

gallery players present

# A Streetcar Named Desire

tennessee williams



SIR JOHN MILLS THEATRE

28<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER  
to  
7<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

# A Streetcar Named Desire

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## ***Production Team***

Director *Sally Scurrrell*

Assistant Director *Rosie Beattie*

Set Design *Darren Beattie, Dave Borthwick*

Lighting Design *Callum MacDonald*

Sound Design *Duncan Broatch*

Properties *Sue Simmons*

Stage Manager *Dan Moore*

Wardrobe *Sally Scurrrell, Lorena Cenci, Steve  
Wooldridge and the Cast*

Production Manager *Steve Wooldridge*

Stage Crew *Dave Borthwick, Duncan Broach,  
Gabby Bolderstone, Patrick Clougherty, Emily  
Davies*

Lighting Technician *Bradley Palmer*

Sound Technician *Dan Moore*

Programme *Steve Taplin*

Programme Content *Steve Wooldridge*

Photography *Duncan Broatch, Mikaela Rackham*

Hair Design *Kate Eastall*

Set Construction *Dave Borthwick, Steve  
Wooldridge, Duncan Broatch, Darren Beattie,  
Norman Rutterford, Mel Mayhew, Georgie Beard*

Music *Duncan Broatch*

Original piano music:- 'Blue Piano' by *Claire  
Hollocks*

Front of House *Steve Wooldridge, Sheila  
Garnham, Norman Rutterford, Sue Goodall, Mike and  
Judy Wadman, Helen and Andrew Clarke, Linda  
Wooldridge.*

## Tennessee Williams

Thomas Lanier Williams was born on March 26, 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi. The second of three children, his family life was full of tension. His parents, a shoe salesman and the daughter of a minister, often engaged in violent arguments that frightened his sister Rose.

In 1927, Williams got his first taste of literary fame when he took third place in a national essay contest sponsored by The Smart Set magazine. In 1929, he was admitted to the University of Missouri where he saw a production of Henrik Ibsen's Ghosts and decided to become a playwright. But his degree was interrupted when his father forced him to withdraw from college and work at the International Shoe Company. There he worked with a young man named Stanley Kowalski who would later resurface as a character in A Streetcar Named Desire.

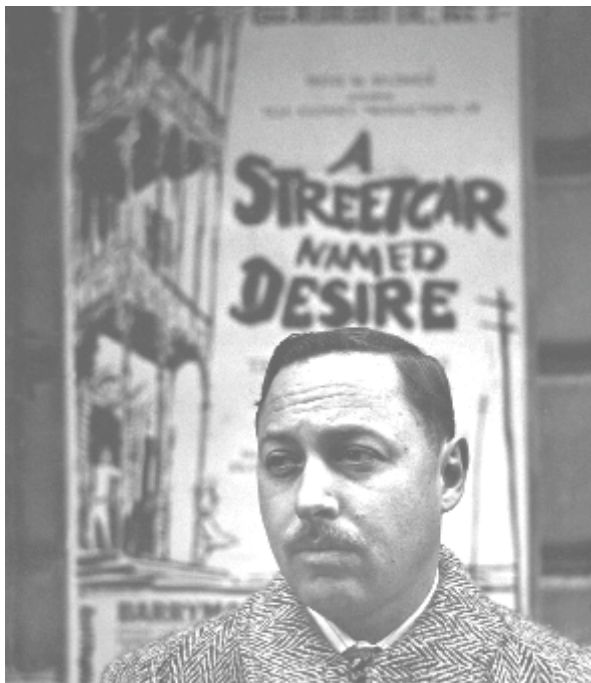
Eventually, Tom returned to school. In 1937, he had two of his plays (Candles to the Sun and The Fugitive Kind) produced by Mummars of St. Louis, and in 1938, he graduated from the University of Iowa. After failing to find work in Chicago, he moved to New Orleans and changed his name from "Tom" to "Tennessee" which was the state of his father's birth.

In 1939, the young playwright received a \$1,000 Rockefeller Grant, and a year later, Battle of Angels was produced in Boston. In 1944, what many consider to be his best play, The Glass Menagerie, had a very successful run in Chicago and a year later burst its way onto Broadway. The play tells the story of Tom, his disabled sister, Laura, and their controlling mother Amanda who tries to make a match between Laura and the gentleman caller. Many people believe that Tennessee used his own familial relationships as inspiration for the play. His own mother, who is often compared to the controlling Amanda, allowed doctors to perform a frontal lobotomy on Tennessee's sister Rose, an event that greatly disturbed Williams who cared for Rose throughout much of her adult life. Elia Kazan (who directed many of Williams' greatest successes) said of Tennessee: "Everything in his life is in his plays, and everything in his plays is in his life." The Glass Menagerie won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play of the season.

Williams followed up his first major critical success with several other Broadway hits including such plays as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Summer and Smoke*, *A Rose Tattoo*, and *Camino Real*. He received his first Pulitzer Prize in 1948 for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and reached an even larger world-wide audience in 1950 and 1951 when *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* were made into major motion pictures. Later plays which were also made into motion pictures include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (for which he earned a second Pulitzer Prize in 1955), *Orpheus Descending*, and *Night of the Iguana*.

Tennessee Williams met and fell in love with Frank Merlo in 1947 while living in New Orleans. Merlo, a second generation Sicilian American who had served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, was a steadying influence in Williams' chaotic life. But in 1961, Merlo died of Lung Cancer and the playwright went into a deep depression that lasted for ten years. In fact, Williams struggled with depression throughout most of his life and lived with the constant fear that he would go insane as did his sister Rose. For much of this period, he battled addictions to prescription drugs and alcohol.

On February 24, 1983, Tennessee Williams choked to death on a bottle cap at his New York City residence at the Hotel Elysee. He is buried in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to twenty-five full length plays, Williams produced dozens of short plays and screenplays, two novels, a novella, sixty short stories, over one-hundred poems and an autobiography. Among his many awards, he won two Pulitzer Prizes and four New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards.



## Blanche

It has been an amazing experience playing such an iconic female character. I can remember studying the text at 6<sup>th</sup> form and having a daydream about playing the role.

The process has been complex. Firstly, I had to 'find' Blanche's voice; and I will admit I was nervous to open my mouth and speak her words for the first time in rehearsal.

Exploring Stella and Blanche's somewhat complicated relationship has been of great interest to both Molly and I. We have spent a lot of time considering the type of childhood the girls would have experienced at Belle Reve; they have grown up with such privilege in contrast to some very distant parenting on the plantation. Clearly, this childhood was the start of Blanche's troubles.

The most challenging element of the process has been making all the connections of her 'emotional journey'. She is so complex, multi-layered and erratic. Her behaviour doesn't always make sense; and I have found I have had to think very deeply to understand her actions and motivations, and look for ways to make them believable to an audience.

It was so helpful to me as an actor when we started to 'run' the scenes together rather than rehearse them in isolation. For the first time I could really consider the flow of her emotional journey. Not everyone feels

sympathy for Blanche. She can be tactless, superior, insulting and prejudiced. Our interpretation of the text really highlights how, despite her flaws, just how tragic, vulnerable, and a victim of the time she is. She is inevitably betrayed by everyone, even in death by her young husband- the absolute love of her life.



*continued ...*

His suicide, and the blame she places on herself has never left her. Hence, our addition of 'the boy' in this production.

There is real irony and sadness in her famous final line: 'I have always depended on the kindness of strangers'. In truth, there has been very little kindness in her life. Any she has found has been taken away.

*Rosie Beattie*

## **Stella**

It has been an amazing experience being involved in the Gallery Players production of 'A Streetcar Named Desire'. It is a privilege to be a part of this iconic play and to perform opposite two brilliant actors.

To me the character of Stella is a complex one. She's strong yet weak at the same time. Her decision to leave home and her ability to speak her mind with Stanley and her sister Blanche shows her courage. Yet her love for Stanley is her weakness. I believe this is because their passion for one another is so electric that she can't resist him, no matter how badly he treats her.

The challenge of portraying these two conflicting parts of her personality has been what I have enjoyed most about playing Stella. It has been hard work as the characters are so complex.

They go through different emotions in the blink of an eye. Nevertheless it has been exciting as we have been able to explore the play in great depth with our director to be able to deliver the play with the justice it deserves.

*Molly Scurrrell*



## ***Stanley***

Stanley Kowalski is a creature of violence and sex. His everyday life is one of battle; dominance, manipulation, control, f\*\*\*ing and fear. He fears losing his kingship of his family home, his rule over his friends and defends them with a ruthlessness as he might in war. Using all weapons at his disposal he exhorts his will over those around him.

These is a case that he suffers from PTSD, becoming dependent and fixated on Stella and leaning on alcohol to maintain order within him and his world. This could go in some why to explain his actions if not to excuse them. There are a great number of people who have returned from war who struggle to reintegrate into civilian life. Stanley could serve as an extreme example of that difficulty.

He is also, to a degree, a proponent of American socialism. Huey Long was a towering figure in New Orlean politics during that time and his reference, however bastardised and misused, does go to highlight Stanley 's hatred of privilege and the excesses of those with wealth. He delights in his discoveries of Blanche and with no hesitation deals the bitter blows of truth to all who will listen. He has little empathy for anyone false. He has little empathy. He does however love Stella with a burning, unrelenting force. Blanche is his immovable object.

He is a desperate man. Desperate men do unspeakable things.

*Liam Gregory*







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## Cast

### in order of Appearance

'And so it was I entered the broken world  
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice  
An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)  
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.'  
*"The Broken Tower" by Hart Crane*

*Eunice*      **Lorena Cenci**

*Woman*      **Michelle Buckley**

*Blanche Dubois*      **Rosie Beattie**

*Boy/Allan Grey*      **Oliver Ward**

*Stella Kowalski*      **Molly Scurrrell**

*Stanley Kowalski*      **Liam Gregory**

*Harold "Mitch" Mitchell*      **Michael Cook**

*Steve*      **Paul Mann**

*Pablo*      **Tom Hitchcock**

*Matron*      **Michelle Buckley**

*Doctor*      **Steve Wooldridge**

*The action takes place inside and outside a building  
on a street in New Orleans called Elysian Fields*

**The time is 1947**

*There will be an interval of twenty minutes between  
Acts 1 & 2 during which refreshments will be served.*

*Please be aware that play has some scenes of an  
adult nature*

## Director's Notes:-

My love affair with Tennessee Williams started one Saturday afternoon in the early 80's when, lying ill on our lounge settee, my mother turned the television on to the Saturday matinee film, which happened to be Elizabeth Taylor in full swing right in the middle of A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Immediately I was hooked by the heat and intensity of the action. Although I know that Taylor and Newman were amazing it was the dialogue and characters that mesmerised me. Following that I visited the library to read his plays (We did not have the luxury of the internet then and I think I am probably a little grateful for that). A Streetcar Named Desire of course became a favourite and I remember the first time I watched Vivien Lee depict the sad demise of Blanche Dubois amidst the sweltering heat of Williams's New Orleans.

One evening in summer sharing a few manhattans with Rosie Beattie the conversation moved to discussing our favourite plays, at which point we realised that we both had a passionate interest in Streetcar. I admitted that my dream would be to direct the play and so began a journey. One filled with as many emotional highs and lows as to mimic Blanches turmoil as we endeavoured to obtain the rights to the play. Months of emails, phone calls proceeded as we battled to find who actually owned the rights as this in itself was a complete mystery. Samuel French were the go between and unbeknown to us were just the admin agents having no say over who performed the play. Nobody seemed to know who did. Rosie emailed everyone that we thought could help us on our quest to obtain the rights. Endless phone calls to Samuel French (we actually became on first name terms with them!) lead us to the director of the Young Vic who once heard that we were wanting to perform the play couldn't have been more supportive. A professor of The Tennessee Williams society and Gillian Anderson who couldn't have been more helpful became involved in helping us to obtain the elusive rights to A Streetcar Named Desire. After many months of hoping and nail biting, finally we unlocked the rights which were released for a small window, just so that the Gallery Players could have them. The reason you are able to watch tonight is in many ways thanks to Rosie's determination and I thank her for her support for me and my crazy dream.

After obtaining the rights came the somewhat daunting task of finding a cast to do it justice. I never had any doubt in my mind that Rosie would be the perfect Blanche so had to compliment her with actors of the same calibre and commitment. Having seen Molly Scurrrell in A Beautiful Thing and remembering the way that the two actresses had jelled so brilliantly on stage lead me to toy with the idea of bringing them together once more and after a read through between the two it was obvious that they were meant to play the sisters. I had seen Liam in another Gallery play, The Importance of Being Ernest, where he had played opposite Molly and thought that the energy on stage between the pair was just what I needed for Stella and Stanley. Right away it was obvious that the chemistry was right and that this play was going to be something special.

Directing the play has been a joy, every line breathes life into the characters and hints at their underlying emotional struggles. The themes and issues surrounding the characters are as relevant now as they were 75 years ago, with mental illness hitting 1 in 4 adults. Blanches plight, as she struggles to maintain her sanity, is catalysed by Stanley's intense hatred of her based on his own weakness, encompasses the fragility of the human mind and holds a message beyond the changing America of the 1940's. I am so grateful that I have had the chance to work with possibly one of the greatest scripts of the 20th Century. What the cast have brought to the play is beyond exception and I think myself so blessed to have not only achieved one of my dreams but also to have worked with incredibly talented and creative individuals. Now this text is part of the curriculum - and so it should be for what better writing is there to introduce young adults to the power of theatre. This has been one of the most challenging projects I have taken on to date but I have enjoyed so much of this creative process and I feel that the end product is an extension of the commitment, passion and vision of so many people.

Sally Scurrrell





## Acknowledgements

Jon Taverner and all at Eastern Angles  
Stephen Foster, BBC Radio Suffolk  
David Henshall, East Anglian Daily Times  
Chris and Maggie Finbow, Museum St Methodist  
Church  
Eileen O'Connor, Joe Leat for help with Vocal  
Coaching  
Mike and Wendy Wooton, Great Blakenham Parish  
Room  
New Wolsey Theatre  
Rosie Webb  
Witnesham Church Hall  
Mikaela Rackham  
Andrew Westaway  
Gillian Anderson  
Benedict Andrews  
David Lan  
John Nice  
Jack Elden, filming and editing  
Greyfriars Bedding and Carpets, Felixstowe  
David George, Tea and Antiques, Felixstowe  
Art and Technical Departments:-  
Northgate High School  
One, Sixth Form College

## Friends of Gallery Players - 2015

Jane Bolton	Pam Curtis	Mr & Mrs Holder
Margaret Morphew	Rita Morton	Peggy Osbourne
Dennis Pennock	Mr & Mrs Quelch	Roy & Ally Riley
Eric & Wilma Smart	Pam White	John Whitear



**Gallery Players** were formed in 1985 by Pat Taplin to produce rarely performed plays and musicals that larger companies would find uneconomic or which only use a few actors. The company quickly established a reputation for quality and excellence. Our aims are broadly speaking:

**To exploit a niche for staging productions that are progressive and exciting in both content and execution.**

**To embrace both new and established works.**

**To act as vehicle for engaging new talent as well as established members.**

**To foster a group of actors and technicians that are truly a community.**

**To foster links with schools and colleges.**

We generally stage three productions a year.

Performing lesser known shows is always difficult, particularly when it comes to building an audience and balancing the books, but by sticking to our aims we have grown an audience, that, hopefully, trust us to produce interesting work.

Although we have a strong pool of performers new blood and talent is always welcome as are people who want to work on the technical side.

The company is run by a small steering group: Dave Borthwick, Helen Clarke, Steve Taplin and Steve Wooldridge .

We encourage other directors to take the reins of their own pet projects, allowing them to cast freely and create individual shows with the backing of our excellent technical and production crew. Our only insistence is that the final show should entertain and stimulate our discerning audience and should exude that sense of professionalism we strive for.

Gallery have won several awards including the NODA Eastern Area Shield for Best Production with 'Carnival' & 'Putting it Together' and the Councillors Cup for 'The Bakers Wife' and 'Kiss Me Like You Mean It'.

Please visit our website at [www.galleryplayers.co.uk](http://www.galleryplayers.co.uk) for details of all our shows past and future. Please sign up with your email address if you would like us to keep you informed of what we are doing and receive our 'newsletters' which will give details of any workshops/auditions we may be holding.

Our Motto is '**Making Theatre Exciting**' which we like to think we do, most of the time!



## Past Shows:-

1985 Cowardy Custard, 1986 Happy as a Sandbag, 1987 Sail Away, 1988 Something's Afoot, 1989 Company, 1990 The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, 1991 The Hired Man, 1992 Snoopy - The Musical, A Little Night Music, 1993 Stepping Out, Cabaret, 1994 Assassins, The Ghost Train, Into the Woods, Hobson's Choice, 1995 Man of La Mancha, Steel Magnolia's, City of Angels, Scent of Flowers, 1996 Little Shop of Horrors, The Most Happy Fella, Blue Remembered Hills, 1997 Dancing at Lughnasa, Pacific Overtures, Chicago, Hard Times, 1998 The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Sweeney Todd (The Demon Barber of Fleet Street), Shadowlands, Something's Afoot, 1999 Carnival, Trip to Bountiful, The Boys From Syracuse, Tons of Money, 2000 On Golden Pond, The Bakers Wife, Kiss of the Spiderwoman, A Slice of Saturday Night, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, 2001 Mrs Warren's Profession, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, Billy, Breezblock Park, 2002 The Memory of Water, Flora The Red Menace, A Slice of Saturday Night, Radio Times, 2003 Kiss Me Like You Mean It, Days of Hope, Honk!, And A Nightingale Sang, 2004 Bouncers, Merrily We Roll Along, Talking Heads, You're A Good Man Charlie Brown, 2005 Kindertransport, She Loves Me, A Night At The Dogs, 2006 Amy's View, Passion, With Love, Colder Than Here, 2007 This Happy Breed, Grand Hotel, You Want Chilli Sauce With That & Marry Me A Little, The Sunshine Boys, 2008 Oh Kay!, Spend Spend Spend, To Kill A Mockingbird, 2009 The Long Road, Follies, Flare Path, 2010 Ordinary Days, Rent, Spring & Port Wine, 2011 My Mother Said I Never Should, Our House, Heroes, 2012 Putting it Together, Love Story, Be My Baby, 2013 A Man of No Importance, Into the Woods, The Importance of Being Earnest, 2014 Oh What a Lovely War!, Galileo, The History Boys, 2015 A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, Hairspray, A Streetcar Named Desire.

## Friends of Gallery Players

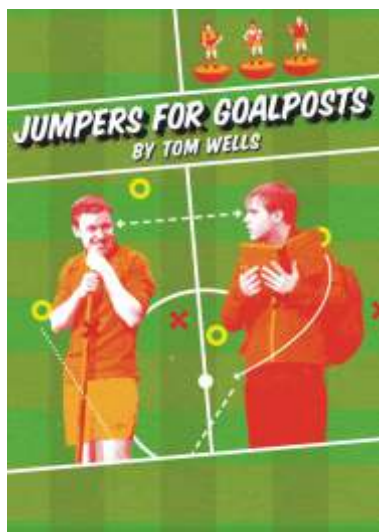
If you would like to help us to continue to present our shows to a high standard and, just as importantly, help to raise money to help others, perhaps you would like to become a *'Friend of the Gallery Players'*?

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To become a 'Friend', or for any information on other forms of sponsorship or advertising please contact Steve Taplin on 07941 360786 or email [stevet@galleryplayers.co.uk](mailto:stevet@galleryplayers.co.uk)

## Honorary Friends

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*SIR JOHN MILLS THEATRE  
SPRING 2016*

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# SPRING AWAKENING

**summer 2016**  
**new wolsey theatre**