

'The Glass Menagerie' slays

THEATER STUDENTS STAGE 1944 PLAY THAT MADE TENNESSEE WILLIAMS FAMOUS

BY VICTORIA TINKER



Amanda and her children, Tom and Laura, live in a small beehive-like apartment in St. Louis that faces an alley and is entered by a fire escape. The year is 1930, and this is Tom's memory.

"The Glass Menagerie," written by Tennessee Williams, opened Thursday, Nov. 10 at Clackamas Community College in the Niemeyer Center. The play is directed by James Eikrem, scenic and lighting design is by Christopher Whitten, and costume design was by Alva Bradford.

"It's a memory play, and in most memories, nothing's too square," said Whitten.

The set of "The Glass Menagerie" was created so that it can change just as quickly as the memories do.

There are two different scenes—the front living space of the apartment and the alley way with the fire escape. Instead of changing sets everytime the memory changes, Whitten decided to make the alley way part of the stage right curtain.

Whitten designed the screens so that the wallpaper can change easily. It's projected through the back of the screen so it doesn't show on the actors.

In this play, we see some new faces and some old faces. Nancy Nye, a community member who plays Amanda in "The Glass Menagerie," starred in "Urinetown" last spring.

"My favorite part about the play is the language. It's a really lyrical play," said Nye.

I found this to be true. The language was unique.

"Oh! I baptized myself a little," said Amanda. The character was sitting on the couch trying to have a casual conversation when she spilled some of her drink on her shirt. It's quirky, funny things like this that you'll get the chance to appreciate too in this wonderful play.

Rachel Polley, who plays Laura, has been in two other plays, but said that this is her first big production.

There's quite a bit of time that Laura

was on stage without any lines. She was just there and I started to notice her more, wondering what she was thinking of as she stood there without a word to say, perfectly in character.

Polley said, "Usually when that's happening, I'm listening to the other character. Instead of just being there and waiting for your line, you have to actually listen to what the other character is saying and react to it."

The director said there's more to come.

"It's a classic," said Eikrem. "The whole season is built on classics of American theater."

Fall term starts off with a small play, which switches to a larger play during winter term, then finishes with a big musical spring term.

According to Eikrem, we can look forward to more genuine, non-cynical plays like "The Glass Menagerie" throughout the 2016-2017 school year.

***"It's a memory play,
and in most memories,
nothing's too square,"
— Christopher Whitten***

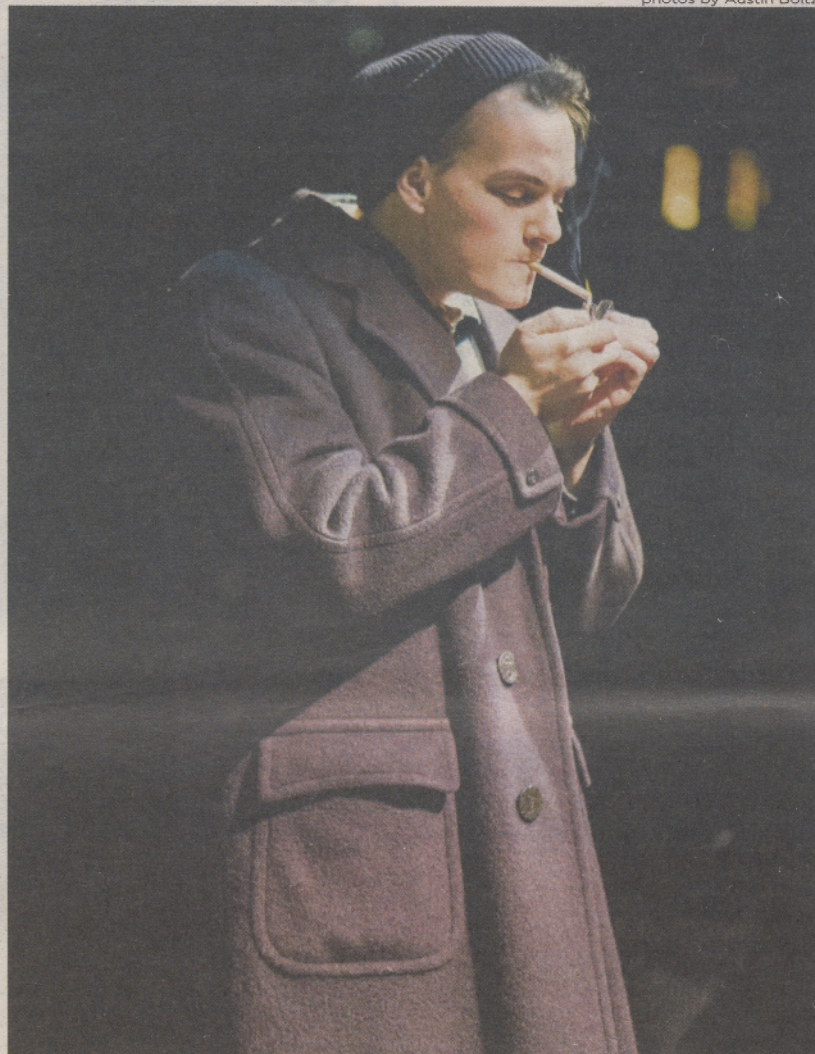
Although this play has a small cast including a mother, Amanda, her children, Tom and Laura and one scene with a gentleman caller, these four actors rule the stage.

This play is intense, funny and heartbreaking. It's better than going to the movies.

"The audience for live theater performances is the final character in any play," said Eikrem. "If we don't have the audience out there watching these plays, there's really no reason to be doing them."

The last chance to see "The Glass Menagerie" is Sun. Nov. 20. Tickets are \$11 for adults, \$9 for seniors and \$5 for students.

photos by Austin Boltz



Above: Billy McLendon begins the play as the narrator, explaining the story while smoking a cigarette.

Below: Nancy Nye, left, and Rachel Polley embrace in a scene.