

Weekend Notes Review: A Streetcar Named Desire

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by Damsel Martin

I'm a freelance writer, blogger and animal wrangler living in Brisbane's western suburbs. Many of my stories offer great giveaways to readers - subscribe to hear about them first.

Event: 15/10/2016 - 12/11/2016

Take a right turn for the most challenging of destinations



A Streetcar Named Desire. Image courtesy La Boite Theatre Company.

With its steamy, subtropical climate, tendency towards hot, heavy rains, and general air of déshabillé, there are a lot of parallels between Brisbane and New Orleans, the setting for Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*. So this theatrical world seems wholly familiar to audiences viewing La Boite Theatre Company's current production of a timeless classic.

Performed in the round, giving audience members a delicious sense of being part of the action, the desperation, violence and lust which unfolds during La Boite's *A Streetcar Named Desire* is foreshadowed in the set-up of the stage. An unmade bed, a disorderly table, and a well stocked liquor cabinet in a small flat with a higgledy piggledy floor - all these elements create an uneasy sense of disorientation long before the key character Blanche DuBois (Bridie Carter) shows up with her suitcases.



Bridie Carter plays Blanche DuBois in A Streetcar Named Desire. Dylan Evans Photography. Image courtesy La Boite Theatre Company.

A Streetcar Named Desire explores the long, slow, unravelling of the key character Blanche, who has been forced to leave Mississippi after the loss of her family home to creditors. When she shows up at the house of her married, pregnant sister, Stella (Ngoc Phan), and Stella's husband Stanley Kowalski (Travis McMahon), a clash of cultures ensues. On the one hand, there are the Kowalski's coarse and drunken poker games, and on the other Blanche's tarnished airs and graces. Eventually, when Blanche's sad and sordid history comes to light, her suitor Mitch (Colin Smith) rejects her, ushering in the final, brutal events which seal her fate.

Carter is incandescent as the flirtatious, fallen woman Blanche, while Phan and McMahon also put in strong and wholly believable performances. They are ably supported by other cast members, including Steve (Alexander Forero), Eunice (Parmis Rose), and Pablo (Guy Webster).



Alexander Forero. Dylan Evans Photography. Image courtesy La Boite Theatre Company.

The domestic violence and mental health issues which unfold in *A Streetcar Named Desire* are just as relevant today as they were in 1948, when Williams won the Pulitzer Prize for drama. 'Ultimately I hope this work will affect audiences - stop them and make them think deeper and harder about these issues,' says director Todd MacDonald.



Parmis Rose. Dylan Evans Photography. Image courtesy La Boite Theatre Company,

Interested in seeing not one Pulitzer Prize winning drama, but two? Queensland Theatre and La Boite Theatre Company have a special offer in which you can see both Ayad Akhtar's drama *Disgraced*, together with Tennessee William's masterpiece, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for the combined price of \$90 (adults) or \$52 (youth). The offer expires at midnight on 4 November 2016 and conditions apply.