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## “OUR TOWN” AT PS/21 TO FEATURE CAMEO APPEARANCES Well-Known Area Citizens To Portray Professor Willard in this Walking the dog Theater Production

[CHATHAM, NY] - The summer production of the quintessential American classic Our Town at PS/21:Performances Spaces for the 21st Century will have an inspired twist. Each performance will feature a well-known area citizen in the role of the local historian, Professor Willard.

“It truly is a play about our town,” said PS/21 Administrative Director Warren Collins. “Since the play was the centerpiece of our season’s theme of community and the celebration of small town values, rotating the role of Professor Willard seemed like the perfect way to incorporate local people from all walks of life into the play.”

Part of the idea was to bring in different perspectives on the community through some of the voices that live in it. “Each night we feature a different face and voice from our community, making this event even more about our town,” said Director David Anderson. “The guest professors share the stage with the professional actors for their cameo appearance, giving their unique professor to that evening’s event.”

Notable community members have been invited to play the role of Professor Willard for one night during the 16 night run of the play.

- more -

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Rounding out the cast of locals:

Wednesday, July 7	David Black
Thursday, July 8	Fr. Gary Gelfenbien
Saturday, July 10	Parry Teasdale
Sunday, July 11	Mitch Khosrova
Wednesday, July 14	Frank Serpico
Thursday, July 15	David Dashiell
Saturday, July 17	Edgar Acevedo
Sunday, July 18	Lenny Collins
Thursday, July 22	Lloyd Constantine
Friday, July 23	Uel Wade
Saturday, July 24	Jason Kahn
Sunday, July 25	Patrick Doyle
Thursday, July 29	John Spitzer
Friday, July 30	Ira Marks
Saturday, July 31	Sheldon Evans
Sunday, August 1	Martin Ping

Professor Willard appears once and then disappears. The tweedy State University professor gives the audience a long-winded, highly technical recitation of the geological and anthropological history of the town.

Award-winning novelist, screenwriter, and producer David Black portrayed Professor Willard on opening night. “I was intimidated at first but once onstage I lost myself in the part. David is a remarkable director and everyone was so welcoming,” said Black. “This was the first time I’d seen a production at PS/21 and it was fabulous, the best Our Town I’ve ever seen. It was even better than the production with Paul Newman and would stand up on Broadway.”

Chatham resident Elaine Khosrova was there opening night and has seen the show two more times since. “It really makes me appreciate what an actor brings to the stage. The script is a fixed thing, but the nuances of character and gesture are endless--even with amateurs in the role.” It’s also quite remarkable, she adds, “to see this volunteer group of local townspeople--our doctor, our priest, a lawyer, etc.--help connect the universal themes in this play with our very own small town. I suppose that’s what Wilder had in mind when he named the play.”



Screenwriter and Old Chatham resident Rose Ross, who also attended opening night, commended the effort to reach out to the community. “ It’s a great thing to have the general public involved, to reach out and get people participating in theater who would normally be on the other side of the stage,” she said, adding, ”and it’s fun to leaf through the program and see who’s going to be there next.”

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Our Town is a Pulitzer Prize-winning three-act play written by Thornton Wilder in 1937.

In it a small New Hampshire town, Grover’s Corners, is described in great detail. While on the surface the tale seems like a simple retelling of everyday life, underneath love, joy, disappointment and heartbreak transform ordinary lives into something extraordinary.

Walking the dog Theater will present sixteen performances through August 1. All shows begin at 8:00 pm under The Tent at PS/21 located at 2980 Route 66 in the Town of Chatham.

To purchase tickets or for more information about this event, call 518.392.6121 or visit ps21chatham.org. Ticket pricing for the remaining performances is as follows:

July 14, 22, 29

All seats for this performance \$15

July 15, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31 and Aug 1

General admission \$25/ Members \$20/ Students \$12

PS/21 is a not-for-profit organization located at 2980 Route 66 in Chatham, New York. PS/21 is dedicated to the performing arts and serving a diverse community with concerts, programs and residencies by professional artists and ensembles, youth and children’s programming and cultural education opportunities for all ages.

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Photo available upon request