

QUESTORS ARCHIVES

THE PLAYS OF
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

The Questors Theatre
1958-2015



Compiled by
John Dobson
2022

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March 1958

SUMMER AND SMOKE

The Questors first venture into the poetic world of Tennessee Williams was in the old Tin Hut with a stellar cast of Questors' finest actors, including **Philip Wright, Diana Benn, John Clemow, Patrick Bacon, Ruth Tremayne, Una Chapman, Vincent McQueen, Carla Field, Neville Bradbury, Ned Gethings.** The Director was Pamela Richards.

SUMMER AND SMOKE		The entire action of the play takes place in Glorious Hill, Mississippi The time is from the turn of the century to 1910	
<i>"Who, if I were to cry out, would hear me among the angelic orders?"</i> RILKE		<i>Scenes</i>	
***		Prologue The Fountain	
<i>Cast, in order of appearance</i>		Part I—A Summer	
Alma Winemiller as a child	SUSAN LOVELACE	Scene 1	The Fountain
John Buchanan as a child	LESTER WATSON	Scene 2	The Rectory and Doctor's Office
Rev. Winemiller	PHILIP WRIGHT	Scene 3	The Rectory
Mrs. Winemiller	DIANA BENN	Scene 4	The Doctor's Office
John Buchanan	JOHN CLEMOW	Scene 5	The Rectory
Dusty	KENNETH PORTER	Scene 6	The Arbour
Pearl	JUNE DAVIES	Part II—A Winter	
Dr. Buchanan	PATRICK BACON	Scene 7	The Rectory and Doctor's Office
Alma Winemiller	THERESA HEFFERNAN	Scene 8	The Doctor's Office
Rosa Gonzales	RUTH TREMAYNE	Scene 9	The Rectory and Doctor's Office
Nellie Ewell	UNA CHAPMAN	Scene 10	The Fountain
Roger Doremus	VINCENT McQUEEN	Scene 11	The Doctor's Office
Mrs. Bassett	CARLA CRAIK	Scene 12	The Fountain
Rosemary	JILL TYLER		
Vernon	NEVILLE BRADBURY		
Papa Gonzales	NED GETHINGS		
Mr. Kramer	ROY MONTGOMERY		
Production ...	PAMELA RICHARDS		
Decor ...	EDWARD MENDELSON. Costumes ...		
	KIM ZEIGLER		
Original music ...	YVONNE COX and DONALD KINCAID		

There will be an interval of fifteen minutes after Part I when you may remain in your seat and be served with tea and biscuits at a fixed charge of 6d., or cross to the Lounge where coffee and light refreshments may also be obtained.	
There will be an interval of five minutes after Scene 8.	
We should like to thank the Principal of Bushey Hall School who helped us to find the children for the Prologue and Mr. A. Barnett, of Bond Street, for the loan of a silver loving cup.	
BOX OFFICE (6.30-8.00 p.m.)	EALING 5184

Members are respectfully reminded that smoking is not permitted in the Theatre while the Play is in progress.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY TIMES
Saturday 22 March 1958

A BRILLIANT PLAY BRILLIANTLY PRESENTED
"SUMMER AND SMOKE"

HERE in the Questors' current production, Tennessee Williams' "*Summer and Smoke*", is a brilliant play brilliantly presented. From the opening, when the darkened stage lightens, to reveal an ingeniously contrived set by means of which two homes are simultaneously presented together with a central piece dominated by a stark, evocative angel statue – from the opening, Saturday's audience sat enthralled. And, at the close, when the cast returned no more in response to the thunderous applause, they sat on for a few moments in their seats, as if unable to believe that the long, absorbing dream was over.

Long . . . for we lived a lifetime in that preacher's unhappy house! First, were the two children, the preacher's daughter and the doctor's son, beautifully played by **Susan Lovelace** and **Lester Watson** from Bushey Hill School, their soft Southern accents setting the pattern for the rest of the cast. Then

came the grown girl, Alma, and the young doctor newly returned to his sleepy hometown. She, repressed affected, nervously gabbling and with a wonderful silly laugh (played by **Theresa Hefferman**), and he, conscious of a bond between them but noting, with a beautifully observed, considering, clinical manner, the signs of her neurosis.

A BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE

As the doctor's son, **John Clemow** is brilliant. He has a charming voice, and the nuances of his behaviour are superbly conveyed. It is possible to accept the character as a whole, and the young man's attempts to break through Alma's affection to the ardent, pitifully struggling creature beneath, are beautifully done.

"*You think you are stuffed with rose leaves!*" he says impatiently. And, pointing to the anatomical chart which hangs in his father's surgery, he describes the '*three hungry birds*' which live in the tree that is the body, '*birds in a tree they cannot fly out of.*' She, he says, admits the bird that lives in the brain, she will feed the bird that is the stomach, but the bird that lives at the seat of love – that bird she starves and seeks to deny. "*There are other things between a man and a woman than respect,*" he tells her.

But Alma, a prisoner of her own contriving, will not learn, and so she watches as the young doctor, in his father's absence, falls a victim to the long, sultry summer days, and turns to drunkenness and debauchery. From the window of the preacher's house next door she watches, while always in the background, watching in turn, is her mad mother, shrewd in her spiteful knowledge of her daughter's heart.

Diana Benn is excellent in this role, muttering to herself, crunching her eternal ice-cream cornets, gritting her teeth at the jigsaw puzzle with which she is set to play. "*Insufferable cross yourself,*" she flashes, repeating after her clergyman husband his by no means *sotto voce* remark concerning herself. And the struggle for the



plumed hat which she has abstracted from a local shop, with its revelation of open hatred between mother and daughter – and Alma for once forgetting her affectation – is wonderfully felt.

'FRIEND OF THE FAMILY'

Then there is the 'friend of the family', Mrs. Bassett (**Carla Craik**), a lady who 'knows all about Blake' and who appears from time to time as the joyful bringer of unhappy news; and Rosa, the Mexican girl (**Ruth Tremayne**) with her voluptuous dancing and her feeling description of a childhood crowded in one room with numerous brothers and sisters and amorous parents; and the preacher father (**Philip Wright**), well conveyed. Nellie (**Una Chapman**), Alma's ingenuous pupil was, I felt, the least bit overplayed.

And so the tension builds, until at last Alma goes to the young doctor and offers herself. Here, **Clemow's** playing is perfect. Just the right touch of embarrassment, of concern, of distaste. For once, as Alma truly understood, there might have been something between them. But, the years have not awaited her change of heart. Her young pupil Nellie has grown up, and she and the young doctor are engaged to be married.

Dominating the play, as the author intended, is the wide, serene skyscape and, etched against it, the uncaring angel, symbolic of Eternity, to which the slow heartbreak of an Alma (whose name, symbolically, means 'soul') is as nought. "Who, If I were to cry out, would hear me among the angelic orders?"

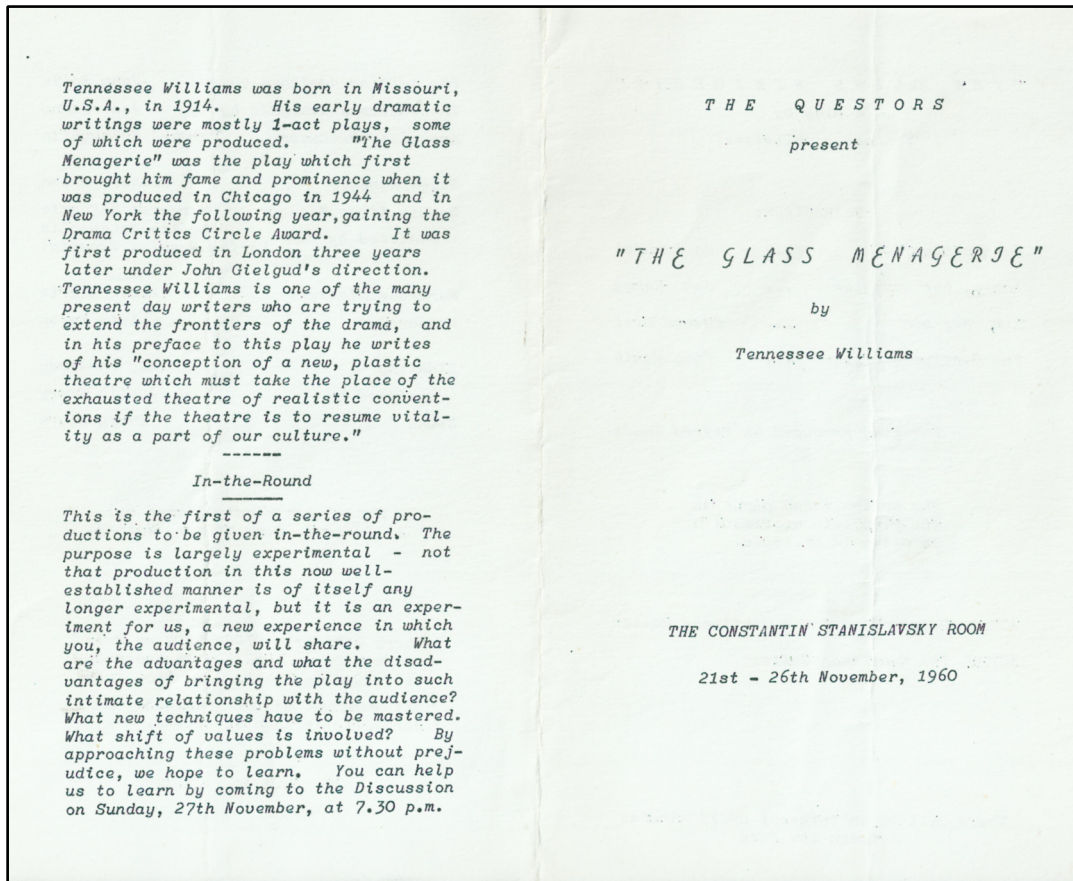
Full marks go to **Edward Mendelsohn** for solving the problem of the setting, and to **Pamela Richards** for an inspired production. Original music was specially composed by **Yvonne Cox** which, played by a small ensemble under the direction of **Eric Stuckey** and recorded by **Alec Brown**, is worth listening to.



November 1960

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

This production was notable for two reasons. Firstly, it was The Questors' first **studio** production to take place in the newly built **Stanislavsky Room**: and secondly it was the company's first production to be fully **in-the-round**. Sadly we have no photos of the production.



THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY TIMES
Friday 25 November 1960

**ANOTHER 5-STAR
PERFORMANCE
BY THE QUESTORS**

IT is impossible, within the limited space of this review, to do justice to the theatre-in-the-round production of Tennessee Williams' "*The Glass Menagerie*" which **Alfred Emmet** has been mounting for the Questors during the week.

The year 1960 must unquestionably rank as **Mr. Emmet's** year. In May he staged "*Three Sisters*" to our deep satisfaction. Now, however, he has surpassed that earlier triumph.

The piece which ends its run tomorrow (Saturday) night is graced by the most accomplished acting I have seen at Mattock-lane since "*The Birthday Party*" last December.

"*The Glass Menagerie*", like "*Orpheus Descending*", is one of Tennessee's

younger, softer works. Unfortunately his apprentice efforts aren't his best; and while "Menagerie" - unlike "Orpheus" - seldom bores, it doesn't possess the dramatic drive or tragic inevitability of "Cat" and "Summer and Smoke", his finest achievements.

Its first half suffers through a triple division of interest; between the predatory St Louis gentlewoman whose husband escaped from her long ago, her shy crippled daughter whom she aims to marry off, and her restlessly ambitious son whom she tries to dominate (an over-vague, quasi-symbolic character-cum-chorus, played solidly but unexceptionally by **Edward Pitt**).

The second half repairs the deficiency by concentrating on the situation of the daughter. Yet even here Williams tends to defeat himself. He never really convinces us that the girl's physical and psychological problems are insoluble. In consequence, the sad final curtain after a single unsuccessful attempt to gain a suitor appears sentimental rather than poignant, touching rather than fiercely moving.

Nonetheless, he affords considerable opportunities to a skilled director and cast. The Questors supply both.

Jan Kenny's rendering of the daughter is as beautifully tiny and fragile as the toy glass animals she childishly clings to (and made me very glad to be a member of a close-range audience).

Two amaze

But two performances amaze. **Jo Arundel** turns the mother into a quintessentially Williamsian personification of crumbling elegance, laughable, rapacious and pathetic in her nagging Southern sing-song where every other sentence seems to finish on a query. And **Tony Worth** lives the part of the intended groom with a spontaneous ease and confidence, a gaiety and warmth, a tact and understanding and simple kindness which are quite extraordinary.

Mr. Worth's handling of the long, delicate dialogue with **Miss Kenny** sets the crown on this memorable evening.

DOUGLAS McVAY

" THE GLASS MENAGERIE "

a play by
Tennessee Williams.

CHARACTERS:

Amanda Wingfield	...	Jo Arundel
Laura, her daughter	...	Jan Kenny
Tom, her son	...	Edward Pitt
The Gentleman Caller	...	Tony Worth

The play produced by Alfred Emmet

The action takes place in
the Wingfield apartment in
an alley in St. Louis.

ACT I. Preparation for a Gentleman Caller
ACT II. The Gentleman Calls.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes
between the Acts.

The setting designed by	John Rolfe
The costumes designed by	Jan Kenny
Associate Producer	Bernard McLaughlin
Stage Manager	Richard Brown
Deputy Stage Manager	Margaret McKenzie
assisted by	Phyllis McLaughlin Enrico Ressiga Vacchini
Wardrobe Mistress	Pixie Laurie
Properties	Sylvia Estop
Lighting	Andy Anderson
assisted by	Judith Emery
Sound	Barry Clark

Candelabra kindly loaned by:
A. Barnett, Bond Street, Ealing.

There will be a DISCUSSION on this
production on SUNDAY, 27th November,
at 7.30pm in the Bernard Shaw room.
All members of the audience are
cordially invited to attend.

NO SMOKING PLEASE

February 1961

THE LADY OF LARKSPUR LOTION & PORTRAIT OF A MADONNA

The following year, and back in the old Tin Hut, it was the turn of the **Student Group** to include Tennessee Williams in their spring presentation of Four One Act Plays.

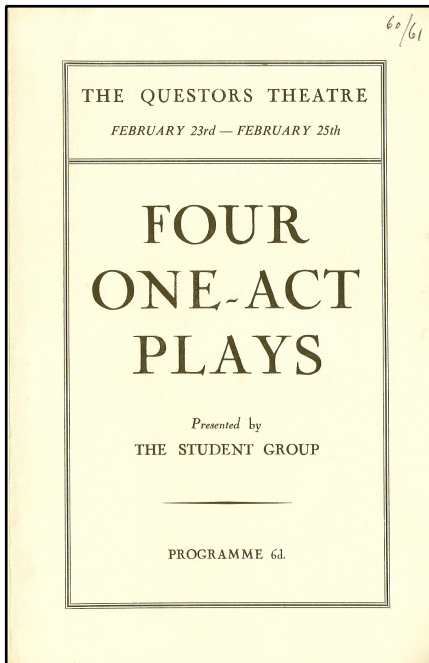
Middlesex County Times
3 March 1961

**Four Plays for the
price of one by
Questors student group**

Last week in Ealing, the Questors student group presented four short plays by distinguished authors. Tennessee Williams' "*The Lady of Larkspur Lotion*" and "*Portrait of Madonna*" are two moderately effective blueprints for Blanche DuBois.

At Mattock-lane the former, little more than a curtain-raiser, was chiefly notable for the atmospheric decor touch of the pink bar-sign glowing through the bedroom window, and **Ewart Vaughan-Hopkins'** melancholy "*Larkspur Lotion Blues*" jangling away on the piano offstage.

The latter, though, is longer and afforded **Liat Sandys** the chance of an inevitably compelling - if vocally somewhat limited - *tour de force* in the name-part.



1. THE LADY OF LARKSPUR LOTION	
by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS	
Mrs. Hardwicke-Moore	KARLA SHACKELL
Mrs. Wise	JO GREEN
A Writer	JOHN BEAVIS
Larkspur Lotion is a common treatment for body vermin which contains a high proportion of alcohol.	
"Larkspur Lotion Blues" was specially composed for The Questors by Ewart Vaughan-Hopkins.	
2. PORTRAIT OF A MADONNA	
by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS	
Miss Lucretia Collins	LIAT SANDYS
The Porter	DEREK BROWN
The Elevator Boy	CLIVE WILLIAMS
The Doctor	VICTOR POMPINI
The Nurse	MONYENE KANE
Mr. Abrams	BARRY DAVIS
FIFTEEN-MINUTE INTERVAL	
3. THE LOVE OF DON PERLIMPLIN	
by FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA	
translated by GEORGE LEESON	
Don Perlimplin	BASHIR BADRUDDIN
Marcolfa	CAROL ADAMS
Belisa	FLORENCE COOPER
1st Elf	LIAT SANDYS
2nd Elf	CHARLES CONABERE
Songs specially composed for The Questors by SYLVIA LEESON	
FIFTEEN-MINUTE INTERVAL	



The Lady of Larkspur Lotion
with director Michael Hoddell
far right

April 1962

SOMETHING UNSPOKEN

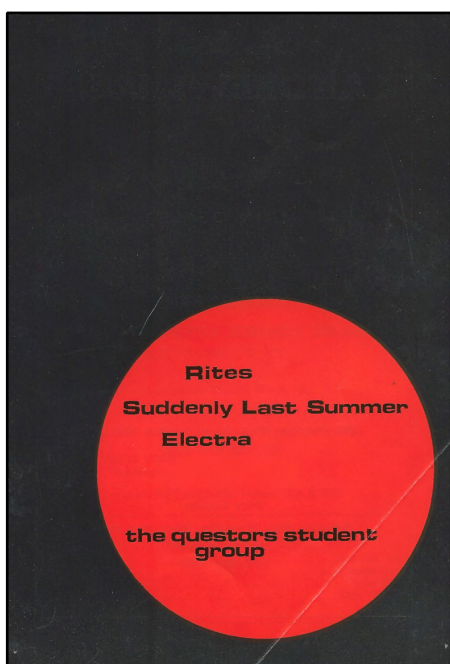
This play was presented as one of three showcases for prospective directors. **Something Unspoken** was directed by **John Holloway**. (Incidentally, one of the other prospective directors that night was **Alan Chambers**, directing an Edward Albee play.) **Alfred Emmet** commented afterwards on **John Holloway**:

"This was this producer's first attempt to produce a play and it is not to be expected, therefore, that it would be of a standard high enough to justify offering him work. He has yet much to learn."

In the event, **John Holloway** appears to have learnt enough to have been accepted as a director after a further showcase in **1974** and in **1979** was entrusted with an adventurous programme of Tennessee Williams' early works (see below).

February 1972

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER



It was the turn of the **Student Group** to include Tennessee Williams again in their Spring production of Three One-Act Plays. The full programme included a **Maureen Duffy** Play and **Sophocles' Elektra**, so I imagine all three were trimmed down to a degree. The students were directed in all three plays by **Wyllie Longmore**.



The Questors Student Group

presents

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

by Tennessee Williams

Characters in order of appearance

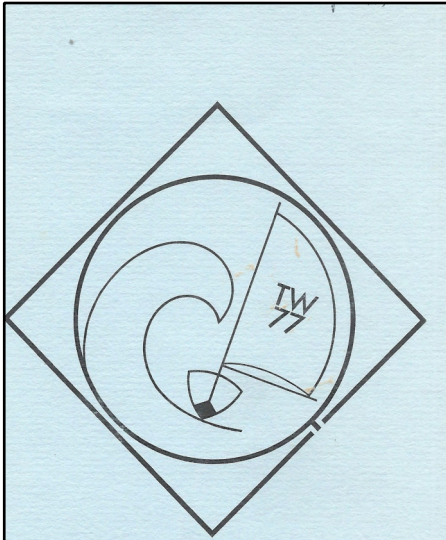
Mrs. Venable	IRENE MACDONALD
Doctor Cukrowicz	PETER HARBORNE
Miss Foxhill	CAROLINE FINCH
Mrs. Holly	DANA STUCZYNSKA
George Holly	STAN MCGOWAN
Catherine Holly	ROSEMARY PARRY JONES
Sister Felicity	CLARE PATRICK

Scene: The garden of a Victorian Gothic Mansion in the Garden District, New Orleans.

Time: Late afternoon, between late summer and early fall, 1935.

September 1977

SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS



SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS

by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY



The Questors
Theatre Company

First Performance Saturday 10th September 1977

SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS

by Tennessee Williams

CAST

in order of appearance

Monk	—	JOHN ROBB
Violet	—	DOROTHY BOYD TAYLOR
Doc	—	WILFRID SHARP
Bill McCorkle	—	JOHN KEARNS
Leona Dawson	—	CAROLINE McDONOUGH
Steve	—	TOM JENNINGS
Quentin	—	NORMAN WILKINSON
Bobby	—	GRAHAM WILLIAMS
Tony, the Cop	—	TONY WILD

Director — Ed Pitt

Set Design: John Bush Lighting Design: Les Smith

Act 1

A bar along the Southern California Coast

Act 2

An hour or two later

THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES

SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS is one of Williams' crucial works, written immediately following the period in his life which he refers to in his autobiography as his 'Deathtime'.

It is set in a run down beach bar near Los Angeles and concerns a group of derelicts and their relationship with a middle-aged 'beautician' who echoes the author's struggles with his weaknesses and environment.

The play is harsh, very basic and funny and contains all of Williams' careful observations and lyricism.

Questopics, July 1977



TRUBLE AT the bar as Caroline McDonough interrupts Wilfred Sharp — centre — and John Robb's conversation.



WHAT'S GOING on here then? — policeman Tony Wilde investigates while Tom Jennings and Caroline McDonough panic.

THE GAZETTE
Friday, September 16, 1977

Hot gossip from a sleazy bar room

WRITER Tennessee Williams is best known for such classics as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

He proved himself a brilliant creator of theatrical atmosphere, providing spectacular acting parts for young men and older women against a run-down Southern background.

While most of these elements are to be found in his later play, *Small Craft Warnings*, which has been showing all week at The Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing, they appear to be somewhat muted. The characterisation loses some of its impact.

One reason could be that Williams' favourite character-types have now been over exploited by the Californian based American television factory and no longer retain for us the interest they once possessed.

HUMOUR

Having said that, the play is still interesting and entertaining as it looks at an important day in the lives of a bizarre group of human cast-offs, inhabiting a sleazy bar along the Southern Californian coast, with humour and understanding.

Its atmosphere is strengthened by the fact that Williams wrote it at the culmination of a savage relapse in his own life, during which he became addicted to drugs and alcohol. It is obviously based on his experiences at the time.

The brunt of the acting falls upon the shoulders of **Caroline McDonough** as Leona Dawson, a middle-aged beautician who lives in a trailer and moves from city to city and job to job.

As the most dominant inhabitant of the bar, **Miss McDonough** tackles the role with a brash confidence, neatly side-stepping from the abrasive to the sympathetic when the mood dictates. Her constant gesticulating, however, tends to become monotonous.

NEUROTIC

Violet, a pathetic lonely figure who resorts to crude sexual advances in order to make contact with people, is sensitively and movingly played by **Dorothy Boyd Taylor**.

Her erratic changes of neurotic moodiness coming across like a whiplash.

Les Smith's lighting changes achieved a smooth isolation which added to the continuity of the action.

John Bush's set succeeds in economically providing a suitable seedy background to the play.

July 1977

SOMETHING UNSPOKEN

The Student Group revive the play that **John Holloway** had attempted in his first Director's Showcase. This time **Wyllie Longmore** is directing the play as a curtain raiser to Edward Bond's *The Sea*.



Katy Butler and **Sandie Rix**, who also appeared to good effect in *The Sea*, got their big chances in *Something Unspoken* by Tennessee Williams.

Perhaps this is a difficult play for young actresses to strike excitement from — though **Katy Butler's** make-up was a marvel of ageing and carried immediate conviction. However, the play failed to find a depth of atmosphere or its climax when it came. Perhaps this was because the performances were not quite revealing enough of the something that remains unspoken throughout the play but should be shown to the audience — Cornelia's soft centre and Grace's granite heart.

John Martin



The Questors Student Group

First performance Saturday July 16, 1977

SOMETHING UNSPOKEN

by Tennessee Williams

Cast

Cornelia Scott KATY BUTLER
Grace Lancaster SANDIE RIX

Scene: Miss Scott's Residence — somewhere in the American South.

THE SEA

by Edward Bond

Cast

Willy Carson IAIN REID
Evans LENNOX THOMAS
Hatch DAVE GOODWIN
Louise Rafi MARGARET McDONALD
Jessica Tilehouse ANGELA WILKES
Hollarout CHRISTOPHER WELLS
Thompson DEREK LONGHURST
Carter BRIAN MURPHY
Rose Jones MAGGIE HOSKIN
Mafanwy Price SUE SCOTT
Jilly SANDIE RIX
Rachel KATY BUTLER
Vicar FRANK WYSE
Davis NIKOLA WILLIS
Townsppeople JEREMY BENTHAM, DIANA FARLEY,
CATHERINE GRUBB, SARAH JANE HALL, TARI KHAN.

A village on the East Coast of England. Spring, 1907.

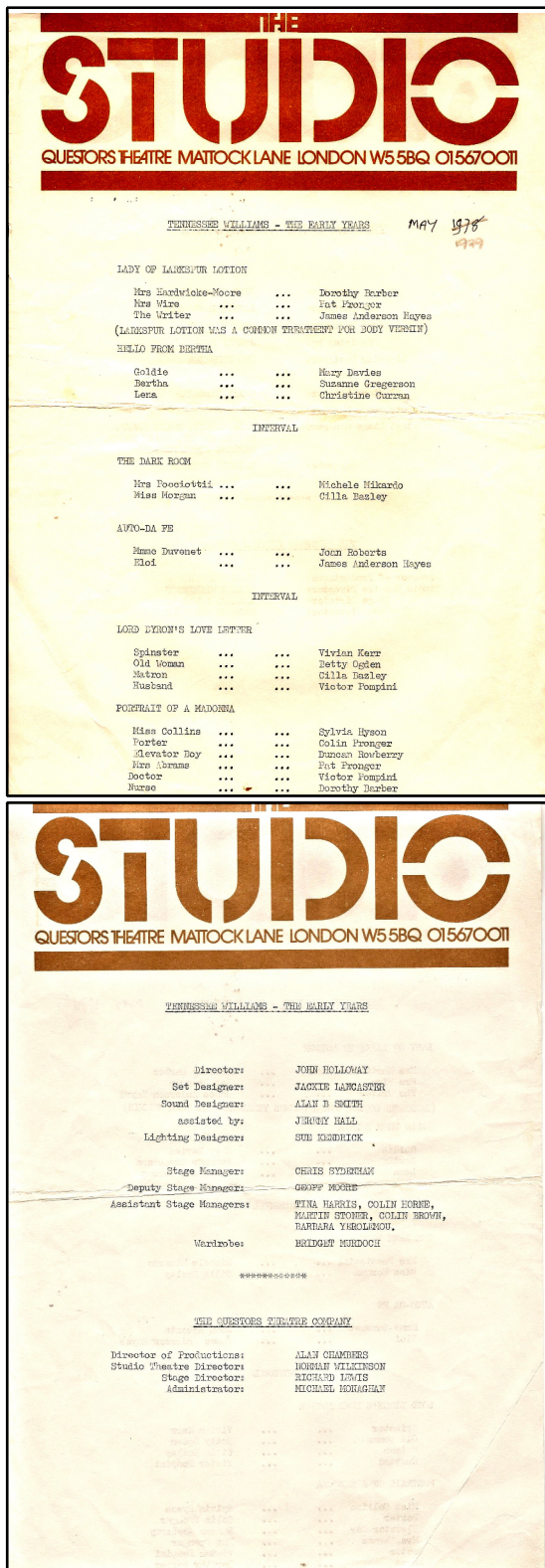
Scenes: 1. Beach 5. Draper's Shop
2. Draper's Shop 6. Beach
3. Beach — Evens' Hut 7. Clifftop
4. Park House 8. Beach — Evens' Hut

There will be ONE INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES after Scene 4 of *The Sea*.
The plays directed by WYLLIE LONGMORE
Designed by CHRIS HARRIS - Costumes by CATHERINE GRUBB
Iain Reid and Frank Wyse are past members of the Student Group.

May 1979

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

- The Early Years



John Holloway introduced his interesting exploration of Tennessee Williams' early writing. Unfortunately we don't have any production photos.

Since 1948 with *The Glass Menagerie* and later *Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Summer and Smoke*, *Suddenly Last Summer* to name a few, right up to 1978 with the West End premiere of *Vieux Carre* **Tennessee Williams** has remained America's leading playwright.

In the late 30's and early 40's - before he established his reputation - he wrote a considerable number of one act plays which are of some considerable interest as from them he has extended and developed the themes and characters into his later full length works. *The Lady of Larkspur Lotion* for example has the same characters and situation as *Vieux Carre* and the tragic *Portrait of a Madonna* is clearly the basis of the final scene from *Streetcar*.

Our programme will also include the humorous *Lord Byron's Love Letter*, the black comedy *The Dark Room*, and two stark tragedies - *Auto da Fe* and *Hello from Bertha*.

In case you think that six plays in one evening looks like a marathon I hasten to say that most of these works last no longer than 15 minutes. In all it should be a very varied and interesting evening.

JOHN HOLLOWAY
Questopics, June 1979

September 1981

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE



A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

There are a number of interpretations of this play. Some find in it a Freudian theme, Blanche's guilt at causing the death of her young husband leads her to seek solace in sexual encounters and rationalise the whole thing in elaborate fantasies. Others see the clue in the title. As a tram cannot escape from its lines so Blanche cannot escape the course and destiny of her life — of her tragedy. There is also the view that Blanche represents the corruption of American society, fallen into ruins but presenting a genteel and respectable front. But surely this view does not fit the period in which the play was written — just after the Second World War. Such an idea would have been more appropriate after McCarthy and Vietnam. And does not the date provide us with some pointers to the play itself? With the war still fresh in memory people were still coming to terms with the fact of death on a large scale. There is Stanley, confident and a realist;

"Taken at Salerno. I believed I was lucky. I figured that four out of five would not come through, but I would . . . and I did . . . To hold front position in this rat-race you've got to believe you are lucky."

But against this there is Blanche, in a crumbling mortgaged house with her relatives dying around her;

CAST
in order of appearance

NEGRO WOMEN	Winnie Miller
EUNICE HUBBEL	Jennifer Tudor
BLANCHE DuBOIS	Anna Brown
SAILOR	Richard Lewis
STANLEY KOWALSKI	Robin Ingram
HAROLD MITCHELL (Mitch)	Geoff Webb
STELLA KOWALSKI	Sarah Morrison
STEVE HUBBEL	Peter Knight
PABLO GONZALES	Rodney Prynne
YOUNG COLLECTOR	Paul MacWilliams
MEXICAN WOMAN	Pam Gower
DOCTOR	Gerry Blake
NURSE	Vivien Kerr

Directed by Elayne Gomersall
Set designed by Geoff Moore
Costumes designed by Anna Belej
Lighting design by Ken Lake
Music arranged and conducted by Andrew Brixey

The play is set in New Orleans in the Summer of 1947.

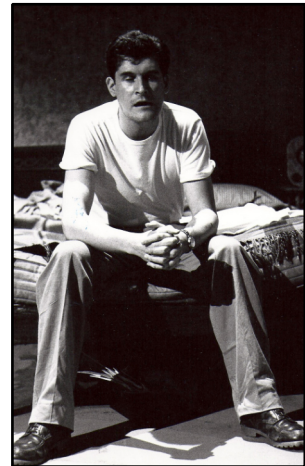
There will be an interval of fifteen minutes between Act 2 and Act 3.

"I used to sit here and she used to sit over there and death was as close as you are. We didn't dare even admit we had ever heard of it . . . The opposite is desire, so you wonder?"

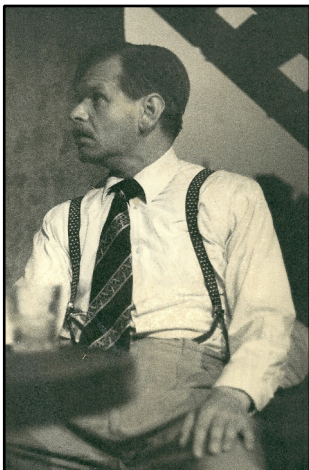
So desire and panic chase her "from one to the other". And her fantasies of primness and respectability and rich friends cover her insecurity.

Her brother-in-law Stanley would never understand this. To his practical working-class mind it is all lies and she falls into the category of being treated as a whore.

Stanley Kowalski was played by **Robin Ingram**. He was simple, honest, tough, down to earth, moving from violence to emotional repentance, from coarse humour to tender affection. The accent was more Brooklyn than New Orleans - but why not. He came over as a good man without imagination, who took life as it came. He was a survivor. It was, I thought, a first class performance.



The part of his wife, Stella, is a difficult one, for she has to show recognition of her lot, which could sometimes include violence, without being cowed or subjugated. **Sarah Morrison** achieved this by being sweet and equally unimaginative. But she too showed she could match her husband with outbursts of anger and of passion. She was a good foil to Robin Ingram.



Mitch, Blanche's dull devoted follower, was well represented by **Geoff Webb**. A decent man, one felt, but lost when it came to understanding Blanche. He knew he should do more, and that there was more to Blanche's problem than Stanley thought but he could not see what it was and when he did dimly perceive it, it was too late.

This brings us to Blanche herself. **Anna Brown** had perfected a slow Southern drawl. She gave a brilliant performance as a neurotic refined if often vague woman with fluttery gestures. Blanche's loss of control and descent into mental instability was well done. Yet the sexual drive she must have had did not come across, so the whole effect was a little flat and slow. This would not have mattered so much if the whole production had not slowed up from time to time. The long waits in semi-darkness between the eleven scenes slowed the play up even more, despite the cuts. The characters came in too slowly one by one at intervals. This play can be made very dreary and at times the production teetered on this edge.

It is after all a simple story. Blanche only wanted a little affection. Mitch failed her. Stanley was blind to her problems and mistreated her. Her sister was too wrapped up in her man. Hence the ending. The woman upstairs hands Stella's baby to her mother as Blanche leaves for the mental home — an important gesture omitted in this production, — while Blanche is led out 'as if she were blind' with the telling words, 'Whoever you are — I have always depended on the kindness of strangers'. **Anna Brown** delivered this so tellingly she crowned her performance. Stanley comforted his wife and the card game went on. The answer to death is life and affection.

September 1983

PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

by Tennessee Williams
directed by Annie Kimber

A sad, wild comedy of love and marriage American-style. Ralph married his father-in-law's millions and George got married yesterday . . . and wishes he hadn't!

The Swinging Sixties are about to begin; men are men, women are dolls and Hollywood has got a lot to answer for.



Sept 1983

THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT
by
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

CAST

RALPH	Phillip Sheahan
ISABEL	Colleen Johnson
GEORGE	Martin Woodruff
DOROTHEA	Ferne Arfin
MR. MCGILLICUDDY	Philip Remington
MRS. MCGILLICUDDY	Annalisa Taylor
SUSIE	Julie Bridgman
POLICE OFFICER	Stephen Quinn
CAROLLER	Caroline Bleakley

Directed by ANNIE KIMBER
Set designed by Philip Pinkham
Costumes designed by Diana Lloyd

Stage Manager	— Caroline Bleakley
Deputy Stage Manager	— Marguerite Minster
Assistant Stage Managers	— Steve Hawkins, Hilary Robertson, Tom Smith, Lyndsay Maples
Properties	assisted by Iris Phelps, Marjorie Edwins
Wardrobe	assisted by Diana Lloyd, Nicola Collins, Sarah Griffey, Edith Rickett, Barbara Howes, Jacki Hulbert
Lighting Designer	— Steve Harnes
Sound Designer	assisted by Philippe Forster, Beverley Keech
Prompt	— Dave Ellis
Set Construction	assisted by Murray Horrex, Grace Craddock
	— Tim Hayward
	assisted by Howard Orman, Nick Winkworth, Gill Clarke, Peter Hinson, Chris Sydenham

Our thanks also to John Turner, Oenone Grant, Michael Langridge, David Pearson, Geoff Webb, Colin Harris, Ruth Arnold.

Brandy donated by Lucky's Cocktail Bar Restaurant, Ta Haven Green, WE

Champagne donated by Moët & Chandon and Cigars by Desmond Sauter Ltd.



PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

I set off for this play with the intention of avoiding any mention of Tennessee Williams and of concentrating on the production and the actors; but I found this impossible, for the play itself had a stronger impact on these things than I had expected, despite its different style from Williams's usual work. This is partly because of his deep pessimism about the human condition - we are apparently in a permanent state of adjustment - and partly because he set it in his own environment of the American South, though neither the plot nor the atmosphere demanded it.

So the production faced at once the problem of language, that of Tennessee and Texas. There are two consequences of attempting dialects to which one is not accustomed. One, which has previously been pointed out, is that the effort to maintain a consistent form of speech - here highly successful - tends to slow up the action from time to time. And second, that the variety of intonation habitual in the native users of that form of language is lost, so that a certain monotony takes its place. Alternatively the variety becomes simply that of loud and soft - extremes of noise when the speech is lost at both ends. There were many examples of this. It is a difficult situation, which the professional theatre itself often fails to overcome. It is worth noting that Eduardo de Filippo's *Inner Voices*, currently at the National, played in straightforward English works much more successfully than his *Saturday Sunday, Monday* played at the same place in an attempted Italian accent.

The second difficulty arises from the nature of the characters Williams creates. They are naive and immature, but the actors are not. **Phillip Sheahan**'s lively mind shone through his energetic performance as Ralph. You could see him acting and thinking. He was Williams's 'Ralph' only when he was still and that baffled look came over his face. I am not here disparaging his fine performance but sympathising with the double difficulty. It was well thought-out and creative acting.

Colleen Johnson as Isabel overcame this to some extent, though her high notes were unintelligible, but she showed too much intelligence in her face and eyes for the dumb nurse. **Martin Woodruff**, on the other hand, as George, managed to show very little intelligence, except when he stopped acting briefly from time to time, but then he had the added advantage of concentrating on being off-balance and pathetic. The one person who successfully dealt with this particular problem was **Annalisa Taylor** as the shrill American matron, partly because she did not have to sustain it for long (it would have palled after a while), and partly because she was able to take refuge in that wonderfully shaped and so stupid mouth between words.

That the acting team overcame these difficulties in creating a highly comic piece of caricature is greatly to be praised. It was very enjoyable. I am glad I saw it. Yet I suspect Williams's play is much sadder, and leaves us more sharply with the feeling that these people - including the parents who are equally naive in their narrow lives have no future.

This play led me to notice a purpose I had overlooked in Tennessee Williams's work as a whole, hidden from me previously by his intensity and deep pessimism; namely, the exposure of the American way of life. If the characters of *Period of Adjustment* represent that society as a whole . . . well, it makes you think, doesn't it?

April 1984

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

This second of three presentations of **THE GLASS MENAGERIE** was in a programme of Director Showcases, in this case showcasing **Simon Meadon**...

THE GLASS MENAGERIE
by Tennessee Williams

TOM WINGFIELD	...	Robert Jones
AMANDA WINGFIELD	...	Anne Renn
LAURA WINGFIELD	...	Fiona Nicholson

Director : Simon Meadon
Stage Manager : Penny Morris
Prompt : Georgie Glen

September 1986

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

This was a revival of **Alfred Emmet's** in-the-round production of 1960, only this time making full use of the adaptable auditorium in the playhouse.



THE GLASS MENAGERIE

The *Glass Menagerie* is a beautiful play. In later works of Tennessee Williams the symbolism becomes overworked, the situations often too contrived, and the white heat atmosphere created by his incredible sense of theatre tends to cool too quickly when subjected to a little calm afterthought. His touch in *The Glass Menagerie* is delicate, virtually flawless.

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THE QUESTORS THEATRE

THE GLASS MENAGERIE
by
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

AMANDA WINGFIELD . SUZANNE GREGERSON
LAURA, her daughter HELEN RAISWELL
TOM, her son ROBERT GORDON CLARK
The GENTLEMAN CALLER NICHOLAS HARDING

SCENE AN ALLEY IN ST. LOUIS
ACT I Preparation for a Gentleman Caller.
ACT II The Gentleman Calls.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes after Act I.

THE PLAY DIRECTED BY ALFRED EMMET
assisted by STEVE FITZPATRICK
The set designed by RAY DUNNING
Costumes by JUNE NEVIN
Lighting Designer ANDREW DIXON

What can one say about this production other than that, for me, it appeared virtually flawless? Yes, I was occasionally worried by the perfectly legitimate but difficult use of mime, but I found this acceptable, apart from the slightly irritating variations in the position of the imaginary door knob! I have not seen a play truly '*in the round*' for some time, and here it worked perfectly, and I was far too absorbed to '*feel sorry for the audience on the other side!*'

Performances by **Robert Gordon Clark** (Tom), **Suzanne Gregerson** (Amanda), and **Nicholas Harding** (Gentleman caller) were totally convincing and memorable; the name of **Helen Raiswell** (Laura) seemed familiar to me, and I find that in the July 1985 Student group production of *The Good Woman of Setzuan*... "*I look forward to seeing the excellent Helen Raiswell in another production, when we can see if her fine voice and stage presence can be matched by her acting ability, which I'm sure it can*". I'm naturally delighted to find how right I was! A fine, sensitive interpretation, and so right to avoid the natural amateur temptation to appear an obvious cripple.

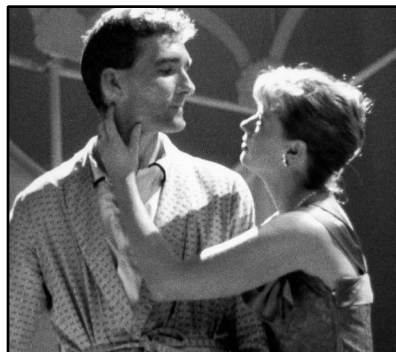
It was one of those rare evenings when I wanted to wait a few seconds before breaking into applause at the end, and one of those equally rare occasions when I have nothing more to add beyond saying 'thank you, **Mr. Emmet**, your cast and your team, for a super piece of theatre'.

DH, Questopics December 1986



May 1994

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF



THE QUESTORS
THEATRE

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

by Tennessee Williams

Sponsored by
VICKERS SOLICITORS

CAST

Margaret	.....	CHLOE FRANKS
Brick	.....	PETER KENNEDY
Mae (sometimes called Sister Woman)	.....	SUSAN REICH
Big Mama	.....	SANDRA HEALY
Disie, a little girl	.....	KERRY HOOK
Big Daddy	.....	MIKE LANGRIDGE
Reverend Tooker	.....	T.J. ZALE
Gooper (sometimes called Brother Man)	.....	GEORGE MARTIN
Doctor Raugh	.....	MICHAEL GERRARD
		GEMMA BARRY
		KATE PILMER
Other Children	.....	VALERIE COPENHAGEN
		JONATHAN PILLAY
		WARREN BARRY
		SOPHIE GREY
		FIONA WHITEFOOT
Servants	.....

The action takes place in Big Daddy's house somewhere in the Mississippi Delta.
The time is an evening in summer in the mid-nineteen-fifties.
The action is continuous.

There is one interval of fifteen minutes.

PRODUCTION

Director	.....	ROGER LEWIS
Set Designer	.....	KATE MORTON
Assistant Set Designer	.....	NORMAN BARWICK
Costume Designer	.....	KATE MORTON
Lighting Designer	.....	JONATHAN PARTINGTON
Lighting Operator	.....	STEPHAN GERBING
Sound Designers	.....	MARTIN UDALL, FRANK WOOD
Sound Operator	.....	KATE SMITH
Stage Manager	.....	MARTIN STONER
Deputy Stage Manager	.....	NIGEL BAMFORD
Production Assistant	.....	KAREN TEGGART
Assistant Stage Managers	.....	KAREN HORNBV, FIONA WHITEFOOT, MUNIRA QURESHI
.....	.....	JEAN ASH
Proprietor	.....	LINDSAY KELLY,
Properties	.....	BARRY JONES, ALISON MORRIS,
		RICHARD KELLY,
Construction	.....	JIM CRADDOCK, MATT HORTON, BOB COOPER
Wardrobe	.....	MARY ANGLUS, JENNY BECKLEY, CHRIS GREENING,
Dialect Coach	.....	WENDY HELLERHOOK, GERARD GREENELL,
Make-up & Hair	.....	KATE MARTIN, TONJE ROBERIO

Thanks to: NIGEL WORSLEY, TESSA CURTIS,
QUEST ANTIQUES of NORTHFIELD AVENUE, ROGER BRACE,
CHRIS SYDENHAM, TINA HARRIS, LINDA ZIEBA

Music taken from Samuel Barber *Adagio for Strings* Opus 11 and Beethoven *Egmont Overture* Opus 84.

A View from the Back Row Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

I suppose a lot of people will have memories of the 1958 Liz Taylor/ Paul Newman film; I watched a video afterwards, and the ending surely is pure schmaltz: Big Daddy and Big Momma virtually walk hand in hand up to

Heaven, Brick falls into bed with his wife; Burl Ives and Jack Carson are nicer, Momma (I forget who played her) less silly and never even gets to mention the spastic colon, and only Sister Woman is more unpleasant. In the nature of things, Taylor and Newman are prettier than **Chloe Franks** and **Peter Kennedy**, but unless one's only reason for watching a film is to see the stars, one needn't, frankly, give a damn. The Questors' cast were very good indeed.

Tennessee Williams was a gritty, unsentimental writer; not many describe children in terms of "*five head*" of them. The nearest he dared get in 1955 to a homosexual apologia was the Edward Carpenter-style Noble Companionship speech, which was fairly common in literature of the 1890's onwards, and disappeared in the course of the franker 60's. (The film, characteristically, couldn't let even a mention of such notions besmirch the clean-cut Newman, and came as close as it possibly could to writing Skipper out of the story altogether with coded chat about Immaturity). Brick isn't really sure what his feelings are, except that he isn't coping with them, and we are left unsure at the end. Stay married for about ten years and then "come out" in the late sixties, is my guess. But I like the atmosphere of "*we've come through a lot together*" affectionate weariness in which the couple finished. **Chloe Franks** in particular, produced everything from rancid cynicism to tenderness in her huge part, which has a great emotional range.

Everyone must have done hours of work on accents; I thought **Peter Kennedy** was a bit too laid back with this, whereas **Chloe Franks** was so Deep South as to be positively subterranean. I expect you do hear people like that in Mississippi, but it would be rather hard work to listen to them all day, with about six vowel sounds for every consonant: "*caiyewut*" on a hot tin roof. I think she toned it down later on Sunday afternoon, and the audience, I gathered, was rather grateful. The rest of the cast gestured gracefully in the general direction of the Southern States, and I thought did about enough.

Big Daddy doesn't have to be physically tall (Ives wasn't), hut must have Presence. **Mike Langridge** was blessed with both, and had enough edge to make his assault on his wife truly crushing. He didn't quite convince me that his pain was ever more than a touch of wind. Did he never feel like sitting down after his six weeks in hospital? Was he never short of breath after a big ding-dong? How did he get the energy for all that shouting? I wondered whether having him a little more shaky (although he will not admit it to himself), might have been effective. Brick, too, could have been hurt a bit more when he'd been deliberately tripped up. Cooper and his family were excellent, and the kids went through their frightful motions just right, and **Sandra Healy** (Big Momma) was truly pathetic as required. Rev Tooker seemed to have been parachuted in from Damon Runyon (am I thinking of Tubby Kayes?)



The pink and white candlewick-bedspread setting was fifties, and I've always loved the Barber piece; absolutely right. But had the dead leaves wafted in from Uncle Vanya; I thought it was high summer, not autumn. But altogether, most enjoyable, and (although Liz Taylor was good), knocked Hollywood into a cocked hat.

HILARY POTTS, Questopics, October 1994

January 1998

THE ROSE TATTOO

Questopics, January 1998

By
Tennessee Williams

CAST

Salvatore Vivi Bruno Assunta Rosa Delle Rose Serafina Delle Rose Estelle Hohengarten The Strage Giuseppina Peppina Violetta Father de Leo Doctor Miss Yorkie Flora Bessie Jack Hunter Salesman Alvaro Mangiacavallo	Angela Schlegel Clare O'Connor Tomas Lewis Janet Egan Miranda Webb Lisa Day Clare Hocter Freddy Henry Penny Sims Grace Craddock Rachel Cody Jim O'Connor John Martin Claudia Garrison Grace Craddock Linda Shannon Eddie Fitzgerald Kelvin West Antony Quinlan
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The play is set in near New Orleans in the 1950's

ACT 1
 Scene 1 Evening
 Scene 2 Almost morning the next day
 Scene 3 Noon that day
 Scene 4 A late spring morning, three years later
 Scene 5 Immediately following
 Scene 6 Two hours later

 ACT 2
 Scene 1 Two hours later

 ACT 3
 Scene 1 Evening of the same day
 Scene 2 Just before dawn of the next day
 Scene 3 Morning

There will be a 15 minute interval between Act 1 and Act 2

THE ROSE TATTOO / Studio

Tennessee Williams is the poet of sexual rage. In *The Rose Tattoo* a Sicilian peasant glorifies in the prowess of her husband, who claims to be a baron and is a lorry-driver smuggling dope in his cargo of bananas. When he is shot, she cuts herself off from society, degenerates into a slattern and turns her husband's ashes into a shrine.

The play is set in a small town on the Gulf of Mexico where the population includes a number of Sicilians. Most of the the time the Italians and the Americans mix amicably, sometimes they don't. The result is a fiery, tumbling society where jealousies and passions collide, where the tragic and the comic intertwine. This is a society that never rests, and Tennessee Williams exploits its vitality to the full.

The Director, Brian Ingram, writes:

It has usually been my habit to ignore biographical factors when preparing to direct a play, but with the work of Tennessee Williams it is tempting to keep elements of his persona to the fore. It may be argued that several of his leading characters represent his own fears and frustrations. Coming as he did from a conservative southern state at a time when his homosexuality had to remain hidden, he implanted his frustrations into his writing. The characters in whom he explores his own feelings are as likely to be female as male. That is



certainly the case in *The Rose Tattoo*. The widowed Serafina rebels against the restrictions of her society and her religion as she comes to realise that her love and her passion are as powerful as her traditional duties. In many ways she may be identified with a character such as Sophocles' *Antigone*, torn between social tradition and personal duty. But with Serafina physical passions and needs also intrude; as do her motherly concerns over her daughter as she reaches puberty and becomes embroiled in an affair with a young sailor.

In many ways this is a naturalistic play, yet its poetry reveals images of deeper feeling so that the whole offers an expression of humanity that reality rarely embraces. It is through a miraculous lightness of touch and humour that Williams allows the characters to progress. Although it has its darker moments it is a play of hope and a celebration of life.



April 2003

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

Audiences were in for a treat this month as David Emmet's studio production of *Suddenly Last Summer* (below) was preceded a fortnight earlier by a Director's Showcase which included the same play directed by Louis Tasker.

Questopics, April 2003

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

Suddenly Last Summer
by Tennessee Williams

26, 28, 29, 30 April, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 May at 7.45pm, 27 April at 2.30pm

BOX OFFICE 020 8567 5184
Members £6.00, guests £7.50

Tel: 020 8567 0011 • Email: enquiries@questors.org.uk • www.questors.org.uk

SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER

by Tennessee Williams
First performance of this production 26th April 2003

CAST - in order of appearance:

MRS VENABLE	MORAGH GEE
DOCTOR	ANTHONY GREEN
MISS FOXHILL	BARBARA MARKER
CATHARINE HOLLY	CLAIRE GARRIGAN
SISTER FELICITY	SUSAN GERLACH
MRS HOLLY	MARGARET TURNER
GEORGE HOLLY	TRISTAN MARSHALL

Setting: a patio garden at Mrs Venable's mansion in the Garden District of New Orleans, late November 1935.

Running time - 1 hour 40 minutes. There is no interval.

Directed by	David Emmet
Designed by	Wanda Duszynska
Get-In Designer	Alex Marker
Costumes designed by	Nichola Thomas, Sarah Andrews
Lighting designed by	Chris Newall
Sound designed by	Joel Schrire
Soundscape created by	Mark Rose
Dialect Coach	Susan Gerlach
Stage Manager	Les Fraser
Deputy Stage Manager	Jo Matthews
Assistant Stage Managers	Elena Marks, Dominique Gozdawa, Arabo Shahanian, Matthew Simpson
Sound Operator	Martin Choules
Props	Les Fraser
Construction	John Rolfe, Alex Marker, Simon Clarke, John Rantell, Jennie Rawlings
Make-up & Hair	Julie Cruttenden
Get-In Crew	Martin Stoner, Geoff Moore, Patrick Smart

Last summer the fabulously wealthy Mrs Venable's son Sebastian died in mysterious circumstances while travelling in Europe with his cousin Catherine Holly, who is the only person who knows what happened. But Catherine has been so traumatised by the events she witnessed that she has been kept in a mental hospital ever since, undergoing endless drug treatments that have probably disturbed the balance of her mind even more. Nevertheless, snippets of her story have filtered through to Mrs Venable, who has had her brought to her house to tell her story.

But Mrs Venable's agenda has nothing to do with discovering the truth. She is determined to suppress it in order to maintain her false illusion of Sebastian's character. She was obsessively devoted to her son, and his reputation, and of course hers, must be maintained at all costs. She has entrapped a young doctor with the promise of support for his medical research. She is more than willing to use her wealth and power over him to have her niece permanently silenced, if that is what it will take to ensure that the truth (which she refuses to believe) does not come out. After all, Catherine's story is so fantastic that only a mad girl could have invented it.

Also in Mrs Venable's power are Catherine's mother and brother George. They are dependent on her for financial support, for their status and for their upper class way of life. They join in trying to persuade Catherine to lie - their inheritance depends on it, and they'd rather see Catherine shut away than lose it. Meanwhile, the doctor starts to fancy Catherine.

Under the influence of a truth drug, Catherine tells her story, and it turns out to be infinitely

more shocking and devastating than any character in the play, or you the audience, could ever have expected. So what will happen to Catherine now?

This intense drama is quite as great as Tennessee Williams' more famous plays, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. It is rich in atmosphere, set entirely in a steaming subtropical garden full of carnivorous plants, and punctuated by the chilling noises of a jungle. It is full of the most delicate subtleties; while the subject matter is not for the faint hearted (or young children). It is a short play, which builds inexorably towards its terrifying conclusion in a single scene. The drama unfolds without let-up, and the climax is mind-blowing.

The cast includes **Moragh Gee** (in her first part at *The Questors*), **Claire Garrigan** (Hedda in *Hedda Gabler*), **Margaret Turner** (Doris in *Carrying On*); **Anthony Green** (Nigel in *Absolute Hell*), **Tristan Marshall** (in his first part at *The Questors*), **Susan Gerlach** (*Absolute Hell*), **Barbara Marker** (Mrs Marriner in *Absolute Hell*).



September 2004

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Questopics,
August 2004

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE by Tennessee Williams

This torrid and passionate tale of desire in the southern heat created a sensation when it opened at the *Ethel Barrymore Theater* in December 1947. It met with some rave reviews: "a quietly woven study of intangibles... [Tennessee Williams is] a genuinely poetic playwright whose knowledge of people is honest and thorough"—Brooks Atkinson.

And some less enthusiastic ones: George Jean Nathan complained of the play's "unpleasant" nature, calling it *The Glands Menagerie*; while Mary McCarthy said Williams would have been better off writing "a wonderful little comic epic, *The Struggle for the Bathroom*".

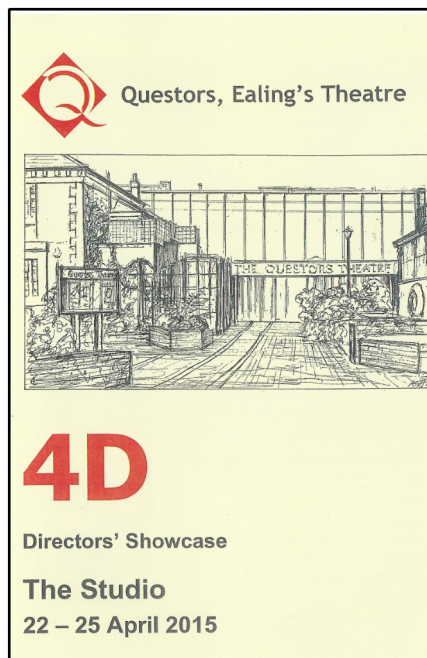
Nonetheless that first production, starring Jessica Tandy and Marlon Brando, went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama. The play reached an even wider audience in 1951, when it was filmed with Vivien Leigh as Blanche DuBois. Leigh's performance earned her a second Oscar and the film made Brando an acting legend.

Cast		Production Team	
Blanche DuBois	Lisa Day	Director	Roger Beaumont
Stella Kowalski	Chloë Lewis	Set Design	John Horwood
Stanley Kowalski	Tony Steele	Lighting and Sound Design	Alan N Smith
Harold Mitchell (Mitch)	Andy Ashford	Stage Management	Katy Gallantry, Bin Parsonage, Catherine Colinson
Eunice Hubbel	Nina Lubicz-Nawrocka	Properties	Harriet Parsonage
Steve Hubbel	Zach Measures	Lighting Assistants	Perri Blakelock, Andrew Fletcher, Sue Crowson
Pablo Gonzales	Marc Golland	Sound Assistant	Sue Crowson
Clarisse	Sheri Desbaux	Costume and Wardrobe	Nichola Thomas, Jennie Yates, Sarah Andrews, Bernie Hardman
Doctor	John Hines	Construction and Get In Team	Mike Hagan, Tina Harris, Louise Torres, Mike Caddy, Gordon Miller, Richard Williams, Karen Hilday, Chris Tomkins, Kate Barber, Phil Driver, Ed Wally, Jovanka Lovinko, Duncan Walsdale
Nurse	Marie Brusa	Set Painting	Dennis Draoup, Elaine Hagan
A Young Collector	Paul Wesley	Set Dressing	Jenny Richardson
A Mexican Woman	Marie Brusa	Rehearsal Prompts	Pam Smith, Sue Oliver
A Sailor	Paul Wesley	Dialect Coaching	Eldi Dundles, Susan Gerlach
		Make up and Hair	Chloe Williams
		Wardrobe Assistant	Carole Mann
		Thanks to	Adrienne Talbot, Nigel Bantford, Nigel Worsley, The Tower Theatre, Audrey Thomas, Amsey Thomas, Colin Gullins, Ian Cole, Martin Sapped, Martin Stoner



September 2004

TALK TO ME LIKE THE RAIN AND LET ME LISTEN



This little known play was presented in the Studio as one of four Director Showcases (4D), and is introduced here by the director, Stephanie Pemberton.

Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen

Tennessee Williams is a playwright that I have dreamed of directing and, as it needed to be short, his collection *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other One Act Plays* was a perfect source. The set had to be simple and the play *Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen*, introduced to me over thirty years ago, fulfilled all that was required.

The play is set in a room which depicts the poverty of the unnamed man and woman. In his poetic way, Williams' major themes are explored in the Man's abuse of alcohol and the Woman's solitary depression. The play is mostly a series of monologues: the man's conveying the life he leads away from the relationship and the woman's about the life she dreams of. The pair are bound together in an endless cycle by their hopeless poverty but between them is an intimacy of desperation.

The music, *Estrellita* by *Manuel Ponce* suggested by Williams, is tender and intense and the opening melody quickly covers an entire octave. Using two recordings, one by guitarist *Adam Holzman* and the other by renowned violinist *Jascha Heifetz*, gives us a sense of the world the characters live in, whilst Heifetz' soaring violin gives us the raw emotion.

Thank you to our hard working production team and to Jane Mason for finding rehearsal spaces. My special thanks to **Emma Armstrong Hawkins** (woman) and **Christian Search** (man) for their trust and commitment.

