

Long Day's Journey into Night

(Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night)

Year: 1996; **Language:** English; **Runtime:** 173 min

Director: David Wellington ; **Producer:** Niv Fichman, Daniel Iron; **Writer:** Eugene O'Neill

Cinematographer: David Franco ; **Editor:** Susan Shipton; **Sound:** Jane Tattersall, John Thomson

Music: Ron Sures; **Cast:** Tom McCamus, Martha Henry, Peter Donaldson, Martha Burns, William Hutt

Production Company: Rhombus Media

Set in 1912, and based on the masterful Eugene O'Neill play, *Long Day's Journey into Night* is the tragic story of a once-proud family's disintegration. James Tyrone (William Hutt), the patriarch of the Tyrone family, was once a Broadway actor, but is now a miser and an alcoholic. His wife Mary (Martha Henry) struggles with a long-time morphine habit, which masks deeper spiritual wounds. Older son Jamie (Peter Donaldson), who tried to follow in his father's footsteps but failed, is bitter and broke, while Edmund (Tom McCamus), a struggling poet who represents O'Neill himself, is seriously ill. A doctor's confirmation that Edmund has tuberculosis, coupled with Mary's relapse into her addiction, triggers acrimony and recrimination, baring the bitterness and despair at the family's heart.

This powerful rendition of O'Neill's masterpiece, one of the greatest plays of the twentieth century, is a beautifully filmed version of the Stratford Festival's extraordinary 1994 production.

Wonderfully cinematic and seething with dark, rich atmosphere and moments of heart-rending intimacy, it is considered by many O'Neill aficionados to be the definitive film version of the play. In adapting the play to the screen, director David Wellington has retained the Stratford production's greatest strengths – the forceful, exemplary performances and the increasing physical distance between characters as the family falls apart.

Wellington was so awestruck by the Stratford production that he saw it fifteen times over two seasons and insisted on employing the same cast. Shockingly intimate, the film captures the emotional claustrophobia inherent in the play, aided in no small part by the setting – a room-by-room recreation of the house in New London, Connecticut where the O'Neill family spent their summers.

Long Day's Journey into Night was originally shot for television, but was screened as a Gala Presentation at the 1996 Toronto International Film Festival®, where it was named Best Canadian Feature Film. It enjoyed a modest theatrical release and went on to receive seven Genie Award nominations, sweeping the acting categories with honours going to William Hutt (Lead Actor), Martha Henry (Lead Actress), Peter Donaldson (Supporting Actor) and Martha Burns (Supporting Actress).