

ABOUT *HARPER LEE*

In the one-taxi town of Monroeville, Alabama, where Harper Lee grew up, everyone told stories. Housewives told stories as they hung out the wash. Men told stories while they hunted and fished. And lawyers like Amasa Lee, Harper's father, filled the venerable courthouse with stories of guilt or innocence. Stories fell like rain in the childhood of Harper Lee, until her imagination brimmed like a dam about to burst. *To Kill a Mockingbird* overflows with those haunting, homey voices. They tell a story whose powerful theme many people were longing to believe back in 1960, as America wobbled on the brink of tumultuous social change: that love can overcome hatred, and that each person carries some inner beauty, some fragile mockingbird's song that the rest of us need to hear.

Virtually overnight the book's popularity turned an obscure corner of Alabama into a celebrated piece of literary real estate, and it worked a similarly stunning transformation on the life of its young author, who was then living in a cold-water Manhattan apartment.

If there ever was a remote, rural hamlet, it was Monroeville, Alabama, where Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926. As in most of the South, the past was alive in Monroeville. Young boys and girls inherited a vivid pastiche of ghost stories, tall tales, and widespread rumors from a grassroots oral tradition. Nelle (Ellen spelled backward) took up the local vocation at age seven, when she began to write short "practice" narratives. An intellectual prodigy, she was bored with school and was 10 years old before she realized that not everyone could carry a full symphony around in her head.

But Nelle was also a combative, sun-baked tomboy. Her best friend and constant companion was her cousin Truman Capote. The two were an inseparable, if unlikely, pair. He was a dainty, fair-haired child with an overstuffed vocabulary of adult words; she,

an overall-clad urchin who would sooner knock a boy down than argue with him.

The two shared a passion for mischief, and one night they persuaded their aunt to take them spying on a Ku Klux Klan rally. For Nelle, the evening's foray presented a frightening first glimpse of her community's dark side. Perhaps the most fateful event in the duo's shared summers, however, occurred the day Nelle's father brought home a beat-up typewriter, thinking the machine might provide some amusement for the children. Nelle, Truman, and the Underwood became fast friends. Truman supplied a frayed Webster's dictionary and Nelle provided office space—her backyard treehouse.

Their second most important observation post was the balcony of the Monroeville courthouse, where they watched Amasa Lee toil for the respected local law firm of Barnett, Bugg, and Lee. With his deep voice and dignified bearing—no doubt inherited from his forebear General Robert E. Lee—he must have seemed to a child's eye the epitome of wise authority.

As Nelle grew, so did Amasa's quiet influence over her. After four years at the University of Alabama she decided to study law there, hoping to one day join her sister as a partner in their father's law firm. But Nelle's love of storytelling continued to tug at her ambitions.

Six months before earning her law degree, Nelle packed up and moved to New York City. With distance came perspective. In the tradition of many Southern writers, Lee's relocation freed her to tell the truth about her hometown. Once she was far removed from Monroeville, choice pieces of regional speech began to ring clearly in her ears, and various youthful episodes stepped forward from memory. And the law, as it turned out, provided her with a deep well of dramatic story ideas.

To husband her creative energy for four hours of intense writing each evening, Nelle took a job as an airline reservations clerk. By day she avoided composing so much as a letter; at night she devoted herself to learning the craft of fiction. After seeing a set of her short stories, a literary agent encouraged her to expand them into a novel. Nelle was both delighted and disheartened. How, after all, could she take on so large a task while coping with a full-time job?

In 1956 some close friends who knew that Nelle missed her family during the holidays invited her over for Christmas. After a large pile of presents had been opened and scattered by the children, Nelle's hosts pointed to an envelope nestled within the boughs of the tree.

The note inside contained the most extraordinary gift exchange: Nelle would receive from her friends a full year's financial support, and in return she would single-mindedly apply herself toward the goal of completing her novel. Nelle moved to the window with tears in her eyes. As she looked out on the snow-softened city, she struggled to grasp that she had actually been granted "a full, fair chance at a new life." She vowed that by making the most of it, she would reward her friends' wondrous act of faith.

Now a full-time writer, Nelle set herself to the business of communing with her past and bringing it to life. While hammering out the novel, she let everything else lapse—her diet, her social life, even her beloved golf game. But a year later she emerged from her creative cocoon with a first draft of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The publishing firm of J.B. Lippincott saw enough promise in Lee's manuscript to support her through three years of revisions, slowed by her periodic visits home to her ailing father.

In the fall of 1959 Nelle restlessly awaited publication of her book. Then came a phone call from Truman Capote, himself now a writer, inviting Nelle to join him in investigating a murder case in the Midwest.

Reunited, the pair headed out to Garden City, Kansas, where they gathered material for what would eventually become Capote's landmark book, *In Cold Blood*. Before long, Nelle would join her cousin as one of the most highly acclaimed new voices in American literature.

By the end of 1960 *To Kill a Mockingbird* was a fixture on the bestseller lists and was already being translated into a dozen languages. In 1961 Harper Lee was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Shortly thereafter Universal Studios adapted her book into an Academy Award-winning film, which in turn earned Lee an invitation to dine with President John F. Kennedy at the White House. Most pleased of all was 80-year-old Amasa Lee, who lauded his daughter for her fine book and the risks she had taken to produce it. He concluded a congratulatory telegram with the pithy review: "You'll have to go some to beat this one."

Typically, Amasa Lee's humility caused him to be surprised when many of his Monroeville neighbors began calling him Atticus, after the book's noble hero, whom he resembled so closely. Perhaps it was this similarity between fictional character and real man that made Nelle fret about Gregory Peck's ability to portray her father in the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She worried that Peck's youthful good looks might hinder him in projecting Atticus's moral seriousness but changed her mind the instant she saw him in character. "It was the most amazing transformation I had ever seen," she said of Peck's uncanny performance. During filming Peck got to meet, know, and—like almost everyone else—respect Amasa Lee. When Lee died on April 15, 1962, Peck remembered him as "a beautiful man" and added, "I am very proud to have known him."

A few weeks later, while sitting nervously at the Academy Awards ceremony, Peck clutched a gold watch that was engraved "To Gregory from Harper." With characteristic generosity, Harper Lee had made a gift of her father's watch to the actor who had so subtly animated her artistic vision. Peck held on to the watch as he stood onstage and accepted the award for Best Actor. One of the first people he thanked was Harper Lee.

It is here, in the flush of fame and applause, that the story of Harper Lee's literary career comes to an abrupt and intriguing end. Whether she will ever surpass her enormously successful first novel remains an open question, for 30 years after her triumph she has yet to publish another work.

Meanwhile, *To Kill a Mockingbird* seems only to grow in stature with the passage of time. As dozens of editions have been published and tens of millions of copies have been sold, Lee's tale of quiet courage has taken its place on the shelf with America's literary classics. For many, that is quite enough. In a voice that Harper Lee would immediately warm up to, a Monroeville man once summed up the feelings of himself and his neighbors: "We're proud of you, doggone it."

No critic ever offered higher praise.

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Quotations from *To Kill a Mockingbird*

It was times like these when I thought my father, who hated guns and had never been to any wars, was the bravest man who ever lived.

I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do.

Before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience.

When a child asks you something, answer him, for goodness' sake. But don't make a production of it. Children are children, but they can spot an evasion quicker than adults, and evasion simply muddles 'em.

So it took an eight-year-old child to bring 'em to their senses.... That proves something—that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they're still human. Hmp, maybe we need a police force of children.

I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks.

The one place where a man ought to get a square deal is in a courtroom, be he any color of the rainbow, but people have a way of carrying their resentments right into a jury box. As you grow older, you'll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don't you forget it—whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from, that white man is trash.

ABOUT THE REP

Montana Repertory Theatre was established as a professional touring company in 1968 to provide professional theatre to our own and neighboring Western states at an affordable cost. Montana Rep is one of the oldest and most respected touring companies in the country. Our mission is to tell the great stories of our world to enlighten, develop, and celebrate the human spirit in an ever-expanding community.

Montana Rep assembles principal actors, directors and designers with prestigious credits and awards from the worlds of Broadway, national and international tours, film, and television.

Main stage productions are supplemented by professional theatre workshops, audience talkbacks, and a one-hour performance suitable for high schools.

Montana Rep has been touring nationally since 1996, when we presented our first production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Following that highly successful tour and building on its success were *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Miracle Worker*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Lost in Yonkers*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Montana Rep is proud to present the very best of the American theatre tradition, as we continue examining the heart of the American character through the medium of live theatre.

The company receives substantial funding from the state of Montana through the Montana Arts Council, the Montana Cultural Trust, the Montana state legislature, and The University of Montana. This funding helps maintain the most affordable fees of any comparable theatre on the road today.

The company tours with fifteen actors and a crew of seven. Montana Rep is completely self-contained, providing sponsors large and small, in facilities ranging from performing arts centers to high school gyms, the opportunity to enjoy first-class theatre.



MONTANA REP is funded in part by a grant from the Montana Arts Council (an agency of state government); with support from the Montana State Legislature; The University of Montana; the Montana Cultural Trust; the Dramatists Guild Fund, Inc.; and the Agnes Ranjo Capps Fund for the Colony.

THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Greg Johnson has served as artistic director of the Montana Rep

since 1990. He brought with him a commitment to excellence developed during years of experience in the New York theatre, where he worked with the best directors, choreographers, actors, designers, and playwrights in the country. From Neil Simon and Gene Saks to Hugh Leonard, Elizabeth Ashley, Beth Henley, Christine Baranski, Andie McDowell, and Barnard Hughes, Mr. Johnson has been privileged to work with the finest. He brings his energy and expertise to every aspect of his involvement with the Montana Rep.

Greg Johnson's Broadway credits include

Biloxi Blues; Crimes of the Heart; Is There Life After High School?; Da; and Hide and Seek. National tours include the Broadway productions of *Steel Magnolias, Crimes of the Heart, and Biloxi Blues.* Mr. Johnson spent nineteen years working in the professional theatre in New York City as an actor, stage manager, and director before coming to Montana to head the Montana Rep.

Since joining the Montana Rep, Greg Johnson has directed *Broadway Bound; Nunsense II; The Heidi Chronicles; Someone Who'll Watch Over Me; Lend Me a Tenor; Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll; The Real Thing; Willi; The Voice of the Prairie;* and the national tours of *To Kill a Mockingbird, It's a Wonderful Life, Death of a Salesman, A Streetcar Named Desire, and The Trip to Bountiful.* In addition, he is responsible for development of The Missoula Colony: A Gathering of Artists in Support of the Writer's Craft at The University of Montana. Mr. Johnson has served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and, with the Rep, is a member of the Theatre Communications Group, a national network of regional theatres. He serves on the faculty of The University of Montana School of Fine Arts.

With To Kill a Mockingbird, we return to a story we first encountered with joy over a decade ago. We are delighted to reexamine this timeless tale in a new century, for a new generation of theatregoers.

GREG JOHNSON, Artistic Director

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Now in its twenty-fourth year, our program offers experience, creativity, and flexibility to audiences across the country. Every year, our professional actors and production crew hold workshops and give backstage tours for audiences on our tour. These inspired professionals teach various aspects of the theatre. Special topics are added each year depending on the themes inherent in the current play and the talents of our company.

Contact for workshops and discussion information:

Salina Chatlain
Assistant to the Artistic Director

Phone: (406) 243-6809
FAX: (406) 243-5726
e-mail: Salina.Chatlain@mso.umt.edu

The educational outreach program acquaints audiences with live theatre and the work of playwrights, making the process of play production fascinating and accessible. In doing so, the program educates audiences, developing their appetite for plays and literature. The Montana Repertory Theatre is strongly committed to nurturing and developing new audiences for the theatre and supporting the classroom experience with theatre arts. With that in mind, we offer educational programs to you on the day that we perform in your community. You may stipulate in your contract which educational outreach activities you prefer and we will arrange for them, schedule permitting, since scheduling depends on our travel time to your city.

Educational outreach available:

- Pre- or post-performance discussions with audiences
- Backstage tour with Montana Rep technicians
- Professional acting and improvisation technique workshops

Let's start early! The most successful experiences are those that are arranged ahead of time. You may wish to consult with the local drama or language arts teachers in your town so they can make plans to include their students. Scheduling the workshop, either at your school or at the theatre, can be arranged through Salina Chatlain, assistant to the artistic director.

Thanks to our funders for their generosity:
The University of Montana, the Montana Arts Council, and the Montana Cultural Trust.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Information:

1. The Rep will arrive in two 24' rental trucks (not semis). The company supplies a set, totally floor-based.
2. The Rep crew will consist of six people: a carpenter, two electricians, wardrobe, sound, and props. It is not a yellow card crew.
3. The load-in will take about 45 minutes, if it is a straight shot onto the stage and does not involve steps or elevators. The setup will take about 90 minutes and the light focus and sound testing 2-3 hours, depending on the variables found in each venue and the skills of the local crew. Strike and load-out will take at least two hours.

What the Rep needs from you, the sponsor:

1. A scaled floor plan and section of your performance space.
2. A plan of the theatre showing the load-in route, dressing rooms, and house, including number of seats.
3. Any established rules regarding the use of your space.
4. The name, title, and phone number of the person we should contact regarding any questions about the theatre and technical matters.
5. A city map with your theatre marked on it.

What the Rep expects at each venue:

1. A local crew of eight people, including an electrician familiar with the site's electrical capabilities. One of the crew should have keys to all areas which the company will need access to, including, but not limited to, stage, dressing rooms, electrical power main shut off, and control booths.
2. A proscenium opening at least 34' wide and 17' high. The stage should be 28' deep; if there is no crossover from one side of the stage to the other, except by using the stage, the depth will need to be 30'. There should be at least 8' of wing space in each wing and this space should be free to a height of at least 12'.

3. The stage area should be free of all scenery and other material. It should be clean and heated or cooled as needed.

4. Dressing rooms should be available for both men and women. These should be clean and available for the company's exclusive use from six hours before show time the day of the performance. There should be restrooms for the performers' exclusive use from one hour before show time to the end of the performance.

5. At load-in there should be a coffee/snack station available. Items at the station should include coffee and coffeemaker, cups, sugar, milk, etc., bottled water for 25 people, and an assortment of fresh fruit and juice. Lunch to be provided on load-in day. Any other items would be greatly appreciated.

If your space cannot meet one or more of these requirements, please call us at once. Many times we can adapt if we know in advance.

Lighting:

1. If your facility has an adequate inventory, the Rep will send you a general plot which you can adapt to your theatre and hang and circuit before the company arrives. Our demands are not excessive and will seldom exceed 70 instruments.

2. If you do not have the inventory to do the hang, we travel with enough equipment to do a minimal plot. We will use our instruments and your front of house positions, circuits, and control capability if they are sufficient. Our equipment is equipped with stage plugs.

3. We expect you to have the color needed for the plot.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

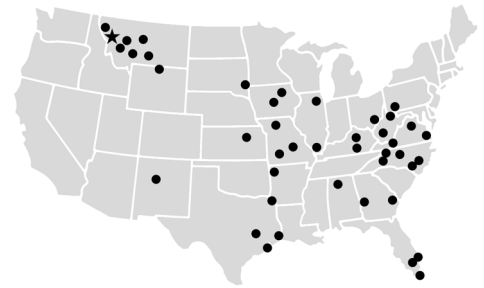
BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

JANUARY

23 WED **Lewistown, Montana** / Fergus High School Performing Arts Theatre
 24 THU **Bozeman, Montana** / Strand Union Theatre
 29-31 TUE-THU **Missoula, Montana** / Montana Theatre

FEBRUARY

1-2 FRI-SAT **Missoula, Montana** / Montana Theatre
 5-9 TUE-SAT **Missoula, Montana** / Montana Theatre
 11 MON **Plains, Montana** / Plains High School Gym
 12 TUE **Helena, Montana** / Myrna Loy Center
 13 WED **Billings, Montana** / Alberta Bair Theater
 15 FRI **Butte, Montana** / Mother Lode Theatre
 17 SUN **Sheridan, Wyoming** / WYO Theater
 19 TUE **Sioux Falls, South Dakota** / Washington Pavilion of Arts and Sciences
 22 FRI **Chillicothe, Missouri** / Gary Dickenson Performing Arts Center
 23 SAT **Manhattan, Kansas** / McCain Auditorium
 26 TUE **Albuquerque, New Mexico** / Popejoy Hall
 29 FRI **Alma, Arkansas** / Alma Performing Arts Center



MONTANA REPERTORY THEATRE

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MARCH

1 SAT **Texarkana, Texas** / Perot Theatre
 3 MON **Springfield, Missouri** / Juanita K. Hammons Hall
 6 THU **College Station, Texas** / Rudder Theatre
 7 FRI **Orange, Texas** / Lutcher Theatre
 8 SAT **Galveston, Texas** / Grand 1894 Opera House
 11 TUE **Decatur, Alabama** / Princess Theatre
 13 THU **Columbus, Georgia** / River Center for the Performing Arts
 14 FRI **Statesboro, Georgia** / Georgia Southern University Performing Arts Center
 18 TUE **Key Largo, Florida** / Ocean Reef Cultural Center
 19 WED **Palm Gardens, Florida** / Elsey Campus Theater
 20 THU **Belle Glade, Florida** / Dolly Hand Theater
 25 TUE **Winston-Salem, North Carolina** / Stevens Center
 27 THU **Pembroke, North Carolina** / Givens Performing Arts Center
 28-29 FRI-SAT **Newport News, Virginia** / Ferguson Center for the Arts

APRIL

2 WED **Blacksburg, Virginia** / Virginia Tech University
 3 THU **Charlottesville, Virginia** / Paramount Theater
 4 FRI **Charleston, West Virginia** / Clay Center for Arts and Sciences
 5 SAT **Uniontown, Pennsylvania** / State Theatre Center
 7 MON **Fairmont, West Virginia** / Fairmont State College
 10 THU **Boone, North Carolina** / Appalachian State University
 11 FRI **Smithfield, North Carolina** / Johnston Community College
 12 SAT **Morganton, North Carolina** / Morganton Municipal Auditorium
 15 TUE **Carbondale, Illinois** / Shryock Auditorium
 16 WED **Rolla, Missouri** / University of Missouri
 18 FRI **Ames, Iowa** / Iowa State University
 19 SAT **Cedar Falls, Iowa** / University of Northern Iowa
 20 SUN **Aurora, Illinois** / Paramount Arts Centre
 23 WED **Athens, Ohio** / Templeton-Blackburn Memorial Auditorium
 24 THU **Somerset, Kentucky** / Center for Rural Development Theater
 25-28 FRI-MON **Lexington, Kentucky** / Lexington Opera House