

The Herald reviews 'Our Town'

A triumphant plunge into unusual theatre

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer

Just as residents in Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, recall neighborhood events as integral parts of the community's history, Halton Hills residents will recall Georgetown Little Theatre's production of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" as a theatrical milestone here.

"Our Town" is a bold triumph for GLT, a company which must carefully choose material spanning a wide range of entertainment preferences. Recently, they brought Halton Hills drama buffs "Dracula" and "Bedroom Farce" as well as specials for the youngsters at Christmas. Directed by Ron Hunt, "Our Town" presented a formidable challenge to its cast over a five-night run at the Elliott Theatre; but the production underlined once again that GLT has come of age and its "amateur" status is merely a figurative term.

The actors displayed ability to adopt a theatre format considerably different to that which GLT fans are familiar. On the "Our Town" spartan stage, gope were painstakingly-painted backdrops and only a handful of props cluttered the floor.

And then there was this timeless gentleman who ambled to the front of the stage, chewing leisurely on his pipe and rocking on his heels, amiably chatting with the audience while setting the tone of the play.

The "stage manager" played by Ron Hill paints with words the missing backdrop and whisks his 1980s audience back to the years between 1904 and 1914.

Using his pipe as a pointer, this stage sage takes his

audience, at the beginning of the play, on a guided tour down the Main Street of Grover's Corners, jabbing at the location of the post office and the town hall, the milkman and the



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newsboy on his paper route. It's the crack of dawn, and the 5:10 train from Boston has pulled into the station, just as it has done for years.

STORY LINE
"Our Town" has no elaborate story line to develop and conclude in a period of two or three hours, but by focusing on the efficient machinery of smalltown life, Wilder's message has enormous scope; man is an unimportant speck in the

universe; He's overly caught up in his material well-being, and without being "biblical" about his point, the playwright seems to be telling us that we pay too little attention to our spiritual awareness.

Natural, in tale about small-town life without an exciting plot and only a dreamy young love interest as a focus, there's an enormous demand on the talents of the cast to make do with the rudimentary tools at hand.

The stage manager, after convincing us that our urban mentality comes from the same sort of roots found in thousands of small towns in the world, invites us to cling to the love interest thread unraveling as the maturing Emily Webb (Melissa Bell) and George Gibbs (Rod Cook) start paying special attention to each other.

Without getting actively involved with the plot, the stage manager pushes events through time, eventually the pair marry, and four years later, Emily dies.

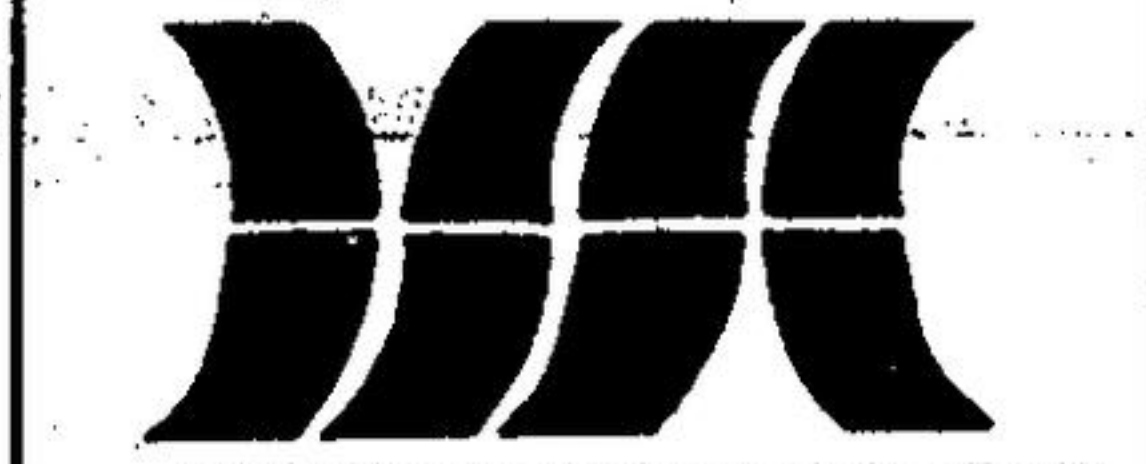
MOST TALENT
It's during the graveyard scene that Miss Bell's talents shine. She has the most difficult role in the play, requiring the most talent, tying together Wilder's cerebral ideas which have developed throughout the course of the play.

As a spiritual figure uncon-

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Stratford '82

The mail has brought us a sign of spring. Signs of spring are always welcome, especially this year. The harbinger of spring that landed in our mailbox was the brochure announcing the 30th anniversary season of the Stratford Festival. Our first thought was, "Impossible, it can't be 30 years since that first performance of Richard III in a tent." But yes - it is so.



Our research tells us that it was 1953, when Tom Patterson convinced Tyrone Guthrie to become involved in what Guthrie called "A pioneering venture of a gallant and unselfish kind." Guthrie recruited Tanya Moiseiwitch to design the stage and Alec Guinness and Irene Worth to be the two leading actors of the first season.

Enough of history - what has Stratford to offer this year? Something for everyone: at the Festival Theatre Len Cariou stars in "The Tempest" and "Julius Caesar", as well as co-starring with Brian Bedford in Shaw's "Arms and the Man". Douglas Campbell will be a formidable Falstaff in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and for four performances only, "A Musical Theatre Piece", by Stanley Silverman and Tina Howe, featuring Len Cariou and The Primavera Quartet.

At the Avon Theatre June 7 to Aug. 1 a familiar friend, Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado". It will be joined in July by the Canadian premier of "Translations" by Brian Friel. In August, "Mary Stuart" by Friedrich Schiller stars Pat Galloway and Margot Dione. September brings that delightful romp, "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward starring Brian Bedford, who also directs the production, and from Broadway, Tammy Grimes.

The Third Stage presents "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "All's Well that Ends Well" featuring "Shakespeare 3" a new acting company of four senior actors and 12 newcomers to the classical stage.

Also on the Third Stage, two virtuoso performances: Nicholas Pennell in "A Variable Passion", a humorous and often moving examination of passion as seen through the eyes of such diverse writers as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Woody Allen and many others.

Lewis Gordon in "Damien", the story of Father Damien, the young Belgian priest, who dedicated his life to helping the lepers and who himself contracted the disease and died in 1889.

The Festival is not devoted to theatre alone. Music is not neglected. There will be concerts by Oscar Peterson, Roberts Fleck, Kris Kristofferson and many more. For full information regarding plays and concerts, contact the Stratford Festival, P.O. Box 520, Stratford, Ont. N5A 6V2.

The Stratford Festival has a world-wide reputation for excellence and is an easy day trip away from Halton Hills.

New House Sol show opens

A Toronto artist whose work evokes the spirit of Edgar Degas, prime force behind the groundbreaking Impressionist movement of the late 1800s, will bring his latest pastels and drawings to Gallery House Sol in Georgetown this Saturday.

Indonesian-born Leo Rampen, the CBC television producer who created "Take 30" and "Man Alive", both acclaimed and still-popular current events series, will join ceramicist Bob Kavanagh for the Charles Street gallery's new show Saturday through April 1.

Both artists will greet visitors to the gallery Saturday from 2 to 6 p.m. The show continues Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 6 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays until 6 p.m. There is no admission charge.

Working in a medium few serious artists still use, Mr. Rampen follows the respected tradition of such pastel masters as Degas. House Sol proprietor John Sommer calls Mr. Rampen's landscapes and interiors "richly crafted paintings of great elegance and discrimination".

Bob Kavanagh is one of Ontario's foremost ceramic masters in stoneware. Making his second appearance at House Sol, Mr. Kavanagh has a studio in east Toronto and teaches at Harbourfront.

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May We Present . . .
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Contact: Maureen McCullum
Phone: 877-3219, 853-1637
DO IT NOW

"I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing, therefore, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; for I shall not pass this way again." (anonymous)

- If you feel that you do not have the time or the skills to offer as a volunteer, read through the following checklist. If you answer yes to any of the questions, then we have a place for you at the volunteer centre.
1. Do I enjoy reading or reading aloud?
 2. Am I a good organizer?
 3. Do I miss my professional job since retirement?
 4. Do I spend time watching TV?
 5. Do people I know confide their personal problems in me?
 6. Am I a good driver?
 7. Do I miss having small children around?
 8. Would I like to learn something new?
 9. Am I considering a career change and wondering what else I can do?
 10. Do I enjoy the company of young people?

Do it now, call your volunteer centre. Get involved. We're waiting for your call.

If you're a mother at home with pre-schoolers, wondering where you can volunteer and take your children with you, here are some opportunities:

One morning a week, volunteers are needed to help at a daycare for handicapped children. You will be given an orientation and given the chance to work with one child. Training is provided on an on-going basis. Seminars and workshops are also held from time to time. Your children will benefit by developing relationships with those who are a little less fortunate.

Mothers and tots are welcome to visit seniors in a residence type setting. The relationship between the young and the elderly is a very special one. Why not look into how you can take part?

If you enjoy playing cards, bowling, shuffleboard, why not assist staff in a recreation program for seniors. If watching TV is your pastime why not do it with someone who would otherwise be alone.

DO IT NOW. Call 877-3219 for more information



Volunteers-Canada's greatest natural resource

VOLUNTEERS - Canada's greatest natural resource. Volunteers are important people. In 1980, for the first time, the volunteer labor force was included in the Statistics Canada labor survey. Did you know: 2.7 million Canadians worked as volunteers, that constitutes 13 per cent of the adult population; if volunteers had been paid, they would have represented \$3.5 billion in earnings. The total wage would make up 1.2 per cent of the Gross National Product; 54 per cent of the volunteers were female, 46 per cent were male.

Why do people do it? There are as many reasons as there are volunteers. Volunteers come from every walk of life: students, housewives, shift workers, professional people, the handicapped, seniors. Most are looking for personal involvement, they are interested in their community, they acquire a sense of fulfillment by helping others.

By becoming a volunteer you can meet new, interesting people, you may brush up on old skills, develop new ones, gain experience for that new job or career change, be appreciated and recognized in your community. What would you like to get out of a volunteer job? Your volunteer centre has many placements on file. Call us and drop in for

coffee, we will help you discover how you can get involved.

SWIMMERS are needed to help handicapped people learn basic swimming skills. This program would require approximately two hours of your time per week.

Put your listening skills to good use. After an intense training program help man an information-crisis line. This job requires a commitment of three or four-hour shifts per month.

Friendly visitors are needed in a variety of environments. You would be required to visit the handicapped, the elderly, or those confined because of illness, and perhaps take in groceries or do odd jobs. A palliative care unit is seeking volunteers to do clerical work, public relations, and counselling. Learn more about this interesting field by becoming involved.

For information about these and other jobs, call your volunteer centre at 877-3219, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 to 4:30, or at 853-3310, Monday 1 to 4:30.

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ON GOLDEN POND
FRANK CAPRA
FRI. SAT. SUN. 7:05 P.M. & 9:05 P.M.
MON. TO THURS. ONE SHOW 7:30 P.M.

STARTS FRIDAY
"RICHARD PRYOR ON THE SUNSET STRIP"
Warning: Some language may be offensive.
FRI. SAT. SUN. 7 P.M. & 9 P.M.
MON. TO THURS. ONE SHOW 7:30 P.M.

WED. 10 TO THURS. 11
WILLIE NELSON 7:30 P.M. **Country**

HELD OVER 2ND WEEK
In a world of professional assassins there is no room for an amateur.
JOHN CHRISTOPHER MARTHE SAVAGE PLUMMER KELLER
The Amateur
FRI. SAT. SUN. 7 P.M. & 9 P.M.
MON. TO THURS. ONE SHOW 7:30 P.M.

CANADIAN ODEON THEATRES GEORGETOWN 3

HELD OVER 5TH GREAT WEEK
Henry Fonda - Katherine Hepburn - Jane Fonda
"ON GOLDEN POND"
Evenings: 7:00, 9:20
Sat., Sun. Mat. 2 p.m.
Warning - some mature language - Thr. Br. Ont.

HELD OVER 2ND WEEK
Christopher Plummer - John Savage in
"THE AMATEUR"
Evenings: 7:00, 9:20 Sat., Sun. Mat. at 2 p.m.
Warning - Not suitable for children - some scenes of violence & some language offensive - Thr. Br. Ont.

STARTING FRIDAY
Richard Pryor
"IN CONCERT"
Evenings only 7:05, 9:05

Last 2 days: "THE BARGE" 7:05, 9:15, Revue
SPECIAL FOR MATINEE SAT. & SUN. AT 2 P.M.
All Seats \$1.50 - Doors open at 1:30
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