



# Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival Announces Season

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Tennessee Williams knew the drama of waiting, both in his life and in his writing, making his plays richer, sadder, and more joyous. His insights into waiting inspire the theme of Wishful Thinking for the 13th Annual Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival.

The 2018 lineup of shows features five

Tennessee Williams plays alongside works by Federico García Lorca, Anton Chekhov, and Samuel Beckett, produced and performed by artists from New York City, Philadelphia, Florida, Michigan, Texas, and beyond.

This year's line-up features the world premiere of Talisman Roses, a Williams one-act that Tom, not yet Tennessee, was moved to write after a visit to his older sister Rose in a state psychiatric ward. Never before seen on stage, this tender and vivid piece about the fragility of the mind is staged by distinguished actor and director Marsha Mason and produced by The Collective NY.

Roses feature prominently in Festival shows this year, including in The Rose Tattoo - one of Williams' most passionate and romantic comedies, starring Festival favorite Irene Glezos and directed by Dana Greenfield - and in Doña Rosita the Spinster, Lorca's lyrical final play about an artless young woman who waits in Spain for her beloved to return from Argentina, in a production directed by Festival Curator David Kaplan in collaboration with Texas Tech University.

This year's program also includes: Chekhov's Uncle Vanya in a fresh translation by John Freedman of the Moscow Times, produced as an immersive and intimate site-specific show by Arb Arts from Ann Arbor, Michigan and directed by Katherine Mendeloff; an imaginative rendering of the Beckett novella Company by Lane Savadove and Philadelphia's EgoPo, who produced the 2016 Festival hit The Hairy Ape, directed by Brenna Geffers; an adaptation by Geffers of a wild new comic book by Mark Russell, The Snagglepuss Chronicles, which reimagines the classic Hanna-Barbera cartoon character as a closeted Southern playwright living in New York City; and a new performance piece by Geffers called Menagerie of Angels, in which Philadelphia's Die-Cast ensemble (last year's Pericles) leads audiences through a series of haunted encounters with figures from Tennessee Williams' dreams.

Also this year: a production from Jeff Glickman and the Pensacola Little Theatre of the Williams drama Will Mr. Merriwether Return From Memphis? that blends fantasy and reality into a colorful ghost story; and a dark comedy from New York City called Some Problems for the Moose Lodge that skewers family, religion, aging, and madness in a way only Williams can. Directed by Rory Pelsue and produced by The Collective NY, Some Problems for the Moose Lodge is paired with the Williams play Steps Must Be Gentle, a fantasia about the death and afterlife of the poet Hart Crane.

The Festival also features parties, post-show mixers, educational classes, and exclusive donor events throughout the four-day celebration.

The drama of anticipation inspires this year's programming, says Kaplan. "We are all, in America and around the world, waiting for something to happen," he says. "We don't know what it is, but we can feel something is coming. Does waiting unsettle us? Does it paralyze our will to act? Does it give us hope, or cause for despair?"

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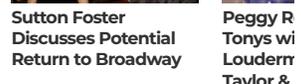
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After last year's globe-trotting season, which paired Williams plays with works by Shakespeare, Festival Board President Patrick Falco says he is intrigued to see audiences and artists turn inward this year. "These beautiful plays remind us how much of reality we build for ourselves, and of the power our own stories have over us," he says. "Even the simple act of waiting is full of discovery."

The program includes:

Plays by [Tennessee Williams](#):

#### THE ROSE TATTOO

Romantic Comedy

directed by Dana Greenfield

featuring Irene Glezos

Festival star Irene Glezos explodes as the Sicilian widow Serafina in this luscious Williams fable of loss, faith, and rebirth.

After the fiery death of her husband, Serafina, the village seamstress, shuts herself in her cottage and makes an altar of his ashes. But Serafina has, as she says "A wild thing in the house" - her 17-year-old daughter Rosa delle Rose.

Set in a close-knit Sicilian-American enclave on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, The Rose Tattoo is arguably Williams' most joyful play, which The New York Times calls "an intoxicating fairy tale for grown-ups."

Festival favorite Irene Glezos (Orpheus Descending, 2010 and 2011; In the Summer House, 2013 and 2014) returns in a tour-de-force as Serafina. The Festival production comes from New York City and is directed by Dana Greenfield.

#### TALISMAN ROSES

World Premiere

The Collective NY / New York, New York

directed by [Marsha Mason](#)

[Tennessee Williams](#) imagines flowers might restore a crushed soul in this unpublished one-act, performed for the first time under the direction of distinguished actress and director [Marsha Mason](#).

[Tom Williams](#), not yet "Tennessee," wrote Talisman Roses as a student at the University of Iowa. Set in a suburb of St. Louis, the play is rooted in Williams family sorrow. In 1937, his sister Rose suffered a mental collapse and was taken to a state asylum. When his mother took him to see her there, he was shocked that her windows were barred. Rose's doctors recommended shock: insulin shock, electric shock.

Williams wrote Talisman Roses that same year and named the play for the yellow and orange roses popular in the 1930s for bridal bouquets. The play presents a young woman in the same condition as Rose, released into the care of her family. Williams suggests the delivery of a bouquet could shock her back into enjoying her life. The play has never been published or performed.

Talisman Roses, the Festival's 12th world premiere of a [Tennessee Williams](#) play, will be directed by [Marsha Mason](#), who is herself from St. Louis and has been nominated four times for an Oscar. It will be performed alongside several other world premiere short plays on the theme of waiting by Charlene A. Donaghy (Gift of an Orange, 2012), and Festival newcomer Joseph Paprzycki.

The program is produced by The Collective NY, New York's ensemble of professional theater artists dedicated to the belief that the current conditions of commercialized theatre necessitate collective action.

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Pensacola Little Theatre / Pensacola, Florida

directed by Jeff Glickman

For every shadow there is a bright light shining in this high-spirited ghost story, a play with music and dance accompanied by banjo.

In Bethesda, Mississippi, as the 19th century turns into the 20th, the widowed landlady **Louise McBride** pines for her former flame and star boarder, Mr. Merriwether. He's a traveling salesman who went off to Memphis, and he's been gone so long he might be dead.

To distract herself, Louise holds séances with Nora, her neighbor with a potty mouth and a heart of gold. But the ghosts they conjure, among them the ghost of Vincent Van Gogh, seem as lost in death as Nora and Louise are in life.

The play is produced by the Pensacola Little Theatre - ongoing since 1936 - and directed by Jeff Glickman, whom Festival audiences will happily remember from his production of *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* (2010).

#### SOME PROBLEMS FOR THE MOOSE LODGE

Dark Comedy

with *STEPS MUST BE GENTLE*

The Collective NY / New York, NY

directed by Rory Pelsue

Williams' satirical wit is on full display in the haunted home of a flailing Mississippi family, where Gothic comedy is shadowed by hysteria - and hysterical laughter.

Cornelius and Bella McCorkle come home to Pascagoula after the funeral of their fun-loving gay son. To Bella's delight and Cornelius's derision, they discover their other son has moved into their house for a visit with his fiancée: a pregnant holy roller who speaks in tongues.

The McCorkle family tradition is to ward off disaster with denial. Attacks of guilt, fear, disappointment, hemorrhoids, over-eager police officers, and an arriving ambulance are countered by happy memories, the old boy network, and a peanut butter sandwich.

Moose Lodge is paired with *Steps Must Be Gentle*, Williams' fantasia about the poet Hart Crane. Both plays are directed by Rory Pelsue and produced by The Collective NY, New York's ensemble of professional theater artists dedicated to the belief that the current conditions of commercialized theatre necessitate collective action.

Plays by Other Writers:

#### DOÑA ROSITA THE SPINSTER

by Federico García Lorca

Poetic Drama

Texas Tech University / Lubbock, Texas

directed by **David Kaplan**

In the south of Spain, Rosita maintains a young girl's trusting heart for 25 years in the great Spanish poet/playwright Federico García Lorca's tender play with songs and music.

Beginning in the 1890s, Rosita waits in her **Rose Garden** for her fiancé to return, while her friends grow older and the world moves on into the era of automobiles and dirigibles.

The passage of time has consequences; hope brings beauty and pain. If ever there was a play most like **Tennessee Williams** but written by somebody else, this is it.

Doña Rosita the Spinster is directed by Festival Curator **David Kaplan**. In keeping with the childlike faith of Rosita and her family, the Festival production is cast with a talented ensemble of children and adults. Songs and dances turn the Wharf House at the Provincetown Marina into Andalucía, backed by a harpist and a guitarist playing classical Spanish music.

The production is a collaboration with Atkins Middle School of Lubbock, Texas, in association with Texas Tech University's School of Theatre and Dance. Doña Rosita is Texas Tech's third time producing for the Festival. Festival audiences will remember the "outrage for the stage" Kirche Küche Kinder (2016) and that Slapstick Tragedy The Gnädiges Fräulein (2017). Doña Rosita provides something very different: heart-on-the-sleeve hope.

UNCLE VANYA

by **Anton Chekhov**

Environmental Theater

Arb Arts / Ann Arbor, MI

directed by **Katherine Mendeloff**

A new translation of Chekhov's "scenes of country life" premieres in Provincetown as an immersive and intimate show. The audience is in the room where Vanya, the longtime caretaker of a quiet Russian country estate, sees his extended family arrive at the beginning of each season and depart at the end of it. This summer, a lot of people fall in love, and everyone waits for that wished-for love to be returned. Vacation ends, they are still wishing and waiting when Sonya says:

"We shall live through the long procession of days before us, and through the long evenings; we shall patiently bear the trials that fate imposes on us... We shall rest. We shall hear the angels. ...

In a new translation by Moscow Arts critic John Freedman, directed by **Katherine Mendeloff** (The Notebook of Trigorin, The Pink Bedroom, Summer at the Lake) and produced by Arb Arts from Ann Arbor, Michigan, the show uses live music and autumn roses to capture the sly humor and heartbreak of Chekhov's look at longing for what won't happen.

When he was asked who influenced him most, Williams said, "Chekhov! Chekhov! Chekhov!" - exclamation points included. The great Russian playwright is the master of our festival theme this year of waiting and wishful thinking.

COMPANY

by **Samuel Beckett**

Sensory Drama

EgoPo Classic Theater / Philadelphia, PA

directed by Lane Savadove

Sound, not sight, carries audiences through this inspired rendering of the voices one hears in one's head.

In one of Beckett's most powerful narratives, a body lies in the dark, listening to voices. Is the listener lying between life and death? Between sleeping and waking? Are the voices memories? Delusions? Dreams?

In this mind-opening production, you are that listener lying in the dark.

With eyes closed, lie comfortably on your back, and drift into another place. Past, present, and future spiral together in Beckett's haunting novella, adapted for a listening audience by Lane Savadove and EgoPo, the Philadelphia-based company who brought us Brenna Geffers' The Hairy Ape in 2016.

Savadove's staging of *Company* has been a singular theatrical experience of the work of the Irish playwright **Samuel Beckett** (best known for *Waiting for Godot*) for over two decades. Beckett concluded his novel, *The Unnamable*, with the words "I can't go on. I'll go on." The motto might sum up all the plays of this season.

Live violin music adds to the soundscape of a story that is not so much told as lived together. Leave your expectations at the door and enter a space where only you and the play exist.

Plus special events:

#### THE SNAGGLEPUSS CHRONICLES

Live Comic Book

by **Mark Russell**

adapted for the stage by Brenna Geffers

Hanna-Barbera's classic Saturday morning cartoon character is reborn as a droll 1950's Southern playwright in **Mark Russell's** wild new comic book miniseries, presented as a staged reading.

Broadway fame, star-studded parties, and confessional limo rides on down-low visits to the Stonewall Inn: this is the world of Snagglepuss in *Exit Stage Left: The Snagglepuss Chronicles*, the bestselling new series written by comic book mastermind **Mark Russell**.

Released by DC Entertainment in six issues through the first half of 2018, this re-imagining sees America's beloved pink mountain lion as - Heavens to Murgatroyd! - a discreetly gay playwright under attack by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Set during the "Red Scare" panic over communism, the idea began with **Mark Russell** sending tweets as Snagglepuss in the voice of **Tennessee Williams**. The resulting comic series, *Exit Stage Left*, featuring Mike Feehan and a rotating roster of artists, is a hard-hitting political satire of mid-century fame, shame, and social change.

Brenna Geffers, whose Philadelphia company Die-Cast staged last year's *Pericles*, teams up with **Mark Russell** for a special staged reading that brings Hanna-Barbera's lovable hero to life. Celebrity guest stars appear in cameos as Huckleberry Hound, **Marilyn Monroe**, **Lillian Hellman**, **Dorothy Parker**, and the Rosenbergs. Not to be missed, it is an unexpected comic understanding of Williams as iconic American.

#### MENAGERIE OF ANGELS

A First Draft

Die-Cast / Philadelphia, PA

created and directed by Brenna Geffers

This is an opportunity to be part of the birth of a new performance piece at the intersection of time, space, and longing.

*Menagerie of Angels* is the response by director Brenna Geffers (who staged *The Hairy Ape* and *Pericles*) to the challenge, given by Curator **David Kaplan**, to create something unexpected for Festival audiences. Inspired by the **Tennessee Williams** title *Something Cloudy, Something Clear* - and a quote from that play: "Life is all - it's just one time. It finally seems to all occur at one time."

The result is a braiding of ghost stories, where figures that might be out of **Tennessee Williams'** dreams are stuck between life and death: waiting, eternally present, eternally alone, eternally expectant.

This new work by Philadelphia's Die-Cast ensemble invites its audience to follow five tales that divert, lead astray, then weave together into an impossible love story. Audience members may follow the characters that interest them in the order that interests them. As characters overlap spatially, the audience can break off and follow different characters, or simply remain in one location and watch who passes through. As audiences roam, they become haunters themselves.

Menagerie of Angels is performed in the Wharf House at the Provincetown Marina - where time is a snapshot, a closed loop, and the space itself is a character.

Festival-goers will be the first to experience this site-specific piece from Die-Cast in residence in Provincetown, helping to write Menagerie of Angels' second draft.

WILLIAMS 101

Discussion

with Patricia Navarra and Katherine Mendeloff

This entertaining 90-minute lesson on Tennessee Williams and this year's plays will brief audiences on the playwrights, with handy insights about our lineup of performances.

Hosted by Patricia Navarra of Hofstra University and Katherine Mendeloff of the University of Michigan, Williams 101 is the perfect opportunity to brush up on your Tennessee Williams and discover how his works have shaped this year's theme of waiting.

With brief, informative backgrounds on this year's playwrights, the discussion will prime your pump for a weekend of theater. Peppered with Festival artists, Williams 101 provides audience members with practical insights into the thematic through-lines of the Festival lineup.

About the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival

The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival was founded in 2006 in Provincetown - the birthplace of modern American 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 an understanding of the full breadth of the work of America's great playwright. Each year, theater artists from around the globe perform classic and innovative productions to celebrate Williams' enduring influence in the 21st century, hosted by venues throughout the seaside village. For more details, visit twptown.org and follow the Festival on Facebook.

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