Thornton Wilder’s
The Skin of Our Teeth

Oct. 30, 31, Nov. 4, 6, at 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 5 at 4 p.m.; Nov. 7 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Norton Clapp Theatre, Jones Hall, University of Puget Sound

UNIVERSITY of PUGET SOUND
The Skin of Our Teeth
By Thornton Wilder

Director ......................................................... Geoff Proehl
Scenic Designer ............................................. Kurt Walls
Costume Designer ............................................ Doris Black
Lighting Designer ............................................. Richard Moore
Choreographer ............................................... Stephanie Kriege
Stage Manager ................................................ Lisa Armstrong
Assistant Director ............................................. Megan Noyce
Dramaturg ...................................................... Ella Wrenn

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Directing Class One-Acts
Dec. 7, 8, 9, 2009
Norton Clapp Theatre, Jones Hall
5:30 p.m.
Tickets: $2 sold only at the door

Spring Musical Production Anything Goes
Book by Guy Bolton, P.G. Wodehouse, Howard Lindsay, and Russel Crouse
Lyrics and Music by Cole Porter
March 24–28, 2010
Norton Clapp Theatre, Jones Hall
March 24–27, 7:30 p.m.
March 28, 2 p.m.
Tickets: $11 general, $7 Puget Sound students/faculty/staff, senior citizens, students.
Tickets: sold at Wheelock Information Center. Remaining tickets available at the door. For credit card orders, call 253.879.3419

Senior Theatre Festival 2010
April 9, 10
April 16, 17
April 23, 24
April 30, May 1
Norton Clapp Theatre, Jones Hall
Fridays, 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: $8 general, $6 Puget Sound students/faculty/staff, senior citizens, students.
Tickets: sold at Wheelock Information Center. Remaining tickets available at the door. For credit card orders, call 253.879.3419

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL PAGERS, CELL PHONES, AND ANY OTHER NOISE-OR LIGHT-MAKING DEVICES DURING THE PERFORMANCE.
THEATRE ARTS TECHNICAL SUPPORT
SCHOLARSHIPS 2009–10

Acting (Survey) ................................................................. Emily Cohen
   Jen Davis
   Claire Mason
   Megan Noyce
   Eleanor Ross
   Daniel Smith
   Bryan Sullivan

Acting (Pedagog) ............................................................. Joey Fechtal
   Claire Mason
   Kate Z. Stone
   Bryan Sullivan
   Colin Wallace
   Ella Wrenn

Assistant Director ......................................................... Julia Miller
   Megan Noyce
   Emily Veling

Dramaturg .......................................................... Ella Wrenn

Community Relations ........................................... Jessica Baloun

Research ............................................................... Claire Mason
   Colin Wallace

Lighting ............................................................ Megan Chambers
   Emily Cohen
   Emily Leong
   Mandi Wood
   Rachel Yaron

Props ................................................................. Blake Bewley
   Lindsay Flatt
   Tristen Hall
   Alyson Sundal

Scenic .............................................................. Dane Goulet
   Kate Z. Stone
   Mandi Wood

Sound .............................................................. Rachel Yaron

Stage Manager ............................................................ Lisa Armstrong
   Claire Mason
   Virginia Stone
   Cait Weisensee

Wardrobe .............................................................. Georgina Cohen
   Sarah Gibson

CAST
(In order of appearance)

Announcer, Broadcast Official .................................................. Brent Visser
Assistant Stage Manager .......................................................... Daniel Smith
Assistant Stage Manager .......................................................... Matthew Jackson
Sabina ........................................................................... Meredith Nichols
Stage Manager .................................................................... Adam Colton
Mrs. Antrobus .................................................................... Jessica Baloun
Dolly ................................................................................... Elisabeth Burton
Frederick, Conveener .......................................................... Max Westhelle
Telegraph Boy, Chair Pusher ................................................... Connor Jones
Gladys ............................................................................ Georgina Cohen
Henry ................................................................................... Michael Armstrong
Mr. Antrobus ....................................................................... Drew Shannon
Doctor, Conveener ............................................................. Bryan Sullivan
Homer, Conveener ............................................................ Joseph Workman
Euripides, Chair Pusher ...................................................... Tyler Harmon
Professor, Bingo Caller .......................................................... Chloe Nord
Miss E. Muse, Boardwalk Girl ................................................ Rachel Yaron
Miss T. Muse, Boardwalk Girl ............................................... Jen Davis
Miss M. Muse, Boardwalk Girl ............................................. Jacki Ward
Moses, Conveener .............................................................. Colin Wallace
Refugee, Fortune Teller .......................................................... Emi Chiba
Aristophanes, Conveener ..................................................... Nick Spencer
House Manager .................................................................. Eleanor Ross
Understudies ....................................................................... Megan Noyce
   Bryan Sullivan
   Colin Wallace
   Ella Wrenn

There will be two 10-minute intermissions.
THAT NIGHT

One evening just about two years ago, I was in rehearsal for C. Rosalind Bell’s *The New Orleans Monologues*. Grace Livingston, playing the pivotal character of Elaine Madonna Bergeron, and I were working our way through Rosalind’s words, trying to find our way through a beautiful and harrowing play about New Orleans, Katrina, and so much more.

That evening we came to these words spoken by Elaine to the audience, describing a "skin of our teeth" moment, as she and her neighbor (played by Eleanor Ross ’10) are saved by a local drug dealer (played by Yusuf Word ’09) for whom Elaine, until then, had only scorn. Other neighbors were, however, not so fortunate. As Sabina notes, early in our production of Wilder’s play, “In the midst of life, we are in the midst of death.”

Here are the words we came upon:

ELAINE: That night was terrible. It was just getting dark. Arnold told us not to look, but how you not going look? Your mind wasn’t built for that type of rumination, you know, and your eyes certainly didn’t come to the earth to take that kind of thing in.

Why you think people go crazy? Too much that’s why. Too much seen that shouldn’t been seen. Too much known that shouldn’t be known. Too much ugly. You have to have some kind of balance.

“That night was terrible.”

It was not the rescue Grace and I noticed that evening, but the night. I said to Grace, something like, you and I are both old enough to have known what these words mean, nights when the phone rings after a certain hour. As it is, anyone reading this note is old enough to know.

Wilder’s Antrobus family, in the midst of all their self-serving, rascally silliness, have also been there, in the tiny boat that floats through the streets of New Orleans in the midst of death.

THEATRE ARTS SEASON

Department of Theatre Arts offers several dramatic performances each year. A faculty-directed production takes stage each semester in Norton Clapp Theatre, along with Directing Class One Acts in late fall and Senior Theatre Festival in April. Recent faculty-directed plays include *A Streetcar Named Desire, Tartuffe, Iphigenia at Aulis, Angels in America, Part I, Romeo and Juliet, Kiss Me, Kate, Arcadia, and The New Orleans Monologues*. Students have directed and designed such plays as *All My Sons, Big Love, Top Girls, Richard III, Fefu and Her Friends, The Glory of Living and Anton in Show Business* as part of the Senior Festival. Matthew Norton Clapp Endowment for Visiting Artists brings outstanding contemporary theater makers to campus for workshops and presentations. Past guest artists have included Bill T. Jones, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Godfrey Hamilton and Mark Pinkosh, Holly Hughes, Steven Deitz, Russell Davis, and C. Rosalind Bell, as well as Pulitzer Prize winners Edward Albee and Robert Schenckkan. Theatre Arts encourages all university students, regardless of major, to participate in all aspects of theatrical production, both onstage and behind the scenes. The department web page (http://www2.pugetsound.edu/theatrearts/) provides up-to-date information on auditions and upcoming performances. Functioning independently of the Theatre Arts Department, ASUPS Student Theatre Productions and other campus groups present an exciting variety of theatre throughout the year in the newly remodeled Rausch Auditorium and in other campus venues.

NORTON CLAPP THEATRE

Norton Clapp, chairman of the Laird Norton Company and president and chairman of Weyerhaeuser Company, served as a trustee for more than half of the University of Puget Sound’s first century—from 1933 until 1995. This 62 year term included work with four University presidents (Todd, Thompson, Phibbs, and Pierce). Mr. Clapp served as Chairman of the Board for 19 years and later was named Chairman Emeritus and then Honorary Chairman of the Board, for a term running “forever.” The Board reported that “no other trustee in the history of the University of Puget Sound has contributed for as many years or more significantly than Mr. Clapp in advancing the institution's national academic standing, nor has any trustee been more admired or appreciated by so many students, alumni, faculty, staff, and trustees.” The Board of Trustees named the Inside Theatre the Norton Clapp Theatre in 1998 to commemorate his committed service to the University of Puget Sound.
Toward the end of the play, Mr. Antrobus speaks of the voices that come to us in such times, voices that, like the boat that Arnold brought to Elaine, have the power to lift us up, to carry us over the water, to begin again.

As you came into the theater tonight, you saw the words spoken by some of these voices in the lobby. They come to us from across time, culture, place, and history. We hope that as you read them, they will call to your mind the words, the images, the voices, the spirits—gentle and fierce—that sing to us from and in the night.

Finally, it has often been, in the midst of making this play and for reasons I cannot quite explain, Joshua, my son, who has come to mind. Not because I find him in the play, perhaps because in so many ways, I don’t. Perhaps as well because one of his playlists have found a place on my iPod, where they’ve lived during the months we’ve been working on this play, accompanying me on walks, in one or two instances, joining us—Lisa, Megan, Ella, Cait, the entire company—in that same space where Grace and I found ourselves, that space we call “rehearsal.”

I’m not sure why Josh has been so near, but he’s been close by, along with Morlie and Kristen, Mercedes and Darold, Jim and Dave and Lee, the spirits (add your names here . . . )—gentle and fierce—that sing to us on those days when we know what the title of this play means.

Geoff Proehl, director
When we started working on *The Skin of Our Teeth*, people would ask me what the show was about; and as the production’s dramaturg, it’s a question that I, of all people, really ought to have been able to answer. Initially, I would giggle guiltily and mutter something about mammoths and the end of the world. But as we got into the text, I realized that the play is about something a whole lot more than that.

Thornton Wilder thought of *The Skin of Our Teeth* as showing the “destiny of the whole human group seen from a telescope 1,000 miles away.” Paula Vogel, who wrote the forward for the edition of the text that we used, says that Wilder has the Antrobus family on a “theatrical treadmill of entrapment … facing the end of time again and again until we realize that the whole human race is perpetually caught in crisis but also perpetually surviving.”

*The Skin of Our Teeth* is about hope. It’s about finding whatever it is that can pull you through, whatever you have that can give you the strength to keep going, to start again, to rebuild, to continue—even when it feels like the world is ending. For Sabina, it’s going to the movies. For Mrs. Antrobus, it’s her family, and the promise of something better. For Mr. Antrobus, it’s the thought of his wife and children, the thought of the people struggling for a better life, and the thoughts and ideas he pulled from his books, ideas that, when associated with the hours of the night, got him through the war, and gave him strength to believe, to start over.

While we were rehearsing, there was a moment when Geoff asked all of the cast to put their hands on their hearts and really look at each other. And it struck me that this is at the root of the meaning of the play, 30 people looking at each other with an awareness of their hearts and the ability to really see the people around them. And in that memory, I find immense hope.

Ella Wrenn, dramaturg