

# out of my head | Tennessee Williams' best, 'Streetcar' opening tonight

By Robert Thurber

Tennessee Williams' most sensuous and moving drama, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, will be staged at 8 p.m. tonight through May 1, as the final production of the UNL Theater's so-called "all-American" season.

After its initial performance in New York in 1947, *Streetcar* was unanimously hailed by critics and audience alike as best play of the year. Subsequently it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Drama Critics' Circle Award and established Williams' reputation as America's leading playwright.

William R. Morgan, professor of speech and dramatic arts and director of the Howell production, called *Street-*

*car Williams' "fullest play... a masterpiece. It would almost be absurd to leave it off an all-American program."*

The popularity of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, according to an article by Williams in the New York Times, is caused by its female protagonist, Blanche Dubois, and her relationship with Stanley Kowalski.

Blanche and Stanley, have become synonymous with two distinct styles of sexuality; Blanche the delicate lily-like creature, and Stanley the driving essence of masculinity.

Stanley, played by UNL graduate George Hansen of Lincoln, is a crude, animalistic character driven by baser needs. Blanche, the waning woman who always depends on the kindness of others, is played by theater arts graduate student Paula Redinger of Ralston.

Other actors in the Howell presentation include: Lincolnites Susie Kozak, a freshman theater arts major, as Stella; Paul Baker, a graduate student in theater, as Steve; Eric Sorensen, a freshman in theater arts, as Mitch; and Omahan Suzy Wurtz, a junior theater major, as Eunice.

The play, set in the New Orleans' French Quarter, deals with the lives of lonely desperate people caught by their self-destructive actions. Although *Streetcar* is in description a tragedy, it is full of Williams' own special sense of humor, which has made his work, and especially *Streetcar*, so successful.

"We are trying to preserve the blend of realism and poetry evident throughout Williams' work," Morgan said.

*Streetcar*, originally called *The Poker Night*, was written in 1946 while Williams shared a flat with a friend in New Orleans. Williams has written that the situations and characters are based to a large degree on his experi-



Photo by Kevin Higley

Blanche Dubois, who "always depended on the kindness of strangers," is comforted by Stella Kowalski in the UNL production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Paula Redinger plays Blanche and Susie Kozak plays Stella.

ences and his relationships during those years. With *Streetcar* he has played these human emotions to their fullest.

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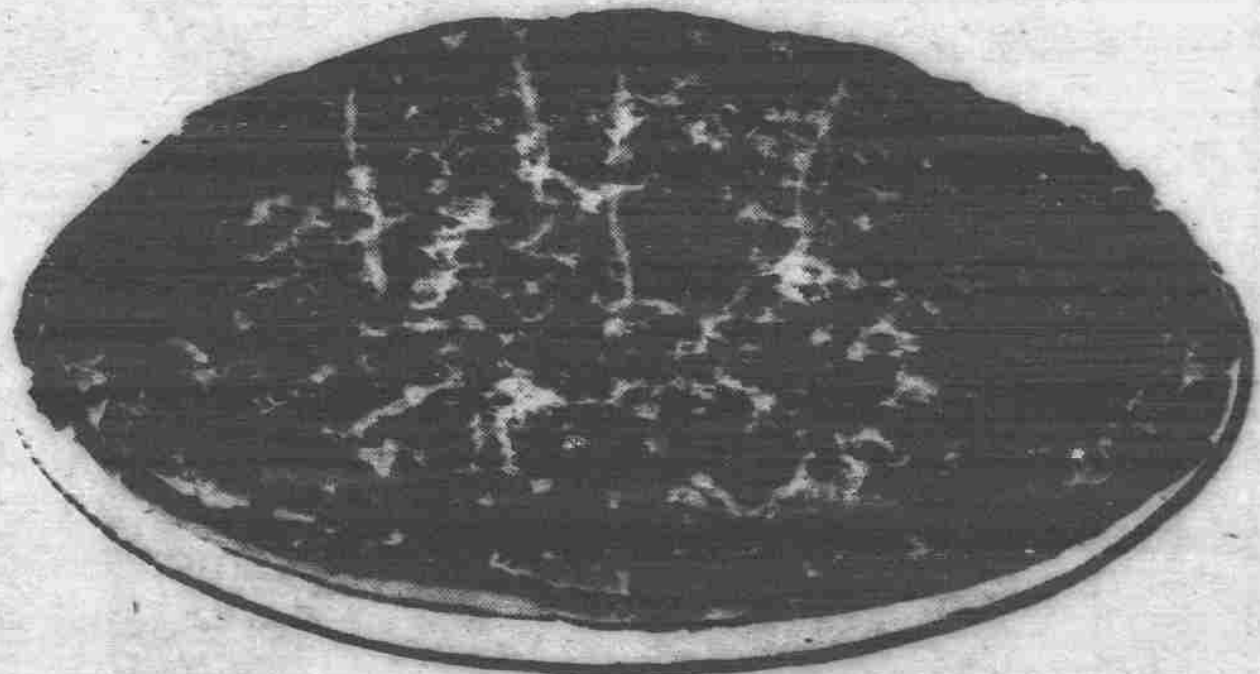
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