

Stage manager charms 'Our Town'

By **MICHAEL JANAIRO**

Arts and entertainment editor

CHATHAM — Thornton Wilder's 1938 Pulitzer-winning drama "Our Town" has endured as an American classic, and the enjoyable co-production by Walking the dog Theater and PS/21 shows why.

The story about small-town life in the fictional Grover's Corners, N.H., unfolds in three acts: "Daily Life," "Love and Marriage" and "Death and Eternity." Presented in early 20th-

Theater review

"OUR TOWN"

■ **Performance reviewed:**

8 p.m. Wednesday

■ **Where:** PS/21, 2980 Route 66, Chatham

■ **Length:** 2 hours 30 minutes, including two 10-minute intermissions

■ **Continues:** 8 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday, through Aug. 1

■ **Tickets:** \$12-\$25

■ **Info:** 392-6121; <http://www.ps21chatham.org>

century period costume and with minimal set and no props, the play focuses on the families of Dr. Gibbs and Mr. Webb, and presents characters such as the milkman, the town drunk and the constable.

The Stage Manager is the most important character. God-like, he guides the audience's attention to specific scenes. David Anderson (also the play's director) is wonderful with a genial and calm portrayal, which served him well when he mistakenly skipped the first scene of the second act. Staying in character, Anderson joked about it being opening night, and that seemed to deepen the audience's trust in him.

Others who stood out in the cast of 19 for their attentive and full-bodied portrayals were Robert Ian Mackenzie as Dr. Gibbs; Nancy Rothman as Mrs. Webb; Eddie Allen as Mr. Webb; and Parker Cross as Simon Stimson.

The most difficult characters to play are Emily Webb and George Gibbs, who are teens in Act 1, get married in Act 2 and face tragedy in Act 3. Bethany Caputo grows stronger as Emily, though her straightforward delivery early on sometimes fell flat.

Andrew Rosenberg's George, however, was inconsistent. Sometimes when he needed to be silent, he would stare nowhere and not react to the other actors. When he did react, though, he was often charming.

A high point of the production is the mood-enhancing original music written by Jonathan Talbott and performed by him (banjo and violin), Ralph Bedard (trumpet) and Dae Jin Yuk (piano).

The play calls on us to be attentive to life, and the PS/21 tent in rural Columbia County offers a perfect setting. On opening night, the audience wasn't the typical older theater crowd, but people of all ages enjoying the community created by well-crafted theater.

July 8, 2010 at 8:55 am by [Michael Janairo, Arts & Entertainment Editor](#)

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The story about small-town life in the fictional Grover’s Corners, N.H., unfolds in three acts: “Daily Life,” “Love and Marriage” and “Death and Eternity.” Presented in early 20th-century period costume and with minimal set and no props, the play focuses on the families of Dr. Gibbs and Mr. Webb, and presents characters such as the milkman, the town drunk and the constable. The Stage Manager is the most important character. God-like, he guides the audience’s attention to specific scenes. David Anderson (also the play’s director) is wonderful with a genial and calm portrayal, which served him well when he mistakenly skipped the first scene of the second act. Staying in character, Anderson joked about it being opening night, and that seemed to deepen the audience’s trust in him.

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