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CYGNET THEATRE PRESENTS A MODERN TAKE ON THE BELOVED CLASSIC *OUR TOWN*.

SAN DIEGO, CA - With the final echoes and razzle-dazzle of Cygnet's latest production playing throughout the weekend, Artistic Director Sean Murray is making preparations to strip the theatre bare and bring in his largest cast to date for something entirely different. Rehearsals are underway for Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-Winning ***OUR TOWN***, featuring an impressive array of San Diego actors including Resident Artists Jo Anne Glover and Francis Gercke as the young lovers, Emily and George, and Sylvia M'Lafi Thompson as the over-seeing Stage Manager. ***OUR TOWN* will play at Cygnet Theatre in Old Town and will run June 9th through July 10th, 2011. Press Opening is Saturday, June 26th at 8pm.** The production is sponsored by Danah Fayman along with Associate Production Sponsors Earl and Sarah Feldman.

Wilder's ***OUR TOWN*** is arguably one of the most iconic plays of the twentieth century. Its seemingly simple story of the communal life in Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, has spoken to generations of audience members about love, companionship, choices and change. The unique construct of the play - which calls for no set, little-to-no scenery and minimal props, along with an interactive Stage Manager - was the playwright's response to a belief that "theatre was not only inadequate, it had become evasive." Wilder hoped that this shift to the bare essentials would direct more attention to the words and story and therefore have greater impact. Indeed his play has become one of the most produced and recognized across the globe. It has been turned into multiple films, an opera, television productions and even a 1955 musical TV adaption. The 2009 revival at Barrow Street Theatre ran for 644 performances, making it the longest running production of the play in its history.

The moving artistry of ***OUR TOWN*** has long been loved by Artistic Director Sean Murray. However, the oft-produced antiquated stereotypes of the piece concerned him, too. "The story is so beautiful and universal," said Murray. "It truly speaks to everyone. But the normal casting of the piece sets it back and makes it feel like an historical piece about a select few." **Murray's decision to select a color-blind, age-blind cast was his conclusion.** "I want the audience to see themselves represented on the Cygnet stage. I want the town to truly be *our* town and not a mythical place in New England."

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The selection of the **OUR TOWN** cast became a unique puzzle. Without the typical stereotypes to go by, the casting process focused on each actor's essence. The challenge of pairing the internal energy and heart of Wilder's characters with modern individuals of various races and ages opened the door to a rich and diverse cast. Fortunately for Murray, actors came out in abundance, making the audition process the largest in Cygnet's history. Hundreds of men, women and children signed up for an opportunity to audition for the well-loved classic production, extending the auditions over five days. The result is a truer representation of the town we live in and thus, Murray feels, in keeping with Wilder's intentions.

The cast of OUR TOWN will include many familiar faces from San Diego Theatre including Cygnet Resident Artists Francis Gercke (*Love Song, A Number, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) as George Gibbs, **Jo Anne Glover** (*The Norman Conquests, The Receptionist*) as Emily Webb, **Jim Chovick** (*A Christmas Carol, Desire Under the Elms, Copenhagen*) as Professor Willard, **Jason Connors** (*Noises Off, Arcadia*) as Joe and **Tom Stephenson** (*The History Boys, My Fair Lady, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*) as Simon Stimson. Other cast members include **Robin Christ** (*Man from Nebraska, Bug, Las Meninas*) as Mrs. Gibbs, **Keith Jefferson** (*The Piano Lesson*) as Dr. Gibbs, **Dale Morris** (*The Receptionist*) as Mr. Webb, **Sherri Allen** as Mrs. Soames, **Scott Andrew Amiotte** as Sam Craig, **Everett J. Davis** as Constable Warren, **Yolanda Franklin** as Mrs. Webb, **Jonah Gercke** as Wally Webb, **Ralph Johnson** as Joe Stoddard, **Cashae Monya** as Rebecca Gibbs and **Eddie Yaroch** as Howie Newsome. Serving as the Stage Manager and guide will be **Sylvia M'Lafi Thompson** (SD Critic's Circle Award Winner - *Fences*).

OUR TOWN will begin previews Thursday, June 9th, 2011, at 7:30 pm at Cygnet Theatre located at 4040 Twiggs St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Opening Night is Saturday, June 18th, and the show runs until July 10th. A special talk-back forum with the cast is scheduled for Friday, June 24th. Surround Events featuring Cygnet's new book club and readings from Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* performed by artists with WRITE OUT LOUD are scheduled for Wednesday, June 22nd, and Monday, June 27th, respectively.

Tickets can be purchased by visiting Cygnet's website at www.cygnettheatre.com or by calling the box office at **619-337-1525**. Tickets can also be purchased in person by visiting Cygnet's box office located at the Old Town Theatre, **4040 Twiggs St.** in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park.

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WHAT: Cygnet Theatre Company presents **OUR TOWN.**

WHERE: Cygnet Theatre - The Old Town Stage
4040 Twigg's St. in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

WHO: By **Thornton Wilder**

Director: **Sean Murray**
Costume Designer: **Shirley Pierson**^o
Sound Designer: **Jason Connors**^o
Lighting Designer: **Michelle Caron**
Properties Designer: **Bonnie Durben**^o
Wig and Make Designer: **Peter Herman**^o
Stage Manager: **Ross Barrientos**^{*o}

CAST: Sherri Allen (Mrs. Soames)
Scott Andrew Amiotte (Sam Craig)
Jim Chovick^o (Professor Willard/Farmer McCarthy)
Robin Christ (Mrs. Gibbs)
Jason Connors^o (Joe/Si Crowell)
Everett J. Davis (Constable Warren)
Yolanda Franklin (Mrs. Webb)
Francis Gercke^o (George Gibbs)
Jonah Gercke (Wally Webb)
Jo Anne Glover^o (Emily Webb)
Keith Jefferson* (Dr. Gibbs)
Ralph Johnson (Joe Stoddard)
Cashae Monya (Rebecca Gibbs)
Dale Morris* (Mr. Webb)
Tom Stephenson^o (Simon Stimson)
Sylvia M'Lafi Thompson* (Stage Manager)
Eddie Yaroch (Howie Newsome)
*** Member of Actors Equity Association, ^oResident Artist**

DATES: Previews begin: **Thursday, June 9th, 2011**
Press Opening: **Saturday, June 18th, 2011, at 8:00pm**
Closes: **Sunday, July 10th, 2011**

Performance Schedule

Wednesday - Thursday at 7:30pm
Friday at 8:00pm
Saturday at 4:00pm and 8:00pm
Sunday at 2:00pm and 7:00pm

PRICES: Range from \$24-\$49
Previews: \$29(Section A) / \$24(Section B)
Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday Evenings: \$39(Section A) / \$34(Section B)
Friday Evenings, Saturday and Sunday Matinees: \$42(Section A) / \$37(Section B)
Saturday Evenings: \$49(Section A) / \$44(Section B)
(Discounts are available for children, seniors, students, active-duty military and groups)

HOW: Phone: **(619) 337-1525**
Online: www.cygnettheatre.com
In Person: **Old Town Theatre - 4040 Twigg's St., San Diego, CA 92110**