

# Newsroom

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# Theatre and Performance Presenting *Look Homeward, Angel*

OCTOBER 5, 2008



Every small town has its gossip, but not every small town has that gossip adapted into a Pulitzer Prize-winning play. Georgia Southern University's Theatre and Performance presents *Look Homeward, Angel* through Oct. 11 in the Black Box theatre in the Center for Art and Theatre.

*Look Homeward, Angel*, adapted by Ketti Frings

from Thomas Wolfe's 1929 semi-autobiographical novel, deals with the struggles of a young man leaving behind his home and family to go to college. Unlike many of the plays of its time, the characters in the play are not perfect people; they all have good and evil in them.

"These are real people with real lives," director Gary Dartt said. "Like all great tragic characters, these people aren't always likable."

This is a play, ultimately, about the people who shape our lives. Those people for Eugene Gant (Kenneth Wigley) are his family and the guests at his family's boarding house. His mother Eliza (Ellen George) runs the house and family with a firm hand. Usually drunk, and always disorderly, Eugene's father W.O. (Geoffrey Carr) is less than the ideal father figure. Eugene's brother Ben (Eddie Key) wants desperately to fight in the Great War, but something dark is standing in his way.

A cast of characters pass through the house over the course of the play, bringing love, pain, and joy with them. Love strikes Eugene when he meets Laura James (Mandy Shead). Eugene desires to escape the trappings of his home to see the world, and he wants to take Laura with him on his journeys. But Eugene feels a strong sense of responsibility to his family, and struggles to part ways with the only world he's ever known.

In Wolfe's novel, he held nothing back when he described the people of his young adulthood.

"It is important to remember that these were people, and he made a lot of enemies with this book," Dartt said. "The audience will leave knowing more about some of those characters than they do their own families."

'I think that everyone can find a little bit of themselves in the show,'" said Shead, a junior at Georgia Southern.

The actors went above and beyond the usual research to prepare for their roles. Many of the actors visited Thomas Wolfe's childhood home in which the play takes place.

'We traveled up to Asheville, N.C. the town where the events took place and saw the Thomas Wolfe Memorial,'" Shead said. 'It was humbling to be in the same room where my character falls in love. We felt like it gave us an extra responsibility to tell their story.'

Kelly Berry, technical director of the Center for Art and Theatre, designed the set and lights for the production. Professor Melanie Stone designed the sound, and Brenda Dartt designed the costumes.

GSU junior Caroline Lea stage managed the production.

The show runs through Oct. 11, with performances at 7:30 each night. Tickets are \$4 for students, \$8 for faculty and staff and \$12 general admission. For ticket reservations or show information, call the box office at (912) 478-5379.