

Western Piedmont Community College and Drama 120

proudly present

Thornton Wilder's The Long Christmas Dinner

a play in one act

December 19 - 21, 1983



THE CAST
(in order of appearance)

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| LUCIA | Susan Jennings |
| MOTHER BAYARD | Tonya Walker |
| RODERICK, Lucia's husband | James Chapman |
| COUSIN BRANDON | Richard Garrison |
| CHARLES | Toby Stephan |
| GENEVIEVE | Barbara Rodriguez |
| (Charles and Genevieve are the children of Roderick and Lucia.) | |
| THE NURSE | Jamie Eller |
| LEONORA, Charles' wife | Kaye Smith |
| ERMENGARDE, a cousin | Sonya Jordan |
| SAM | Michael Smith |
| LUCIA II | Bethany Ball |
| RODERICK II | Kevin Doerle |
| (Sam, Lucia II, and Roderick II are the children of Charles and Leonora.) | |

The scene takes place in the dining room of the Bayard home.

The play covers a period of ninety years in the life of the Bayard household. The individual characters grow up, grow old, and leave the table, and their world changes drastically around them. Yet the bonds of family and home which bring them together year after year at Christmastime endure.

The Long Christmas Dinner is presented through special arrangement with Baker's Plays of Boston, Massachusetts.

THE PRODUCTION CREW

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | Cheryl Oxford |
| LIGHTING | Kevin Doerle |
| COSTUMES & PROPERTIES | The Cast |
| MAKE-UP | Toby Stephan Katie Stephan |
| HOUSE MANAGER | Mary Lou Furr |
| STAFF | Kathy Heald Sanja Staley Joyce Rector |
| RESERVATIONS MANAGER | Toby Stephan |
| MUSICIANS | Louise White Pat Harton Mark Buchanan |
| SOUND | Buddy Noles |
| CATERER | Piedmont Vending |
| PROGRAM | Louise White |
| PHOTOGRAPHY | Mary Evanish |

Special Thanks To:

Ken Clark
Mabel and Jim Oxford
Raymond Goodfellow
Cheryl Marshall
Laura Clay
Donna Clark

IN THE WINGS . . .

Drama 120 is planning a production of Tillie Olsen's short story "Help Her to Believe" for later in the winter quarter. The piece will be performed for literature students at the College who are studying the story. Taken from a collection of Olsen's stories called I Stand Here Ironing, the story deals with a mother's psychological struggle to let her daughter be her own person.

Drama 120 thanks all of the friends of the theatre, both on and off stage, for their invaluable support this year and wishes all of you a joyous holiday season.



WPCC Drama 120 is excited to announce our first-ever dinner theatre production--Thornton Wilder's The Long Christmas Dinner. Performance dates for this Yule-tide play are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, December 19-21. Dinner will be served in the college cafeteria in the basement of the Student Services building, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The meal will be followed by a performance of the one-act play, The Long Christmas Dinner, beginning at 7:45 p.m.

The Long Christmas Dinner traces a New England family through three generations, telescoping ninety years of the family's Christmas dinners into the duration of this thirty-minute play. Noted theatre critic John Gassner has called Wilder's play "the most beautiful one-act play in English prose."

The menu for the dinner buffet includes baked ham, scalloped potatoes, green bean casserole, corn, cole slaw, rolls, beverage, and pie.

Tickets for Drama 120's dinner production of The Long Christmas Dinner are \$6.00. Reservations are required and may be made by calling the college at 437-8688, extension 2223.









Wed., Dec. 21, 1983



Toby Stephan, Kay Smith, Jamie Eller in scene from play.

Dinner theater a fresh venture

By MARY LOU SOSSOMAN
For The News Herald

WPCC's Drama 120 first attempt at a dinner theater with the production of Thornton Wilder's "The Long Christmas Dinner" shows the versatility and freshness of this dramatic troupe. Besides the physical nourishment provided through the buffet, "The Long Christmas Dinner" also provides emotional nourishment and much "food for thought."

As unlike a student center cafeteria as possible, the atmosphere for the dinner theater is very festive with red candles and fresh greenery decorating each table. The mood is set by the musical selection of favorite Christmas songs such as "The Little Drummer Boy" and a comical rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Both atmosphere and music create a setting for lively but relaxed dinner conversation.

"The Long Christmas Dinner" is a thirty minute one-act play set around the Bayard family Christmas dinner table covering a span of 90 years. Various methods of depicting time lapses are used from the obvious like the dimming of lights to the more subtle references to the Christmas morning sermons. Each delivered by a different minister,

Genevieve's hysterical outburst the Christmas after her mother's death reveals her grief at not telling Lucia how much she meant to her before she died.

Tickets for "The Long Christmas Dinner" were sold out for the Tuesday night performance. As of this writing, reservations are still being accepted for Wednesday's performance.

Because of the format of "The Long Christmas Dinner" and its abbreviated length there is a necessity in immediately and continually setting the pace to establishing the passage of time. This performance by Drama 120 is at its best when the scenes are emotionally charged. Several clues to a new Christmas dinner are lost in dialogue delivered too rapidly. However, by the end of the act, I felt a part of the Bayard family and a strong sense of continuity and, above all, hope.

"The Long Christmas Dinner" presents universal situations of birth and death, joy and grief. Because Christmas is a time for family, it is also the time to recall what has gone before in a family's history. It is those who have died who are missed and remembered at the holidays.

Although the impetus of "The Long Christmas Dinner" is on how quickly the years pass as when Leonora admonishes her baby to stay the way you are because, "I don't want time to pass any faster," there is another stronger theme stressed throughout.



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