

TENNESSEE
WILLIAMS

The Glass Menagerie

Directed by
GORDON
EDELSTEIN

Welcome to Center Theatre Group and this re-imagining of Tennessee Williams' classic story *The Glass Menagerie*.

One of our greatest American plays, it tells the story of a family hanging its hopes on the arrival of a "gentleman caller." *The Glass Menagerie* is a deeply personal play and this production further emphasizes its autobiographical nature. Traditionally, the character of Tom serves as a narrator or guide through *The Glass Menagerie*. In this production, Tom, like Tennessee Williams, is a writer and as an audience we watch him struggle to find the words to bring his family to life onstage.

The Glass Menagerie is about some of the most fundamental relationships that a person has: our parents and siblings. The New York Times said that "...the production is suffused with emotion from its first moments to its last, turbulent with the confusions of love and hope and regret and fear that fill any family living room in a time of crisis and stress." The play explores how deeply families need and love one another and the potential cost of that love. It is a play about the pain of leaving home and the memories that travel with us as we go.

Before we tell you more, take a moment and think about family. How do you balance your individual dreams with your responsibility to your family? What does it take to speak your heart to your family? Do you think that families are the people who know us the best and/or the people who know us the least? How can one family's story ripple out and help us reflect on our own?

Turn the page to explore *The Glass Menagerie*. Discover the playwright, Tennessee Williams and how he explored his life through his writing. Learn about the 1930s, the economic challenges of that time period and how they compare to the economic realities of our present day. Meet the characters in this play and imagine their lives; their hopes, dreams, challenges and fears. Is there a character who reminds you of someone in your family? Is there a character that reminds you of yourself?

Theatre raises questions and challenges audience members to discover their own answers. See what questions this information raises for you and what questions and answers the performance provides. Thank you so much for joining us for *The Glass Menagerie*. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

"the long-delayed but always expected something that we live for." —*The Glass Menagerie*



About this Production

Synopsis

In a hotel room in New Orleans we meet Tom, a young writer struggling to write a play about his family. He begins telling us about his mother Amanda, and his sister Laura, with whom he lived in a small tenement apartment in St. Louis, Missouri, in the late 1930s. As he reminisces about his past, the stories and characters come to life.

The Great Depression has ended, but the country is still experiencing a major economic recession. It's a time of swing music, the golden age of Hollywood and major political changes around the world. Tom is the family breadwinner, working long hours at the Continental Shoemakers warehouse. He dreams of becoming a poet, traveling the world and being free of all of his familial obligations. He escapes by taking nightly excursions to the movie theatre or watching the young couples across the alley at the Paradise Dance Hall from his fire escape.

As a single mother, Amanda is always searching for ways that she and her two children can make a better life for themselves. She reminisces about her youthful days when she was a young Southern belle with many gentleman callers and a future filled with endless possibilities.

But life did not turn out the way Amanda expected. Her family is struggling and Amanda senses Tom's restlessness. She fears that, just like his father, he will eventually leave her and Laura to fend for themselves.

“A play does not exist until it is on the stage.”

– Tennessee Williams

She decides that the family's only salvation lies in finding her daughter a husband. She strikes a deal with Tom: If he can help her find a proper gentleman caller for his sister then he will be free to go.

But Laura lives in her own world. She is disabled due to a childhood illness that left her with one leg shorter than the other. She spends her days at home caring for her glass animals and listening to old phonograph records that her father left behind. Her disability has become an obstacle keeping her from connecting with the outside world. Even though Tom feels opposed to Amanda's plan, he decides to appease his mother by bringing home Jim O'Connor, his fellow colleague from the warehouse. Jim is a charming and enthusiastic young man whom Laura had a crush on in high school. Amanda tirelessly prepares for the young man's visit hoping that this will be her chance to secure a financial future for herself and Laura. Jim's arrival becomes a catalyst for each character's longing, desires and dreams to surface in unexpected ways.

Menagerie:

- a collection of wild or unusual animals, esp. for exhibition
- a place where they are kept or exhibited
- an unusual and varied group of people

Based on a short story originally titled *Portrait of a Girl in Glass*, Tennessee Williams chose to rename his autobiographical play *The Glass Menagerie*. Why do you think he chose this title?

RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY, 2010

The Glass Menagerie opened at the Lyric Theatre in Chicago in 1944 and then moved to Broadway the following year. It earned Williams a New York Critics' Circle Award and established him as an influential voice in the American Theatre. Williams' other work includes *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Second New York Critics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, 1948) *Summer and Smoke*, *A Rose Tattoo* (Tony Award, 1951), *Camino Real*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* for which he would win his second Tony Award and second Pulitzer Prize in 1955.

Discovery Guide

Educational
Materials Team:

Writer
Janine Salinas

Associate Director of
Education and Community
Partnerships
Debra Piver

Performing for Los Angeles
Youth (P.L.A.Y.) Project
Faculty
Lynn Clark
Leslie Ishii
Marcos Najera
Michael Yurchak

Proofreader
Ana Rose O'Halloran

Graphic Designer
Charity Capili

Tennessee Williams

Tennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams III on March 26, 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi and was raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the second child of Cornelius Coffin Williams, a traveling salesman, and Edwina Dakin Williams, a young Southern belle whose father was an Episcopal Minister. Life at home was quite turbulent for the young Williams who was often caught in the middle of his parents' explosive arguments over money, the children, and his father's hard drinking and gambling. He and his older sister Rose were inseparable as children, often clinging to each other for comfort and safety at home. But during her teenage years, Rose began to experience severe bouts of depression and her behavior became increasingly erratic and unmanageable. This created a distance between her and Williams, who was already growing up a shy, awkward young man often taunted by other children. Seeing that her son had an overactive imagination and trouble socializing, Edwina bought him a second hand typewriter at the age of 13. Writing would quickly become both his obsession as well as his escape from a troubled childhood.

In 1938, Williams entered a playwriting contest through the Group Theatre in New York, using the pen name Tennessee Williams to keep his real identity secret. He then left home and traveled to New Orleans where he officially changed his name. The emotional and physical distance between St. Louis and The French Quarter allowed Williams the space to evolve as both a young man and a young artist. It was during this time that he first began to write about his family and his upbringing. For Williams, the farther away he was from home the closer he was to becoming his true self.

During a trip home to St. Louis in 1943, Williams visited his sister Rose shortly after she had undergone a pre-frontal lobotomy. After spending the day with her, Williams said that he was flooded with memories from his childhood. He also began observing his mother's behavior and created sketches of her and Rose. He fused these with his earlier family writings and began laying the foundation for what would become his most autobiographical play, *The Glass Menagerie*. Amanda's relentless storytelling, and her illusions of grandeur, embodied Edwina's own memories as a young woman as well as her frustrations with the reality of her adult life. Laura's shy, withdrawn nature captured the innocence that he would forever see in Rose even after her surgery. And the choice to have the father physically absent, served as a metaphor for the vast emotional distance that separated Tennessee from his own father.

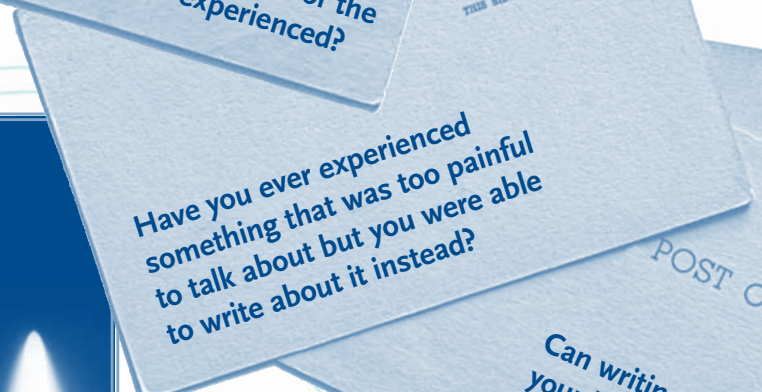
The character of Tom echoes the dreams and struggles of Williams himself. He too grew up in St. Louis, worked in a shoe factory as a young man, dreamed of becoming a writer, and even shared the same first name. Tom reflects Williams' own desire to break free of the familial obligations that kept him so tightly bound to his home. By placing himself and his family on the stage, Williams was able to confront his own demons and speak about the pain and the necessity of leaving home in order to become both the artist and the person he was meant to become.

With the commercial success of *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams became the best known playwright of the 1940s and 50s. His ability to portray the universal human condition inspired audiences. Williams



Tennessee Williams. PHOTO BY YOUSUF KARSH.

continued to write prolifically until the end of his life, often using his personal experiences as inspiration. He is considered by many to be the greatest American playwright of the 20th century.



What is the value of memory?
What is the danger?
Do memories keep us rooted in the past or do they help propel us into the future?

Meet the Characters

Tom Wingfield

“You say there’s so much in your heart that you can’t describe to me. That’s true of me, too. There’s so much in my heart that I can’t describe to you!”
—Tom (Act I, Scene 4)

How do you balance your responsibility to your family and to yourself? In order to become who you are supposed to be, do you think you need to leave home?

Have you ever felt like there was something in your heart that was too painful to discuss with members of your family? Why do you think it can sometimes be difficult to talk honestly among family members?

If you could share one thing that’s in your heart with a family member, what would you tell them?

Amanda Wingfield

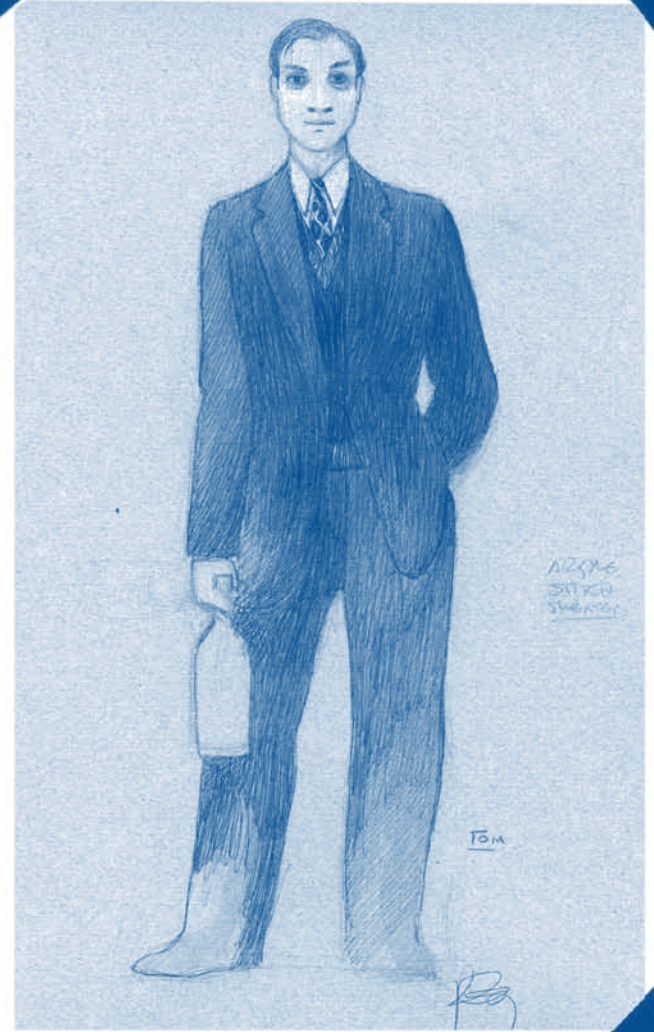
“I’ll tell you what I wished for on the moon. Success and happiness for my precious children. I wish for that whenever there’s a moon, and when there isn’t a moon, I wish for it, too.”

—Amanda (Act I, Scene 6)

What do you think is the job or role of a parent? What is their responsibility to their children and what do you think is the best way to accomplish that?

Think of a disagreement you had with a parent or adult in your life. What do you wish they had done or said differently? Imagine the situation through the adult’s eyes. What was their job or responsibility in that situation? What do you think they wished you had done or said differently?

COSTUME SKETCHES BY MARTIN PAKLEDINAZ.



A poet with a job in a warehouse. His nature is not remorseless, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity.
—Tennessee Williams

Tom is caught between pursuing his own dreams and his responsibility to his sister Laura and his mother Amanda. He is an aspiring poet, who works at a shoe warehouse in order to support his family. In the absence of his father, he has become the primary breadwinner. He is frustrated by the predictable routine of his job as well as Amanda’s demanding nature. He sees some of his father’s tendencies within himself, such as his desire to be out on the open road. Tom is struggling with how to share who he is with his family. He senses that in order to become the poet he dreams of being, he will have to leave home.

COSTUME SKETCHES BY MARTIN PAKLEDINAZ.



A childhood illness has left her crippled, one leg slightly shorter than the other, and held in a brace. Stemming from this, Laura’s separation increases till she is like a piece of her own glass collection, too exquisitely fragile to move from the shelf.
—Tennessee Williams

Amanda’s daughter and Tom’s older sister. Laura is painfully shy. A childhood illness left her disabled, with one leg being shorter than the other, causing a slight limp when she walks. The brace she wears on her leg has become an obstacle to living in the outside world. She retreats into her own imagination and spends her days listening to old records and caring for her collection of glass animals.

Laura Wingfield

“The different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of....They’re common as – weeds, but – you – well, you’re – Blue Roses.”
—Jim about Laura (Act II, Scene 7)

What causes shyness? Are there benefits to being shy? If you consider yourself to be shy, are there certain places or people where you are not shy at all?

If you are not a shy person, how do you respond to shy people in your school or family? Can you imagine what it feels like to be them?

Laura is the most obviously delicate character in the play. In what ways is she also strong?

Do you think that all human beings are delicate in some way? Why do we feel the need to conceal our vulnerability or fragility from each other?

COSTUME SKETCHES BY MARTIN PAKLEDINAZ.



A little woman of great but confused vitality clinging frantically to another time and place. Her characterization must be carefully created, not copied from type. She is not paranoiac, but her life is paranoia. There is much to admire in Amanda, and as much to love and pity as there is to laugh at. Certainly she has endurance and a kind of heroism, and though her foolishness makes her unwittingly cruel at times, there is tenderness in her slight person.
—Tennessee Williams

Tom and Laura’s mother, once a popular Southern belle. Amanda is a proud, vivacious woman. She likes to relay stories about her past when she was a fixture in her town’s social scene and had many gentlemen callers. She is now a single parent, desperate to find a way to secure a future for her and her children. She nags, pushes, encourages, cajoles. Her tactics don’t always work and sometimes make Laura feel guilty and push Tom away.

COSTUME SKETCHES BY MARTIN PAKLEDINAZ.



A nice, ordinary, young man.
—Tennessee Williams

Jim is an acquaintance of Tom and Laura. In high school he was a popular athlete who also starred in the musicals. Everyone expected Jim to become someone important in adulthood because of his reputation in high school. Six years later he finds himself working as a shipping clerk at the shoe warehouse alongside Tom. Even though he may be nostalgic for the glory days of his youth, he is devoted to a path of self-improvement. He takes night school courses in radio engineering and public speaking because he plans to someday break into the television industry. He describes himself as “disappointed but not discouraged.” (Act II, Scene 7)

Jim O’Connor

“He was shooting with such velocity through his adolescence that you would logically expect him to arrive at nothing short of the White House by the time he was thirty.”

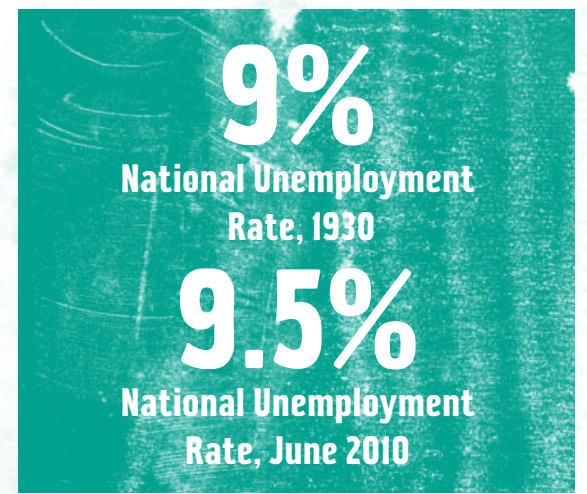
—Tom about Jim (Act II, Scene 7)

Where do you see yourself six years after graduating from high school? What are some of the dreams that you hope to pursue? What do you hope to accomplish?

What is the difference between being disappointed and discouraged? Is there a way that disappointment can serve as a catalyst to make you work harder to reach your dreams? How do you personally move forward in your life when you encounter a disappointment or get discouraged?

The 1930s was a time filled with great hardships, promise, and hope for the United States. The Great Depression began when the stock market crashed on October 29, 1929. The national income fell by fifty percent. By the mid 1930s, over 40 million Americans were living in poverty and one out of every three young adults was unemployed. As a result of the scarce job market, the 1930s saw an increase in the high school graduation rates and a surge in enrollment numbers at schools and universities.

Even though the decade was defined by great economic turmoil, it also marked the birth of popular culture. The dance craze swept America, Benny Goodman brought swing music to the radio and “Gone With the Wind” became the first novel to sell one million copies. Hollywood celebrated its technological evolution with movies such as *King Kong*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. More women entered the work force reshaping the structure of the American family as well as their roles in society. Amelia Earhart flew alone. The Empire State building was built. As it began, the 1930s closed with a momentous occurrence — the German invasion of Poland and the impending threat of war.



1929

- On October 29, 1929 the stock market crashes. Known as “Black Tuesday” this event marks the beginning of the Great Depression



1930

- The Chrysler Building opens in New York City. It is the world's tallest skyscraper
- The first commercial air flights between Los Angeles and New York City take place
- With the addition of sound, audiences are able to hear Greta Garbo speak for the first time in the film *Anna Christie*
- Mahatma Gandhi leads the “Salt March”, a non-violent protest against the British Salt Tax

1931

- American Gangster Al Capone is sentenced to prison for income tax evasion
- The Empire State Building opens in New York City. It surpasses the Chrysler Building becoming the world's tallest skyscraper
- Hostess Twinkies and Snickers candy bars appear in markets
- The film *Dracula* opens in movie theatres, starring Bela Lugosi

1932

- Radio City Music Hall opens in New York City
- Shirley Temple makes her film debut
- Walt Disney is given a special Academy Award for creating Mickey Mouse
- Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean
- The Lindbergh's baby is kidnapped causing a nationwide media frenzy

1933

- Franklin D. Roosevelt assumes the presidency of the United States. He begins his “Fireside Chats” on the radio to record audiences
- The musical *42nd Street* is a new hit on Broadway
- *King Kong* opens in movie theatres with special effects that had never been done before
- President Roosevelt signs the New Deal, a series of economic programs in response to the Great Depression
- Prohibition officially ends in the United States with Congress passing the Twenty-first Amendment
- Adolf Hitler becomes the Chancellor of Germany

1934

- American outlaws Bonnie and Clyde are killed by the police
- Benny Goodman's show, “Let's Dance”, brings swing music to the radio
- The cheeseburger is invented
- The first mass produced car, the Chrysler Airflow, is introduced
- The Dust Bowl begins

1935

- Bruno Hauptmann is convicted for the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby
- “Your Hit Parade”, a show that tracks the most popular records of the week, is introduced on the radio
- *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin opens on Broadway
- The board game Monopoly is introduced to the American public
- Germany issues the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws

1936

- The Hoover Dam is completed
- Margaret Mitchell's epic novel *Gone with the Wind* is published and becomes an instant best seller
- Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers become major Hollywood stars
- The Olympics take place in Berlin hosted by the Nazi party. African American track star Jesse Owens wins four gold medals
- The Spanish Civil War begins

1937

- Amelia Earhart vanishes while flying over the Pacific Ocean
- The Golden Gate Bridge opens
- Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* premieres. It is the first all-color and all-animated film
- The bombing of the town of Guernica in Spain gains international attention. Pablo Picasso creates his painting *Guernica* in response to the tragedy

1938

- Orson Welles' radio broadcast of “The War of the Worlds” causes a nationwide panic
- Frank Sinatra makes his radio debut
- Action Comics introduces Superman
- Howard Hughes flies around the world in three days

1939

- Nylon stockings are introduced as a result of a silk shortage
- The film version of “Gone With the Wind” premieres starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable
- The Spanish Civil War ends with the triumph of General Franco and his Fascist army
- Germany invades Poland marking the start of World War II

How does the outside world impact the lives of the people in *The Glass Menagerie*?

How does the economy impact a person's ability to dream or to dream big?



“To begin with, I turn back time. I reverse it to that quaint period, the thirties...”

—*The Glass Menagerie*



INTERVIEW WITH Gordon Edelstein

A conversation with director Gordon Edelstein and Center Theatre Group Teaching Artist Marcos Najera



Gordon Edelstein, who is also the Artistic Director of the Long Wharf Theatre in Connecticut, is taking a break from rehearsing *Bones* by Dael Orlandersmith at the Kirk Douglas Theatre

Thank you for talking with us, we appreciate that. Can you explain what you do as a director? What a director is is hard to define. But I would say a director's job is to marshal all the forces. The design elements. The sets. The costumes. The lights. The sound. The music. And the actors. And put them all together and put on the play. He or she is responsible for the final product of the play.

When we are at our best, which is not always, but when we are at our best our job is to communicate what kind of play we are producing (or making), what is the nature of the play. In other words, he or she (the director) is the architect. What kind of house are we building? It's the director's to say what kind of house we are building. Then everybody has to do their part to build it.

What does your day look like? There is no such thing as a normal day. Every day is different. That's the joy of being in the arts. But I understand the spirit of the question.

In a normal rehearsal day, I'll come in, take my script and put it on the table in front of me or I like to work on a music stand. And investigate, excavate, dig into the play with the actors to try to determine what this moment means. And then how should we present this moment, such that it will support the house that we are building.

And the way I like to work is in a way like a writer. I do several drafts of a show. So in a four week rehearsal process, I'd like to have at least three drafts of the show. Right now, I'm in rehearsal, not for *The Glass Menagerie*, but for a play called *Bones*, which we are very much in our first draft. So we are stumbling our way through it. Bumping into furniture and honestly being a little lost. Being lost is not a bad thing, if you are honestly lost but honestly looking. You can sometimes come up with the best solutions.

I think many students look at adults and they imagine that adults just do things "correctly." So it's a pretty powerful thing that you say you let yourself "stumble through" a project. It takes confidence and experience to have the courage to be lost. When I was a kid, and I've got two kids, you don't want to admit that you are lost because it seems weak. It seems childlike. And when you are 15, or 14 or 13 or 16 or 17, you want to be grown up. You want to be strong. You want to be tough. You want to be on top of it.

In fact, there's no shame in not knowing where you are. It's good to kind of know where you might want to go, but you don't necessarily have to know how you are going to get there. But I have confidence that I am going to get there.

What drew you to directing versus performing and what was your journey? Fair enough. Well, the first thing that drew me to it was that I was a terrible actor. And when you are young and you love the theatre, you try out for plays. And it was extremely painful—I mean it sounds funny now. But it wasn't funny at the time.

Please excuse my laughter... No, it's funny. I'm laughing too. I just got bad parts. I was getting terrible parts in the school plays.

Like what, do you remember? I don't want to talk about it; it's too painful [laughing].

I understand, I got cast as a yellow chicken when I was a kid. I don't mean that kind of thing. I mean I was in the chorus and I was in the back, in the fourth row and I wasn't even good in that! And yet, I was the smartest, I understood the plays better than anybody. And I was deep in the play—but I just wasn't any good at doing it. And in junior high, there were directors of these plays, sort of the boss of the show, and I thought "That I could do!" Because I understood the plays very well. So I started directing in high school.



(L-R) Patch Darragh, Ben McKenzie, Judith Ivey and Gordon Edelstein. PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ.

The two things that I am most motivated by is the literature, the play. Very, very, very moved by the play. And by the actors. So it's a happy thing for me that I'm moved by both those things because those are the two central tools that a director has — the actors and the script.

In the case of *The Glass Menagerie*, I had a very specific idea for this production. I wasn't 100% sure that it was going to work. I thought it would work. I believed in it, but you have to always allow for the possibility that you are wrong. I continue to be working on the idea.

...talking to them about family and about how love and obligation and rage can walk together very closely.

So the idea here, if I understand it, is that we are with Tom (the main character) as he starts to imagine the play in his head. Is that fair? That is fair. I don't know if the people watching this will have read the play in school, but you know, it's unquestionably one of the great plays ever written by an American. It's one of the great literary works of art of the 20th century. It's a masterpiece. It's a shatteringly beautiful and perfect play.

But yes, Tennessee Williams kind of put himself onstage in this play [as Tom]. I thought it would be interesting not to be coy about that. Tennessee Williams left home, moved into a hotel in New Orleans, and started writing *The Glass Menagerie*. Changing the names to protect the innocent, but pretty much, a fairly accurate autobiographical account of his family.

And so we begin our production with a man walking into a hotel room in New Orleans with a suitcase, a bottle of bourbon, a book of poetry and his record player. And so we imagine Tennessee Williams—a man walks in, sets up his hotel room, puts on some music and starts to write. He writes *The Glass Menagerie*.

The characters in the play are like memories, like ghosts, coming to him in the hotel room. And the hotel room transforms into the Wingfield [family] house.

It's an attempt to unsentimentalize this play and it's often treated very sentimentally. And it's an attempt to tell the truth about the author's relationship to the material.

The central story is really about a young man trying to break away from his family and trying to individuate. Everybody has to leave home eventually. And if you don't, you're sunk! Sometimes leaving home can be very painful. And this is about the pain of leaving home.

The truth is the play was written out of a certain amount of survivor guilt. That is, Tennessee Williams, in leaving home left a sister who was mentally incapacitated. We know from his biography that Williams' sister Rose, that was her real name—in the play she's called 'Laura'—she was mentally disturbed and ultimately lobotomized shortly after Tennessee left home. And so in leaving home, he was aware he was leaving her to the four winds. To the elements. He had to leave, because you do. But he was aware of the cost. So the play was partly written out of the guilt that Tennessee felt upon leaving home.

What part of that quest for him to leave home was hampered by his sexuality? In other words, his own quest to find someone to love. Well, we don't know the answer to that question. Of course, Tennessee Williams was a gay man in the 1940s. When he wrote this play, the word 'gay' didn't mean 'homosexual.' It meant 'happy.' Tennessee was a closeted gay man.

I think first and foremost, Tennessee was an artist who needed to get away from his mommy and his sister. And St. Louis, where he grew up. He says, "There are things in my heart, mother, that I just can't describe to you." It's a heartbreaking moment. And you know, that is probably not just his sexual orientation, but sexual orientation is included in that line. We honestly don't know. But it's always seemed clear to me. And if I was going to do the play, then I wanted to investigate that.

What else drew you to this play? I know the path has been from the Long Wharf Theatre in Connecticut, to the Roundabout Theatre in New York, and now here to Center Theatre Group. What about the play grabbed you initially? The truth is, when I was 17 years old, I saw a production of it. And I thought it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life. If I saw that production now, it would probably be terrible. But I remember being shattered by it. Devastated by it.

One particular character or the story? The play. As a theatre director, I'm very motivated by the text. I thought it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I was absolutely shattered by it and I have wanted to do it ever since. Way before I even knew I wanted to be a director.

And several years ago, I had an image for the play — a man comes into a hotel room and starts to write *The Glass Menagerie*. And I said, okay. I'm going to do this one day.

That's fantastic. Because it's a simple, but beautiful image. Yeah, well thank God! Because I've had some other ideas that haven't worked so well! [Laughing]

What is the best thing we can do to prepare students for this production? Reading the play is good. Really good, and then talking to them about family and about how love and obligation and rage can walk together very closely.

ESCAPE

In the 1930s, wide-spread unemployment and the threat of impending war sent Americans to the movies, radio and dance halls in record numbers. The need to escape reflected the hard truth of everyday life for many Americans during this time period. How is this still true in our world today?

Tennessee Williams wrote to escape the realities of the world. He said: "What I am doing is creating imaginary worlds into which I can retreat from the real world because I've never made any kind of adjustment to the real world."

Do you think art is an escape from reality or a reflection of the real world? Have you ever used art or imagination to escape?

Have you ever felt like you needed to escape? How do you escape from the world?

Laura lives in an imaginary world to escape the harshness of reality. Is there a place that you go to mentally or emotionally to retreat from the real world?

Some of the ways that the characters escape are more harmful than others. Amanda worries about Tom's excessive drinking. Are there ways to escape that aren't hurtful to yourself or others? How else did the characters in *The Glass Menagerie* escape or avoid the reality of their everyday life?

"A fire escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth."

— *The Glass Menagerie*

About Us

CENTER THEATRE GROUP'S MISSION is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Education and Engagement

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit. Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society.

Center Theatre Group's education and community partnership programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives;

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging, young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Arts Education Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.

Education and Community Partnerships

Leslie K. Johnson, Director of Education and Community Partnerships • Debra Piver, Associate Director of Education and Community Partnerships

Traci Cho, Director of School Partnerships • Patricia Garza, Department Manager

Dan Harper, Educational Programs Associate • Shaunté Caraballo, Educational Services Coordinator

Janine Salinas, Assistant to the Director of Education and Community Partnerships

Funder Credits

The Education & Community Partnerships Department receives generous support from the Center Theatre Group Affiliates, a volunteer organization dedicated to bringing innovative theatre and creative education to the young people of Los Angeles.

Additional support for Education & Community Partnerships is provided by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation, the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California, The Sascha Brastoff Foundation, the Brotman Foundation of California, the James A. Doolittle Foundation, the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, the Lawrence P. Frank Foundation, The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Education Endowment, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the MetLife Foundation, the Music Center Fund for the Performing Arts, the Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation, Laura & James Rosenwald & Orinocco Trust, The Simon Strauss Foundation, the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, and Theatre Communications Group.

Center Theatre Group is a participant in the A-ha! Program: Think It, Do It, funded by the MetLife Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional American theatre.



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