members near Harrogate at The Stable Studios at Huby (LS17 0EA, a 5-minute walk from the Weeton Train Station). Rehearsals will move to York during production week.

## Character breakdowns

- ⇒ **Characters that are available are in green font**
- ⇒ **Characters that are already cast are in red**

### THE WEBB FAMILY

- **EMILY WEBB: Age 18-24 – CAST**  
Emily is a bright, articulate, conscientious and vivacious person who shares some of her mother's anxious nature.
- **CHARLES WEBB: Age 45-55**  
Publisher and Editor of the town newspaper and the go-to expert on all things about the town (and a bit of a workaholic). He is a caring husband with a dry sense of humour. Kindly, affectionate, sympathetic, he knows how to bring Emily down to earth.
- **MYRTLE WEBB: Age 45-55**  
Hardworking, serious, slightly anxious, she's a good mother but sometimes forgets the personal touch. At first a no-nonsense woman who does not cry on the morning of her daughter's wedding, Mrs. Webb later shows her innocent and caring nature
- **WALLY WEBB: Age 10-14**  
A wilful, stubborn, lovable rebel.

### THE GIBBS FAMILY

- **GEORGE GIBBS: Age 18-24 – CAST**  
A decent, sincere, agreeable, polite, respectful and upstanding young man, but not very good at book and school learning. A loving person – but not very good at expressing those emotions – and perfectly happy to stay on the farm.
- **FRANK GIBBS: Age 45-55 – CAST**  
Loving father, kind husband, content in life, he has a selfless servant spirit, is well liked, knowledgeable and has a good way with people.

- **JULIA GIBBS: Age 45-55**

A Mother Earth character who's also a dreamer. She is the one character with a wanderlust who dreams of life beyond Grover's Corner, But she's contented with being a caring mother to her children, a supportive wife to Doc Gibbs and a steady guiding hand to Emily in the afterlife.

- **REBECCA GIBBS: Age 10-14**

Like her mother, Rebecca is a dreamer, but she also loves money. She's a business owner in the making and she has a very significant scene with her brother George at the end of Act 1.

## THE TOWNSFOLK

- **STAGE MANAGER – CAST**

Steady, even-handed, he is the host of the play and the dramatic equivalent of an omniscient narrator.

- **JOE CROWELL: Age 10-14**

The paperboy. A young entrepreneur: sharp-witted, upbeat, ambitious and opinionated. He gives the impression that he is bound for success.

- **HOWIE NEWSOME: Age 22-40 – CAST**

The local milkman, good-natured, friendly, chatty and divulges the local gossip.

- **SIMON STIMSON: Age 30-55**

The church choirmaster, whose alcoholism and undisclosed "troubles" have been the subject of gossip in Grover's Corners for quite some time. He is unhappy, unappreciated (in his eyes), embittered and oftentimes disparaging. Mr. Stimson's character hints at enormous potential as an artist that was never fulfilled in Grover's Corners, but was celebrated in New York.

- **LOUELLA SOAMES: Age 30-60**

A gossipy, curious, sociable woman who sings in the choir along with Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Gibbs. A chatterbox during the wedding, she shares her tears and her excitement directly with the audience.

- **CONSTABLE BILL WARREN: Age 50-70**

He's the local policeman with little crime to fight. But he is protective, watchful, likeable, respected and reliable as the neighbourhood watch for the parents of Grover's Corners.

- **PROFESSOR WILLARD: age 35-60**

A comic role, he's a passionate lecturer at the state university. He has one big scene but is present in the town throughout the play.

- **SAM CRAIG: (Male or female) Age 22-30**

Emily's cousin who left the town to travel west. He's an outsider, experienced and worldly. He has one scene of dialogue but present in the town throughout the play.

- **JOE STODDARD: Age 50-70**

The town undertaker: he's a reclusive but kindly watcher who conveys important information in the last act. He has one scene of dialogue but is present in the town throughout the play.

## How to audition

The casting process will be as easy as Sunday morning in Grover's Corners:

- Choose the character(s) you'd like to play.
- Go to the homepage at [www.americantheatre.com](http://www.americantheatre.com) and complete the Contact Form on the home page.
- Wait for Bryan to contact you regarding audition dates.