

"Cat" proves to be a hot performance

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The thick heat moves across the lavish bedroom and the breeze from the large open veranda seems to have little effect on the interior. The humid feel crawls beyond the stage, into the audience.

It's not only the July sun that is making things sticky and crowded, but also a family that is desperately trying to pull together and further apart at the same time.

Things are hot, and Maggie is feeling like a cat on a hot tin roof. Tennessee Williams' "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is the latest production by the CCC drama department. Because it is set in the Mississippi Delta in the early 1950's, the audience is able to peek in on some of the sufferings and pains of a time and place foreign to most of us.

Maggie the Cat (Danielle Turley) immediately warms up the stage with her sprawls and graceful sleekness about the room and bed. Turley carries a long southern drawl and a sensual pout that brings Maggie some sympathy from the audience, but not Brick (Jayson Shanafelt), her husband, who is more interested in liquor than any romance or conversation with the pleading Maggie. Shanafelt plays the part as cool as his Scotch on the rocks, with his slow staggering from the bed to the liquor cabinet, speaking in a calm tone.

While Maggie expresses all her needs, dreams and complaints, Brick remains mostly quiet and somber, with something much heavier on his mind. It's not until later that Brick is opened up through much prying and force of Big Daddy (Joseph Erickson). Erickson brings real anger and roughness to the stage, entering with a roaring voice and biting lines. He is described as a clenched fist that has held for twenty years and Erickson makes the anger felt throughout the crowd. Big Daddy represents honesty more than anything, as sour as it may be to the characters that are putting on a shallow performance for him in desperate attempts to show who is more deserving and loving. They hope to prove this in return for his land and wealth that approaches as quickly as his death from cancer.

This plan is most brilliantly executed by Mae (Ina Strauss). Strauss plays the part perfectly, with a cold southern elegance and a superficial attitude of gleaming smiles to Big Daddy and Big Mama and her converse envy and hate, which she throws casually at Maggie. Strauss makes alive the disgust that Big Daddy is so fervently fed up with.

Mae's husband, Gooper (Sigfried Seeliger) is exactly what the name implies. Seeliger plays him well with humorous face expressions, and his puffing cigar along with one-line cracks that add laughter to the heated situation.

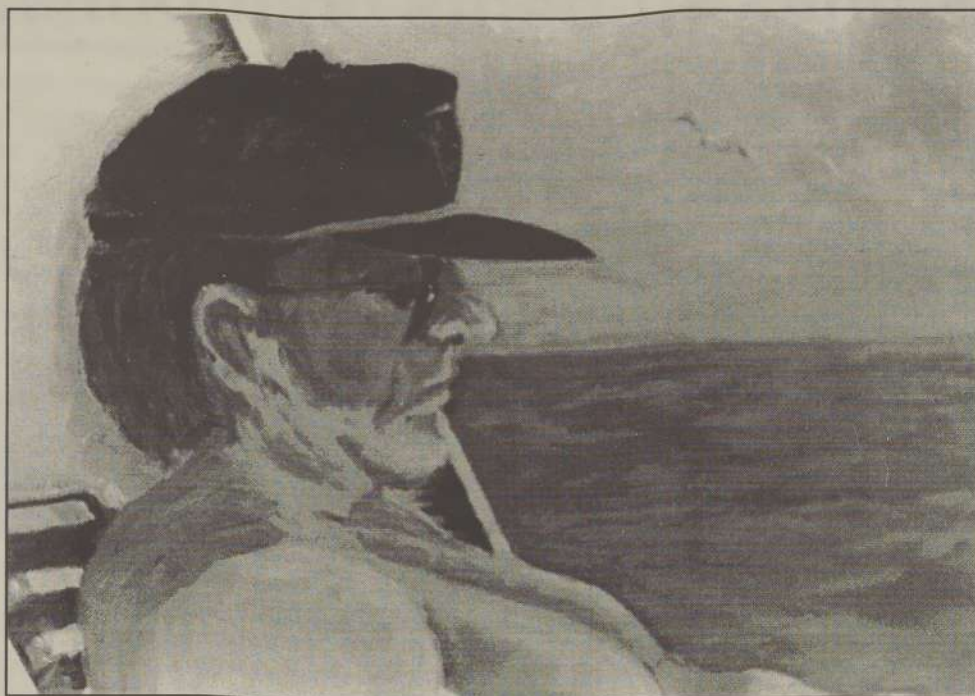
The big surprise of all, though is Big Mama (Maggie Chapin) who enters, bouncing, with a loud voice to match her big body. Chapin brings energy into the play with her cheery portrayal of optimism, however innocent and shallow it may be in the dysfunctional family.

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is heavy with memorable and pondering lines, many provided by Big Daddy through his shouts and wails and later as advice to Brick with his direction less life and alcoholism. Another strong scene is Big Daddy's bitter scorn for Big Mama, which is soaked with southern passion and regrets.

The play continues to build up slowly as weaknesses rise to the surface; and long bottled feelings and desires are finally expressed and fought out in a circus of events with boisterous children, fireworks, a preacher, and a doctor. All add to the cleverness and wit that make "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" move as smoothly as the Mississippi River.

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is dramatic and runs like poetry. The message and ideas of Williams are well expressed by the cast that lingers like thick sticky heat in the audience's minds.

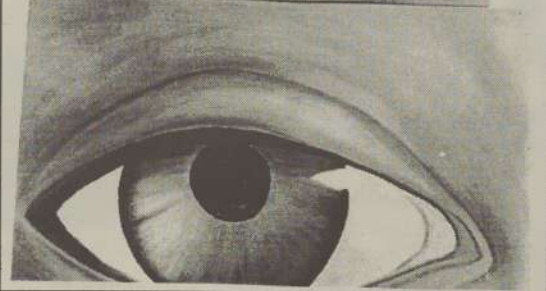
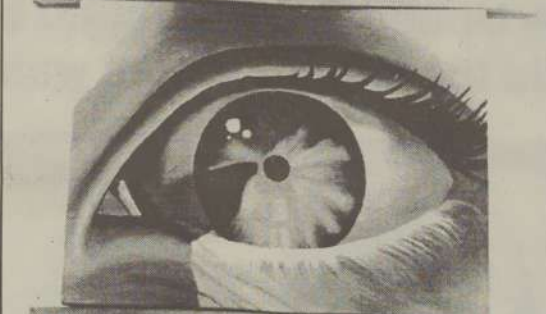
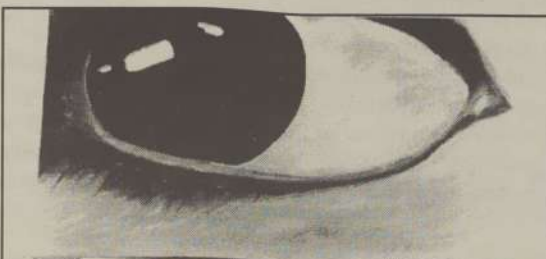
The play opens Feb. 26 at 8 p.m. Other nights include Feb. 27-28 at 8 p.m. and March 6-7 at 8 p.m. March 8 at 2:30 p.m. in the McLoughlin Hall Theater. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$3 for students and free for seniors who make reservations. Make reservations by calling 657-6958, ext. 2356.



Art by Gary Richardson

JARED BEZZANT / Clackamas Print

Students have their art on display in the Pauling Gallery until March 20. Here are just a few of the many excellent works.



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ALEX MAHAN / Clackamas Print



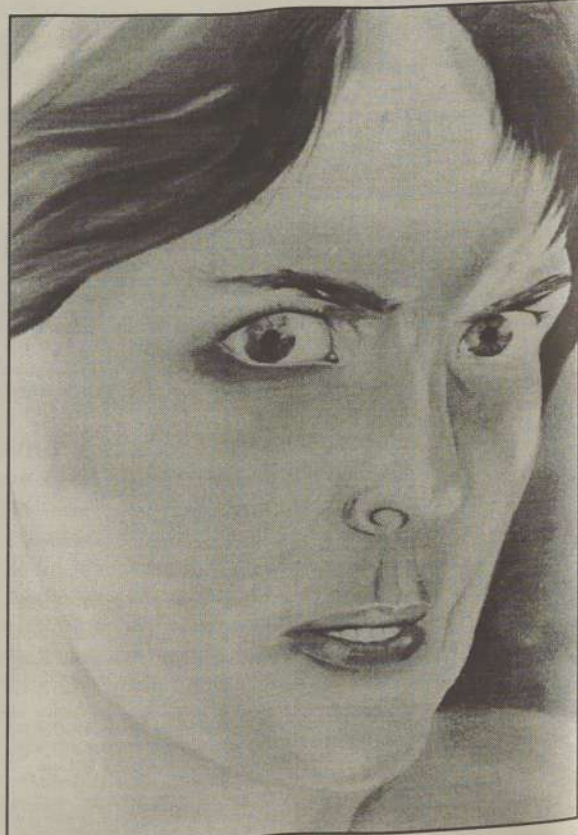
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Eyes from top to bottom: Linda Hagstrom, Julia Nunn, Mary Alexander
Top right: Artwork by Pat Hedahl
Right: Sunflowers by Shireen Mackeson



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Above: Sculpture by Julie Larson
Right: Painting by Robert Suzuki



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