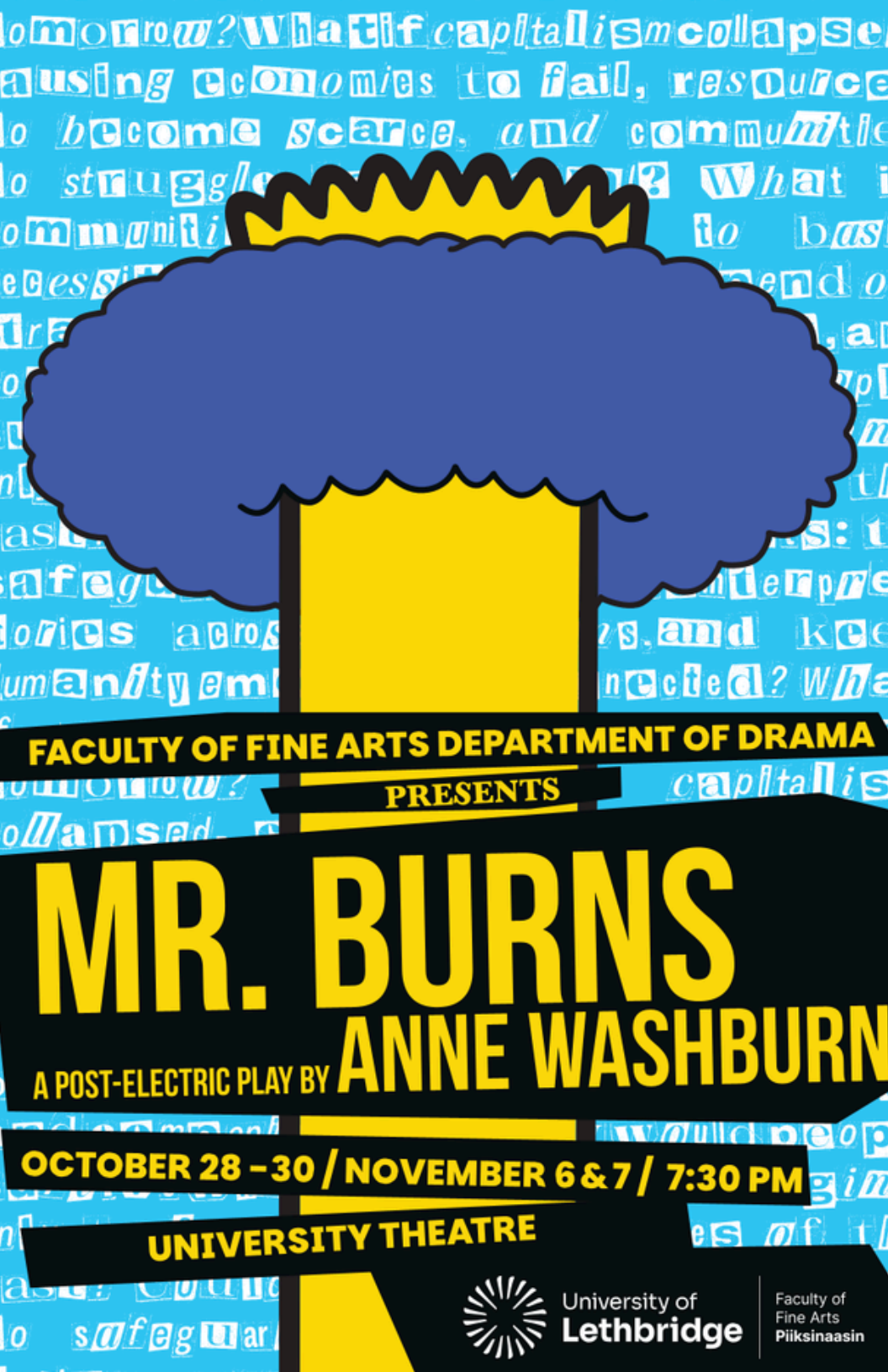
FACULTY OF FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA
PRESENTS
MR. BURNS
A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY BY ANNE WASHBURN
OCTOBER 28 – 30 / NOVEMBER 6 & 7 / 7:30 PM
UNIVERSITY THEATRE
University of Lethbridge
Faculty of Fine Arts
Piiksinaasin

What if a nuclear meltdown occurred tomorrow? What if capitalism collapsed, causing economies to fail, resources to become scarce, and communities to struggle for survival? What if communities' lost access to basic necessities and compelled to depend on strangers for survival, comfort, and companionship? How would people survive when they were left clinging only to fragmented memories of the past? Could this be why art exists: to safeguard memories, reinterpret stories across generations, and keep humanity emotionally connected? What if a nuclear meltdown occurred tomorrow? What if capitalism collapsed, causing economies to fail, resources to become scarce, and communities to struggle for survival? What if communities' lost access to basic necessities and compelled to depend on strangers for survival, comfort, and companionship? How would people survive when they were left clinging only to fragmented memories of the past? Could this be why art exists: to safeguard memories, reinterpret stories across generations, and keep humanity emotionally connected? What if a nuclear meltdown occurred tomorrow? What if capitalism collapsed, causing economies to fail, resources to become scarce, and communities to struggle for survival? What if communities' lost access to basic necessities and compelled to depend on strangers for survival, comfort, and companionship? How would people survive when they were left clinging only to fragmented memories of the past? Could this be why art exists: to safeguard memories, reinterpret stories across generations, and keep humanity emotionally connected? What if a nuclear meltdown occurred tomorrow? What if capitalism collapsed, causing economies to fail, resources to become scarce, and communities to struggle for survival? What if communities' lost access to basic necessities and compelled to depend on

Mr.Burns, A Post Electric Play

Written by Anne Wasburn
Score by Michael Friedman
Lyrics by Anne Washburn

Presented by arrangment with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel Fench Inc.

Playwrights Horizon, Inc. produced the New York City premier of the play off-Broadway in 2013. Originally produced in June 2012 by Woolly Mommoth Theatre Company, Washington DC, Howard Shalwitz, Artistic Director, Jeffrey Herrmann, Managing Director.

Introduction

Mr Burns: A Post-Electric Play by Anne Washburn is a darkly comic, thought-provoking theatrical experience about survival, storytelling, and cultural memory after collapse. Blending satire and music, it reimagines The Simpsons as post-apocalyptic myth, exploring how art rebuilds community, meaning, and resilience in a fractured world that may reflect our own today.

Run Time

This play runs approximately 135 minutes, with one 15-minute intermission.

This production utilizes sudden loud sounds and strobing lights, patron's disgression is advised.

Any recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

Creative

Director | Choreographer #1 | Fight Director	Pat Chan
Assistant Director	Spencer Johnson
Music Director	Sandra Stringer
Assistant Music Director	Cidelle Crawford
Production Manager	Betty-Lou Hushlak
Stage Manager	Jocelyn Smith
Assistant Stage Managers	Ellie Cartwright
	Tavish Foshaug
Set, Props & Lighting Designer	Dave Smith
Ast. Set, Props & Lighting Designers	Brooke Jenkins
	Owen Gaston
Costume, Hair & Makeup Designer	Julia Wasilewski
Mask Designer	Steele Prefontaine
Projection Designer	Lee Burckes
Assistant Projection Designer	Kacie Hilliard
Sound Designers	Seth Villamil
	Diego Mendoza Nakano
Theatrical Music Composer	Izzy Paige
Choreographer #2	Tavia Jenner
Keyboard	Emmalynn Boehmer
	Mya Kuss
Guitar	Keandra Rondeau
Percussion	Luke Pohve

Cast

Matt | Willy Mcdougal	Matthew DeNittis
Jenny | Nelson Muntz | Scratchy	Aliyah Deane
Maria | Ned Flanders | Itchy	Elizabeth Iwanyshyn
Colleen | Edna Krabappel	Tavia Jenner
Gibson | Troy Mclure	Oliver Helm
Sam | Apu Nahasapeemametilon	Quang Pham
Walmart Man | Homer Simpson	Tristan de Gruchy
Shadow Puppeteer | Agent #2 | Bart Simpson	Tiana Blackmore
Shadow Puppeteer | Intruder | Mr. Burns	Drew Marinakos
Shadow Puppeteer | Agent #1 | Lisa Simpson	Kaaya Wiens
Shadow Puppeteer | Quincy | Marge Simpson	Jenna Knott

Crew – Production

Light Board Operator	Noah Austin
QLab Operator	Dawson White
On Deck Audio Technician	Emily Clarkson
Head of Wardrobe	MacKenzie Hamer
Dressers	Freddy Basco
	Lorpu Kollie
	Maeve Baker
Stage/Runner	Livea Featherstone
Stag/Flys	Jenna Schubert
	Ashland McCullough
Light Crew	Keagan Gorzitza
	Melissa Turner
	Theo Thatcher Silvera
	Emily Clarkson
	Brooke Thibault
	Cody Botha
	Freddy Basco
	Isaac Burford
	Via Brown
	Owen Gaston
Props Construction	Cole Howg

Term Positions

Costume Shop	Reese Cox
	Kiora Morningbull
Scene/Prop Shop	Elizabeth Iwanyshyn
	Maddy Davison

Program

Program Cover Art Designer	Chad Patterson
Dramaturgy	Justin Blum
	Spencer Johnson
Program Creator	Kacie Hilliard

Special Thanks

The University of Lethbridge, cast, crew and production team would like to thank Nicola Elson, Bente Hansen, Michael Fong, Ronnie Arcand, Cody Botha, Theo Thatcher-Silveira, Richard Carvalho, Maeve Baker, Lexi Massicotte, Bert and Mac's Source for Sports for their efforts in helping make this production great.

Director's Note

Throughout Mr. Burns, there is a constant reference to the Western pop culture of The Simpsons. "The Simpsons started as animated shorts on The Tracey Ullman Show on April 19, 1987, and premiered as a half-hour prime-time series on Fox on December 17, 1989. It has now been on the air for over 36 years. Almost four decades of sharp satire and humor have made the show well known for its clever spoofing of American culture, politics, religion, and the traditional family sitcom. It blends emotional depth with fast-paced, multilayered jokes that appeal to both children and adults. The show is also famous for its uncanny ability to "predict" future real-world events, with pop culture frequently celebrating these apparent predictions years before they happen."

On page one of Anne Washburn's Mr. Burns, a post-electric play script, the character Jenny mentions that Lisa Simpson has a pen pal from an Asian country. Matt jokingly responds, "Yes, like a repressed country." I find this absolutely hilarious, particularly because of how ignorant and absurd the remark is. I remember watching The Simpsons on television back in my home country. I loved the three-fingered Simpsons family and how animated and "motor-mouthed" the characters were, speaking a hundred miles an hour and delivering jokes that, most of the time, I could neither catch nor understand.

Even more so, I did not understand the cultural context behind many of these characters and jokes. Asian cultures, morals, and values can be very different from what is portrayed through The Simpsons. I did not fully understand this distinction until I travelled, studied, worked and eventually lived here in the Americas.

But "lo and behold," here I am directing Anne Washburn's Mr. Burns, a post-electric play. Directing this play has made me realize that what is fascinating about the story is not simply its uncanniness, but the through-line of pop culture that has spanned almost four decades. This pop culture becomes a form of heritage—something handed down and inherited through generations and carried into the present.

Mr. Burns tells the story of survivors who have lost almost everything, including basic necessities.

Yet what continues to bond them together is culture—specifically, the pop culture of The Simpsons. Through countless episodes that are retold, altered, reimagined, and eventually transformed, The Simpsons becomes more than a television show. It becomes a shared language and a cultural memory that helps keep the community alive.

For me, Mr. Burns, a post-electric play is therefore not simply about entertaining an audience. It is about educating, connecting, and reminding us of the ways stories and cultural memories can bind people together. It asks us to consider how communities might survive and preserve their identities in the face of political, natural, and social catastrophes. Most importantly, perhaps, the play reveals the enduring human need for hope, love, connection, and unity. What begins as a familiar piece of Western pop culture ultimately becomes something much larger: a story about how culture allows people to remember who they are, even when almost everything else has been lost.

-Pat Chan

Music Director's Note

As a long-time fan of The Simpsons and of post-apocalyptic story telling, I was immediately drawn to this show. How intriguing it was to use one of the most-loved episodes of The Simpsons as a through-line plot device and as a musical leitmotif in the tradition of opera and film music! I was also fascinated by the idea that no matter the circumstances, story telling, music, and theatre are unifying human experiences vital to our survival. As you experience Mr. Burns: a post-electric play, listen for the 4-note Cape Feare theme to unify both the story and especially the musical score of Act 3. I invite you to also listen for the unique musical ensemble in the pit; there may be some surprising sounds! Special thanks to Emmalynn, Mya, Keandra, and Luke for your skill and dedication to bringing this special theatrical experience to life. And thank you to our director, Pat Chan for inviting me along for the ride.

-Sandra Stringer

Excerpt from “Cultural Practices of the Late Electrical Age: A Speculative Reconstruction”, by Professor Hugh Djas and Dr. Amanda Huggankys. University of Denay, Nunavut Press. 2100

“Prior to the advent of Super Intelligence and the subsequent development of the fully immersive MetaGrokGPT-verse, the power demands of which are considered by scholars to be the most likely cause of the initial Meltdown Sequence, North Americans of the Electric Age entertained themselves with dramatic rituals centred around broadcast television. The precise details of this technology remain subject to intense academic debate, but it is widely believed that central authorities selected particular “programs” to be transmitted electronically to receivers which allowed the projection of images to “screens.”

One of the most popular of these television programs, which no doubt stood at the centre of much of Electric Age culture, was The Simpsons. Believed to have been initially written and created by Coco “Conan” O’Brian, who earned his nickname by starring in a popular series of films about a pre-Electric Age hero called “Conan the Barbarian” and is believed to have served several terms as governor of the state of Kahlifornia, this program followed the exploits of a typical North American family in its struggle for freedom against the tyranny of the evil Mr. Burns. Believed by many historians to have been based on the real-life oligarchs of the late Electric Age like Sam Musk and Elon Trumpgates, the resistance to his literal and electrical power displayed by the heroic child Bart Simpson and his family is clearly emblematic of the same widespread nostalgia for a simpler unelectrified past evident in the Conan phenomenon. If only they could see the wonders of contemporary post-Electric society, how happy our ancestors would be!“

Costume, Hair & Makeup Designer's Note

For me, sustainability is both a material practice and an artistic philosophy. By finding possibility in what remains, I explore how costume can hold traces of the past while imagining new futures. When familiar resources have diminished, I see costume as a means of reconstructing identity from the fragments of a lost world. Materials become vessels of memory, transformed through improvisation, adaptation, and theatrical imagination.

Central to my approach is the audience's pre-existing relationship with The Simpsons. Through suggestion rather than imitation, familiar images emerge from unexpected materials, inviting audiences to draw on their own cultural memories to complete the picture.
As the play unfolds, costumes shift from recognisable contemporary clothing into fragmented, layered, and increasingly theatrical forms. This evolution reflects how stories are inherited, reshaped, and reimagined across generations.

Ultimately, I want the audience to encounter these costumes somewhere between familiarity and uncertainty, recognition and reinterpretation. Rather than providing complete answers, the costumes invite the audience to participate in the act of remembering, allowing their own associations and cultural knowledge to shape what they see.

Through this exchange between performer, material, and audience, costume becomes a living expression of the play's central question: how do we preserve who we are when the world we knew no longer exists?

-Julia Wasilewski

Set, Props & Lighting Designer's Note

The Simpsons have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. There was little I wanted to watch more than a new episode on Sunday nights, but if that wasn't doable, I'd settle for syndicated reruns.

The Simpsons, particularly early seasons of the show, did such an incredible job of seamlessly working pop culture references into plot lines, that I got exposed to classic media through their show much earlier than I got exposed to the source material: Citizen Kane, The Great Escape, The Music Man, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, and of course, Cape Fear... the list is almost endless. I remember watching movies as an adult, seeing a scene and thinking "oh so this is where that reference comes from!"

Truthfully, I had selfish motives pitching this play - a chance to design a production based on the Simpsons was too good to pass up. Adding a post-apocalyptic to the mix has made it all the better. I've had an endless amount of fun designing this production and I hope that comes across in the world I've created.

Keep watching the skis. Uh. Skies.

-Dave Smith, Faculty Initiator

Timeline

ACT 1- 2030

Act 1 takes place in an alternate America that has undergone a complete and total societal collapse. Nuclear Reactors have exploded across the country, the power grid is completely offline, and the only way to gain new information is by word of mouth. It is now 2030, and a group of survivors have gathered around a campfire; sharing their recollections of The Simpsons episode Cape Feare to pass the time and briefly escape from their haunting reality.

ACT 2- 2037

Act 2 moves forward 7 years, where our group of survivors have found success in staging episodes of The Simpsons alongside other fragments of the pop culture of our time. They have begun touring across the country as a way to gain an income and spread the comfort of nostalgia; but with the resurgence of Capitalism comes the fire of competition and the survivors must figure out how to adapt to a changing society.

ACT 3- 2112

Act 3 jumps ahead 75 years, and the production and consumption of entertainment has changed beyond our current understanding. Much like the party game Telephone, we follow threads of entertainment as they have adapted and shifted from person to person throughout the years. Act 3 of Mr Burns is the result of that adaptation.

The Simpsons

The Simpsons is an animated television series that has become a mainstay in the pop culture of our time. Spanning nearly 40 years, as of October 2026 there are 38 seasons and 811 episodes. It is directed at mature audiences and centers around a tight knit family of 5 Simpsons, Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie; as well as a large ensemble of iconic side characters. They all live in the hilariously ambiguous town of Springfield, and the usual episode of The Simpsons follows these characters as their antics ensue, usually with a moral lesson tucked just beneath the surface. They also tend to parody or reflect other pop culture mainstays within their episodes, often as the butt of a joke or as a way to poke fun by inserting their own comedic characters in a plot structure that mimics that of their subject. We see this directly in Mr Burns: A Post Electric Play which centers around Season 5 Episode 2 of the Simpsons that intends to parody the classic film Cape Fear.

We have compiled a list of every episode of The Simpsons mentioned in the show, all for your viewing pleasure!

Raging Abe Simpson and His Grumbling Grandson in 'The Curse of the Flying Hellfish'
Season 7 Episode 22

Cape Feare
Season 5 Episode 2

The Springfield Files
Season 8 Episode 10

Homer the Heretic
Season 4 Episode 3

A Streetcar Named Marge
Season 4 Episode 2

Lisa the Vegetarian
Season 7 Episode 5

Much Apu About Nothing
Season 7 Episode 23

Bart of Darkness
Season 6 Episode 1
(referred to as "Heart of Bartness" in the script)

Music Sources

#1 "Chaos Theme"
Original Composition
by Izzy Paige

#2 "Hectic Day"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#3 "Livin La Vida Loca"
by Ricky Martin
Performed A Capella

#4 "Havana"
by Camila Cabello
Performed A Capella

#5 "Can't Stop the Feeling"
by Justin Timberlake
Performed A Capella

#6 "I Just Might"
by Bruno Mars
Performed A Capella

#7 "Butter"
by BTS
Performed A Capella

#8 "Bad Guy"
by Billie Eilish
Performed A Capella

#9 "Toxic"
by Britney Spears
Performed A Capella

#10 "Shape of You"
by Ed Sheeran
Performed A Capella

#11 "Espresso"
by Sabrina Carpenter
Performed A Capella

#12 "Opalite"
by Taylor Swift
Preformed A Capella

#13 "Flower"
by Miley Cyrus
Preformed A Capella

#14 "Hey, Soul Sister"
by Train
Performed A Capella

#15 "Gangnam Style"
by PSY
Perfomed A Capella

#16 "Firework"
by Katy Perry
Performed A Capella

#17 "Golden"
by KPop Demon Hunters Cast
Perfomed A Capella

#18 "Say Goodbye (Act 2)"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#19 "The Call Came on the Radio"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#20 "I Stand on the Deck"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#21 "Theme From Cape Feare"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#22 "Mr. Burns Theme"
Original Composition
by Izzy Paige

#23 "Two Little Darling Lads"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#24 "Messin' with the Simpsons"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#25 "Everything will be alright"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#26 "Love and Hate/And Now the Sky"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#27 "Say Goodbye (Act 3)"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#28 "Keep on"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#29 "The Rapids"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#30 "Burn's Last Speech"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#31 "The Clouds Have Parted"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#32 "Last Song"
Composed by Michael Friedman
& Anne Washburn

#33 "Dying Legacy"
Original Composition
by Izzy Paige

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A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare, 2025.
Photo by Angeline Simon.

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