

2017 Black Box Theatre Repertory Series

ALLISON WATROUS

Guest Director

BUS STOP

Inge: A Quintessential Playwright of Realism.

Theatrical realism is described as performances that are faithful to real life settings, time and behavior. Inge's work is an embodiment of this type of storytelling.

William Inge has been described as the playwright of the heartland. He was committed to writing what he knew and exposing the rich humanity that existed in the small towns of Kansas. He didn't want to use the term "flat" –he preferred "level" to describe the landscape and the people. The people are level, but not uncomplicated. They live vibrant lives with universal struggles. This is what drove Inge's writing and this is why his plays are so relevant today. He asked essential questions about how we grapple with our deepest selves.

"Inge's plays are about lives, our lives."

Inge magically unpacked the human experience by using his own. His plays directly reflect his upbringing in Independence, Kansas. He explored the complexity and struggles of marriage, the fever and desire of young love, the gossip that can spread from porch to porch in a single breath, the delicate balance of sobriety, the duty of friendship and the heartbreak of loneliness.

Bus Stop is about one fateful night when a blizzard—a wild, uncontrollable outside force—traps eight people in one tiny roadside diner. This extraordinary circumstance of the storm heightens the quest for love, the pain of growth and loss and the hunger behind desire. It is a play that is driven by the behavior of the characters and how they develop, shift, create, destroy, and strengthen their relationships.

Inge's plays are about lives, our lives.

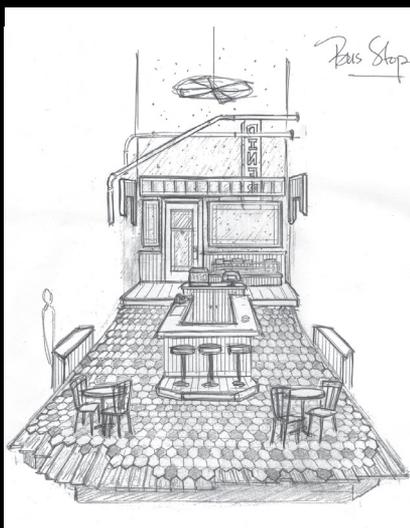
"It takes strong men and women to love. . . People strong enough inside themselves to love. . . without humiliation. People big enough to grow with their love and live inside a whole, wide new dimension. People brave enough to bear the responsibility of being loved and not fear it as a burden."

- Dr. Lyman, *Bus Stop*

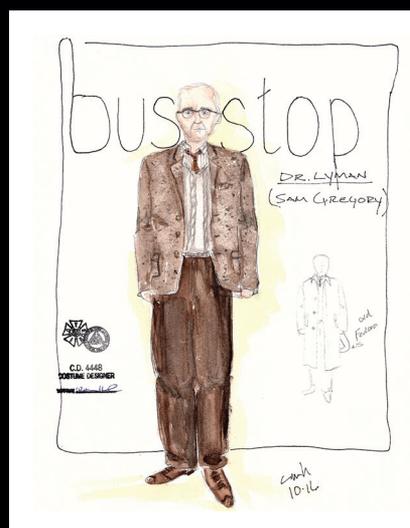
His truthful and authentic voice is a gift to direct. It allows the company an opportunity to settle into a specific environment and peel back the layers of each human being. Inge tells this simple story with specific authenticity.

Thank you for joining us at Grace's—a little slice of life.

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Preliminary scenic sketch by Brian Mallgrave 2017



Costume design by Clare Henkel 2017

