



CONTACT: Ann Gallo - Artistic Director, UBU Theater
anngallo@ubutheater.org 508.361.3677
Images: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskYWCsY5>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UBU Theater Celebrates Community Identity with an Outdoor, Site-Specific Production of *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, August 5, 6, 12 & 13, 2017

TYRINGHAM, MA— (June _____) This August, **UBU Theater** will present a site-specific/outdoor, community-based production of Thornton Wilder's ***Our Town***, directed by Courtney O'Connor and performed by residents of Tyringham, MA, population 416. The performances will take place at 11:00 AM on August 5th, 6th, 12th, and 13th on the front lawn of the Union Church of Tyringham (128 Main Road, Tyringham, MA) and in a nearby field bordering the Tyringham Cemetery.

Bring a lawn chair or blanket! The production will be outdoors. In case of rain, performances will be held inside the Union Church of Tyringham.

Tickets - \$5 for Tyringham residents and relatives; \$20 for non-residents; admission FREE for children under 10. Tickets can be purchased on day of the show.

OVERVIEW

As our country struggles with community identity, UBU Theater envisions Thornton Wilder's ***Our Town*** as an apt artistic lens through which to examine this societal dilemma. Narrated by the character of the Stage Manager, the 1938 Pulitzer Prize-winning play tells the story of the fictional but quintessentially American small town of Grover's Corners through the everyday lives of its citizens. Following the Webb and Gibbs families as they experience love, marriage, death and dying, the work celebrates universal themes that are still relevant in small, rural American communities today.

"***Our Town***, one of the most iconic plays in the American theatre, explores—among other things—what it is to be a member of a community," says O'Connor, the project's Director. "Tyringham transports you to a place where people still intimately know their neighbors, their struggles, and their happiness, and celebrates the beauty of sharing this joy and pain of life together. I look forward to working with the members of the Tyringham community to find the moments where the stories of Grover's Corners and Tyringham blend, overlap, and strengthen each other."

A unique aspect of the production is that it will be staged outdoors on two site-specific locations in the town of Tyringham, population 416. Acts 1 and 2 will be performed on the portico and front lawn of the majestic Union Church of Tyringham. For Act 3, the audience will be ushered behind the church to a field adjacent to the town cemetery. Equally unique, Tyringham residents—primarily non-actors/non arts professionals—will participate in all aspects of the production. For many of the actors and crew, this will be their first theater experience.

[More Follows]

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The ***Our Town*** Tyringham Project was conceived in 2015, during the town's annual observance of Memorial Day. Veterans, farmers, writers, teachers, nurses, carpenters, firemen and generations of local families—all with deep roots in the town—sat on rickety wooden chairs amongst the gravestones of the bucolic Tyringham cemetery. Baking under the late-spring sun, some attendees sported baseball caps, straw hats and sun umbrellas; others wore military medals honoring service to their country. Surrounded by the extraordinary beauty of the Berkshire hills residents had gathered to hear the names of Tyringham's veterans read aloud as a local youth played "Taps" on his trumpet. The moment inspired Ann Gallo—Founder and Artistic Director of UBU Theater—to mount a Tyringham production of ***Our Town*** to celebrate the intrinsic and essential value of community and identity.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Thornton Wilder (1897-1975) was a novelist and playwright whose works celebrate the connection between the commonplace and the cosmic dimensions of human experience. He is the only writer to win Pulitzer Prizes for both drama and fiction: for his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, and two plays, *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

Courtney O'Connor (Director) is no stranger to site-specific projects. Her production of ***Blood on the Snow*** (performed with the Bostonian Society at the Old State House in Boston, MA) is being brought back for a second run this summer. She recently directed ***Stage Kiss*** at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston. She has directed at Emerson Stage, UMass Boston, Suffolk University, Brandeis University, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company (intern company), Shakespeare Now! AIM Stage, and Coyote Theatre (where she also served as Artistic Director). Awards: The Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Direction, for her work as Associate Director of Lyric Stage's ***The Life and Times of Nicolas Nickleby***. O'Connor is a senior affiliated member with the Performing Arts faculty at Emerson College. She received a BA in English from Cabrini College and an MA in Theatre Education from Emerson College. www.Courtneyoc.com

Ann Gallo (Producer) is the Founder and Artistic Director of UBU Theater. The company's mission is to give communities a voice through theater. She teaches and directs at the Boys and Girls Club of the Berkshires in Pittsfield, MA. Gallo has also taught and directed for the Pittsfield Public Schools' EOS program and with ESL youth from Multicultural Bridge and the PPS's Gateways ESL summer program. Directing credits: ***The Hundred Dresses***, ***A Fly in My Soup and Other Works***, and ***A Spy, A General and June Peas*** at the BGC. Devised pieces include ***Cultural Heritage Spoken Word*** and ***Maloh, a Congolese Folktale*** with PPS's. She has a BA from Bennington College and an MA in Theatre Education from Emerson College. <http://ubutheater.org/about/>

Daniel Kozar (Costume Design), **Lia Russell-Self** (Production Stage Manager), **Corinna May** (Voice Coach)

ABOUT UBU THEATER

UBU Theater's vision is to identify and engage with communities who lack equitable access to theater. In partnership with communities or groups, UBU develops unique, custom, theater-based projects or curriculum to articulate the community's voice.

SUPPORT

This production is supported in part by the Mass Local Cultural Councils of Tyringham, Otis and Monterey, as well as the Hop Brook Community Club of Tyringham.

Contact: Ann Gallo – Founder/Artistic Director UBU Theater
508.361.3677

anngallo@ubutheater.org
www.ubutheater.org