

SAM RUDY MEDIA RELATIONS

For the Arts and Entertainment

WILDER 125

--a year of tributes to Thornton Wilder—

announced for 2022

-the 125th anniversary of his birth-

Short documentary to debut, along with OUR TOWN STAGE MANAGERS DAY -

-first-ever staging of unfinished EMPORIUM-

Major revivals of Wilder's plays across the U.S. and overseas

-new editions of plays and novel-

The 125th anniversary of Thornton Wilder's birth (April 17, 1897) will be observed throughout 2022 with nearly 150 productions of his plays worldwide – including OUR TOWN, a new production of THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH on Broadway and a first-ever staging of his unfinished play THE EMPORIUM completed by Kirk Lynn (Rude Mechanicals) at the Alley Theater in Houston – along with new editions of several plays, the recent new edition of Wilder's Pulitzer-Prize winning novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," and the completion of the Thornton Wilder Library editions of all of Wilder's novels and major plays, it has been announced by Tappan Wilder, the late author's nephew and literary executor.

Almost 50 years after his death in 1975, Wilder remains one of the most widely-produced playwrights in the world, and international productions of his plays have been licensed in 2022 (to date) to theaters in Hungary, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Serbia, China, Romania, Greece, Hong Kong, Japan, Portugal and Spain. A production had also been licensed to Ukraine.

A highlight of the anniversary year will be the release of a new short documentary film, *Thornton Wilder: It's Time*, on April 27 as part of an evening celebrating the author at Lincoln Center Theater, where THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH is receiving a major Broadway revival this spring, directed by Lileana Blain-Cruz. Featured in the documentary are interviews with playwright Paula Vogel, Ms. Blain-Cruz and never-before-seen interviews with A.R. Gurney, Mia Farrow and rarely-seen footage of Wilder himself. Subsequent to its premiere, *Thornton Wilder: It's Time* will be made available free to theaters, schools and libraries everywhere.

The year-long tribute will conclude on January 22, 2023 with an OUR TOWN STAGE MANAGER'S DAY that will recognize theatrical stage managers, with special designations for stage managers who have either stage managed OUR TOWN or played the iconic role in Wilder's beloved classic. (Wilder himself

played the Stage Manager on Broadway for several weeks, and in numerous summer stock productions through the years.) January 22, 1938 marked the world-premiere of OUR TOWN at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton. OUR TOWN STAGE MANAGER'S DAY is being presented in association with the Stage Managers Association.

Tappan Wilder says of his uncle, "Wilder was a man of many parts: most people know him as a playwright and a novelist, but he was also an actor, translator, educator, lecturer, musician, lyricist, screenwriter, and the list goes on. Constantly experimenting with form, he wrestled with the questions of the cosmos, of what it means to be human. With the celebration of the 125th anniversary of his birth, we're putting him back together. It's a moment to celebrate the depth and breadth of his work, as well as his legacy--his influence on the writers of today."

WILDER/125 THEATER PRODUCTIONS

One of the most widely produced playwrights in the world – author of OUR TOWN, THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH, THE MATCHMAKER, THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER and THE HAPPY JOURNEY TO TRENTON AND CAMDEN– Wilder won the Pulitzer Prize for OUR TOWN (1938) and THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH (1943).

Upcoming productions of note:

OUR TOWN – Asolo Rep, now through March 27;

Center Repertory at the Leshner Center in Walnut Creek April 15-May 7;

Shakespeare Theatre Company in DC May 12-June 11;

South Coast Rep in Costa Mesa May 7-June 4.

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH – Lincoln Center Theatre, preview April 1, opening April 25.

BIRTHDAY CANDLES – a new play by Noah Haidle inspired by THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER, previews March 18, opening April 10 at the Roundabout Theatre.

THE EMPORIUM – Alley Theatre in Houston will present a workshop production of Wilder's ambitious, unfinished play, adapted by Kirk Lynn and directed by Rob Melrose (Artistic Director of the Alley Theatre) as part of the sixth annual Alley All New Festival (June 15-26, 2022).

Kirk Lynn, Artistic Director of Austin's Rude Mechs theater collective, collaborates with the late Thornton Wilder on Wilder's last full-length play. In the era of the great department stores, a young man from an orphanage is adopted

by a farmer, but runs away to the big city only to discover... all this is only a metaphor, and maybe life is really an elaborate job interview to determine if we even qualify to apply for our own existence.

WILDER/125 NEW EDITIONS

Wilder won his first of three Pulitzers with the publication of his second novel, "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," which was released in a new edition by Harper Collins in December 2021.

The Thornton Wilder Library editions of all of Wilder's novels and plays will be complete this fall with the release of the new edition of THE CABALA AND THE WOMAN OF ANDROS. A new edition of WILDER'S PLAYLETS: 3 MINUTE PLAYS FOR 3 ACTORS will be published by Samuel French this spring, and Theatre Communications Group will publish a new edition of THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER AND OTHER PLAYS.

WILDER/125 DOCUMENTARY AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Produced by THE THORNTON WILDER FAMILY and conceived and scripted by Jim Knable, the short documentary about Wilder – including interviews with contemporary theater artists whose own work has been profoundly influenced by the late author, such as Paula Vogel, director Lileana Blain-Cruz, Henry Wishcamper and Tatiana Pandiani, and never-before seen interviews with A.R. Gurney and Mia Farrow – will have its premiere at a WILDER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION at Lincoln Center Theater on April 27. Tappan Wilder will be joined by THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH director Ms. Blain-Cruz for a conversation about Wilder and the new film, moderated by Jeremy McCarter.

American Academy of Arts and Letters will present the 2022 THORNTON WILDER PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION to Edith Grossman on May 18. Widely-considered one of the leading Spanish-to-English translators in the world, she is renowned for her translations of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Miguel de Cervantes and Mario Vargas Llosa.

Later this year The Thornton Wilder Society will award the Thornton Wilder Prize to Michel Hausmann and Miami New Drama.

On Tuesday, May 3 at 6:00pm, The Library of America will host OUR TOWN FOR OUR TIME: HOW THORNTON WILDER'S PLAY SPEAKS TO A CHANGING AMERICA AND AROUND THE GLOBE a conversation with Michel Hausmann, Julie Vatain-Corfdir, and Tappan Wilder, as part of its LOA Live Series.

Thornton Wilder was born in Madison, WI in 1897 and died on December 7, 1975 in Hamden, CT. Following an extensive education, he published his first novel, "The Cabala" in 1926, followed by "The Bridge of San Luis Rey." Following the successes of OUR TOWN and SKIN OF OUR TEETH, and while in the midst of writing THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH, Wilder joined the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in Italy, receiving several awards for his military service, and concluding as Lieutenant Colonel. While there, he directed an all-military production of OUR

TOWN. (In the course of his life, Wilder, in fact, played the Stage Manager for two weeks on Broadway, and numerous times in summer stock, and also played Mr. Antrobus in THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH.) His novel THE IDES OF MARCH was a considerable success in 1948, and he adapted his own THE MERCHANT OF VENICE as THE MATCHMAKER, which was a smash in 1954, starring Ruth Gordon and directed by Tyrone Guthrie.

He wrote many one-act plays – including THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER and PULLMAN CAR HIAWATHA. His final two novels were and THE EIGHTH DAY (1967 National Book Award) and THEOPHILUS NORTH (1973). Wilder wrote the screenplay for the 1943 film “Shadow of a Doubt.”

A popular speaker on the lecture circuit both in the United States and abroad, Wilder independently or engaged by the State Department spoke before audiences in Columbia, Ecuador and Peru before WWII and in the bombed out German cities after the war. Celebrated for his erudition, he moved worked easily with German, French, and Spanish and was never afraid to tackle Italian and Latin.

Amos Tappan Wilder (known as Tappan) is Thornton Wilder's nephew and has served as his uncle's literary executor since 1995. In this role, he manages Wilder's intellectual property, promotes interest in the literary and dramatic subsidiary rights of the works, writes about, and speaks widely about his uncle's life, family and artistic legacy. He has been involved with the re-issue of all of Wilder's novels and major plays in the HarperCollins Thornton Wilder Library edition (to which he contributed Afterwords), a volume of selected letters, The Library of America's three Wilder volumes, and the definitive biography of his uncle by Penelope Niven. He has also supported dramatic adaptations and operas of Wilder's fiction and drama (including the *Our Town Opera* composed by Ned Rorem with libretto by J.D. McClatchy), and arranged publication of lost works, including Wilder's Broadway record-breaking translation of *A Doll's House*. Tappan is a graduate of Yale and holds advanced degrees in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and American Studies from Yale. He is Honorary Chair of The Thornton Wilder Society, a member of PEN (American Center), Honorary Trustee of Long Wharf Theatre, and member of the Graywolf Press National Council. He lives in Northern California.

Rosey Strub, Director of Programming; Amanda Woods, Special Events; Ryan Pointer, Graphic Designer.

For more info, visit www.wilder125.com or www.thorntonwilder.cm

MISSION STATEMENT

Against the backdrop of the cosmos, Thornton Wilder celebrated the individual human heart. His plays, novels, and essays offer one of world literature's finest treatments of our loves, hopes, struggles, and dreams. On the 125th anniversary of his birth, we honor his compassion, his understanding, and his radical imagination, which have opened doors for generations of artists to come.