

# **Berkshire Fine Arts – Charles Giuliano**

## **Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival**

**Tenn Annual Festival September 24 to 27**

**By: Tenn - Jun 03, 2015**





Jennifer Steyn and Marcel Meyer in *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, 2013 photo by Josh Andrus.

Announcing the program for Year TENN, Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival (TW Fest), **Co-founder and Curator David Kaplan** said,

"This year's festival celebrates what happened to Tennessee Williams in Provincetown during the last ten years: his plays got performed here. We've rethought his classics, and rethought the plays he wrote that had been ignored or dismissed. The mantra that Williams had lost his mojo was replaced with cheers at the world premieres in P'town of *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Madame LeMonde* (TW Fest 2009) and *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (TW Fest 2013). So we're bringing those two productions back for our audiences to cheer in 2015, along with eight other hits and variations."

In Year TENN, the TW Fest brings back the original casts of some of its greatest hits, revisits landmark productions performed in new ways and introduces new works. New works include a world premiere of a short late play by Williams and a reading of a new play by **John Guare**, the author of *Six Degrees of Separation*, which is based on a Williams short story.

Since 2006, the TW Fest has presented American and international productions of Williams' classics, little known works by Williams and his avant-garde experiments, along with new works inspired by Williams. Over the four-day festival, audiences enjoy an immersive experience of drama, music, dance, and talks with performing artists and scholars in the charming seaside village considered one of the most beautiful small towns in America.

In its first decade, the TW Festival has premiered ten new works by Tennessee Williams, and many Festival productions have travelled across the world – from New Orleans to New Zealand. “Audiences in major cities and festivals have gotten a fresh look at Tennessee Williams through our productions,” said **Jef Hall Flavin, executive producer of the TW Fest**. “We have inspired thousands of people with innovative stagings, humble and elaborate, to think beyond “Streetcar,” and to realize that Williams’ was always -- and remains -- an experimental writer with the power of a poet.”

The 2015 Program for **Year TENN: A Decade of Tennessee Williams in Provincetown** includes:

### **Return of Original Cast Productions**

***The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*** - an award-winning production from Meyer Abrahamse Productions of South Africa

***The Remarkable Rooming House of Madame LeMonde*** - Antic physical comedy from the Beau Jest Moving Theatre of Boston

***Tennessee Williams: Words and Music*** - Songs from Williams’ plays, featuring Broadway singer and actor **Alison Fraser**

### **Landmark Productions Revisited**

***The Parade*** - the world premiere that began the Festival in 2006, performed in 2015 on the beach

***The Day on Which a Man Dies*** - a powerful play inspired by the death of Jackson Pollock and the work of Yukio Mishima

***The Road to Paradise*** - a dance piece incorporating Williams’ love letters, first seen in 2006

### **New Productions**

***Aimez -Vous Ionesco?*** - a World Premiere of a Tennessee Williams one-act

***Suddenly Last Summer*** - a well-known classic by Tennessee Williams in a new production from Mississippi

***The Liberation of Colette Simple*** - a musical from London, based on the Williams one-act *The Case of the Crushed Petunias*

***More Stars Than There Are In Heaven*** - a staged reading of a new play by John Guare, based on a short story by Williams

***Tenn @ Town Hall*** - an anthology of ten years of world premieres of plays written by Tennessee Williams – and other writers.

### **More information about the Productions:**

#### **Returning Productions**

#### **\* *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore***

First shown at the TW Festival in 2013, this brilliant interpretation by Cape Town’s **Meyer Abrahamse Productions** went on to be nominated for many awards in South Africa.

Sissy Goforth, a legendary diva (and former Ziegfeld showgirl) is dictating her memoirs atop the mountain of her Italian Riviera estate when the Angel of Death drops in to make love to her. This highlight of TW Fest 2013, returns under the direction of **Fred Abrahamse**. **Jennifer Steyn** rules in her best actress award winning role as Sissy; **Marcel Meyer** soars as the Angel of Death.

*...this production of the text makes for an engrossing night at the theatre, all the more so because of a magnificent performance by Jennifer Steyn, who plays the central role of Flora "Sissy" Goforth, a character that - taken on its own terms - ranks right up there with Blanche du Bois and Maggie the Cat.* -Broadway World

#### **\* *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Madame LeMonde***

Belly-laugh and cutting humor lace a tea party between old prep school chums madder than any hatters in Wonderland. The late play by Williams, set in a London garret was published while he was alive in a limited edition. The TW Fest 2009 world premiere production was celebrated in Boston and returns with the original cast from the **Beau Jest Moving Theater**, which is celebrating its 31st Anniversary this year under the direction of **Davis Robinson**.

*... required viewing for those who love Williams in all of his artistic manifestations, and of interest to theatergoers who relish a first-rate theatrical imagination applied to the mordantly unusual."*  
-Boston's TheArtFuse

**\* Tennessee Williams: Words & Music**

Broadway's **Alison Fraser** (*Romance/Romance, The Secret Garden*) blazes in a jewel box of pop songs from Tennessee Williams' plays, along with the original dialog. **The Gentleman Callers Jazz Band**, some from the 2011 TW Fest lovefest under the baton of piano virtuoso **Allison Leyton-Brown**, will be tearing down the house. Compiled and directed by David Kaplan. The critically acclaimed recording was released by Ghostlight Records in 2014.

*"... a wonderful homage to a tragic genius. Fraser literally conducts a séance with her voice, reaching out to Williams across the decades. At times it feels as though he's responding ..."*  
-The San Francisco Bay Area Reporter

**Landmark Productions**

**\* The Parade**

This charming short play brought the Festival fame in the first year, when it presented the world premiere of Williams' life-affirming gay romance that he wrote in Provincetown in 1940. **Ben Berry**, who created the role of Don in the original 2006 production, is now the same age as the character he recreates in this revival, directed by TW Fest executive director, **Jef Hall-Flavin**, who co-directed the original with Eric Powell Holm. The otherworldly beauty of the Provincetown dunes where the play is set plays a major role, and that's where the 2015 production takes place.

*...The Parade is a document of what [Williams] later called that 'pivotal summer when I took sort of a crash course in growing up,' a chronicle of how he 'had finally come thoroughly out of the closet.'*  
- Randy Gener, The New York Times

**\* The Day on Which a Man Dies**

Paintings are created onstage and destroyed in Williams' "lost" fantasia on the death of **Jackson Pollock**, who Williams met in Provincetown in 1940. A dream team of the actors from **Meyer Abrahamse Productions'** South African actors from *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, will be under the direction of festival curator **David Kaplan** who directed the world premiere and brought the acclaimed Chicago production to PAAM for TW Fest 2009.

*The production's stylized edginess brings ... psychic traumas out in garish and explosive moments of excess that lap at the feet of the audience.* -The Chicago Tribune

**\* The Road to Paradise**

A dance of sailors, artist models, and a hopeful young writer was our first performance on the first day of our first year, a dance choreographed by **Carson Efirid** prompted by TW's heart on the sleeve love poetry written in 1940 Provincetown, shadowed by his heart-broken diary entries. Performed in 2006 inside the Cabral Wharf House, this year *The Road to Paradise* will be danced outside on the deck of the waterfront hotel, the **Boatslip Beach Club**.

**New Productions**

**\* Aimez -Vous Ionesco?**

As a lagniappe\* to *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Madame LeMonde*, the World Premiere of *Aimez Vous Ionesco* presents a yet madder tea party attended by a self-adoring ballet dancer. Williams

channels the great surrealist playwright Ionesco, whose love of language delighted and inspired Williams to create his own surreal fun.

*\* lagniappe /læn'jæp; noun, an unexpected treat, for example a 13th doughnut when buying a dozen*

**\* *Suddenly Last Summer***

Truth speaks to power in this 1950's Tennessee Williams thriller starring Festival favorites **Brenda Currin** as the imperious Mrs. Venable and **Beth Bartley** as the reckless Catherine Holly. The first production from the **Columbus, Mississippi Tennessee Williams Tribute** to come to Provincetown will be performed where the memorable staged reading with Dana Ivey was performed for TW Fest 2010. The play's director, **Augustin J Correro**, is Co-Artistic Director of the Tennessee Williams Theater Company of New Orleans. He also guides Festival audiences through our popular Williams 101.

**\* *The Liberation of Colette Simple***

From London, a vaudeville fantasy, with music by Vincent Guibert, relays the tale of a shopgirl who learns to live free. This is an adaptation of Williams' *The Case of the Crushed Petunias*, a delightful short play which was staged by **Patrick Falco** inside a storefront on Commercial Street for TW Fest 2009.

This London production from Spatfeather Theatre is performed by the original London cast and musicians, including **Nathalie Carrington** as Colette, and **Adam Byron** playing, among other roles, a canary. Director **Matt Peover's** production, designed by **James Cotterill**, gives the impression of "ordinary small town-life wrapped in cotton-candy pink.

*Charming and disarming quirkiness* -TimeOut, London

**\* *More Stars Than There are in Heaven – A Staged Reading***

**John Guare**, the author of *Six Degrees of Separation* and *The House of Blue Leaves*, has written a new play based on the Tennessee Williams short story "The Mattress by the Tomato Patch." The story and the play are biographical: about Williams' writing for MGM while learning about life from his Marxist land-lady.

This reading is produced by **Playhouse Creatures Theatre Company** of New York City.

Cosmin Chivu, who will be directing this reading, also directed the Festival's 2013 production of *The Mutilated* with Mink Stole and Penny Arcade that went on to New York to be nominated for a 2014 Drama League Nomination for Best Revival of a Play.

*"Naturalism is great for television and the small screen. Theatrical reality happens on a much higher plane. People on a stage are enormous, there to drive us crazy. I love actors who can do that."*  
-John Guare in a Paris Review Interview 1992.

**\* *Tenn @ Town Hall***

Tenn @ Town Hall presents readings from all ten of the Festival's world premieres of plays written by Williams. At this historic occasion the stage will echo with words from the sultry *Green Eyes*, the down and dirty *Madame Le Monde*, the heart-warming *Parade*, the bawdy *Dog Enchanted by the Divine View*, the mini-tragedy of *The Enemy: Time*, the road-tripping *Once in a Lifetime*, the heroic *Sun Burst*, the revolutionary *Pronoun I*, the stylish *Curtains for the Gentleman*, and the myth-bending *American Gothic*. Threaded throughout will be readings from the TW Fest premieres inspired by Williams' writing. This year's *More Stars Than There are in Heaven* by John Guare joins Wendy Kesselman's *The Foggy Foggy Dew* and *The Shell Collection*, along with *Gift of an Orange* by Charlene A Donaghy, and *Rancho Pancho* by Greg Barrios. Featuring Irene Glezos and Jeremy Lawrence, among other TW Fest superstars, with music from George Maurer, composer of *Autumn Song*, the evening is compiled and directed by Festival executive director Jef Hall-Flavin.

**Expanding the Understanding of Tennessee Williams**

The TW Fest also furthers the understanding of America's great playwright through its **Tennessee Williams Institute (TWI) and Williams 101 talks**

Through TWI, the Festival offers an unmatched range of performance and scholarship all in one place, a unique opportunity for academic study in an artistic context in a graduate-level immersion course for students. In addition to seeing a wide array of performances from across the globe, TWI students participate in a series of private seminars with Williams scholars that relate directly to the productions being presented.

In Williams 101, a 60 minute talk offered each day of the Festival, scholar and director **Augustin Correro** enlightens theater-goers about what Williams wrote and why, from smash hits on Broadway to outrages for the stage that were way ahead of their time. He connects his work to his life and legacy, from his hometown in the Mississippi Delta, to St. Louis, New Orleans, Hollywood, New York and, of course, to Provincetown. A rotating cast of festival artists and Williams Institute scholars, join Correro to offer their personal views on the work.

*Attached are images of Jennifer Steyn and Marcel Meyer in **The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore**; Brenda Currin in **Suddenly Last Summer**.*

#### **About Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival:**

The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival was founded in 2006 in the birthplace of American Modern Theater where Williams worked on many of his major plays during the 1940s. The TW Festival is the nation's largest performing arts festival dedicated to celebrating and expanding the understanding of America's great playwright. Theater artists from around the globe perform classic and innovative productions to celebrate Williams' enduring influence in the 21st Century. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Festival will take place in various venues in the seaside village of Provincetown from Thursday, September 24 through Sunday, September 27, 2015. For more visit [www.twptown.org](http://www.twptown.org) and **Facebook**

*The Festival is funded in part by the Provincetown Tourism Fund and Provincetown Cultural Council and presented by the Crown and Anchor.*

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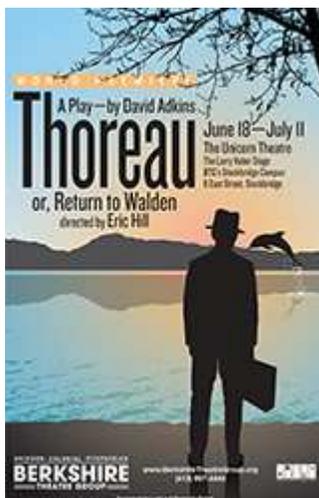
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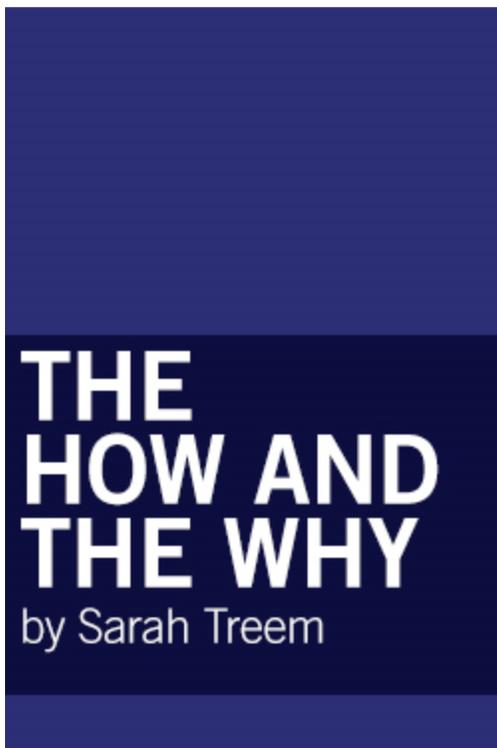
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