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#### Theater

Category: Theater

#### MILK TRAIN stops at Artscape



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By Marcel Meyer

Tennessee Williams' classic drama *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* comes to Artscape this October directly from the 8th Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theatre Festival in the USA.

Described as an allegory and a 'sophisticated fairy tale', *Milk Train* takes a look at the final two days in the life of ageing beauty, Flora "Sissy" Goforth, the much-married, now-widowed millionaires, whose last exotic summer is consumed with an effort to dictate her memoirs before she expires – a Mediterranean summer disturbingly interrupted by the appearance of a handsome young poet, known to play companion to wealthy old women as they near death.

Williams is well-known for writing great parts for women and Sissy Goforth is one of his most fascinating and formidable creations. Acclaimed stage and screen actress, Jennifer Steyn stars as Goforth with Marcel Meyer as the poet, Chris Flanders and Nicholas Dallas as the Witch of Capri. Newcomer, and winner of this year's Fleur du Cap for most Promising student, Roelof Storm, plays Goforth's secretary Blackie. Multiple award-winning director/designer, Fred Abrahamse is at the helm.

Author of classics like *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Night of the Iguana* – Tennessee Williams is regarded as America's greatest playwright. *Milk Train* premiered on Broadway in 1963 and was filmed in 1968 under the title *Boom!* starring Dame Elizabeth Taylor as Sissy, Richard Burton as Chris Flanders and Sir Noël Coward as the Witch of Capri.

In 2012 Artscape and Abrahamse & Meyer scored a huge hit in both the USA and South Africa with their award winning production of Williams' *Kingdom of Earth*.

David Kaplan, curator of the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theatre Festival explains: "With their marvelous production last year of Tennessee Williams' *Kingdom of Earth*, Abrahamse Meyer Productions revealed the sophistication of the South African theatre to America, where it is practically unknown. Our audiences – and the other festival artists from around the world – were startled and moved by the care and insight this South African company brought to a very American play, revealing its universality, and at the same time, flooring us with the precision of the Mississippi accents and the loving details of American bad taste. Staging Williams' *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* has Abrahamse Meyer pursuing Williams' vision of theater past kitchen-sink realism to poetry onstage: a South African fulfillment of an American author's lifework."

Tennessee Williams incorporated elements of classical Japanese theatre into the structure of *Milk Train* because he felt the play would "come off better the further it is removed from conventional theatre". This has afforded multiple-award winning design team – Fred Abrahamse (set & lighting), Marcel Meyer (costumes) and composer Charl-Johan Lingenfelder the chance to create a visually striking production of this dense and poetic play.

Jef Hall-Flavin, Executive Director of the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theatre Festival, notes that "With distance comes perspective. Sometimes Americans can't see Williams' lesser-known works for their true value because the plays become trapped in a kind of nostalgic ideal. Abrahamse-Meyer's perspective is an ideal way to crack open *Milk Train*. Though we share a common language, South African cultural influences are wildly foreign to American sensibilities – which is exactly what our audiences need to shake them awake. Tennessee Williams' late work is a vast arsenal of variations in dramatic form, subject, narrative and character. This company from across the globe has taught us how to look at our own plays again, and to trust them."

*Milk Train* is an ideal opportunity for local audiences to see a rarely performed play by one of the world's greatest playwrights in a production that the local press has described as "ravishing."



Want to look fabulous ALL the time?



**IN A NUTSHELL**  
THE MILK TRAIN DOESN'T STOP HERE ANYMORE by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS



Presented by ARTSCAPE in association with ABRAHAMSE & MEYER PRODUCTIONS

Direction/Set & Lighting Design: Fred Abrahamse  
Costume Design: Marcel Meyer  
Original Score: Charl-Johan Lingenfelder

Cast:

Flora "Sissy" Goforth: Jennifer Steyn  
Christopher Flanders: Marcel Meyer  
The Witch of Capri: Nicholas Dallas  
Frances Black: Roelof Storm

Dates: 4 – 20 October 2013

Venue: Artscape ARENA

Ticket price: R70 – R120

Booking: Computicket or Artscape-Dial-A-Seat

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