

A BLACK SWAN PRODUCTION PRESENTED AS PART OF PERTH FESTIVAL

OUR TOWN

by Thornton Wilder

Directed by Clare Watson

AT

STATE THEATRE
CENTRE COURTYARD

08 → 23
FEB FEB



BLACK SWAN
STATE THEATRE
COMPANY



'19

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FEATURING

CAST INCLUDES

Abbie-lee Lewis EMILY
Ian Michael STAGE MANAGER/GEORGE
Shari Sebbens MRS GIBBS

CREATIVES

Clare Watson DIRECTOR
Tyler Hill SET & COSTUME
DESIGNER
Chloe Ogilvie LIGHTING DESIGNER
Russell Goldsmith COMPOSER & SOUND
DESIGNER
Katt Osborne ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Natalie Moir STAGE MANAGER
Anastasia ASSISTANT
Julien-Martial STAGE MANAGER

PRODUCTION

Jennifer Edwards COSTUME
CONSTRUCTION

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Aqeel Abdul Hanif	John McGlue
Dr Anne Aly MP	Oriana Morris-Johnson
Chris Bedding	Benjamin Narkle
Grace Bell	Elizabeth Narkle
Dr Jonathan Carapetis	Jacob Narkle
John Clapton	Louis Neylon-Williams
Craig Collas	Crystal Nguyen
Chez De Bartolo	Kevin Nguyen
Susie Finch	Duncan Ord OAM
Dimity Franks	Jonathan Paxman
Prof. Dawn Freshwater	Sean Paxman
Shayani Galhenage	Marjorie Picton
Felicity Glendinning	Dr Tajinderpal Singh
Iain Grandage	Ashley Taylor
Robert Jackson	Will Thompson
Irene Jarzabek	Charles Varcoe
Paul Johnson	Graeme Watson
Libby Klysz	Jessica Wilkins
Nick Lawrence	David Zampatti
Polly Low	Rhythmos Choir
Belinda Massey	

Black Swan State Theatre Company acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nations who are the traditional owners and custodians of country on which the State Theatre Centre of WA stands. We pay our respects to all of Perth's First Peoples, to their ancestors and Elders. It is a privilege to be together on Noongar country.

OUR TOWN © 1938,
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Alan Brodie Representation Ltd
www.alanbrodie.com

SYNOPSIS

Our Town opens with the Stage Manager's introduction to Grover's Corners, a fictional town based on Peterborough, New Hampshire where Wilder often spent his summers.

ACT I: DAILY LIFE

The allegorical world of Grover's Corners unfolds. The audience is introduced to the Gibbs and Webb families who symbolise "ordinary people who make the human race seem worth preserving and represent the universality of human existence." Wilder explores the families' inter-relationships, specifically between George Gibbs and Emily Webb.

ACT II: LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Three years later, it is now George and Emily's wedding day. The Stage Manager transports the audience back to George and Emily's high school courtship and then back again to the nuptials that are about to take place. The Stage Manager takes on the role of a minister, hones in on the tearful and anxious families before the young lovers blissfully run up the aisle.

ACT III: THE CYCLE OF LIFE

Nine more years have passed and Emily has died in childbirth. As the funeral procession crosses the stage, Emily questions what it means to live and die. She chooses to relive her twelfth birthday and is saddened by everything she failed to notice while alive. The Stage Manager returns her to the funeral where she sees George on his knees by her tomb. "They don't understand, do they?" she says of the living. The stars come out and the Stage Manager bids the audience a good night.

Abridged version: Original source by A. Gallagher (www.twildersociety.org/works/our-town)

DURATION:

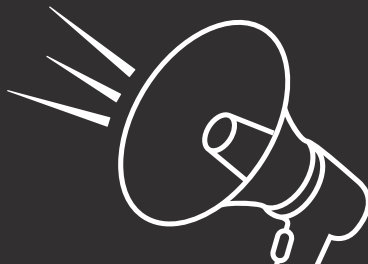
130mins



Contains
adult themes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Black Swan would like to thank Brian Heller and the Arts Angels, Cathy Penglis and our Black Swan Student, Metro and Regional Ambassadors. We would also like to thank the team at the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia for their support and assistance.



A note from the DIRECTOR

“I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.”

Thornton Wilder

Our Town by Thornton Wilder is one of my all-time favourite plays because of Wilder's generosity and care towards his characters, the coexistence of the minutiae and the epic, and its humour and heartbreak. I've always thought of it as a Breughel painting brought to life on stage. It is no surprise that this is one of the most performed plays in the English language – in fact, it's allegedly performed every day somewhere in the world.

It was first presented in 1938 – winning Wilder the Pulitzer Prize for Literature. The action of *Our Town* takes place in the years 1901 to 1913 in a small American fictional town called Grover's Corners. In this production we are not using accents or period costume. We are citizens of contemporary Perth, just like you, the audience. As storytellers we embrace the real 'here and now' to share with you a fictional story of 'there and then'.

Our core cast – Abbie-lee Lewis, Ian Michael and Shari Sebbens – are joined on stage throughout the season by 90 community members making up the citizens of Grover's Corners, the families, the milkman, the paperboy and the choir. Tonight, you will meet 36 of them populating *Our Town*. These performers are teachers, priests, doctors,

funeral directors, students and UberEats drivers. They are the people who make up the community of Perth and we thank every single community member who has joined us on this adventure. Some of them have acted before and for some, this is their first time on stage. We agree with Oskar Eustus, the director of the Public Theatre in New York that “Artistry is not something that is the possession of a few. Artistry is inherent in being a human being, some of us just get to spend a lot more of our lives practicing it”. It is through the performances of our community ensemble that we celebrate the warp and weft that knit together our human existence. *Our Town* is a play about belonging and so it is fitting that our host for the evening, the character called the Stage Manager, is a Noongar man and carries a culture of storytelling that has belonged here for multi-millenia.

You, the audience have an important role too. Wilder's script begins with the words – Act 1: No curtain. No scenery. So, you are invited to complete this town, to bring to it your imagination, your own memories of growing up, of falling in love and of pondering the eternal. The word 'audience' comes from the Latin word meaning 'hearing' – contemporary audiences are adept at this as listeners of podcasts, so put on your headphones and settle in to a very unique episode of *This American Life*. Thank you for joining us tonight in *Our Town*.

Clare Watson

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Clare Watson DIRECTOR

Clare commenced in the role of Artistic Director of Black Swan State Theatre Company in October 2016 and made her directorial debut with *Let the Right One In*. Her other credits with the company since then include *Xenides*, *The Events*, and *You Know We Belong Together*. Previously, Clare was Artistic Director at St Martins collaborating with children and teenagers. Her recent work includes *I saw the second one hit*, *Gonzo* (Malthouse Theatre) and *FITTER. FASTER. BETTER.* (Dance Massive, Junction Arts Festival, Malthouse Theatre). She directed the critically acclaimed *What Rhymes with Cars* and *Girls* for Melbourne

Theatre Company in 2015, which received four Helpmann nominations including Best Director. The production has recently enjoyed a national tour.

In 2014 Clare was Female Director-in-Residence at Malthouse Theatre and she is an MTC Women Directors Program alumna. Her stage credits also include *Gonzo*, *I Heart John McEnroe* (Uninvited Guests/Theatre Works – winner Green Room Award for Best Ensemble, and five nominations including Best Director); *The Man with the September Face* by Kylie Trounson (Full Tilt/Arts Centre); *Smashed* by Lally Katz (Stables); and *Hotel* (Melbourne Fringe Festival – winner Best Director). Her mainstage work has also included *Lungs* by Duncan MacMillan at Melbourne Theatre Company and *The Events* by David Greig for Malthouse and Belvoir, Sydney Festival and Adelaide Festival. Clare is a graduate of Directing at the Victorian College of the Arts. She is a trained teacher and worked in high schools in Victoria for 15 years and was also Education Manager at Malthouse Theatre.

About the PLAYWRIGHT

Thornton Wilder (1897-1975) was a novelist and playwright whose works celebrate the connection between the commonplace and the cosmic dimensions of human experience.

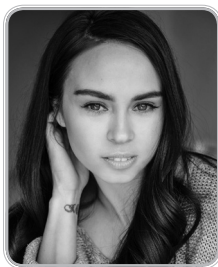
He is the only writer to win Pulitzer Prizes for both drama and fiction: for his novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, and two plays, *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*. His other novels include *The Cabala*, *The Woman of Andros*, *Heaven's My Destination*, *The Ides of March*, *The Eighth Day* and *Theophilus North*. His other major dramas include *The Matchmaker* (adapted as the musical

Hello, Dolly!) and *The Alcestiad*. *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*, *Pullman Car Hiawatha* and *The Long Christmas Dinner* are among his well-known shorter plays.

He enjoyed enormous success as a translator, adaptor, actor, librettist and lecturer/teacher and his screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* remains a classic psycho-thriller to this day. Wilder's many honors include the Gold Medal for Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

www.thorntonwilder.com

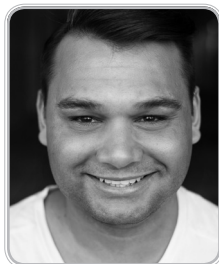
CAST INCLUDES



Abbie-lee Lewis EMILY

Abbie is a Kalkadoon woman, who grew up in rural Western Australia. She is a graduate of the Aboriginal Theatre and Acting Course at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. She has worked with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company (*Talk It Up*), Bell Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* as part of The Players Program; *Macbeth*) and Sport for Jove (*Fallen*). She continues to discover a passion for physicality and storytelling through different avenues. When not acting, Abbie-lee is training in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and facilitating workshops in contemporary Aboriginal dance,

Shakespeare and drama. Connect on IG @abbieleelewis



Ian Michael STAGE MANAGER/GEORGE

Ian is a proud Wilman Noongar man born in Darwin and raised in Bunbury. He is a graduate from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. As actor and theatre maker, Ian's theatre and creative development highlights include *Let the Right One In* (Black Swan), *HART* (She Said Theatre), *Big Day Out*, Black Writers Lab (Ilbijerri Theatre Company); *Blak Cabaret* (Malthouse Theatre); *The Kid* (Melbourne Theatre Company). Film credits include: *Where are the Warriors* (Wirrim Films); *Needle* (Nexus 6 Films). In 2013 and 2015, Ian was awarded the Most Outstanding Indigenous Artist for his roles

in *Laika and Wills* and *HART* at the Melbourne Fringe Festival. In 2015, *HART* won two awards to tour New Zealand and Adelaide Fringe Festivals and Best Emerging Artist for Ian at Adelaide Fringe. In 2016, *HART* was nominated for Best Independent Production at the Green Room Awards. Connect on IG @ianmichaelianmichael



Shari Sebbens MRS GIBBS

Shari is a Bardi and Jabirr Jabirr woman, born and raised on Larrakia country. At 19 she was chosen for the inaugural Australia Council for the Arts first theatre mentorship program "SPARK". She has studied at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and NIDA. Shari was awarded the Graham Kennedy Award for Most Outstanding New Talent at the 2012 Logies for her performance in *Redfern Now*. Film credits include: *The Sapphires*, *Darkside*, *Teenage Kicks*, *OnO*, *Thor: Ragnarok*, *Australia Day* and *Top End Wedding*. Shari has had lead roles in TV Series including: *The Heights*, *Gods of Wheat St* and *8MMM*. Her

theatre highlights include: *Black is the New White*, *The Bleeding Tree* (Sydney Theatre Company), *An Octoroon* (Queensland Theatre). Connect on IG @cloudspotting

CREATIVES



Tyler Hill SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Tyler is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (BA Performing Arts, Set & Costume Design) and alumni of the Black Swan Resident Artist Program. After winning the David Hough Award for Outstanding Achievement in Design (WAAPA, 2016), he was seconded to Sydney Theatre Company's *The Hanging* and then engaged as Design Assistant for the Perth Festival 2017 Opening Ceremony *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak*. His design credits include *Hir*, *The Eisteddfod*, *Endgame* (Black Swan), *You Know We Belong Together* (Black Swan, Perth Festival and DADAA), *Actéon*, *Trouble in Tahiti*

(Lost & Found Opera) *Tom Vickers and the Extraordinary Adventure of his Missing Sock* (Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and WA Museum). Tyler's film credits include *Dirt Music*, *Otherlife*. Connect at www.tyler-hill.com



Chloe Ogilvie LIGHTING DESIGNER

Chloe is a proud Yamatji Nhanda woman originally from Tom Price. She is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (Advanced Diploma of Live Theatre and Events – Lighting). She is a Black Swan Resident Artist and her Lighting Design Associate credits with the company include *Xenides*, *The Events*, *Assassins*. Other theatre credits include *Fever and the Fret* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company), *Toast* (Maiden Voyage Theatre Company), *Spinifex Gum* (Adelaide Festival), *Cockfight* (The Farm), *Good Little Soldier* (Ochre Contemporary Dance Company). Connect on IG @chloeogilvie



Russell Goldsmith

SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER

Russell is a multiple award-winning Melbourne based Sound Designer, Composer, Producer and Audio System Designer. He has a diverse body of work in Theatre, Film, Television, Commercial and Radio Production, Live Music and Installation Art. He has worked with the company on *The Swimming Club* (Black Swan/Melbourne Theatre Company) and *The Web* (Black Swan/Hothouse Theatre Company). His theatre credits include: *Exit The King* (Broadway Season | Stuart Thompson Productions), *Gloria*, *Vivid White*, *What Rhymes With Cars And Girls*,

John, *Disgraced*, *Lungs*, *The Waiting Room*, *Endgame* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Gonzo*, *Hello Goodbye and Happy Birthday* (Malthouse Theatre). His film credits include: *Intrusion*, *Close Observations Of A Single Subject*, *Sad Man*, *Great Acts Of Kindness*, *Spilt*. Russell's most recent installation works are *Make Believe* (Melbourne Museum) and *Aura* (Sovereign Hill). Connect at russellgoldsmith.com.au



Katt Osborne ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Katt is a director, creative producer and theatre maker. She was a founding member and inaugural general manager of The Last Great Hunt and alumni of the Black Swan Resident Artist Program. She is Artistic Director of Riptide Youth Performance Company, based at Mandurah Performing Arts Centre. Theatre credits as Director include: *Elephants*, *Minnie & Mona Play Dead* (The Last Great Hunt), *The 1's*, *The O's*, *And Everything In Between*, *Walk With Me*, *Some Kind of Disaster* (Riptide Youth Performance Company). Credits as Assistant Director include: *Xenides*, *The Lady Aoi* (Black Swan), *Dr Seuss's The Lorax*

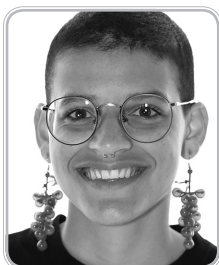
(The Old Vic), *The Removalists* (Perth Theatre Company). Katt has been awarded Achiever of the Year for Arts; 2016 Golden Key Honorary Membership for *Leadership*; 2015 PAWA Best New Play Award for *Elephants*; 2013 Martin Sims Best New WA Work for *Minnie & Mona*. Connect on IG @directfromkatt



Natalie Moir STAGE MANAGER

Natalie is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (Stage Management) and has working with the company on *The Glass Menagerie*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *The Dark Room*; *Portraits of Modern Evil* and *The Clean House* (Black Swan and Queensland Theatre). Other theatre credits include: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*; *Saint Joan*; *Lethal Indifference* (Sydney Theatre Company), *The Father* (Sydney Theatre Company and Melbourne Theatre Company), *The Beast*, *Top Girls* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Mr Burns* (Belvoir). Natalie's extensive musical

theatre credits include: *Dirty Dancing* (Australian Tour 2014/2015); *The King & I* (Australian Tour 2014); *Jersey Boys* (Australian Tour 2012/2013); *Strange Bedfellows* (Instinct Entertainment); *Anything Goes*; *Kismet*; *Sugar*; *The Boy from Oz*; *The King & I*; *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*; *The Boy Friend*; *Crazy For You* (The Production Company). Her event credits include: *Yes Prime Minister* (Australian Tour); *Commonwealth Games 2018* (Great Big Events).



Anastasia Julien-Martial

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Ana will graduate this year from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (BA Performing Arts). They have worked with the company on the world premiere of *Xenides*. Festival and events credits include: Fringe World Festival 2018 *House of Joys*, *You're Welcome*, *Miss Westralia*. Fringe World Festival 2019 *Endless Answers: Limbs*. Ana identifies as non-binary and prefers they/them pronouns. Connect on IG @cafe.sans.lait

Community Members



**Aqeel Abdul Hanif
Wally**



**Dr Anne Aly MP
Professor Willard**



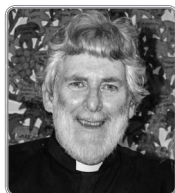
**Chris Bedding
Priest**



**Grace Bell
Rebecca**



**Dr Jonathan Carapetis
Dr Gibbs**



**John Clapton
Priest**



**Craig Collas
Priest**



**Chez De Bartolo
Mr Morgan**



**Susie Finch
Joe Stoddard**



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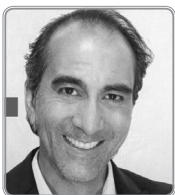
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Joe and Si Crowell



Marjorie Picton
Joe Stoddard



Dr Tajinderpal Singh
Dr Gibbs



Ashley Taylor
Joe Stoddard



Will Thompson
Sam Craig



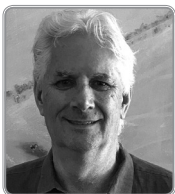
Charles Varcoe
Wally



Graeme Watson
Mr Webb



Jessica Wilkins
Rebecca



David Zampatti
Mr Webb



Rhythmos Choir

Information stated is accurate at time of print.
For a comprehensive listing of community cast members, please refer to the headshot board on the evening of your performance.

KEY PROGRAM AREAS

Fronted by the leadership of our Artistic Director, Clare Watson, we are creating a strong brand of theatre that portrays a uniquely Western Australian voice. One that reaches out and speaks to who we are and who we want to be.

In a place as vast as WA, we have the entirety of our State's story to tell, and we know the absolute importance of sharing it with both our own community and the world.

Our ambition is for Black Swan to match the beauty and boldness of the state that we call home. We will continue to be audacious, ambitious and authentic. We will explore our city and our State to find new ways to inspire audiences and help shape the broader narrative of what it means to be Western Australian.

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

From our home in the State Theatre Centre, we reach far and wide. From regional cities to small towns and remote areas, we aim to anchor theatre, and its ability to bring people together, in the lives of communities large and small. Whether it's supporting regional areas through touring, community engagement, live broadcasts or ambassadorships – these are all vital ways of connecting with the heart of these communities.

EDUCATION

Enabling students to experience theatre has been pivotal in the flourishing of our local arts scene. More importantly, it's where our youth build their confidence, their voice and continue to develop who they are. Through workshops, productions and mentorships in schools, at both a metropolitan and regional level, and of course their attendance at our shows, we are creating a stronger connection with culture and identity.

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

As these generations develop, giving emerging artists the means to explore and experiment is critical to establishing careers. Whether it's through our Emerging Writers Program or partnerships with WAAPA, we're committed to immersing these talents in our productions, to help them shine under the spotlight. Our Resident Artists work closely with the Artistic Director in collaboratively curating the season. They are emerging and established Western Australian artists who work on productions in their area of expertise and contribute to activation activities throughout the year.

OUR PEOPLE

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Polly Low

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Ian Michael

Chloe Ogilvie

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The generous support of our donors enables us to create world class theatre, here in WA.

In recognition of donations received between January 2018 and January 2019.

FOUNDING PATRON

Founding Patron, Janet Holmes à Court AC has played a significant role in the development of Black Swan, providing a platform for growth of arts and culture in Western Australia.

BLACK SWAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you to our board members, who demonstrate outstanding commitment to our philanthropy program.

BLACK SWAN PRODUCTION FUND

A future fund that enables Black Swan to create theatre of exceptional quality, ambition and scale that matches the boldness and beauty of Western Australia.

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Anonymous Donors

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Founded by Janet Holmes à Court AC, supporting Western Australian productions and encouraging young people to engage in theatre.

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Moeschi Hair Stylists
Kate O'Hara
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Simon & Alison Stewart
Robyn Tamke
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Melissa Parke
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Walter Millstead
Delys & Alan Newman
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Shane Colquhoun &
Leigh Cathcart
Andrew Crocker
Dianne Sunderman
Mary Ellen in memory
of Kerensa
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THORNTON NIVEN WILDER CHRONOLOGY

1897	Born in Madison, Wisconsin (April 17)
1906	Moves to Hong Kong in May and to Berkeley, California in October
1906–10	Emerson Public School in Berkeley
1910–11	China Inland Mission School, Chefoo, China (one year)
1912–13	Thacher School, Ojai, California (one year). First play known to be produced: <i>The Russian Princess</i>
1915	Graduates from Berkeley High School; active in school dramatics
1915–17	Oberlin College; published regularly
1920	B.A. Yale College (3 month service in 1918 with U.S. Army in 1918); many publications
1920–21	American Academy in Rome (8 month residency)
1920s	French teacher at Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, New Jersey ('21–'25 & '27–'28)
1924	First visit to the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire
1926	M.A. in French literature, Princeton University <i>The Trumpet Shall Sound</i> produced off-Broadway (American Laboratory Theatre) <i>The Cabala</i> (first novel)
1927	<i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i> (novel – Pulitzer Prize)
1928	<i>The Angel That Troubled The Waters</i> (first published collection of drama—playlets)
1930s	Part-time faculty, University of Chicago (comparative literature and composition); lectures across the country; first Hollywood screen-writing assignment (1934); extensive foreign travel
1930	<i>The Woman of Andros</i> (novel) Completion of home for his family and himself in Hamden, Connecticut
1931	<i>The Long Christmas Dinner and Other Plays</i> (six one-act plays)
1932	<i>Lucrece</i> opens on Broadway starring Katharine Cornell (translation of André Obey's <i>Le Viol de Lucrece</i>)
1935	<i>Heaven's My Destination</i> (novel)
1937	<i>A Doll's House</i> (adaptation/trans.) opens on Broadway with Ruth Gordon
1938	<i>Our Town</i> (Pulitzer Prize) and <i>The Merchant of Yonkers</i> open on Broadway
1942	<i>The Skin of Our Teeth</i> opens on Broadway (Pulitzer Prize) Screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's <i>The Shadow of a Doubt</i>
1942–45	Service with Army Air Force in North Africa and Italy Lieut. Col. at discharge – Bronze Star and O.B.E.
1948	<i>The Ides of March</i> (novel); performing in his plays in summer stock in this period <i>The Victors</i> opens off-Broadway (translation of Sartre's <i>Morts sans sépulture</i>)
1949	Major role in Goethe Convocation in Aspen; lectures widely
1951–52	Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard
1952	Gold Medal for Fiction, American Academy of Arts and Letters
1953	Cover of Time Magazine (January 12)
1955	<i>The Matchmaker</i> opens on Broadway starring Ruth Gordon <i>The Alcestiad</i> produced at Edinburgh Festival with Irene Worth (as <i>A Life in the Sun</i>)
1957	German Peace Prize
1961	Libretto for <i>The Long Christmas Dinner</i> (music by Paul Hindemith—premieres in Mannheim, West Germany)
1962	"Plays for Bleecker Street" (<i>Someone from Assisi</i> , <i>Infancy</i> , and <i>Childhood</i>) premiere at NYC's Circle in the Square Libretto for <i>The Alcestiad</i> (music by Louise Talma—premieres in Frankfurt, West Germany)
1963	Presidential Medal of Freedom
1964	<i>Hello, Dolly!</i> starring Carol Channing opens on Broadway
1965	National Book Committee's Medal for Literature
1967	<i>The Eighth Day</i> (National Book Award for Fiction)
1973	<i>Theophilus North</i> (novel)
1975	Dies in sleep in Hamden, CT on December 7. Buried at Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Hamden, Connecticut

For more information, please visit www.thorntonwilder.com and www.thorntonwildersociety.org
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