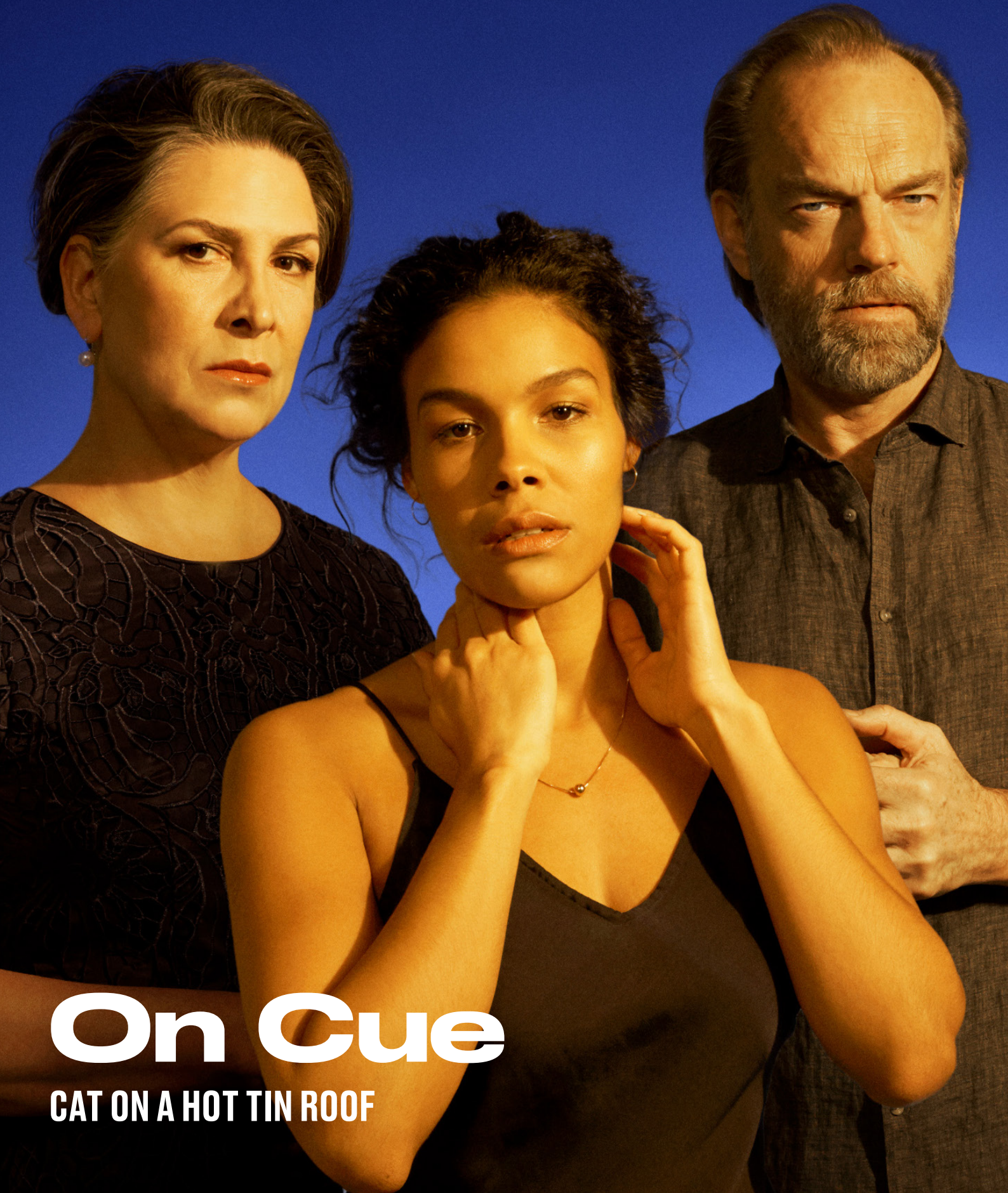


**SYDNEY
THEATRE
CO
EDUCATION**



On Cue

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

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Compiled by Jacqui Cowell.

The activities and resources contained in this document are designed for educators as the starting point for developing more comprehensive lessons for this production. Jacqui Cowell is the Education Projects Officer for the Sydney Theatre Company. You can contact Jacqui on jcowell@sydneytheatre.com.au.

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About On Cue and STC

ABOUT ON CUE

STC Ed has a suite of resources located on our website to enrich and strengthen teaching and learning surrounding the plays in the STC season.

Each school show will be accompanied by an On Cue e-publication which will feature essential information for teachers and students, such as curriculum links, information about the playwright, synopsis, character analysis, thematic analysis and suggested learning experiences.

For more in-depth digital resources surrounding productions, please visit the STC Ed page on our website.

Such resources include:

- Director documentaries
- Design sketchbooks

ABOUT SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

In 1980, STC's first Artistic Director Richard Wherrett defined STC's mission as to provide "first class theatrical entertainment for the people of Sydney – theatre that is grand, vulgar, intelligent, challenging and fun."

Almost 40 years later, that ethos still rings true.

STC offers a diverse program of distinctive theatre of vision and scale at its harbourside home venue, The Wharf; Roslyn Packer Theatre at Walsh Bay; and Sydney Opera House, as its resident theatre company.

STC has a proud heritage as a creative hub and incubator for Australian theatre and theatre makers, developing and producing eclectic Australian works, interpretations of classic repertoire and great international writing. STC strives to create theatre experiences that reflect Sydney's distinctive personality and engage audiences.

Strongly committed to engagement in the community, STC's Education and Communities programs aim to inspire theatre appreciation and participation not only in theatres but also in schools, community halls; wherever people get together. STC offers an innovative School Drama™ program; partners with groups in metropolitan Sydney, regional centres and rural areas; and reaches beyond NSW with touring productions throughout Australia. Through these partnerships and initiatives, STC plays a part in ensuring a creative, forward-thinking and sociable future by engaging with young people, students and teachers.

The theatre careers of many of Australia's internationally renowned artists have been launched and fostered at STC, including Mel Gibson, Judy Davis, Hugo Weaving, Toni Collette, Rose Byrne, Benedict Andrews and Cate Blanchett.

STC often collaborates with international artists and companies and, in recent years, the company's international profile has grown significantly with productions touring extensively to great acclaim.

STC is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, by its arts funding and advisory body, and by the New South Wales Government through Arts NSW.

sydneytheatre.com.au

Curriculum Connections



Hugo Weaving and Harry Greenwood in STC's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 2019. Photo ©Daniel Boud

SUITABLE FOR

Students from Years 9 to 12

SUBJECTS

DRAMA

Stage 5

Dramatic Traditions and Performance

Styles: Realism/Scripted Drama

Stage 6

Theatrical Traditions and Performance

Styles

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

By Tennessee Williams

REVEREND TOOKER
Peter Carroll

BRICK
Harry Greenwood

GOOPER
Josh McConville

MAGGIE
Zahra Newman

BIG MAMA
Pamela Rabe

MAE
Nicki Shiels

BIG DADDY
Hugo Weaving

DR BAUGH
Anthony Brandon Wong

DIXIE
Addison Bourke
Lila Artemise Tapper

BUSTER
Tristan Bowes
Arie Trajcevski

POLLY
Emily Harriss
Holly Simon

SONNY
Jye McCallum
Jerra Wright-Smith

DIRECTOR
Kip Williams

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Susanna Dowling

SET DESIGNER
David Fleischer

COSTUME DESIGNER
Mel Page

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Nick Schlieper

COMPOSTER AND
SOUND DESIGNER
Stefan Gregory

VOICE & TEXT COACH
Charmian Gradwell

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Gen Jones

STAGE MANAGER
Minka Stevens

DEPUTY STAGE
MANAGER
Todd Eichorn

ASSISTANT STAGE
MANAGER
Jaymii Knierum

WIG, MAKEUP
& WARDROBE
SUPERVISOR
Lauren Proietti

COSTUME TECH
CO-COORDINATOR
Samantha Perkins

CHILD CHAPERONE
Anne Carroll

COSTUME
MAINTENANCE
Nyok Kim Chang

FOH SOUND OPERATOR
Hayley Forward

RPT HEAD ELECTRICIAN
/PRODUCTION
ELECTRICIAN
Andrew Tompkins

RPT DEPUTY HEAD
ELECTRICIAN/LIGHTING
OPERATOR
Harry Clegg

RPT HEAD SOUND
Kevin White

RPT HEAD MECHANIST
Steve Mason

RPT HEAD FLYMAN
Chris Fleming

REHEARSAL
PHOTOGRAPHER
Hon Boey

PRODUCTION
PHOTOGRAPHER
Daniel Boud

2 HOURS 40 MINUTES,
NO INTERVAL

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF PREMIERED AT ROSLYN PACKER THEATRE, ON TUESDAY 30 APRIL

PRODUCTION PATRON
GRETLE PACKER



UBS



SYDNEY
THEATRE
CO

Kip Williams in Conversation

What kind of family is the Pollitt family, the central characters of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

The Pollitt family is headed up by Big Daddy, played by Hugo Weaving, an iconic, patriarchal figure, who owns the biggest cotton estate in the Mississippi Delta. They are an incredibly wealthy family, estimated to be worth around half a billion dollars not including land value, which amounts to twenty-eight thousand acres of the best land in Mississippi. However there is tension in the family, as Big Daddy has been sick for a number of years and a question hangs in the air as to who will take over when he's gone.

Big Mama, played by Pamela Rabe, would be the natural inheritor to Big Daddy's estate, but his two sons are also potential heirs. Gooper (Josh McConville), the eldest son, is a lawyer, and has always had a very fractious relationship with his father. The younger son Brick (Harry Greenwood) is the complete opposite: a carbon copy of his father and an incredible sportsman, he is favoured by Big Daddy to inherit the estate. But Brick has found himself in a dark place, distancing himself from his family and from everybody in his world, and not engaging in this battle to be the 'heir to the throne'.

In what ways do these characters face themselves, as well as each other?

Well I suppose all the characters in the play are resisting facing themselves. Rather than coming to terms with who they are, they project an idealised version of themselves onto another member of the family, and define themselves by these relationships. Big Daddy, for example, defines himself through his relationship with his son Brick: he sees Brick's glorious reputation as his own way of becoming immortal. Big Mama defines herself in terms of her relationship to Big Daddy: his success, his place within society, is her success, and her place within society. So the characters are constantly in an act of defining themselves in relation to another person, and it's a way in which they defer having to confront the things within themselves that they're uncomfortable with.

Part of what Williams exposes in this play is that often in life we all look to relationships to try and solve the things that we feel uncomfortable with within ourselves, rather than actually confronting those things. There's this amazing moment in the play where the character Maggie, Brick's wife, looks into the mirror and asks the question, "Who are you?" I found that an incredible and tragic question. Rather than saying, "Who am I?" she says, "Who are you?" She sees an image of herself as being other to her. It's a question that all of the characters within the play are asking themselves on some level.

***Cat* is originally set in the 1950s in Mississippi, America's Deep South. You stayed true to that geographically, but brought the family forward in time. Why have you made that decision?**

When the play premiered in the 1950s in America, the audience would have seen themselves on stage. So whenever I come to stage a classic text I ask myself: what would the original experience have been for the audience seeing the premiere of this play? When the playwright originally conceived the work, did they want the audience to see themselves, or see a past version of themselves? And is there a way in which we can recreate that experience?

The design team and I did a lot of thinking about whether we were going to stay true to period or bring it up into the modern day, and we decided that we could find a version of this play that existed in contemporary times. The world is still in the Mississippi Delta, and a lot of the social tensions and power dynamics that inform the conflict of this drama still, unfortunately, exist today. Mississippi, for example, is a state where women are subjected to discrimination and oppression, where you can be fired based on your sexuality, and is widely documented to be overwhelmingly in opposition to same-sex marriage. It's a deeply conservative place.

Our design is essentially re-contextualising the play in modern times, but the idea is that this household is a relic of the past, a kind of museum that is trying to hold the younger generation back in the 1950s status quo. In addition to modern pieces there is furniture from the 70s, 60s and 50s.

Why have you chosen the original version of the script, rather than the revised version that first premiered on Broadway?

The Broadway version was quite substantially rewritten, specifically the third act, at the request of Elia Kazan, the play's director, and close friend and collaborator of Williams. Kazan felt the absence of Big Daddy in Act Three was a mistake, so Williams completely reconceived the final act for Broadway. The team and I think it was a mistake, and it has become fairly widely accepted that the original version is superior. When Big Daddy, at the end of Act Two, learns some crucial information, there is a symbolic end to his existence. His absence in Act Three not only reflects that symbolic end to his character, but, ironically, has him loom larger than he would were he to come back and try and contest that information in person. Despite his absence, his opinion plays out on the rest of the characters as they try to figure out what to do next. In the end it was a clear decision for us to do the original, and Williams' preferred version of the story.

Kip Williams in Conversation cont'd

What do you know of Tennessee Williams' personal life during the development of *Cat*, and how that might have fed into his work?

When Tennessee Williams was writing *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* he was at a crisis point in his life. He had had a number of great successes: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for example, had been a huge critical, artistic and popular success, and won the Pulitzer Prize. And yet he found himself battling with alcoholism. Williams articulates it in a way whereby he found a split between himself: between the artistic, passionate, creative spirit within him who wanted to confront life's problems, ask difficult questions, and go to dark and confronting places to produce his art, and the side that wanted to protect himself from the pain of that, to numb himself from the difficulty and the heartache that he experienced throughout his life.

And you can see in this play the expression of those two forces in the essential characters of Maggie and Brick. Maggie, who is full of verve and passion, attempts to confront difficulties and find a way forward over huge hurdles, versus Brick, who is in a constant state of retreat, numbing himself with alcohol and trying to hide from everything in life. The delicate dance between those two forces in these characters is really an expression of Williams' conundrum – and a conundrum that we all face. Do we confront difficulty, or do we avoid it? And how do you reconcile those two forces in an individual? Williams expresses that very personal internal conflict in the form of a relationship.

This isn't your first time tackling the writing of Tennessee Williams, having previously directed *Suddenly Last Summer* for STC in 2015. What is it like directing Williams' work as opposed to other playwrights?

It's a huge challenge to direct Tennessee Williams because he's a poet who is not interested in pinning things down. I've directed Arthur Miller before, who is in many ways the polar opposite of Williams, in that he presents a very clear moral framework within his plays. His intent, more often than not, is for the audience all to be thinking the same thing by the end of the play. Williams, on the other hand, is trying to problematize things. He does not offer easy answers, and creates a more complicated, almost paradoxical experience for his audience. Rather than uniting people, he wants you to have a very personal, individual experience when you encounter his work. So it's very challenging.

There's this amazing stage direction where Williams describes his intent in writing this play to be to "catch a group of human beings in the thundercloud of a common crisis". He wants to capture all of the nuanced complexity, the paradox of the multiple perspectives that exist when people collide in a common conundrum. His plays are never about a single perspective. He wants you to identify with one of the minor characters, perhaps, or with multiple characters who are wanting contradictory things. It makes it very hard to realise on stage, but it's a wonderful thing, because it's true to human existence. We do want more than one thing at any one time, and often those wants and desires contradict one another. Williams expresses a side of the human experience that is rarely seen in drama, complicating things in a way that is much truer to life.

Synopsis

Big Daddy is dying. Big Mama is in the dark. Brick is at the bottom of a bottle. But Maggie is alive, desperately alive, and dancing like a cat on a hot tin roof. We meet this fabled family when lies are rife, tensions are boiling over and their future is at stake.

An incomparable cast gather for this boozy, sultry furore of Southern fireworks. Hugo Weaving will be at his magnetic best as the commanding patriarch. The transcendent Pamela Rabe returns as Big Mama following her Helpmann Award-winning performance in *The Children*. Harry Greenwood (*Cloud Nine*) brings fresh brilliance to the stratified role of Brick and Zahra Newman (*The Book of Mormon*) will give us an unmissable Maggie the Cat.

They are joined by STC favourites including Peter Carroll (*Mary Stuart, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*), Josh McConville (*Cloud Nine, All My Sons*) and Anthony Brandon Wong (*Chimerica*). All the while, the extraordinary vision of award-winning Artistic Director Kip Williams continues to turn up the heat.

Tennessee Williams' classic play is set on a steamy plantation in the Mississippi Delta. It's Big Daddy's birthday. He's built his family an empire of 12,000 acres, but that won't help him beat cancer. Brick, the favourite son, is a golden boy drinking himself into oblivion, while his wife Maggie claws at him for a moment of affection.

With a creative team leaning in to Tennessee Williams' original desires and infusing this time-honoured story with scalding relevance, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* will be an unforgettable night at the theatre.

Context & History

Tennessee Williams is one of the most celebrated American playwrights, along with Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller. Tennessee Williams was a prolific writer of poetry, short stories, novels, essays and most significantly plays, many of which transformed the landscape of American Theatre. Williams' career spanned five decades, but his later work was not well received. His most famous plays are *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), *A Streetcar named Desire* (1947) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1956).

Tennessee Williams is quoted as saying "All work is autobiographical if it's serious. Everything a writer produces is sort of his inner history transposed to another time" (Williams in Jackson, 2013, para. 5). Much has been written about the personal connection between Williams' own life and the themes and concerns in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Williams' wrote *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* during what he describes as "The worse nervous crises of my nervous existence" (Williams in Lahr, 2014, p. 284). The inspiration for the play came from a short story he had written in 1952 called *Three Players of a Summer Game* (Crandell, 1988).

In his book on Williams, Lahr (2014) discusses how the playwright was interested in the internal debate between the 'dead heart' and the 'outcrying heart'. Williams had reported in his diaries and to friends how he had developed an insulation with his feelings so he wouldn't suffer too much. He expressed this thought to his friend Kenneth Tynan "Once the heart is thoroughly insulated, it's also dead. My problem is to live with it and keep it alive" (Williams in Lahr, 2014, p. 285). This debate concerning two hearts, one dead and insulated, the other alive, was built into the structure of the script of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. He describes the plot of the play as a battle between the alcoholic Brick, son of Big Daddy Pollitt, "the Delta's biggest cotton-planter", and his frustrated and beautiful wife Maggie. Maggie's desires are for her husband to love her. Secondly, she wants money and security, which she can achieve through inheriting Big Daddy's estate. Lahr (2014) reports that Williams came to understand the play as a synthesis for his life. He projected the war inside of himself, between the drive for creativity and for self-destruction, in the battle between Maggie and Brick.

Lahr (2014) states that Williams' friend Donald Windham saw a change in Williams' writing from self-dramatisation to self-justification when he wrote *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Williams credits the success of the play and the authenticity of the script to his tormented self. He found a new way to work as he wrote in a state of depression and nervous anxiety. Williams explained, "Because I could not work with the old vitality, I had to find new ways" (Williams in Lahr, 2014, p. 288). *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* premiered at The Morosco Theatre in

Context & History (Cont.)

New York in 1955, directed by Elia Kazan. Williams received the Drama Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for the play. Howard and Heintzelman (2005) commented on how the critics praised the cast but criticised the vulgarity in the play and the treatment of homosexuality. The play was revived in 1974, with two productions both directed by Michael Kahn. The 1970s audiences were not as shocked by the controversial themes in the play as they were in the 1950s.

The 2019 production by Sydney Theatre Company is the original version Tennessee Williams' wrote. There are three versions of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*: Williams' original version, the adapted Elia Kazan version (the original director) and a 1970's version, blending both versions of the play.

Tennessee Williams' wrote. STC previously produced *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1981, directed by Richard Wherrett with Wendy Hughes and John Hargreaves. The impetus for programming the play in 2019 came from STC's Artistic Director, Kip Williams. Kip Williams wanted to direct another Tennessee Williams play after directing *Suddenly Last Summer* in 2015. The idea for producing *Cat on a Hot Tin*

Roof came from a conversation between Kip Williams and Hugo Weaving. The conversation centred around the fact that Hugo hadn't acted in any of the classic American plays of the 20th century. He was enthusiastic about the idea of playing Big Daddy. Casting fell into place when Pamela Rabe was cast as Big Mama. Kip Williams is interested in the way human beings lie and conceal things from one another and the idea of the family as a political institution.



Zahra Newman and Kip Williams in rehearsal for STC's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* © Hon Boey

Character Analysis

BIG DADDY

Lahr (2014) comments that Big Daddy and Maggie the Cat are two of the most complete characters Williams' ever created. Big Daddy is the play's hero, a man of violent emotions with a lust for money, love and integrity. Big Daddy is the Mississippi Delta's biggest cotton planter. He's a huge man with a huge appetite for life as well as being profane and tempestuous. "Big Daddy's voice - raffish, rough, rollicking - was mesmerising and unique to the theatre of its time. A terrible black anger and ferocity, a rock bottom honesty" (Lahr, 2014, p. 293).

I believed that in *Cat [on a Hot Tin Roof]* I reached beyond myself, in the second act, to a crude kind of eloquence of expression in Big Daddy that I have managed to give no other character of my creation.

(Williams in O'Connor, 2016, P.107).

Big Daddy is terminally ill with cancer. He is not initially aware of this as Gooper and Mae lie to him while getting the estate in order. In Act 2 in a heated argument, Brick lashes out and tells Big Daddy about his terminal prognosis, in retaliation for Big Daddy making suggestions about Brick's sexuality and treatment of Skipper. After hearing the truth, Big Daddy turns on Brick and the rest of the family, unable to hear the painful truth, saying: "All lyin, Dyin, Liars, Liars, Liars" (Williams, 1956, p.108).

Big Daddy expresses that he feels more for Brick than he does for the rest of his family: "You I do like for some reason, did always have some kind of real feeling for - affection - respect" (Williams, 1956, p.72). The relationship between the two men is fraught, as Big Daddy loves Brick, but has little rapport with him and struggles to understand him (Jackson, 2013). Big Daddy talks to Brick about mendacity and how he's had to pretend to care about Big Mama and the rest of the family for years, saying: "Having for instance to act like I care for Big Mama. I haven't been able to stand the sight, sound or smell of that woman for forty years now!" (Williams, 1956, p.72).

Big Daddy comes across as a bullying and controlling figure. He dominates Big Mama and warns her to not challenge him or try to take control. He dismisses Gooper and Mae and wants little to do with them. He also thinks Maggie and Mae are greedy and ambitious, wanting to get hold of his estate and money. He intimidates Brick, pressuring and confronting him about his relationship with Maggie and Skipper and his sexuality.



Hugo Weaving in STC's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 2019. Photo ©Daniel Boud

Character Analysis

BRICK

Brick is the protagonist of the play and the favourite child of Big Daddy and Big Mama. At the start of the play, Brick has broken his ankle in a drunken attempt to relive his glory days as a successful high school athlete. In his review, Jackson (2013) states that Brick is talked to by other characters more than he talks in the play. The major conversations and arguments in the play revolve around Brick, with his father, Maggie and his mother all wanting him to change. Jackson describes Brick's moral crisis as the central tension of the play: "To register the depth of despair in Brick's life is the challenge in the play" (Jackson, 2013, para. 38).

Brick can be described as "a charming, laidback refusenik who stonewalls the world with drink, cutting himself off from fear, loathing and life" (Lahr, 2014, p. 285). Brick's relationship with alcohol is as a kind of mother, to calm and contain him. For example, Brick says that alcohol provides "The click that I get in my head that makes me peaceful. I got to drink till I get it" (Williams, 1956, p.66).

Brick feels no care or concern for any of the other characters. He is completely cut off and indifferent to the plight of others. The only person he had a deep connection or love with is Skipper, his beloved friend and former football teammate: "One man has one great good true thing in his life, one great good thing which is true. I had a friendship with Skipper- you are naming it dirty!" (Williams, 1956, p.42).

Brick accuses Maggie of being intimate with Skipper, saying it contributed to Skipper's suicide. Maggie defends herself by saying on the contrary, she understands the complexity and intimacy of Brick and Skipper's relationship: "Then you haven't been listenin', not understood what I'm sayin! I'm naming it so damn clean that it killed poor Skipper. You two had something that had to be kept on ice, yes, incorruptible" (Williams, 1956, p. 43).

Brick can't face the truth that he abandoned Skipper when Skipper needed him most. When Skipper called Brick to tell him of his feelings, Brick said nothing and then hung up. Big Daddy pushes Brick to own up to this behaviour. He says that Brick's disgust with mendacity is his disgust with himself, "You!-dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it! - before you'd face the truth with him" (Williams, 1956, p. 306). Brick has since struggled to come to terms with his actions and his feelings for Skipper.

Williams had to find a reason for Brick's aversion to the truth that would be convincing for audiences. He expressed that Brick's drinking was an expression of his impasse, but that his real reason was his love and feelings for Skipper (Lahr, 2014). Kazan believed that Brick's behaviour in the Act 3 was problematic. Williams originally had him singing and mooning on the balcony, but doing nothing. Kazan wondered how to keep Brick centre stage in Act 3, thinking and feeling. At the end of Act 2, Brick has been brought face to face with the reality of his own life. There has been a spiritual recognition that has happened that Brick needed to do something about. He needs to atone for putting the blame of Skipper's death onto Maggie and accept the consequences of his actions.

In the Sydney Theatre Company 2019 production, Big Daddy confronts Brick and makes him talk to him, even though all Brick wants is to be left alone so he can get the 'click' in his head. Big Daddy bullies Brick, wanting to get to the truth. Brick finally breaks when he calls out loudly 'disgust' as to the reason why he drinks heavily. In Act 3, Brick finally gets the 'click; in the head he's been hoping for. His mood changes from depressed and despondent to happy and carefree.

MAGGIE

Maggie Pollitt (or Maggie the Cat) is the catalyst for the plot of the play. She married Brick out of love and to move up in society. Maggie was born and raised in a poor family. She tells Brick that you can be young without money but you can't be old without it: "Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I manage to get something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer" (Williams, 1956, p.44). Maggie's father was an alcoholic and her mother sewed clothes for a living. Marrying Brick opened up a new world for Maggie, with opportunity, money and society.

Maggie is vivacious, funny, beautiful and tenacious. Brick was charmed by Maggie when he met her, but never loved her. Brick refuses to be intimate with Maggie as he has become immune to love. His grief for Skipper, his despair about mendacity and his alcoholism have made him indifferent to the world.

Character Analysis (Cont.)

MAGGIE CONT'D

Maggie competes with her brother-in-law, Gooper and his wife Mae for the inheritance of the estate. Maggie wants to impress Big Daddy and increase her status in the family. She announces in front of the family that she is pregnant with Brick's baby, which is a lie. Brick, in shock after her announcement, states "Truth is something desperate an' she's got it" (Williams, 1956, p. 130).

In an article on Tennessee Williams, Sabashi and Veliaj (2015) discuss Maggie the Cat as one of William's 'real' female protagonists. She is described as a realistic character, full of life and accepting of herself and others. She feels real compassion for others and their problems. Williams called himself an old-fashioned romantic. In terms of his plays, 'romantic' may mean someone who believes in love. Maggie believes in the power of love, she accepts the reality of her situation and consistently shows affection, compassion and love to Brick, regardless of his indifference to her.

Lahr (2014) argues that Williams gave voice to his own emotional decline through the character of Maggie. Maggie tells Brick how she's had to change to cope with his treatment of her; "I've gone through this - hideous!- transformation, become - hard! Frantic!- cruel! (Williams, 1956, p. 24). Brick is disconnected and unaware of Maggie's feelings and despair. In his review, Brantley (2008) states that Maggie's hard-driving sense of purpose has a clear throughline. Her purpose is to make her husband Brick love her and be intimate with her again. He goes on to comment that: "It's not the hot and bothered aspect of her personality that made *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* a success. However, it was her will to survive that interested Williams the most" (Brantley, 2008, para. 11).

As the title of the play suggests, Maggie is like a cat on the hot tin roof, jittering and uncertain if she can stay on: "What is the victory of a cat on a hot tin roof - I wish I knew! Just staying on it, I guess, as long as she can" (Williams, 1956, p. 26). The title of the play relates to Maggie's predicament, including how long she can keep the lie about her pregnancy going and if she can sustain her relationship with Brick.

At the end of the play, Maggie declares "Oh you weak beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you - gently" (Williams, 1956, p.132). Maggie takes control of the seemingly hopeless situation at the end of the play. She empties the liquor cabinet and tells Brick she will let him drink again once he does what she asks, which is to try for a baby.



Zahra Newman in STC's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 2019. Photo ©Daniel Boud

Character Analysis (Cont.)



Nikki Shiels in STC's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 2019. Photo ©Daniel Boud

GOOPER

Gooper is the second son of Big Daddy and Big Mama. He competes with Brick who is the favoured son, despite Brick's faults and indifference to others. Gooper tries to gain Big Daddy's confidence and converse with Big Daddy throughout the play. Big Daddy isn't interested in talking to Gooper and constantly dismisses him, his wife and his children. Gooper suffers from being ignored by Big Daddy and, to some extent, Big Mama. In his eyes, he has done all the right things as a son, without reward.

Gooper is married to Mae and together they have five children with a sixth on the way. When he hears that Big Daddy is dying, Gooper gets plans drawn up for the inheritance of Big Daddy's estate and wealth. He believes he and Mae should inherit the plantation as he has business acumen and they have produced several children as heirs to the estate. He believes Brick is incapable of running the plantation as he is a hopeless drunk.

MAE

Mae is ruthless and ambitious. She hates not knowing what is said and often interferes and interrupts others' conversations. In Act 2, Mae eavesdrops on Big Daddy and Brick's conversation. Big Daddy calls her out on saying "I hate eavesdroppers, I don't like any kind of sneakin and spyin" (Williams, 1956, p. 57). Upon hearing of Big Daddy's cancer, Mae and Gooper come to stay in Big Daddy and Big Mama's house. They ruthlessly pursue the rights to the estate, with a prepared contract for Big Mama to sign.

Mae doesn't like Maggie, seeing her as a threat and disputes her claim to being pregnant; "We know it's a lie because we hear you in here, he won't sleep with you, we hear you! So don't imagine you're going to put a trick over on us, to fool a dying man" (Williams, 1956, p. 102).

Character Analysis (Cont.)



BIG MAMA

Big Mama has been married to Big Daddy for 40 years. She's the matriarch of the Pollitt family and is fun-loving, open and sincere. When she hears the news of Big Daddy's cancer, she refuses to believe it as she can't imagine life without him. She holds onto the belief that Big Daddy is sick but not dying for as long as she can. Big Mama's whole life has been about making Big Daddy happy and content. She's still searching for love from Big Daddy, even though he stopped being interested or intimate with her a long time ago. Big Mama expresses her love for Big Daddy in Act 2: "And I did, I did so much, I did love you! - I even loved your hate and your hardness, Big Daddy!". Big Daddy's cold response to her declaration is said under his breath: 'Wouldn't it be funny if that was true' (Williams, 1956, p.55).

REVEREND TOOKER

Reverend Tooker is the family's religious minister. Big Daddy donates significant amounts of money to his church. At Big Daddy's birthday party, the Reverend finds out that Big Daddy is dying of cancer. Instead of staying to console him and his family he makes a quick exit. Reverend Tooker seems more interested in Big Daddy's money than his welfare. Even though the Pollitts refer to him as family, the Reverend doesn't want to get involved in their affairs.

DR BAUGH

Doc Baugh is the Pollitt family doctor. He delivers the news that Big Daddy is dying of cancer at Big Daddy's birthday party. He removes himself when the family argue, so as to not get involved.

Style and Form

STYLE ROMANTIC MELODRAMA

Tennessee Williams' body of work has been described as Romantic Melodrama. Churchwell's review in *The Guardian* states:

It was Eugene O'Neill who wrested American drama, kicking and screaming, into the world of realism: so repelled was he by Victorian sentimental romanticism that he ruthlessly eliminated all poetry from his plays. Arthur Miller, speaking for America's political conscience, similarly eschewed romanticism. It took Williams to return romantic melodrama to the stage, embracing emotional excess while elevating it through sheer lyrical force.

(Churchwell, 2014, para. 1).

Churchwell (2014) explains that Williams' plays are concerned with 'beautiful dreams'. The language is poetic and his characters are emotional and vulnerable. In *Streetcar Named Desire*, the dream was the vanished home of Stella and Blanche, Belle Reve. In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the dream is love, the family unit and the inheritance of the estate. The characters have personal ambition, but are forced to face up to reality with their dreams and ambitions thwarted. Maggie is perhaps the only character at the end of the play with any hope of achieving her dream.

Thornton (1955) in his notebooks on Williams, includes a review of the original production in *The New York Times* on 22 March. In Atkinson's review of the original production in 1955, he declared *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* to be a "stunning drama", describing Williams as a sophisticated observer of men and women, a truthful and honest craftsman:

Mr Williams has not only found a solid part of the truth but found the way to say it with complete honesty. It is not only part of the truth of life, it is the absolute truth of the theatre. (Atkinson, 1955, p. 666)

Williams' plays are created in the steamy South, a space of opposites, both passionate and repressive, ordinary and mythic (Churchwell, 2014). The characters are victims of their circumstance and cultural rigidity. She discusses that the reality of the plays destroys any chance of romantic heroism. Churchwell states that the mythical and fantastical elements of Williams' plays insulate the characters from the brutal realities of life, but ultimately these elements can't save them. She goes on to say that the dramatic space of the play is created in the gap between fantasy and reality.

PLASTIC THEATRE

In the early 1940's when Tennessee Williams wrote his first successful play *The Glass Menagerie* he invented a new dramaturgy, Plastic Theatre. Churchwell (2014) describes Plastic Theatre as "theatre as a unified system fusing language, staging, music and casting into a whole gestalt. Williams' system was to combine staging, properties, music, sound and effects to enhance the action, themes and characters of the play. He wanted the theatre he produced to make use of all the stage arts to create a theatre form and theatrical experience that was more than just an image of reality.

Durmisevic (2018) commented on how Williams' Plastic Theatre was 'lyrical' relying on expressionism and symbolism. Williams' placed strong emphasis on the importance of stage design in the creative process. At the beginning of the process of writing a play, he liked to envision the set design of the play to be able to "deal with intangibles which need plastic expression far more than verbal" (Devlin & Tischer, 2000, p. 180).

In the production notes for *The Glass Menagerie* Williams' expressed that the new form of Plastic Theatre must take the place of realistic theatre for theatre to stay vital. He believed that realistic theatre had lost the ability to present universal truths. He believed that by employing unconventional techniques the audience could get closer to the truth and experience a more vivid representation of how things really are (Durmisevic, 2018).

An example of how Williams' Plastic Theatre would be imbued in his plays is specified in the notes about the music for *The Glass Menagerie*. He wanted the music to contribute to the overall dream-like quality of the play, recreating Tom's memory. For *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Durmisevic (2018) states that Williams' described his vision for the tune of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* as:

[...] Expresses the surface vivacity of life with the underlying strain of immutable and inexpressible sorrow. When you look at a piece of delicately spun glass you think of two things, how beautiful it is and how easily it can be broken. Both of these ideas should be woven into the recurring tune (Durmisevic, 2018, p. 109).

Tennessee Williams was ahead of his time in terms of wanting to include technology such as projection in his productions. Interestingly, Kip Williams production of Tennessee Williams *Suddenly last Summer* in 2015 used projection throughout, with a live camera filming the stage action. Similarly, Eamon Flack used projection in his production of *The Glass Menagerie* at Belvoir Theatre in 2013. Both directors utilizing an aspect of Williams' Plastic Theatre form.

The stylistic shift in Williams' plays from linear storytelling to poetic, episodic and lyrical storytelling initially discomfited audiences. Williams rallied against the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions. He wanted to create a more vivid expression of things as they are by using expressionism, symbolism and heightened production elements.

Style and Form



FORM

VERSIONS OF THE PLAY: TEXTUAL VARIATIONS

Tennessee Williams wanted Elia Kazan to direct the premiere production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. After examining the first draft, Kazan said that it was brilliant, but it needed work. After hearing Kazan's suggestions, Williams' made the necessary changes to the script; "to get what you want without losing what I want" (Williams in Lahr, 2014, p. 295).

Lahr (2014) states that Kazan's main concern with the original script was with the character of Big Daddy. After hearing his family have kept the news of his cancer from him, Big Daddy angrily exits the stage at the end of Act 2 and doesn't return. Audrey Wood, Williams' agent agreed with Kazan that not having Big Daddy appear on stage in Act 3 was a narrative mistake as his character was too important and vivid to disappear. Kazan wanted to know what Big Daddy does after he's been told by Brick that he has cancer. Kazan wrote a note to Williams' with his concerns "I am left at the end of Act 2

with an intense concern with Big Daddy's fate-and I want to see how to see how he turns out so to speak" (Kazan in Lahr, 2014, p. 295).

Lahr (2014) relates that Kazan also felt that the character of Brick should appear altered after his confrontation with Big Daddy in Act 2. He wanted Brick's character to be more theatrically dynamic, not poetically impassive (Lahr, 2014). Williams' was worried about Kazan's suggestions about Brick. In accompanying notes to the script Williams' states "The moral paralysis of Brick was a root thing in his tragedy, and to show a dramatic progression would obscure the meaning of that tragedy" (The New York Times, 2013, para. 4). Thirdly, Kazan also felt that Maggie was too harsh as a character. He wanted her to be more sympathetic to an audience (Jackson, 2013).

VERSIONS OF THE PLAY CONT.

Kazan was able to get Williams' to rewrite the third act, with Big Daddy on stage, a more sympathetic Maggie and a moral awakening of sorts for Brick. While Williams' said it was not an ultimatum by Kazan he stated "I was fearful that I would lose his interest if I didn't re-examine the script from his point of view" (The New York Times, 2013, para. 4).

One of the major differences between the original script and the version Kazan directed is the ending of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. In the Kazan version, after Maggie suggests they get drunk together and conceive a child, Brick says, "I admire you Maggie". He then turns out the light and she likens his weak condition to "gold you let go of". The final stage direction is; "She touches his cheek, gently" (Williams, 1956, p. 132). The ending of the Kazan version is more positive than the original version with a suggestion that Maggie and Brick's relationship may become intimate again. In the original ending, when Maggie tell Brick she loves him, Brick replies sarcastically with the comment: "Wouldn't that be funny if it were true?" (Williams, 1956, p. 132). There was a third version of the play, which Williams's wrote in 1974 for a Broadway revival. According to Zinoman (2003) this version had an ambivalent tone, blending the previous two versions. The director of this production, Anthony Page, relates that the third version was the one Williams' liked the best (Zinoman, 2003).

The professional relationship between Kazan and Williams was significant. "Kazan's partnership with Williams was the most influential in 20th-century American theatre. Kazan "rallied him out of his writing blocks, challenged his melodramatic excesses, chivied him to work for greater depth, and allowed his imagination to soar" (The Guardian, 2014, "Tennessee Williams review", para. 9).

REAL TIME

Tennessee Williams' conceived of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* as a full-length play. The first Act focuses on Brick and Maggie, the second Act on Brick and Big Daddy and the third Act is the family conference.

The form of the play is interesting in that it plays in real time, with no time passing in between the three Acts. Tennessee Williams wrote about this aspect of the play to his long time agent, Audrey Wood:

I thought at least structurally the play was just right, I liked there being no time lapse between the acts, one flowing directly into the others, and it all taking place in the exact time that it occupies the theatre. I would hate to lose that tightness, that simplicity, by somehow forcing it into a more extended form simply to satisfy a convention of theatre. (Williams in Lahr, 2014, p. 291).

Themes and Ideas

Crandell (1998) states that since the play's premiere, critics have argued about the most important themes in *Cat on Hot Tin Roof*. The key themes of the play are mendacity, truth and illusion, but other themes have also been cited as the affirming powers of life and destructive powers of death. Some critics have argued that homosexuality is a main theme of the play, other critics disagree. Williams deals with homosexuality ambiguously in *Cat on Hot Tin Roof*. Most critics agree that the play is about a moral crisis, primarily for Brick who is coming to terms with mendacity, his sexual identity and mortality.

TRUTH AND LIES (MENDACITY)

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof explores the idea of truth and lies. The plot revolves around the truth and lies behind Big Daddy's health as well as the truth of Brick's sexuality and feelings for his friend Skipper. In Act 1, Doc Baugh announces that Big Daddy isn't dying, he has a spastic colon. Gooper, his wife Mae, Maggie and Brick know this isn't the truth, and that Big Daddy is dying of cancer. As Gooper and Mae want to inherit the large cotton plantation, they hold back the truth of Big Daddy's condition to work in their favour. Brick and Maggie discuss revealing the truth about his cancer to Big Daddy and Big Mama. Maggie states insightfully "No one says 'You're dying.' You have to fool them. They have to fool themselves" (Williams, 1956, p. 38).

In Act 2, Brick accidentally reveals the news to Big Daddy that he's dying of cancer. Brick later reveals he told him this without thinking and as a reaction to Big Daddy confronting him about Skipper. Big Daddy reacts to the news badly, accusing Brick of not facing his own truth by not being there for Skipper when he reached out to him. Brick admits to Big Daddy that he hung up the phone when Skipper called him to disclose his homosexual feelings towards him. After this climactic scene of dramatic tension between Brick and Big Daddy, Brick states "Who can face truth, can you?" (Williams, 1956, p. 81).

In the confrontation with Brick in Act 2, Big Daddy talks about the mendacity and lies he has lived with; "Think of all the lies I got to put up with! Pretences. Ain't that mendacity? Having to pretend stuff you don't think or feel or have any idea of" (Williams, 1956, p. 72). He tells Brick that he also needs to learn to live with mendacity and pretence. Brick replies that he drinks out of disgust with society's mendacity. Mendacity in the play refers to the falseness/duplicity we put up with and the way we lie about 'inadmissible' things, the two inadmissible things in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* being homosexuality and

death. Bigsby (1984) outlined the social implications of the theme of mendacity, arguing that the characters who lie or deceive themselves about the truth reflect society at large.

In the last few lines of the play Maggie reveals the lie she has told to the family: "I told a lie to Big Daddy, but we can make that lie come true" (Williams, 1956, p. 132). Maggie is trying to convince Brick to conceive a baby with her, to make the lie of her pregnancy a reality. This lie about being pregnant will increase her status within the family, guaranteeing the inheritance of the estate by having Brick's child.

There are many other references to truth in the play, the truth of the relationship between Maggie and Skipper and the true nature of Brick's sexuality and feelings for Skipper. Maggie reveals her feelings about the intimate experience she had with Skipper; "In this way, I destroyed him, by telling him the truth that he and his world which he was born and raised in, yours and his world had told him, could not be told. From then on, Skipper was just a receptacle for liquor and drugs" (Williams, 1956, p. 43).

In his review of the original production, Atkinson succinctly outlines the main theme of truth and lies in the play "His characters try to escape from the loneliness of their private lives into some form of understanding. The truth invariably terrifies them. That is the one thing they cannot face or speak. They can find comfort in each other only by falling back on lies. The central characters want to be kind to one another, but lies are the only refuge they have from the ugly truths that possess their minds" (Atkinson, 1955, p. 18).

Themes and Ideas

SELF REFLECTION

In the first act, stage directions describe Maggie's actions when she looks into the mirror; "She rushes straight to it, stares into it and says: "Who are you?". Then she crouches a little and answers herself in a different voice which is high, thin, mocking "I am Maggie the Cat" (Williams, 1956, p. 36). The question "Who are you?" is central in the play, and in different ways all the characters in the play are asking this of themselves. Williams explores the relationship we have with ourselves and how we avoid this relationship, transferring the focus onto our relationships with other people. Characters have realisations about who they are, what they want and their limitations.

Bigsby (1986) states that Williams believed some mystery should be left in the revelation of a character in a play, just as a great deal of mystery is left with people in life and in one's own character. Williams believes the playwright should probe deeply into character and the human experience. At this same time, the playwright should steer away from easy definitions and neat conclusions.

Big Daddy's realisation is coming to terms with his fatal illness. At the end of Act 2, after he's told by Brick that he's dying, he rallies against the news and verbally attacks his family: "Yes, all liars, all liars, all lying dying liars" (Williams, 1956, p. 84). The stage directions indicate that he says this "slowly, with fierce revulsion" (Williams, 1956, p. 84).

Big Mama's realisation is understanding that Big Daddy doesn't love her or return her great love for him. She has revolved her life around his needs and defined her place in the world by her relationship to him. Big Mama has to come to terms with the fact that she will lose Big Daddy to cancer, which will be life-changing.

Maggie is constantly questioning who she is and who she would like to be. She is hoping that Brick will eventually love her and their loveless marriage will improve. Brick is quite cruel to Maggie, making her agree to conditions if she wants to stay in the marriage. Maggie is hurt by Brick, but stays with him out of love, hope and ambition.

SEXUALITY

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was a very personal play for Williams to write. Bigsby (1986) explains that Williams' homosexuality was a key to his personal and dramatic concerns: "He was all too aware of the mendacity forced on him by a society unwilling to validate his particular sensibility" (Bigsby, 1986, p. 85). Kolin (1998) writes that social and commercial pressures resulted in Williams keeping the 'homosexual artist' separate from his work, in that homosexuality never emerges as an explicit subject in his work: "By appropriating the language of convention and by absenting the homosexual subject, Tennessee Williams is allowed to speak and reign over the commercial theatre of the 1940s and 1950s" (Kolin, 1998, p. 62).

Tennessee Williams' treatment of homosexuality in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is ambiguous. Lahr (2014) outlines a letter Williams wrote to director Elia Kazan; "Further to my original (somewhat tentative) premise, I now believe that, in the deeper sense, not the literal sense, Brick is homosexual with a heterosexual adjustment, a thing I've suspected of several others, such as Brando for instance" (Lahr, 2014, p 304). Williams' likens the character of Brick to Marlon Brando, comparing their innocence, blindness, beauty and sadness. He described what happens to Brick in the play as a mask being ripped off, knocking the world from under his feet and leaving him no alternative than to face up to the truth of his sexuality or retreat into alcoholism., "The homosexuality which may or may not have coloured the relationship between Brick and his friend Skipper, exists as an image of suppressed truth" (Bigsby, 1984, p. 85).

When Big Daddy questions Brick about his relationship with Skipper and his homosexuality tendencies, Brick retaliates, saying "Oh, you think so too, you call me your son and a queer" (Williams, 1956, p. 76). Big Daddy and other members of the family infer that Brick's relationship with Skipper was not normal. When Big Daddy discusses this with Brick, something inside Brick snaps. Williams outlines this change in Brick in a large passage of text written as stage directions in Act 2:

Themes and Ideas (Cont.)

“Brick’s detachment is at last broken through. His heart is accelerated; his forehead sweat-beaded; his breath becomes more rapid and his voice hoarse. The thing they’re discussing, timidly and painfully on the side of Big Daddy, fiercely, violently on Brick’s side, is the inadmissible thing that Skipper died to disavow them. The face that if it existed it had to be disavowed to ‘keep face’ in the world they lived in, may be at the heart of the ‘mendacity’ that Brick drinks to kill his disgust with. It may be the root of his collapse.”

(Williams, 1956, p. 56).



Themes and Ideas (Cont.)



Foreground: Jye McCallum, Emily Harris, Lila Tapper and Tristan Bowes, Background: Peter Carroll, Anthony Brandon Wong and Josh McConville in
SITC's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 2019. Photo ©Daniel Boud

FAMILY

Tennessee Williams examined family as an institution that regulates behaviour and prevents people from being honest and open with one another. His plays including *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar named Desire*, are a dissection of family life. In 1956, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* ripped apart the image of the cheery conventional family of the 1950s with a dissection of the dysfunctional Pollitt family.

In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Williams' writes in the stage directions: "I'm trying to catch the true quality of experience in a group of people, that cloudy, flickering, evanescent-fiercely charged! - interplay of live human beings in the thundercloud of a common crises" (Williams, 1956, p. 75). The dysfunctional Pollitt family are in crisis as Big Daddy is dying and hasn't written a will. Gooper, Mae and Maggie are competing for Big Daddy's favour, to be in line for the large fortune. The crisis is exacerbated by Brick's alcoholism. To combat his depression he drinks heavily and constantly, waiting for the 'click' in his head as he describes it, which signifies the alcohol has numbed his senses enough to forget his pain and carry on.

In Sydney Theatre Company's production there are eight children in the cast, alternating the roles of Mae and Gooper's four children. Kip Williams' vision was to have four rowdy, lively children running on and off the stage with toy guns and sparklers as a loud distraction to the action. The children sing "Happy Birthday" to Big Daddy. They also perform for Big Daddy, singing a rendition of 'We Love You' that's loud and grotesque. The children are never far away, infiltrating and distracting from the adult conversations between Maggie and Brick and Big Daddy and Brick.

Elements of Production

COSTUME DESIGN

The costumes' for the production are inspired by a range of periods, from the 1950s through to contemporary design. The designer Mel Page, wanted to have a sense of the past being present in the costume designs. She also wanted to show the world of excess of the wealthy Pollitt family, with an excessive, gross quality in the costume design. Mel Page is interested in how glamour and excess can be used as a mask to hide what is going on with the characters underneath.

The female character's costumes have a shiny, bright look which synthesize with the shiny, bright wall of lights in the lighting design. The male characters wear black dinner suits, apart from Brick who is in a white dressing gown, because of his injury.

SET DESIGN

The play is set in the bedroom that Maggie and Brick are staying in at the lavish home of Big Daddy and Big Mama. The bedroom is pierced by other members of the family throughout the play. The set designer David Fleischer, has created a stripped-out room, a set without walls. He wanted to create a space that was moveable and not as literal as the set described in Tennessee Williams' play. The set is stripped back even further in Act 3, with just the liquor cabinet and one lounge on stage.

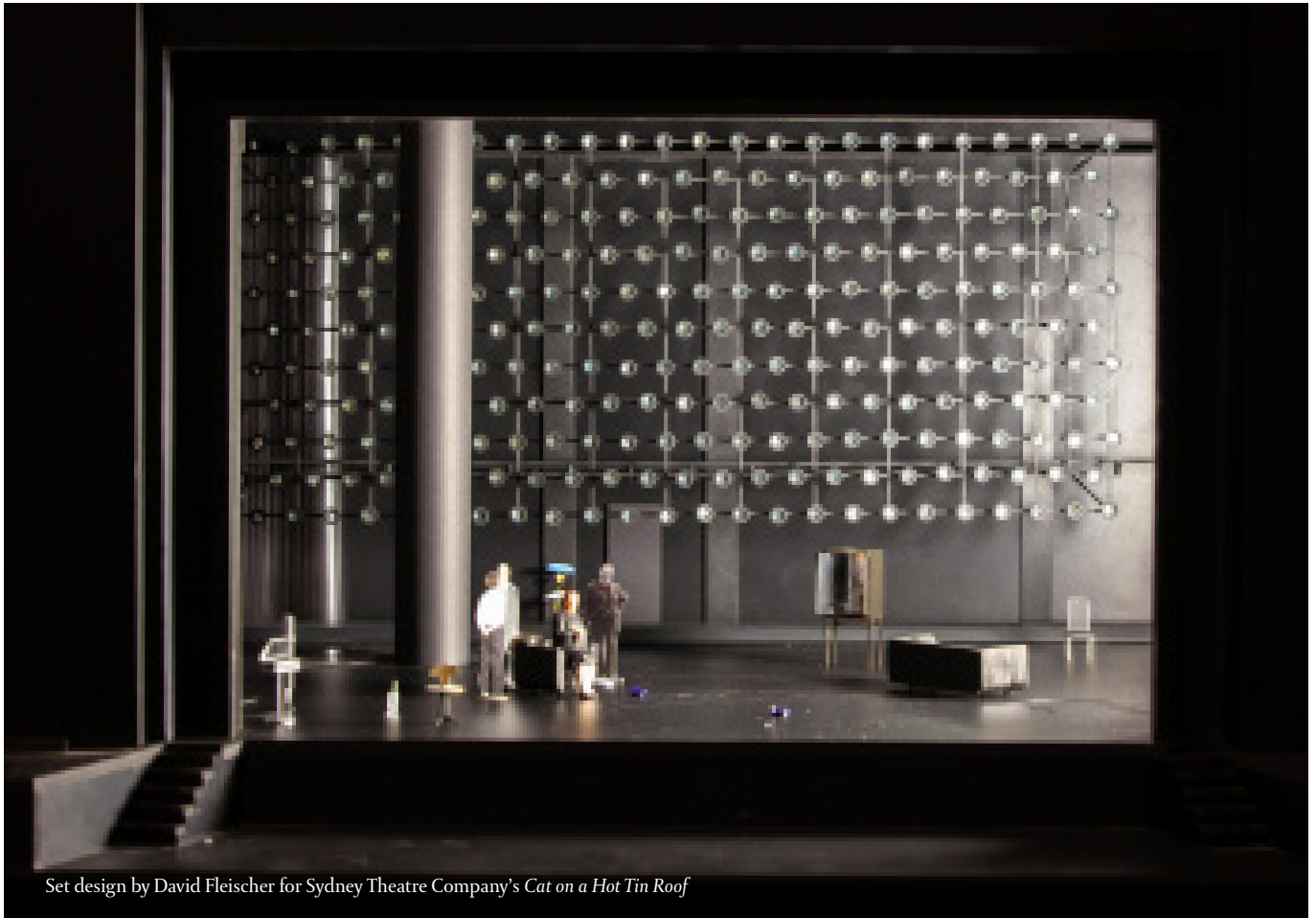
The design of the play is contemporary. The furniture and props are from a mixture of era's from 1950s until today. There is a 1980s Hi-Fi system, a 1950s bed and a 1990s television. The set design consists of small, moveable furniture pieces and architectural gestures. The set items include a shower pod, which is a rectangular prism that is pushed around the stage. The shower pod, like other set items, has a kinetic quality on the stage. It is used by Brick in Act, 1 then wheeled away. The set pieces are not conventionally configured. Instead, they explodes in the space with the furniture moving around throughout the acts and scenes. The movement of the actors around the set pieces is like a dance.

One of the main set items is a huge pillar with a staircase wrapped around it. The gallery is not a traditional gallery as detailed in the stage directions. In this adaptation of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* the balcony is represented by a large lighting fixture, suspended on prompt side. Instead of having actors on the balcony, a single light illuminates the moments the characters have on the balcony. The designers have twisted the conventions of how space is used in this contemporary reworking of the play.



Set design by David Fleischer for Sydney Theatre Company's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

Elements of Production



Set design by David Fleischer for Sydney Theatre Company's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

LIGHTING DESIGN

Lighting Design intertwines with the Set Design with the central idea of what is revealed and what is concealed by the characters in the play. The lighting design shifts with each act, increasing in impact as the play progresses.

In Act 2 a large wall of lights comes down at the back of the stage, becoming the backdrop. The lights represent the fireworks display for Big Daddy's birthday, described by Williams' as: "He stands in the gallery doorway as the night sky turns pink and green and gold with successive flashes of light" (Williams, 1956, p. 73).

The lights and the sound of the fireworks punctuate the dramatic moments in Big Daddy and Brick's conversation and confrontation in Act 2. At the end of Act 2, after truths have been revealed by Big Daddy and Brick, Big Daddy walks toward the back of the stage. The lights are bright and the music is loud as he walks into the light, seemingly disappearing from the stage.

SOUND DESIGN

The show opens with a classic jazz song, *Cry me a River*, sung by Zahra Newman who plays Maggie. Zahra starts singing the sultry jazz song in the dark, with the lights coming up and the set being revealed as she sings.

The sound design works alongside the dramatic rhythms of the play, with slow and fast rhythms and music throughout the play. In Act 2, there is a long silence after the dramatic tension has built between Big Daddy and Brick. The silence is juxtaposed against the loud and dramatic sounds and music that have punctuated their argument in Act 2.

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