

## Our Town (1940 film)

***Our Town*** is a 1940 American drama romance film adaptation of a play of the same name by Thornton Wilder starring Martha Scott as Emily Webb, and William Holden as George Gibbs. The cast also included Fay Bainter, Beulah Bondi, Thomas Mitchell, Guy Kibbee and Frank Craven. It was adapted by Harry Chandlee, Craven and Wilder, and directed by Sam Wood.

The film was a faithful reproduction of the play except for two significant changes: the film used scenery, whereas the play had not; the events of the third act, which in the play revolve around the death of one of the main characters, were turned into a dream from which she awakens, allowing her to resume a normal life. Producer Sol Lesser worked with Wilder in creating these changes.

A radio adaptation of the film on *Lux Radio Theater* on May 6, 1940, used the altered film ending.

The U.S. copyright of the film was not renewed after its first term expired in 1968. However, because it is a derivative work from a play that is still under U.S. copyright, it is not deemed to be in the public domain.

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### Cast

- William Holden - George Gibbs
- Martha Scott - Emily Webb
- Fay Bainter - Mrs. Julia Gibbs
- Dix Davis - Joe Crowell Jr.
- Beulah Bondi - Mrs. Myrtle Webb
- Thomas Mitchell - Dr. Frank F. Gibbs
- Guy Kibbee - Mr. Charles Webb
- Tim Davis - Si Crowell
- Stuart Erwin - Howie Newsome
- Frank Craven - Stage Manager

<i>Our Town</i>	
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<b>Directed by</b>	Sam Wood
<b>Produced by</b>	Sol Lesser
<b>Screenplay by</b>	Harry Chandlee Frank Craven Thornton Wilder
<b>Based on</b>	<i>Our Town</i> (1938 play) by Thornton Wilder
<b>Starring</b>	William Holden Martha Scott Fay Bainter
<b>Music by</b>	Aaron Copland
<b>Cinematography</b>	Bert Glennon
<b>Edited by</b>	Sherman Todd
<b>Production company</b>	Sol Lesser Productions
<b>Distributed by</b>	United Artists
<b>Release date</b>	May 24, 1940 (United States)
<b>Running time</b>	90 minutes
<b>Country</b>	United States

- Doro Merande - Mrs. Louella Soames
- Philip Wood - Simon Stimson
- Ruth Tobey - Rebecca Gibbs (as Ruth Toby)
- Douglas Gardiner - Wally Webb
- Arthur B. Allen - Prof. Willard (as Arthur Allen)
- Charles Trowbridge - Rev. Dr. Ferguson
- Spencer Charters - Const. Bill Warren

<b>Language</b>	English
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## Score

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Aaron Copland accepted the invitation to compose the musical score for the screen version of life in the small town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire. He explained, "For the film version, they were counting on the music to translate the transcendental aspects of the story. I tried for clean and clear sounds and in general used straight-forward harmonies and rhythms that would project the serenity and sense of security of the story." Copland arranged about ten minutes from the film score for a suite. It is dedicated to Leonard Bernstein.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Awards

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The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture.<sup>[2]</sup> Scott, who reprised her stage role as Emily Webb, was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress. Aaron Copland was nominated for Best Score and Thomas T. Moulton was nominated for Best Sound.<sup>[3]</sup>

## References

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1. "Copland, Aaron Our Town (1940) Music from the film score" (<https://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Aaron-Copland-Our-Town/2258>). *Boosey.com*. Retrieved 2018-11-19.
2. "NY Times: Our Town" (<https://movies.nytimes.com/movie/36778/Our-Town/details>). *NY Times*. Retrieved 2008-12-13.
3. "The 13th Academy Awards (1941) Nominees and Winners" (<http://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1941>). *oscars.org*. Retrieved 2011-08-13.

## External links

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- *Our Town* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032881/>) on IMDb
- *Our Town* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v36778>) at AllMovie
- *Our Town* (<http://www.tcm.turner.com/tcmdb/title/title.jsp?stid=85941>) at the TCM Movie Database
- *Our Town* (<https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/4334>) at the American Film Institute Catalog
- *Our Town* ([https://archive.org/details/Our\\_Town](https://archive.org/details/Our_Town)) is available for free download at the Internet Archive

<https://variety.com/1939/film/reviews/our-town-1200413018/>

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