Cat on a Hot Tin Roof: 60 Years of American Dialogue on Sex, Gender, and the Nuclear Family

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Abstract
This thesis is a two-part work. Its components, a written paper and a one-night symposium/film screening event entitled Tennessee Williams: Gender Play in 2015 and Beyond, have been closely coordinated with my dramaturgical research for the February 2015 University of Massachusetts Amherst Department of Theater production of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. The written inquiry is structured around a chronological, selected American production history of Cat; this history, rendered in a series of three case studies, will (1) synthesize preexisting analyses of Cat's dramaturgical profile, its impact on American theater, and its position in Williams's oeuvre; and (2) examine the interplay between this body of scholarship's primary foci (e.g., gender, sexual identity, and family dysfunction) and the evolving cultural climate in which its subject, Cat, is perennially reinterpreted and restaged. In other words, my thesis reframes Cat as a series of inherently American—and potentially unanswerable—questions posed by Williams to his viewers; it then investigates the artistic and critical responses generated by sixty years of public engagement, or “dialogue,” with those questions. Ultimately, each case study will illustrate my central premise: that the value of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof lies in its ability to resonate, both in production design and reception, with the social, sexual, and domestic challenges of the period in which it is produced.

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On a steamy night in Mississippi, a Southern family gather at their cotton plantation to celebrate Big Daddy’s birthday. The scorching heat is almost as oppressive as the lies they tell. Brick and Maggie dance round the secrets and sexual tensions that threaten to destroy their marriage. To pick your own seats for Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at Apollo Theatre simply find the performances you’d like to see from the listings below and you’ll be given the option. ATG TheatreCard: Want to get closer to everything you love about the theatre? Introducing TheatreCard Classic and TheatreCard Plus: our members’ clubs. With prices starting from just £35 a year, why not become a TheatreCard member today? Join Theatre Card More Info. TheatreCard Benefits include