

# STUDY GUIDE

FOR

# The Glass Menagerie

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS  
DIRECTED BY JULIANNE BOYD

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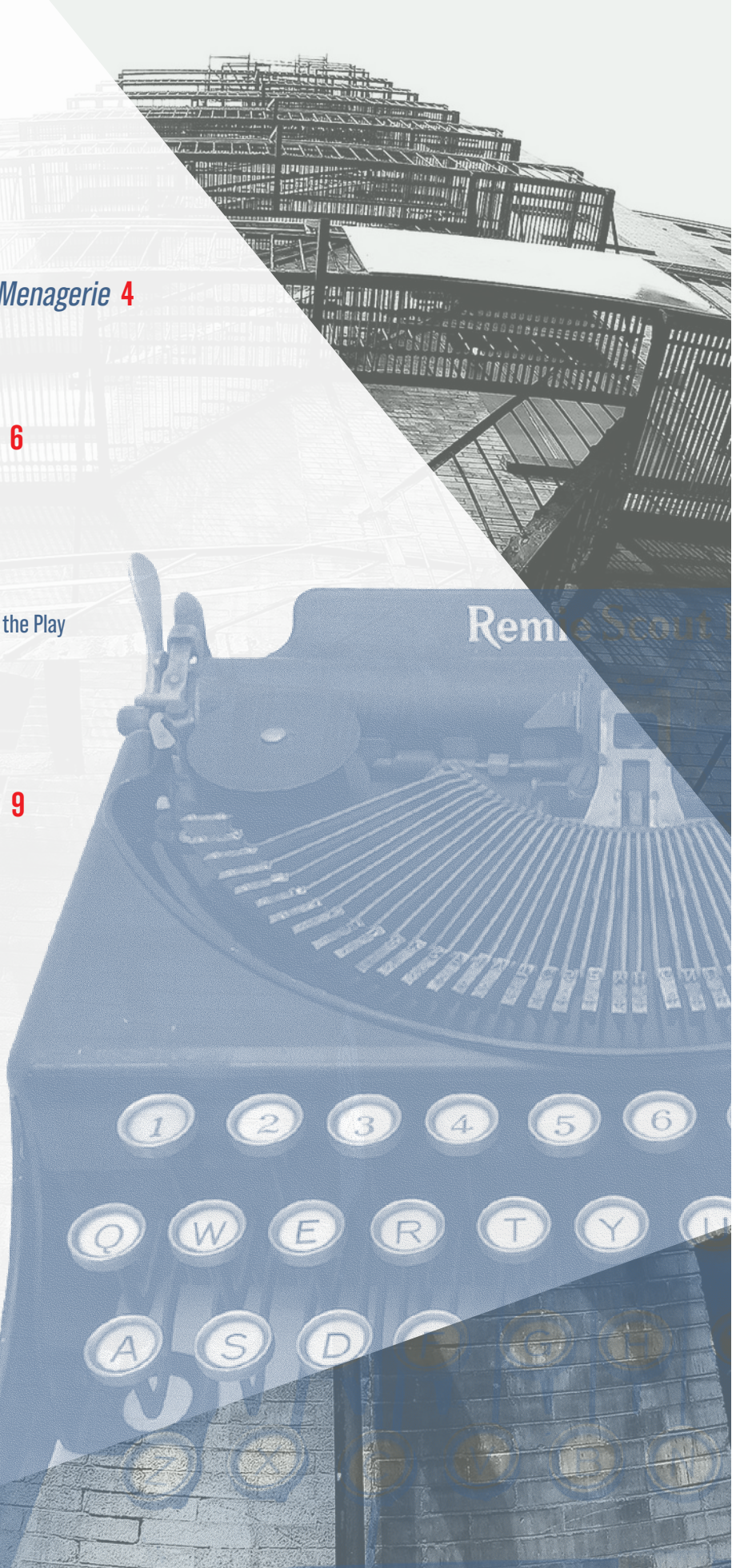
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Lead one of the post-show lessons found in this guide in order to help your students draw connections to the curriculum.

Schedule a free workshop with our education department by emailing Jane O'Leary, Director of Education, at: [education@barringtonstageco.org](mailto:education@barringtonstageco.org)



## PREPARING FOR THE PERFORMANCE

This guide is meant to be a practical education resource for teachers to draw connections between the play and core curricular subjects being studied in the classroom. The guide contains background information on the play, as well as suggested activities that can be used to explore the play's key themes either before or after viewing the performance. The activities and topics are organized in modules that can be used independently or interdependently according to class level and time availability.

### Teachers can use this guide to:

- Enhance student appreciation of the experience of live theatre.
- Introduce students to relevant cultural & historical topics that support classroom learning.
- Creatively draw connections to topics addressed in the play as they relate to core curriculum.
- Gather instructional tools, which can be used to plan lessons in alignment with national learning standards.

### BEFORE THE PLAY

Read articles from this guide with your class. If possible, have students read the play and use the guide to provide context for their reading. Go over the tips for Theatre Etiquette with your class.

### THE DAY OF THE PLAY

Please arrive 10-15 minutes before the performance to allow time before the show for students to use the restrooms, which are located in the theatre lobby. It is recommended that you assign **one chaperone for every fifteen students and ask your chaperones to disperse themselves amongst the student group to help support best behavior during the performance.**

### AFTER THE PLAY

Lead one of the post-show lessons found in this guide in order to help your students draw connections to the curriculum. **Schedule a free workshop with our education department by emailing Jane O'Leary, Director of Education, at [education@barringtonstageco.org](mailto:education@barringtonstageco.org).**

### THEATRE ETIQUETTE

What is my role at the theatre? The audience's role at the theatre is to respond honestly and appropriately to the action on stage. Theatre is quite different from watching a movie at home. Always remember that you're in a room full of other people and your behavior affects those around you. Those other audience members are there to watch the production. They can hear your responses, just as you can hear their responses. Most importantly, the actors can hear and see you as well and will appreciate appropriate responses. The theatre is the actors' workplace. Please respect their space and work the same way you hope they would respect yours!

**Silence or turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones, and watch alarms as the glow from your device is distracting.** It can be embarrassing if one goes off in the middle of a tense moment of the show. It will break the mood for everyone! Have respect for the theatre, actors and other audience members. This means no talking during the performance, no feet on seats, no kicking and no climbing over seats. The performers expect the audience's full attention and focus. Performance is a time to think inwardly, not a time to share your thoughts aloud. Talking to neighbors (even in whispers) carries easily to others in the audience and to the actors onstage. It is disruptive and distracting.

Please be seated promptly in your assigned seat. Remember the show needs to begin on time, and we can't begin until our audience is seated. Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, please wait until intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment...rude to the actors and your fellow audience members.

Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to the show about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.

# ABOUT THE PLAY

## THE STORY OF *The Glass Menagerie*

*The Glass Menagerie* opens with our narrator, Tom Wingfield, addressing the audience and explaining the events of the play as “truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.” The truths of which he speaks are, in fact, memories of personal and painful life events. He takes the audience back to St. Louis and his family’s tenement apartment where he lives with his mother and sister after moving from the South at a young age. His mother, Amanda, is stuck in her past, holding to the last vestige of her Southern gentility. Tom is a poet who dreams of escaping not only his family, but also his current career as a warehouse worker. Unfortunately, Tom’s father left years ago, tasking Tom with the family’s financial and emotional support.

Tom struggles throughout the play with an overbearing mother and a fragile sister, Laura, who is all but paralyzed by her shyness. To add to Laura’s low self-esteem, she walks with a limp due to a childhood illness. Tom loves his family deeply and wants to please both his mother and sister, but cannot seem to accomplish his artistic aspirations in his home environment. When Amanda asks Tom to bring home a gentleman caller for Laura, tensions in the family mount. Tom’s co-worker Jim O’Connor arrives, raising everyone’s hopes. Despite a tender moment of connection between Jim and Laura, it is revealed that Jim is engaged to be married and cannot provide the stability or romance for which the whole family hoped. With excitements dashed, Amanda blames Tom for this unfortunate turn of events, driving Tom out of the house. Tom ends the play by urging his sister Laura to blow her candles out. She does, allowing him to hopefully begin to pursue his life as a writer without a horrible weight of guilt.



Williams (age 54) photographed by Orlando Fernandez in 1965 for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *The Glass Menagerie*.

## THE CHARACTERS

**Amanda Wingfield:** Laura and Tom’s mother. A proud, vivacious woman, Amanda clings fervently to memories of a vanished, genteel past. She is simultaneously admirable, charming, pitiable and laughable.

**Laura Wingfield:** Amanda’s daughter and Tom’s older sister. Laura has a bad leg on which she has to wear a brace, and walks with a limp. Twenty-three years old and painfully shy, she has largely withdrawn from the outside world and devotes herself to old records and her collection of glass figurines.

**Tom Wingfield:** Amanda’s son and Laura’s younger brother. An aspiring poet, Tom works at a shoe warehouse to support the family. He is frustrated by the numbing routine of his job and escapes from it through movies, literature and alcohol.

**Jim O’Connor:** An old acquaintance of Tom and Laura. Jim was a popular athlete in high school and is now a shipping clerk at the shoe warehouse in which Tom works. He is unwaveringly devoted to goals of professional achievement and ideals of personal success

## *The Glass Menagerie* AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Much has been written on the subject of The Wingfields as a representation of Williams’s real life family - his mother Edwina, his often absent father Cornelius and his older sister Rose. The family’s personal demons were the source material for many of Williams’s writings, *The Glass Menagerie* among them.

"I can't expose a human weakness  
on the stage unless I know it  
through having it myself."

-Tennessee Williams

# Tennessee Williams' Life

*Tennessee Williams*

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Tennessee Williams at University

Tennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams III

on March 26, 1911, in Columbus, Mississippi. Known in his early life as "Tom," he was the second of three children born to Edwina Dakin Williams, a straight-laced minister's daughter, and Cornelius Coffin Williams, a traveling salesman fond of alcohol, crude language and late night poker games. In 1918 Cornelius got a job as a manager at the International Shoe Company in St. Louis, Missouri, the area that became the family's permanent home.

Cornelius and Edwina fought constantly. Cornelius felt tied down by his family, but Edwina, overly attached to the children, smothered them with attention. This situation grew worse when a bout of diphtheria swelled Tom's throat, partially paralyzed him for two years and left him with a lifelong fear of suffocation. Tom was close with his older sister, Rose. Their troubled home life was the root of emotional and mental problems that plagued them both.

Small and shy, Tom was cruelly teased during his first years at Eugene Field Elementary School. He struggled so much that he was sent to live with his grandparents in Mississippi for a year. Upon his return, his mother bought him a typewriter and he began writing. His first article, "Isolated," was published in 1924 in the Ben Blewett Junior High newspaper.

Tom attended University City High School where his writing started to get attention. He published two articles in national magazines and wrote a collection of stories for the school paper that were so popular he was asked to continue writing them after graduation. In 1929, Williams enrolled in the journalism department at the University of Missouri in Columbia. His first known play, *Beauty is the Word*, won an honorable mention in the school's annual Dramatic Arts Contest.

In 1932, Tom's father forced him to leave the university and get a job in the shoe factory in St. Louis. Tom kept writing and had a comedy staged by a small theatre group in Memphis while visiting his grandparents. In 1937 two of his plays, *Candles to the Sun* and *The Fugitive Kind*, were staged in St. Louis. Later that same year, Rose had a mental breakdown from which she never recovered. Tom enrolled at the University of Iowa. He worked in the drama department and graduated with an English degree in 1938.

After graduation, Williams submitted plays to a competition in New York. Since the age requirement was twenty-five, he changed his birth date from 1911 to 1914, and his name to "Tennessee" Williams. He won a special \$100 prize in the contest and was, from that time on, known professionally as Tennessee Williams.

Williams then started a lifelong habit of travelling. During this period, he realized he was homosexual.

All of his attempted relationships had ended in heartbreak. Sadness, loneliness and the search for love all became themes in his plays. In 1940 his first professionally produced play, *Battle of Angels*, flopped. Broke and in debt, he traveled constantly, working numerous odd jobs and living off the support of family members and kind strangers.

Williams' breakthrough hit, *The Glass Menagerie*, was filled with characters based on his own troubled family. It opened in Chicago to great reviews in 1944 and moved to Broadway the next year where the opening night audience cheered through twenty-four curtain calls!

*The Glass Menagerie* won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award in 1945 and was the first in a long string of successes for Tennessee Williams. *A Streetcar Named Desire* won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1948. *The Rose Tattoo* won the Tony Award for Best Play in 1951. In 1955, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Williams' last major success on Broadway, *Night of the Iguana*, opened in 1961 and won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award.

"At the age of fourteen I discovered writing as an escape from a world of reality in which I felt acutely uncomfortable."  
-Tennessee Williams

Williams' longtime love and personal secretary, Frank Merlo, died of lung cancer in 1963. After this, Williams sank into a deep depression made worse by drug and alcohol abuse. His writing career declined and never fully recovered. In 1969, he suffered a mental collapse and was admitted to the psychiatric ward at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. Although he got better, he continued to struggle with substance abuse for the rest of his life. On February 24, 1983, Tennessee Williams died in his New York City residence at the Hotel Elysee. According to official reports, he choked to death on a bottle cap. However, given his history of alcohol, drug use and depression, the facts of his death remain uncertain.

## TENNESSEE WILLIAMS VS. TOM WINGFIELD



Tennessee Williams, circa 1955.

### Tennessee:

Williams moved to St. Louis when he was 7 years old.
Williams was forced to work in a shoe factory, but wanted to be a writer.
Williams' father often left the family for work.

### Tom:

Tom, his mother and his sister all move to St. Louis.
Tom often talks about his desire to leave the warehouse. You see him writing throughout the play.
Tom's father ran away when he was young, leaving Amanda to care for the children.

## What other similarities can you find while watching the play?

### EDWINA WILLIAMS' LIFE

"Miss Edwina" Williams, as she was known, is the model for Amanda Wingfield. Born in Ohio, she adopted the style of the Southern Belle perhaps due to the pedigree of her husband, Cornelius Coffin "CC" Williams, who came from one of the finest families in Tennessee. Having grown up with a life of privilege, Edwina struggled to adjust to the family's fall from grace and life in the midst of The Great Depression in St. Louis, away from her parents. According to her father, Edwina was a talker: "There was never any silence. You would step in the room, and she immediately started." He went on, "she liked to focus the attention on herself by talking. She wouldn't pay attention to anyone but herself. It was like water dripping - tip, tip, tip." According to Williams, Edwina was "rarely, if ever, bested" in her verbal fights with CC (Lahr, 51). This knack for wielding speech in a way to seduce and hold a room is evident in Williams' creation of Amanda.



### EDWINA WILLIAMS VS. AMANDA WINGFIELD

*"The little woman of great but confused vitality, clinging frantically to another time and place."*

#### Edwina:

#### Amanda:

Edwina adopted the style of a Southern Belle.	Amanda often talks about "Blue Mountain" when she was a girl and her time in the South, letting it affect her character, especially around company.
Edwina grew up in a life of privilege and was forced to adapt when she moved to St. Louis.	Amanda moves to a small apartment, taking care of her two children alone and working odd jobs to make ends meet.
Edwina struggled with her daughter's mental health.	Amanda struggles with her daughter's physical health.
Edwina liked to focus the attention on herself by talking. She wouldn't pay attention to anyone but herself.	Amanda holds the attention of the room with her stories and constant correction of her children.

**Fact:** It was not until the success of *The Glass Menagerie* that she was able to leave her marriage, because Tennessee Williams gave her half of the show's royalties.



## ROSE WILLIAMS' LIFE

Rose Williams was Tennessee Williams' older sister and the inspiration for Laura. Williams said that she had "the same precarious balance of nerves that I live with," but unlike Williams had no outlet for them (Lahr, 57). Williams wrote that Rose was a popular girl in high school, "but only for a brief while." Her beauty was "mainly in her expressive green-gray eyes and in her curly auburn hair." But her narrow shoulders and "state of anxiety when

in male company inclined her to hunch them so they looked even narrower," and her "strong featured, very Williams head" looked too large for her small body. Her reported "delusions" worsened until she was admitted to Farmington State Hospital at age 28 and diagnosed with schizophrenia. Edwina's decision to have a prefrontal lobotomy performed on Rose in 1943 ruptured an already fractured home life and was a defining moment for the entire family. Williams carried guilt surrounding his sister's lobotomy as he couldn't be with her when it was performed and felt he had no say in the decision of his mother.

## ROSE WILLIAMS VS. LAURA WINGFIELD

### Rose

### Laura

Rose is Tennessee's older sister.	Laura is Tom's older sister.
Rose had a mental illness that made it very hard for her to interact and socialize with other young folks.	Laura concentrates so much on her physical disabilities and shyness that she cannot complete high school or business school.
Tennessee said he cared for his sister deeply: "my sister and I cared for each other. I cared for her more than I did my mother."	Tom's final speech outlines how often he thinks of Laura after he leaves and how much he cares for her.

**Fact:** When Rose was 28 years old, Edwina, her mother, decided to have a lobotomy done on Rose.

According to Rose's psychiatry report, she suffered from "somatic delusions: felt her heart was as big as her chest, thought that her body disappeared from her bed."

"Silence about a thing just magnifies it."

-Tennessee Williams

## A Brief History of Lobotomy

It has been 75 years since the first lobotomy was performed in the US, a procedure later described by one psychiatrist as "putting in a brain needle and stirring the works." In 1935, in a Lisbon hospital, Egas Moniz believed he had found a solution to many mental health disorders. Surgeons would drill a pair of holes into the skull, either at the side or top, and push a sharp instrument - a leucotome - into the brain. The surgeon would sweep this from side to side, to cut the connections between the frontal lobes and the rest of the brain.

Moniz reported dramatic improvements for his first 20 patients. The operation was seized on with enthusiasm by the American neurologist Walter Freeman who became an evangelist for the procedure, performing the first lobotomy in the US in 1936, then spreading it across the globe. Despite opposition from some doctors - especially psychoanalysts - it became a mainstream part of psychiatry. It was used to treat a range of illnesses, from schizophrenia to depression and compulsive disorders. The reason for its popularity was simple - the alternative was worse. In 1949, Egas Moniz won the Nobel Prize for inventing lobotomy, and the operation peaked in popularity around the same time. By 1951 over 18,608 individuals had been lobotomized in the US.

During the mid-1950s the procedure rapidly fell out of favour, partly because of poor results and partly because of the introduction of the first wave of effective psychiatric drugs.

# THE WORLD OF *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*

## SETTING THE STAGE:

### The Social and Political Context of the Play

## THE SETTING:

### St. Louis, MO, 1937, in a tenement apartment:

*"The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in over-crowded urban centers of lower middle-class population and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism."* (stage directions Act I sc 1)



## WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE 1930s?

*"In Spain there was revolution—Here there was only shouting and confusion and labor disturbances, sometimes violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Cleveland—Chicago—Detroit. . ."* (Tom's opening monologue.)

## THE GREAT DEPRESSION

*The Glass Menagerie* recounts the family's time in St. Louis in the 1930s through the memory of Tom/Tennessee. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 plunged the United States and the global economy into the largest period of economic downturn of the 20th century. The Great Depression lasted from 1929-1939. By 1933, when The Great Depression reached its lowest point, some 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half the country's banks had failed.

## ST. LOUIS IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION

When the stock market crashed in 1929, St. Louis was among the largest cities in the country. With a population of more than 820,000 people, it ranked seventh overall, right between Cleveland and Baltimore. As a result, the early years of the Great Depression hit St. Louis hard.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal pushed the federal government to take an active role in getting the country back on its feet. In order to get St. Louis back on its feet, the city and its citizens contributed as many resources as they could. Between 1930 and 1932, the municipal government allocated \$1.48 million of its operating revenue for relief. Voters even approved a \$4.6 million dollar relief bond issue in November 1932. Local charitable organizations also kicked in to help. The Salvation Army, St. Vincent DePaul Society and Provident Association contributed \$2 million.

## CENTURY OF PROGRESS:

In his visit to the Wingfield family home, Jim O'Connor mentions his fascination with The Century of Progress Exposition, which he visited in Chicago. Jim is an emissary from the outside world, representing normalcy, optimism, and hope for the future, in contrast to the Wingfield family, trapped in memories of the past and unable to move beyond their circumstances.

Originally intended to commemorate Chicago's past, the Century of Progress Exposition came to symbolize hope for Chicago's and America's future in the midst of the Great Depression. This was the second World's Fair that Chicago hosted, and by the time it closed, it had been visited by nearly 40 million fairgoers. As was the case with the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the Century of Progress Exposition was conceived in an atmosphere of economic, political and social crisis, shaped this time by the economic recession that followed America's victory in World War I, the ensuing Red Scare, Chicago's 1919 Race Riots and Chicago's notorious gangster violence.

## THEN & NOW

1937



2018



1937



2018



1937



2018





# THE GLASS MENAGERIE AS A “MEMORY PLAY”

In his production notes for *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams describes “a new, plastic theatre which must take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions.” Yearning to break free from the naturalistic proscenium plays of the 1920s and 1930s, Williams sought to highlight emotional truth rather than literal truth by not adhering to conventions of lighting, sound, and/or structure. Perhaps as contrast to the dramas of Eugene O’Neill and Clifford Odets, Williams wrote in his diary that “the three-act play...is probably on its way out anyhow... This form, this method, is for the play of short cumulative scenes which I think is on its way in.” He imagined “something resembling a restrained type of dance with motions honed down to the essential and the significant. Playing with cigarettes, toying with glasses - the myriad little nervous businesses of realistic drama will be out. The pure line, the strongly chiseled profile will at once point and restrain the emotional impact of drama...Apocalypse without delirium.” (Lahr, 31)

## WHAT’S GROUNDBREAKING ABOUT THE GLASS MENAGERIE?

While much of *The Glass Menagerie* could still be considered “realism,” Williams introduced works with non-realistic elements of theatricality that had never been seen before.

- Expressive lighting and music
- The narrator entering and exiting reality
- Looking back through time
- Poetic language

What other plays, movies or books can you think of that use these elements? They are probably inspired by Tennessee Williams!

**"In memory, everything seems  
to happen to music."  
-Tennessee Williams**

## MAJOR PRODUCTION HISTORY

*The Glass Menagerie* opened on Broadway in the Playhouse Theatre on March 31, 1945, and played there until June 29, 1946. It then moved to the Royale Theatre from July 1, 1946, until its closing on August 3, 1946. The show was directed by Eddie Dowling and Margo Jones. The cast for opening night was as follows:

Eddie Dowling as *Tom Wingfield*  
Laurette Taylor as *Amanda Wingfield*  
Julie Haydon as *Laura Wingfield*  
Anthony Ross as *Jim O'Connor*

The play won every major theatrical prize except the Pulitzer (Lahr, 36). It has gone on to become a staple of the American Theatre Canon. *The Glass Menagerie* was Williams’ first major commercial success as a playwright.

### ***The Glass Menagerie* has had a number of major revivals:**

May 4, 1965, to October 2, 1965,  
at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre.

December 18, 1975, to February 22, 1976,  
at the Circle in the Square Theatre with  
Maureen Stapleton as Amanda.

December 1, 1983, to February 19, 1984,  
at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre with  
Jessica Tandy as Amanda.

1989 at the Royal Exchange, Manchester,  
directed by Ian Hastings.

November 15, 1994, to January 1, 1995, at Criterion  
Center Stage Right with Julie Harris as Amanda.

March 22, 2005, to July 3, 2005, at the  
Ethel Barrymore Theatre with Jessica Lange  
as Amanda.

April 2008 at the Royal Exchange, Manchester,  
directed by Braham Murray.

Off Broadway at the Roundabout Theatre Company,  
March 24, 2010, to June 13, 2010, with  
Judith Iy as Amanda.

January 26, 2017, to April 29, 2017, at the  
Duke of York’s Theatre, London.

February 7, 2017 to May 21, 2017, at the Belasco  
Theatre with Sally Field as Amanda.

# OUR SHOW

Set Design  
DESIGNS BY BRIAN PRATHER

*"The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast, hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in over-crowded urban centers of lower-middle class population and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism. The apartment faces an alley and is entered by a fire-escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth, for all of these huge buildings are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation. The fire escape is included in the set—that is, the landing of it and the steps descending from it. The scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details, others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart. The interior is, therefore, rather dim and poetic."*

-Williams' opening stage directions.

Williams' specific language helps the designers visualize the world of the play. The viola represents Laura's emotional journey throughout the play and reminds the audience of the "nonrealistic" elements of the play. The set is a reflection of the Wingfields' current status. It is dark and dingy and wholly different from what we can assume the family's life was in the south.

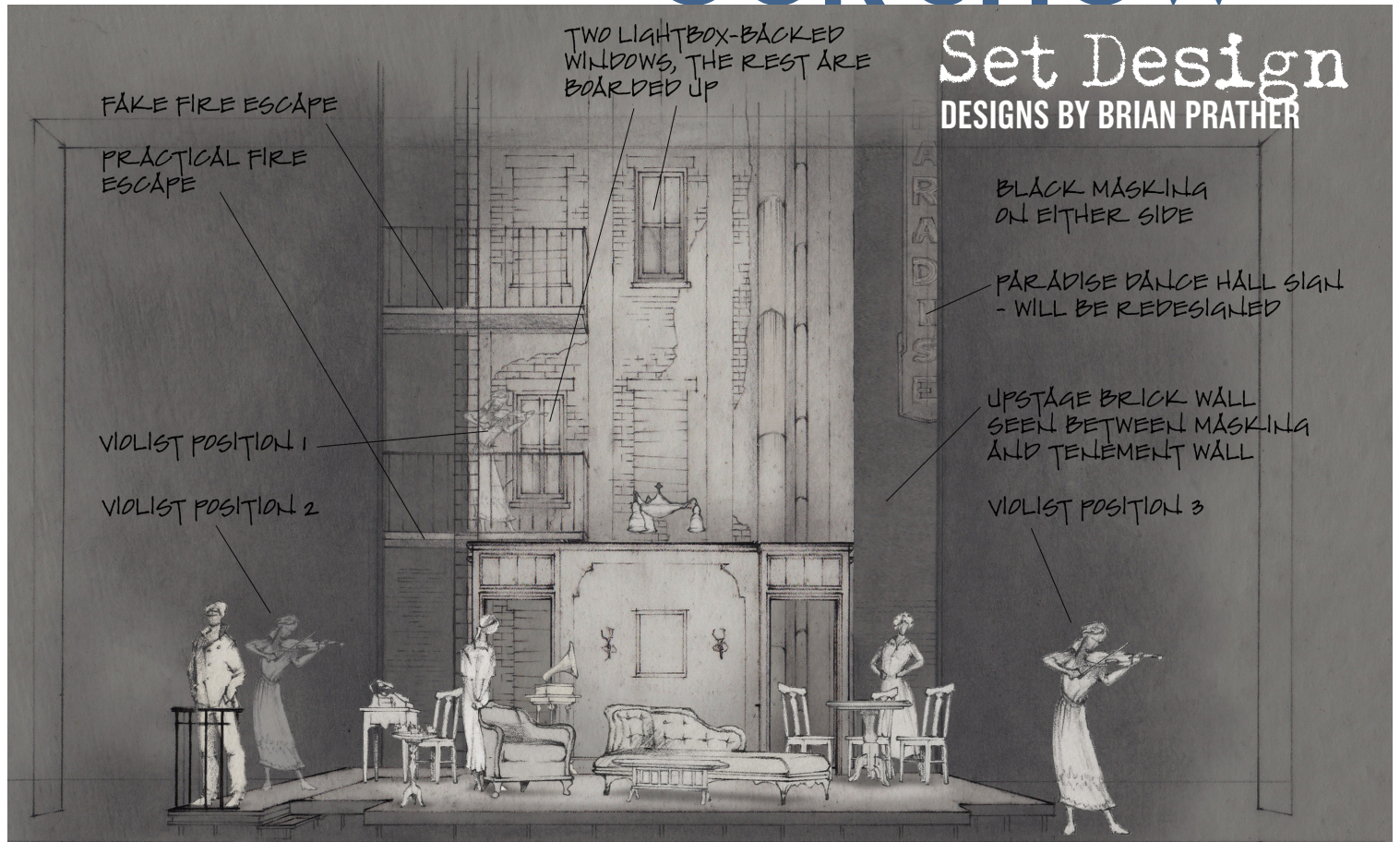
The costumes illustrate the unadorned garments of middle class Americans in the 1930s. In contrast, Amanda's party dress is lavish and reminds her of the grandness of her girlhood.



1930s Living Room



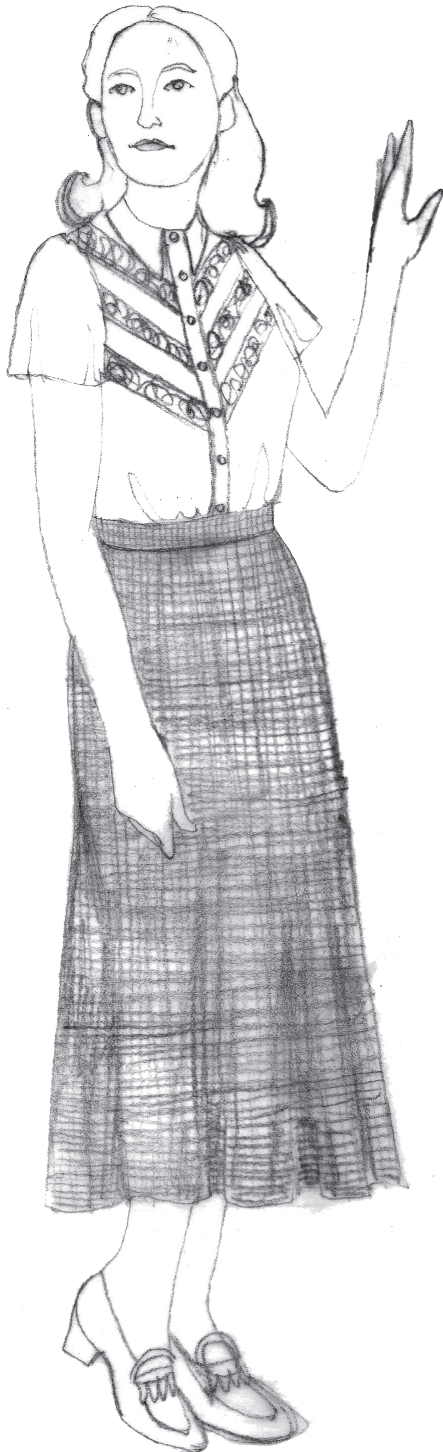
# OUR SHOW



Character: Amanda Wingfield



Character: Laura Wingfield



# Costumes

DESIGNS BY ELIVIA BOVENZI

Character: Tom Wingfield



# Costumes

DESIGNS BY ELIVIA BOVENZI

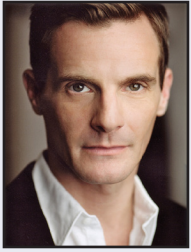
Character: **Jim O'Connor** (The Gentleman Caller)



# OUR SHOW

## Cast & Creatives

### CAST:



**MARK H. DOLD (Tom Wingfield)** Associate Artist. 14 seasons at BSC from 2004-2018. Highlights: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Freud's Last Session*, *Breaking The Code*, *Shining City*, *His Girl Friday*, *THIS* and *Gaslight*. Mark has worked at regional theatres from coast to coast and appeared on and off Broadway. He has guest-starred on network television, web series and just finished shooting *Louie*, a movie written/directed by the Berkshires' own Robert Biggs. Mark is the recipient of Connecticut Critics Circle and San Diego Critics Awards and a Berkie nominee. He is a graduate of Boston University and The Yale School of Drama. He is a member of The Actors Center. The run of this show is dedicated to dear friends Carole, June and his own beautiful sister Laura. [markhdold.com](http://markhdold.com)



**ANGELA JANAS (Laura Wingfield)** BSC Debut! Off Broadway: *Stuffed* (Westside Theatre), *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Macbeth*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (The Acting Company). Regional: *The Lion in Winter* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Three Musketeers*, *King Lear* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival), *In Game or Real*, *The Winter's Tale* (Guthrie Theater), *The Merchant of Venice*, *Starcrossed* (Gulfshore Playhouse), *Arcadia* (Nevada Conservatory Theatre). Training: BFA, University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater. Love to Carl. [angelajanas.com](http://angelajanas.com)



**CAITLIN O'CONNELL (Amanda Wingfield)** Broadway: *The Crucible*, *Mothers and Sons*, *The Heiress*, *33 Variations*. Off Broadway: *TACT: The Killing of Sister George*; NYSF: *All's Well That Ends Well*; Public: *Stuff Happens*; LCT: *Third*; Primary Stages: *Boy*; *Clubbed Thumb*; *Baby Screams Miracle*, *16 Words or Less*. Regional: Berkeley Rep: *Watch on the Rhine*; Guthrie: *Watch on the Rhine*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Playboy of the Western World*; Williamstown Theater Festival: *Pygmalion*; South Coast Rep: *Habeus Corpus*; Shakespeare Theatre: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*; Center Stage: *The Matchmaker*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Othello*, *Oh, Pioneers!*; Old Globe: *Julius Caesar*; Denver Center Theatre Company: *Third*, *The Clean House*, *Dinner With Friends*, *The Little Foxes*; Everyman Theater: *You Can't Take It With You*; ATL/Cincinnati Playhouse: *Doubt*; Ahmanson, Yale Rep, McCarter, O'Neill Center, Dallas Theater Center, Milwaukee Rep, Intiman Theatre. Film: *Oppenheimer Strategies*, *Fizzle*, *The Automatic Hate*, *The Stepchild*. TV: *Unforgettable*, *Whoopi*, *L&O*, *Homicide*.



**TYLER LANSING WEAKS (Jim O'Connor)** BSC debut! Previously, he has performed in Shakespeare, farces and musicals at Lincoln Center Theater, New York City Center, the Old Globe in San Diego, Hartford Stage, Huntington Theater, Trinity Repertory in Providence and many more. TV appearances include *The Good Wife* and *Elementary* on CBS. Most recently, he has worked in the upcoming films *The Chaperone*, *A Rainy Day in New York* and *Nighthawks*. Tyler thanks Abrams and Paige.



**SUSAN FRENCH (Violist)** has served as Concertmaster for the First National Broadway tours of *An American in Paris*, Lincoln Center's *South Pacific*, *Evita* and the National Tour of *The Wizard of Oz*. Broadway orchestral highlights include *On the Town*, *White Christmas* (2008) and Off Broadway's *Queen of the Mist*. Susan has performed with the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music since 2004, and has held positions with Santa Fe Symphony (Assistant Concertmaster), New Mexico Symphony and Des Moines Metro Opera. Additional engagements include *Follies* at the Kennedy Center, Glimmerglass Opera Oman Tour, SONOS, Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Irish Repertory Theatre, Harlem Chamber Players, American Modern Ensemble and Berkshire Music School Faculty.



## CREATIVES:

**JULIANNE BOYD (Director/Artistic Director)** co-founded Barrington Stage Company in January 1995. She has directed many productions at BSC. Last summer, Ms. Boyd directed the acclaimed production of *Company* starring Aaron Tveit. In 2016, she directed two world premieres: Christopher Demos-Brown's *American Son*, which won the Laurents-Hatcher Award for Best New Play of 2016 by an Emerging Playwright, and the musical *Broadway Bounty Hunter* by Joe Iconis, Jason SweetTooth Williams and Lance Rubin. Other productions include the world premieres of Mark St. Germain's *Best of Enemies*, *Dancing Lessons* and *Dr. Ruth, All the Way*, and the critically-acclaimed revival of Goldman and Sondheim's *Follies*. In 1997, she directed BSC's smash-hit production of *Cabaret*, which won six Boston Theater Critics Awards and transferred to the Hasty Pudding Theatre in Cambridge for an extended run. Boyd conceived and directed the Broadway musical *Eubie!*, a show based on the music of Eubie Blake which starred Gregory Hines and garnered three Tony nominations. She also co-conceived and directed (with Joan Micklin Silver) the award-winning Off Broadway musical revue *A...My Name Is Alice* (Outer Critics' Award) and its sequel *A...My Name Is Still Alice*. Over the past thirty-five years she has worked extensively in New York and regional theatres. In 2000, Ms. Boyd created the Playwright Mentoring Project, BSC's underserved youth program that won the prestigious Coming Up Taller Award in 2007. This award, given by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, is the nation's highest honor for after-school and out-of-school programming. In 2015, the Playwright Mentoring Project, along with BSC's other outstanding education programs, won the Commonwealth Award for Creative Youth Development.

From 1992 to 1998, Ms. Boyd served as President of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, the national labor union representing professional directors and choreographers in the U.S. She holds a Ph.D. in Theatre History from CUNY Graduate Center. She and her husband Norman have three grown children.

**JOEL ABBOTT (Sound Designer)** BSC: *Well Intentioned White People*, *Gaslight*, *Taking Steps*. He has designed and assisted on shows on Broadway, Long Wharf, Theaterworks, McCarter Theatre Center, Roundabout, Ars Nova, Bay Street Theatre, Yale Rep, St. Michael's Playhouse, Vermont Stage, Totem Pole Playhouse, and Manhattan Theatre Club. His television music has been heard on *The Vampire Diaries*, *Southern Charm* and *Pawn Stars*. He is originally from Atlanta, Georgia, and he received his MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

**ELIVIA BOVENZI (Costume Designer)** BSC: *Typhoid Mary*, *The Birds*, *Kunstler* and *peerless*. She has designed an extensive repertoire of Shakespeare including *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus* (New York Shakespeare Exchange), *Macbeth* and *Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare on the Sound). Assistant design credits: Broadway revivals of *My Fair Lady* and *Fiddler on the Roof*; and for *The Father and Incognito* (MTC); *Plenty* (Public Theater); *War Paint* (Goodman Theatre); *Kiss Me, Kate* (Hartford Stage) and *My Heart Is In The East* (LaMaMa). MFA: Yale, where her credits include *An Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Yale Rep/Berkeley Rep), *Cloud Nine* and *Richard II*. [eliviabovenzi.com](http://eliviabovenzi.com)

**BRIAN PRATHER (Scenic Designer)** BSC Associate Artist and designer of BSC productions: *A Doll's House Part 2*, *Typhoid Mary*, *Ragtime*, *American Son*, *Breaking the Code*, *Engagements*, *Dr. Ruth, All the Way*, *The Memory Show*, *Freud's Last Session*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Burnt Part Boys* and many others. Recent Off Broadway: *Daniel's Husband*, *Widowers' Houses*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Becoming Dr. Ruth*, *The Memory Show*, *Freud's Last Session*, *Nymph Errant*, *The Burnt Part Boys*. International: *Chung-mu Hall* (South Korea). Regional and other: Alley Theatre, Goodspeed Musicals, TheaterWorks Hartford, Virginia Rep., Broad Stage, Mercury Theatre, Delaware Theatre Co., Shakespeare on the Sound, Capitol Rep. Regional Emmy nominee, Jeff Award and BTCA Award winner. [brianprather.com](http://brianprather.com)

**MATTHEW RICHARDS (Lighting Designer)** BSC: *The Cake*, *Kimberly Akimbo*, *Art*, *Elegies*. Broadway: *Ann*. Opera: *Macbeth* at L.A. Opera. Off Broadway: *Is God Is* at Soho Rep; *Absolute Brightness...*, and *The Curvy Widow* at Westside Arts; *The Killer*, *Tamburlaine* and *Measure for Measure* at Theatre For a New Audience; *A Funny Thing...* at MCC. Regional: Actors Theatre of Louisville; Arena Stage; Baltimore Center Stage; Cincinnati Playhouse; Cleveland Playhouse; Dallas Theater Center; Ford's Theatre; The Goodman; Hartford Stage; The Huntington; La Jolla Playhouse; Long Wharf; The Old Globe; Shakespeare Theatre; Westport Playhouse; Williamstown Theatre Festival; Yale Repertory Theatre.

**ALEXANDER SOVRONSKY (Composer)** BSC: *The Cake*, *Typhoid Mary*, *10x10 New Play Festival* (2017, 2018). Music/Sound Design credits: Broadway: *Cyrano de Bergerac* (starring Kevin Kline). Off Broadway: *Bottom of the World* (Atlantic); *Women Beware Women* (Red Bull Theatre); *King Lear*, *Three Sisters* (Classical Theatre of Harlem); *As You Like It* (Happy Few Theatre Co); *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Resonance Ensemble). Regional: Shakespeare & Co., Berkshire Theatre Group, Hartford Stage, Actors' Shakespeare Project, Wharton Salon, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Off-Square Theatre Co., WAM Theatre. His music can be heard in *Mother of the Maid*, now playing at The Public Theater in NYC, starring Glenn Close. [AlexanderSovronsky.com](http://AlexanderSovronsky.com)

**PATRICK DAVID EGAN (Production Stage Manager)** BSC debut! Broadway: *Fun Home*, *Newsies*. Off Broadway: Howard Crabtree's *When Pigs Fly*, *Giant*, *Fun Home*, *Barbecue*, *Privacy*, *Southern Comfort*, *The Mystery of Love and Sex*, *Cyprus Avenue*. National Tours and other credits: *Roman Holiday*, *War Horse* First National Tour, 25th Anniversary Production of *Les Misérables*, *Newsies*, *Billy Elliot*, *Finding Neverland*, The Kennedy Center, Paper Mill Playhouse and Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. Love to BG.

# Glossary for *The Glass Menagerie*

**beaux-n.**, gentleman callers

**Blue Mountain:** Amanda fondly remembers her youth, where she received “17 gentleman callers” on a Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain. The play does not specify where Blue Mountain is, but this could presumably be a reference to Blue Mountain, Mississippi. Tennessee was born in Columbus, Mississippi which is 103 miles from Blue Mountain. Williams fondly recalls his childhood there prior to the family’s move to St. Louis. The town conjures images of a genteel southern plantation home and stands as a symbolic contrast to the bleak and impoverished reality of the Wingfield’s existence in St. Louis.



Woman in cloche hat. Bain News Service [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

**Cloche hat-n.**, a close-fitting women’s hat

**Cotillion-n.**, a formal ball to introduce a girl to society

**D.A.R.-n.**, Daughters of the American Revolution; group whose members can trace their ancestry to a soldier in the Revolutionary War



1901 Cotillion via Wikimedia Commons

**Merchant Marine-n.**, a sailor who works on a ship involved in trading goods

## **Pleurosis:**

In the play, Jim remembers his nickname for the young Laura - “Blue Roses,” and Laura explains that the nickname stems from an early bout of pleurisy that left her permanently lame and in a leg brace. Pleurisy is actually an inflammation of the lung lining. Pleurisy used to be a common complication of bacterial pneumonia, but it is now less common due to the introduction of antibiotics. Pain in the shoulders and chest are more common symptoms of

pleurisy as well as coughing and wheezing. That the symptoms of Laura’s childhood disease do not have a direct correlation with leg injury bring up the question of Laura’s supposed “lameness” being more a function of how she views herself as disabled and/or how her mother views her disability. While Rose Williams did not suffer from pleurisy in real life, Tennessee did contract diphtheria at age 5, which paralyzed his legs for two years.

**Quinine-n.**, fever and pain reducer

**Victrola-n.**, phonograph, record player



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Hoffman Island, merchant marine training center off Staten Island, New York, 1942 . Photo: John Vachon. Via Library of Congress

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does the setting impact the characters in the play?
2. In what ways do the characters in *The Glass Menagerie* have trouble accepting the reality of their situation? In what ways do they try to escape?
3. Tom is the narrator in *The Glass Menagerie*. What other plays can you think of that have narrators? How does this affect the play?
4. How does the father's abandonment resonate throughout the play? What are some examples?
5. Laura's glass animals serve as a poetic symbol in the play. What does *The Glass Menagerie* represent in the play? What might the glass unicorn represent?
6. What does Jim O'Connor represent in the play? How does his arrival impact the other characters?
7. How does Amanda express her love for her children (even if it is misguided)?

## ACTIVITIES

### Essay topics:

- Compare and contrast Tennessee Williams' life to the story and characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. What liberties has he taken as a writer in translating real people into fictional characters in the play?
- *The Glass Menagerie* is a memory play and is told from the perspective of Tom. In what ways might the story be different if told from the point of view of Amanda or Laura?

### Creative Writing Activity: The Memory Play

**Objective: Students will use their analysis of *The Glass Menagerie* to write their own monologue.**

- The play opens and closes with monologues from the point of view of the Narrator Tom Wingfield. Read the monologues aloud in class and discuss why Tom chooses to directly address the audience. How are Tom's monologues different from his dialogue with his family? What does that difference tell you about the character of Tom?
- In what ways does Tom's perspective guide our opinions of the other characters in the play?
- How does Williams employ poetic language to paint a picture of his memories?

**Objective: Teachers can use the following questions to prompt student discussions.**

**1. Ask the students to think of a personal event which drastically changed the course of their lives.**

- a. What decision was made by them either in response to the change or to cause the change?
- b. Who are the characters in this memory?

**2. In Tom's first monologue he sets the scene dramatically and historically for the beginning of the play.**

**Write a monologue "setting the stage" for the event that happened in your life, from your current perspective.**

**What are the important details?**

- a. Introduce the characters, the setting and the problem.
- b. "Poetic language" is artistic language that conveys a deeper meaning, feeling or image, ie: "*Sometimes they'd turn out all the lights except for a large glass sphere that hung from the ceiling. It would turn slowly about and filter the dusk with delicate rainbow colors.*"- Tom: Act 1, Scene 6. Use poetic language in your own example to help your audience understand how you feel about this memory.

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### Additional References

John Lahr, *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh*

Doland Spoto, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams*

Ed. Albert J. Devlin, *Conversations with Tennessee Williams*

Ronald Hayman, *Tennessee Williams: Everyone Else Is An Audience*

Richard E. Kramer. "*The Sculptural Drama*": *Tennessee Williams' Plastic Theatre* <http://www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org/journal/work.php?ID=45>

Watch the PBS American Masters series, "*Tennessee Williams: Orpheus of The American Stage*" <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/tennessee-williams-about-tennessee-williams/737/>

Poetry Foundation Website: Tennessee Williams <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/tennessee-williams>

# BARRINGTON STAGE COMPANY'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Commitment to Youth

Our mission is to awaken the minds, imaginations and creative power of children, teenagers, and young adults by providing opportunities for them to experience the joy of live theatre as performers, writers, technicians and audience members.

### Playwright Mentoring Project (PMP)

Now entering its 18th year, the national award-winning Playwright Mentoring Project is an intensive, six-month, out-of-school activity that uses theatre as a catalyst to help underserved youth learn valuable life skills that can aid them in developing a positive self-image. Over the course of the program, teens are enabled to create an original performance piece based on their own stories in a safe and confidential environment where they can express themselves, develop conflict/resolution skills and create a supportive community.

### Musical Theatre Conservatory

An intensive ten-week professional training program in Acting, Directing and Choreography where apprentices work and train with top-level New York directors, choreographers and composers during Barrington Stage's summer season from June - August.

### Professional Internship Program

Professional paid internships are offered to college students and recent graduates interested in pursuing careers in theatre. Interns work with award-winning theatre professionals while spending a summer in the thriving theatre culture of the Berkshires.

### Youth Theatre

Now in its 22nd year, Youth Theatre is designed to extend the professionalism of our Mainstage to local youth. Under a professional director and choreographer, students mount a full-scale musical theatre production that is presented 7-8 times a week for a 3 week run. The Youth Theatre program teaches discipline and spontaneity, and provides an opportunity for Berkshire youth who are passionate about the arts to receive professional training and mentorship.

### KidsAct! & TeensAct!

A multi-disciplinary theatre arts program in which students are engaged in the creative and collaborative process of writing, rehearsing and performing their own original plays and musicals. KidsAct! (7-10) and TeensAct! (11-14) focus on individualized attention and coaching, culminating with a special performance at BSC. These programs are a training ground for future performing arts professionals. Students learn all aspects of theatre and what it takes to create quality productions.

### Student Matinee/School Residency Program

Junior high and high school students have the opportunity to participate in a thematic in-school workshop with a teaching artist and then attend a play and talkback with the cast and creative team.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

about any of our education programs, please visit:  
<https://barringtonstageco.org/education-bsc/>.

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