

THE PEAR AVENUE THEATRE

PROUDLY PRESENTS

The Glass Menagerie

by

Tennessee Williams

DIRECTOR

Rebecca J. Ennals

PRODUCER

Diane Tasca

SET DESIGN

Norm Beamer

LIGHTING DESIGN

Malcolm Carruthers

STAGE MANAGER

Ellen Smith

COSTUME DESIGN

Rebecca J. Ennals

CO-PRODUCTION WITH

CALIFORNIA CONSERVATORY THEATRE

CAST (IN ORDER OF SPEAKING)

Tom Wingfield Joseph Salazar

Amanda Wingfield..... Diane Tasca

Laura Wingfield..... Roselyn Hallett

Jim O'Connor..... Carl Holvick-Thomas

Scene: *An alley in St. Louis and a remembered apartment*

Act I: *Preparation for a Gentleman Caller*

Act II: *The Gentleman Calls*

Time *1945 and 1938*

There will be a 15-minute intermission.

The cigarettes used in the play are artificial, and the “smoke” they produce is water vapor or powder.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director..... Rebecca J. Ennals

Producer..... Diane Tasca

Stage Manager..... Ellen Smith

Set Designer..... Norm Beamer

Lighting Designer..... Malcolm Carruthers

Costume Designer..... Rebecca J. Ennals

Choreographer..... Jeff Kellem

Assistant Director/

Dialect Coach..... Drew Ledbetter

Publicity Director..... Robyn Ginsburg Braverman

Postcard Designer..... Patricia Tyler

Program Consultant..... Susan Petit

Website Designer..... Ray Renati

Videographer..... John Beamer

PRODUCED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICES

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

he did own one essential part of a hero,
The idea of life as a nothing-withholding submission of self to flame.
— from the poem “Part of a Hero” by
Tennessee Williams

This play is memory, and like all memories it's a fabrication, a rainbow refracted through a piece of glass. It is an exorcism of Williams' guilt over abandoning his sister Rose, an exploration of his complicated relationship with the mother who both supported and smothered him, and a fantasy of banishing the father who disapproved of him. Just as Tennessee Williams was a public persona created by Tom Williams to mask the shy, fragile poet within, Tom Wingfield is not Tennessee. He is an invented stand-in, someone who can say the things Tennessee perhaps wished he could have said.

Like Tennessee, and like all of us, the characters in this play survive with the help of inventions and illusions. Amanda chooses to live in the past, clinging to her illusions of the way she wishes things could be. Tom, suffocated by his mother and stifled by his job, tries to find meaning in stories on the silver screen. Laura takes more comfort from the imagined lives of inanimate objects than from human interaction. Jim both thrives on his past glory and re-invents himself through words.

We make our memories into stories to help us feel better about ourselves, to explain the pattern of our lives, to make others love us. Williams requires us to examine our own stories and submit our darkest corners to the flame of candlelight. To live most fully, he seems to say throughout his plays and poems, we must rip off the veil of illusion and embrace our full natures - the transcendent and the base, the noble and the selfish, the triumphs and the regrets.

—Rebecca J. Ennals

Throughout this process, we have taken inspiration from Williams' poetry. You'll find some of our favorites in the lobby.

ABOUT THE PLAY AND THE PLAYWRIGHT

Thomas Lanier Williams III was born in 1911 in Mississippi, grew up mostly in Missouri, and graduated from the University of Iowa. But he loved Tennessee, probably because he had spent happy times in Memphis with his maternal grandparents. In any case, he took the name “Tennessee” early in his career. His father, a hard drinker who worked for the International Shoe Company in St. Louis, did not find young Tom masculine enough for his taste; he preferred Dakin, Tom's much younger brother. Williams' mother, Edwina, struggled in her unhappy marriage, and his beloved older sister, Rose, became withdrawn and unstable in early adulthood. Eventually her parents consented to have her lobotomized, after which she was institutionalized.

A long recovery from diphtheria in childhood gave Williams a love of reading; a performance of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in 1934 showed him the power of drama; D. H. Lawrence's fiction was a strong early influence. *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) was Williams' first major success, followed notably by *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), and *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* (1964). Besides over two dozen full-length plays, Williams wrote many short plays, two novels, short stories, poetry, and memoirs and is widely regarded as one of the twentieth century's most gifted playwrights.

Despite this professional success and acclaim, Williams' personal life was not happy. He was gay but did not come out of the closet until 1970. He had a 15-year-long stable relationship with Frank Merlo, but even during that time, he was given to numerous sexual encounters with unknown men. Nevertheless, he was devastated by Merlo's relatively early death in 1963. Williams became dependent on drugs and alcohol, and his habits were often erratic. He died in 1983 after choking on a bottle cap which he may have been using as cup to help him swallow pills.

Writing was Williams' lifeline. He wrote nearly every day of his adult life. *The Glass Menagerie*, based on several early short stories, was his first success, produced when he was in his early 30s. It nearly closed as soon as it opened in try-outs in Chicago, but it was saved by two women. One was Laurette Taylor, who played Amanda Wingfield; she was a former Broadway star who had spent the previous twenty years in a bottle. In rehearsal, Taylor seemed unable to learn Amanda's lines. But at the

opening she stunned everyone by giving the performance of her life, and she continued to do so night after night, although she was dying of cancer. The other woman who saved *Menagerie* was the drama critic Claudia Cassidy. She praised the show day after day in her influential column in the *Chicago Tribune*, so that the theatre was sold out by the third week. The play became a hit on Broadway and has never lost its popularity.

The playwright's mother, Edwina Williams, reportedly saw nothing of herself in the character of Amanda Wingfield, but the Wingfield family is based to some degree on the real-life Williamses. Tom Wingfield, who carries the author's initials and first name, is not just a character. He is the narrator: What we see on stage is what he remembers, not necessarily what really happened, and it is tinged with his regret. Laura Wingfield has Rose Williams' charm and fragility; Amanda Wingfield reflects the vulnerabilities and strengths of the playwright's mother. The menagerie of the title refers to Laura's glass collection but also to the fragile human menagerie collected onstage. Even the gentleman caller, Jim, whom the stage directions call a "nice, ordinary young man," is not as strong as he first appears to be. Williams' epigraph for the play is a line from a poem by e.e. cummings, probably referring to his sister: "nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands."

Today, when our economic and political circumstances echo those of the 1930s, we may be particularly sympathetic to the problems of these characters, who are trying to shut out a menacing world and whose lives are constrained by hard financial realities. Like Tom, we may feel trapped by responsibilities and long for an elusive personal fulfillment. Like Laura, we may try to ignore reality and retreat into our own hiding-places. Like Jim, we may pursue the fantasy of future triumphs. Or like Amanda, we may choose to fight with whatever weapons we have.

--Susan Petit

WHO'S WHO IN THIS PRODUCTION



Roselyn Hallett (*Laura*) is making her Pear debut. Her recent credits include *Doubt* (New Conservatory), *Enchanted April* (Broadway West), and *Mr. Marmalade* (Custom Made). A 2008 Stanford graduate, Roselyn's university productions include *Translations*, *Goat Song for Asa Jacobs*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *Titus Andronicus*, and the title role in Ruhl's *Enrydice*, which she also co-

directed and produced as her senior thesis project. She looks forward to a beautiful summer in Orinda understudying Vivie in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* with CalShakes. Love and gratitude to this wonderful cast, crew, and director!



Carl Holvick-Thomas (*Jim*) recently performed the title role in *Hamlet* with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's School Tour (directed by Ms. Ennals), traveling to over 150 schools and theaters throughout California. Recent credits include Stephen in *Rock n' Roll* at San Jose Stage, Octavius in Marin Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and Edward Sergeant in Shotgun's *Skylight*.

Carl holds an undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley. His favorite roles at Cal were Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, Dionysus in *The Bacchae*, and Max Malone in *Suburban Motel*. He would particularly like to thank Drew's keen eye and Ashley's pretty smile for constantly inspiring him.



Joseph Salazar (*Tom*), a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, is excited to be back performing at the Pear, where he was last seen as Mirabell in *The Way of the World*. Other credits include Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Livermore Shakespeare Festival, Elvis in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* with PCPA, and Estragon in *Waiting for*

Godot with the Iron Ring theater company. Up next, Joseph can be seen as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* with the Livermore Shakespeare festival. Joseph would like to thank his friends for diving in with him into the complex and beautiful world of Tennessee Williams.



Diane Tasca (*Amanda*) holds a doctorate in literature and is the Pear's Artistic Director. Her roles at the Pear have included several ladies from Tennessee Williams country: Alma Winemiller in *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* and Hannah Jelkes in *The Night of the Iguana*. Other recent roles: Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Palo Alto Players) and Evie in *The Gingerbread Lady* (Dragon). She thanks the inspired, dedicated director, cast, and crew. Above all, love to Norm and John.

Malcolm Carruthers (*Lighting Designer*) was given a nickname the last time he lit *The Glass Menagerie*: "The Prince of Darkness", and he is excited to be able to dimly light this production. Born in London, Malcolm began his lighting career working in live rock & roll, tour-ing in England with such bands as Debbie Harry & Blondie, Elvis Costello, the Cure & Paul Weller. Bay Area stage lighting credits include *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Wait Until Dark*, and *SUDS* at CCT; *The Threepenny Opera* and *Victor, Victoria* at the Masquers Playhouse, Pt. Richmond; *Annie, Bye Bye Birdie & Joseph* (for Stage Door Conservatory) at The Julia Morgan Theater, Berkeley; *The Three Musketeers* by The Role Players in Danville. None of this would be possible without the help, love and support of his wonderful wife Janet.

Rebecca J. Ennals (*Director*) is honored to direct her eighth show for the Pear Avenue Theatre, where she also serves on the Steering Committee. Past productions for the Pear include *The Way of the World*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Arcadia*, and *The Psychic Life of Savages*. Rebecca is the Director of Education for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and the Artistic Director of the Pleasanton Civic Arts Stage Company. Bay Area credits include many productions for SF Shakes' Shakespeare on Tour, Peninsula Youth Theatre, Los Altos Youth Theatre, Shakespeare at Stinson, California Conservatory Theatre, and others. Rebecca holds an MFA from UC Davis and a BA from Scripps College. As a playwright and poet, she has been a finalist for the Samuel Goldwyn Writing Award and the Midwestern Playwrights Award and a recipient of the Crombie Allen Award for poetry. Many thanks to the cast and crew for their incredibly hard work and dedication, and to Jeff and Drew for sharing their time and talent so generously. If she ever leaves Will Shakespeare for another writer, it will be Tennessee Williams.

Jeff Kellem (*Choreographer*) has a passion for all forms of social partner dance and performs with the vintage dance troupe Academy of Danse Libre, recreating social dances as they were danced from the Victorian era through the 1930s in period formal attire. He has performed in venues as far away as Prague and as near as the Cubberley Theatre in Palo Alto. Ages ago, Jeff was involved with almost every aspect of theatre from acting to costuming to lighting to directing to managing with professional companies in Connecticut and Boston, MA, spanning musical theatre, plays, and children's theatre, with a dash of television and film thrown in. He's also a composer and member of The Recording Academy.

Drew Ledbetter (*Assistant Director/ Dialect Coach*) is a recent graduate of UC Berkeley, where he appeared in Pinter's *Silence*, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, and *Fist of Roses*, written and directed by Philip Kan Gotanda. Other memorable credits include Clive/Cathy in Churchill's *Cloud 9* and Dennis in Joe Orton's *Loot*. This fall, Drew will enter Brown University/Trinity Rep's MFA Program in Acting. He thanks Hilary for her endless back massages and Carl for letting him know what's up—thanks, Carl!

Ellen Smith (*Stage Manager*) has served as light and sound operator for several productions at the Pear, and this time is adding Stage Manager to her duties for *Glass Menagerie*. She was also seen onstage in *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* at the Pear, as well as elsewhere in the Bay Area and in several independent short films.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For their contributions to this production, the Pear thanks the following individuals and organizations:

Gary Bowman
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 San Francisco Shakespeare Festival

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