

# A close-up look at "Talking Pictures" playwright, Horton Foote

by Jocelyn Gauthier  
Feature Editor

"Some people get up in the morning and go to Wall Street. Or to their job in a department store. Or a supermarket. Or a newspaper office. Or to fly an airplane.

"Horton Foote gets up in the morning and writes plays," said Jerry Tallmer in his introduction to "Four New Plays."

Foote is a playwright of several American theater, film and television productions, including CCC's Winter Term production of "Talking Pictures." A few of his movies include "To Kill a Mockingbird," which he received an Academy Award for, "Tender Mercies" and "Of Mice and Men."

Foote turned to playwriting after early training in acting, and was quickly rewarded in 1944 with his first Broadway production at the age of 28. This success led him to television, for which he wrote "some of the finest drama of its Golden Age," according to the book jacket of "Cousins" and "The Death of Papa."

The name Horton Foote was

often attached to some TV show in the 50's and 60's, "a good, plain American name, like the good plain American people he wrote about - writes about," Tallmer said.

"But there are no good, plain American people. There are no good, plain people. There are people - each of them ever born contains the entire drama history of the world, not to mention that little atom of the world that is the parched, worked-out cotton and oil county of Texas, USA, in and around the city of Galveston on the Gulf of Mexico," Tallmer said.

"The thing that is relevant for all time," Foote said, "is the subject of grief."

He writes the way people talk, "or the way you think they talk, or the way you wish you thought they talk, or once did talk, in your mind's eye (and ear). The way they talk in that perfect/imperfect American of 'Yes, Ma'am' and 'Yes, Sir,'" Tallmer said.

In the 60's, Foote retreated to New Hampshire, fed up with the theater, and stayed 'til the 80's. It was his "15-year intermission," Foote said, "while I was away in the country."

"It was as if he'd dropped off the face of the earth," said actress daughter Hallie.

The Broadway that Foote once knew is disappearing, and so are the movies that Tallmer cares about, except when Foote writes them. "Movies about human beings, not robots, not automobiles, not ghosts, not body builders, not super warriors, not dinosaurs, not twerps and nerds. (Well, there are twerps in Foote too, but interesting ones.)" Tallmer said.

"Talking Pictures" main character, Myra, is a woman who is about to lose her job playing piano in a movie theater that - in 1929 - is converting from silent films to sound.

Her landlord, a railway engineer, faces similar obsolescence. "One day we could wake up and find there are no trains at all," he tells his wife.

"Talking Pictures" is a play, a short play, that mixes light and heavy and light again, just as the shadows of a movie do," Tallmer said.

So just what is Foote all about? "Heartbreak and forgiveness," Tallmer said.

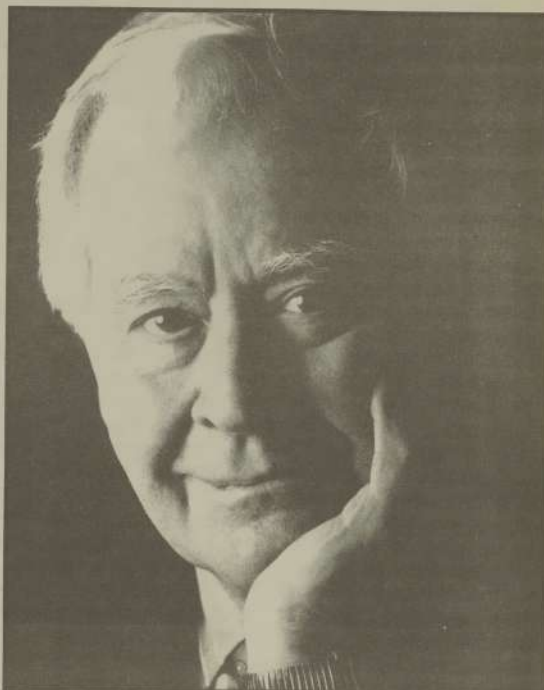


Photo by David Spagnolo

Horton Foote, playwright of "Talking Pictures," CCC's Winter Term production, has won several Academy Awards for other plays and films, including "Tender Mercies."

## Goodenberger to perform 19th century piano music

by Jocelyn Gauthier  
Feature Editor

Jennifer Goodenberger will be performing the music of Clara Schumann at 7:30 tonight in the Gregory Forum.

Her free performance will include comments on Schumann's life, in which Goodenberger's interest began over 14 years ago. She has worked to understand who Schumann

had doubts about her gift in composing, but did it partly because it was expected of all pianists. She was more comfortable as an interpretive artist, but continued to write songs, a trio, a piano concerto and works for the violin. Had she had more time and had there not been the societal influences telling her that women did not and could not have great creative gifts, she

**Goodenberger has worked to understand who Schumann was and what she can teach, especially to women of the 20th century**

was and what she can teach, especially to women of the 20th century.

Schumann, born in Leipzig, Germany in 1819, was trained as a pianist by her father and debuted when she was 11. By 1838, she was renowned in Europe for her technique and musical sensitivity.

In 1840, she married a composer in opposition to her father. Marriage created many obstacles for Schumann's career: her husband required complete silence while composing and she helped prepare his music for performance, as well as raise eight children.

After the death of her husband, she returned to an active concert life and was called "Priestess" by her peers. She

may have become a more prominent composer.

Goodenberger has taught several music courses, including music history and opera at Clatsop Community College and Marylhurst College, and also teaches music and healing seminars.

She has also worked extensively as a musical director, and some of her credits include "Guys and Dolls," "South Pacific," "Fiddler on the Roof," "Into the Woods," "Annie," "I Do! I Do!" and "Quilters."

Goodenberger received her master's degree in music composition from Northwestern University in 1989. She teaches private piano and wrote, "Subject Guide to Classical Instrumental Music."

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by Lorin ARENDT



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