2010-11
HOT Season for Young People
Teacher Guidebook

The Glass Menagerie
Walnut Street Theatre

PHOTO BY MARK GARVIN

Tennessee Performing Arts Center
TPAC Education is made possible in part by the generous contributions, sponsorships, and in-kind gifts from the following corporations, foundations, government agencies, and other organizations.

AT&T
American Airlines
The Atticus Trust
Bank of America
Baulch Family Foundation
BMI
Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund
Brown-Forman
Cal IV Entertainment
Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation
Central Parking Corporation
Coca-Cola Bottling Co.
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
Corrections Corporation of America
The Danner Foundation
Davis-Kidd Bookellers Inc.
The Dell Foundation
Dollar General Corporation
Doubletree Hotel Downtown Nashville
Fidelity Offset, Inc.
First Tennessee Bank
Samuel M. Fleming Foundation
Patricia C. & Thomas F. Frist Designated Fund*
Gannett Foundation
Gaylord Entertainment Foundation
The Gibson Foundation
Landis B. Gullett Charitable Lead Annuity Trust
GroupXcel
HCA-Caring for the Community
Ingram Arts Support Fund*
Ingram Charitable Fund, Inc.*
Lipman Brothers, Inc.
Mapco Express/Delek US
Meharry Medical College
The Memorial Foundation
Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority
Miller & Martin, PLLC
Morton’s, The Steakhouse, Nashville
Nashville Predators Foundation
National Endowment for the Arts
Nissan North America, Inc.
NovaCopy
Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation
Pinnacle Financial Partners
The Premiere Event
Publix Super Markets Charities
Mary C. Ragland Foundation
The Rechter Family Fund*
Sheraton Nashville Downtown
South Arts
Irvin and Beverly Small Foundation
SunTrust Bank, Nashville
Earl Swensson Associates, Inc.
Target
The Tennessean
Green Power Switch®
Universal Music Group Nashville
U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management
Vanderbilt University
The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation
Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis
XMi Commercial Real Estate

* A fund of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

This performance is presented through arrangements made by Baylin Artists Management.

Special Thanks to:
The HCA Foundation on behalf of HCA and the TriStar Family of Hospitals
"The play’s the thing."
As in this quote from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, writers and performers have for centuries used the arts to expose human nature and mirror aspects of real life. In *Hamlet*’s play within a play and in *The Glass Menagerie*, the authors use drama to illuminate or tell the truth about an occurrence or situation. Tennessee Williams uses the device of the memory play as a way for the character and narrator Tom to tell the story of the Wingfield family and his ultimate decision to leave and break out on his own.

Although it is set in the 1930s, students will relate to *The Glass Menagerie* because the scenes depict true moments in family relationships with realistic conversation. The actors will relay family struggles that may be similar to those taking place within your students’ own living rooms and kitchens at home. They may relate to the mother giving “advice” on life and trying to make decisions for her children, or the sister’s feelings of awkwardness, or the brother’s desire to get away and follow his dreams. Whatever the personal connection may be, *The Glass Menagerie* never fails to move an audience.

This guidebook will give you information about the play, its author, set design, and the Walnut Street Theatre Company, as well as activities and discussion questions for you to use as you prepare students to come to TPAC and see *The Glass Menagerie* in February. We hope you will use this guidebook along with your own lesson plans as part of your comprehensive study unit so your students will have a meaningful and satisfying experience when they see the play live.

Language
Don’t let your students be surprised when they hear racial epithets and curse words during the performance. If you are not reading the entire play as a class before you attend the performance at TPAC, please take the time to read a few of the excerpts that include these elements. Prepare your students so they will be able to concentrate on the story and message of the play instead of on these brief occurrences.

A note from our Sponsor ~ Regions Bank

For over 125 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is – reaching over 25,000 students and teachers – some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.
NOTE to Teachers: The current production of Walnut Street Theatre’s The Glass Menagerie creates an interesting situation in which to tell the story. From the set designer, “The concept is that Tom has just come back to St Louis after his time with the merchant Marines; it is around 1945-46 when we start at the top of the play. He goes to a warehouse - possibly the one he worked at or a storage place in St Louis - to pick up some belongings: his sister’s, his mother’s, his own. Bill [the director] and I believe that 10 years have passed and the family is not together; possibly Tom’s mother, Amanda, has passed way, and Laura may be in a home or institutionalized. As Tom starts looking for things in the warehouse, he starts to open crates from the apartment and his past. The things that Tom begins to uncover and pull out of the crates trigger his past and the memories of what happened in the apartment when he was in St Louis ten years ago, 1934-1935.” For more notes from the set designer, go to page 12.

Synopsis (from Walnut Street Theatre’s study guide)

The Glass Menagerie is a memory play, and its action is drawn from the memories of the narrator, Tom Wingfield. Tom is a character in the play, which is set in St. Louis in 1937. He is an aspiring poet who toils in a shoe warehouse to support his mother, Amanda, and his sister, Laura. Mr. Wingfield, Tom and Laura’s father, ran off years ago and, except for one postcard, has not been heard from since.

Amanda, originally from a genteel Southern family, regales her children frequently with tales of her idyllic youth and the scores of suitors who once pursued her. She is disappointed that Laura, who wears a brace on her leg and is painfully shy, does not attract any gentlemen callers. She enrolls Laura in a business college, hoping that she will make her own and the family’s fortune through a business career. Weeks later, however, Amanda discovers that Laura’s crippling shyness has led her to drop out of the class secretly and spend her days wandering the city alone. Amanda then decides that Laura’s last hope must lie in marriage. Meanwhile, Tom, who loathes his warehouse job, finds escape in liquor, movies, and literature, much to his mother’s chagrin.

Amanda and Tom discuss Laura’s prospects, and Amanda asks Tom to keep an eye out for potential suitors at the warehouse. Tom selects Jim O’Connor, a casual friend, and invites him to dinner. Tom confides to Jim that he has used the money for his family’s electric bill to join the merchant marine and plans to leave his job and family in search of adventure. As dinner is ending, the lights go out as a consequence of the unpaid electric bill.

The characters light candles, and Amanda encourages Jim to entertain Laura in the living room while she and Tom clean up. Laura is at first paralyzed by Jim’s presence, but his warm and open behavior soon draws her out of her shell. Laura then ventures to show him her favorite glass animal, a unicorn. Jim dances with her, but in the process, he accidentally knocks over the unicorn, breaking off its horn. Laura is forgiving, noting that now the unicorn is a normal horse. Jim then kisses her, but he quickly draws back and apologizes, explaining that he was carried away by the moment and that he actually has a serious girlfriend. Resigned, Laura offers him the broken unicorn as a souvenir.

Amanda enters the living room, full of good cheer. Jim hastily explains that he must leave because of an appointment with his fiancée. Amanda sees him off warmly but, after he is gone, turns on Tom, who had not known that Jim was engaged. Amanda accuses Tom of being an inattentive, selfish dreamer and then throws herself into comforting Laura. From the fire escape outside of their apartment, Tom watches the two women and explains that, not long after Jim’s visit, he gets fired from his job and leaves Amanda and Laura behind. Years later, though he travels far, he finds that he is unable to leave behind guilty memories of Laura.
Tennessee Williams and The Glass Menagerie

The Glass Menagerie is often considered an autobiographical play. Read the following about Williams, and compare details of the play to the author's real life.

Tennessee Williams was born in Columbus, Mississippi, in 1911. The name given to him at birth was Thomas Lanier Williams III. He acquired the nickname Tennessee in college, when classmates began calling him that in honor of his Southern accent and his father’s home state. The Williams family had produced several illustrious politicians in the state of Tennessee, but Williams’ grandfather had squandered the family fortune.

Williams’ father, C.C. Williams, was a traveling salesman and a heavy drinker. Williams’ mother, Edwina, was a Mississippi clergyman’s daughter and prone to hysterical attacks. Until Williams was seven, he, his parents, his older sister, Rose, and his younger brother, Dakin, lived with Edwina’s parents in Mississippi. After that, the family moved to St. Louis. Once there, the family’s situation deteriorated. C.C.’s drinking increased and the family moved sixteen times in ten years. During these years, he and Rose, the model for Laura in The Glass Menagerie, became extremely close. Rose suffered from mental illness later in life and eventually underwent a prefrontal lobotomy, an event that was extremely upsetting for Williams.

An average student and social outcast in high school, Williams turned to the movies and writing for solace. At sixteen, Williams won five dollars in a national competition and was published in Smart Set magazine. The next year, he published a horror story in a magazine called Weird Tales, and the year after that he entered the University of Missouri as a journalism major. While there, he wrote his first plays. However, before Williams could receive his degree, his father, outraged because Williams had failed a required ROTC program course, forced him to withdraw from school and go to work at the same shoe company where he himself worked.

Williams worked at the shoe factory for three years, a job that culminated in a minor nervous breakdown. After that, he returned to college, this time at Washington University in St. Louis. While he was studying there, a St. Louis theater group produced his plays The Fugitive Kind and Candles to the Sun. Personal problems led Williams to drop out of Washington University and enroll in the University of Iowa. While he was in Iowa, his sister, Rose, underwent a lobotomy, which left her institutionalized for the rest of her life. Despite this trauma, Williams finally graduated in 1938. In the years that followed, he lived a bohemian life, working menial jobs and wandering from city to city. He continued to work on drama, receiving a Rockefeller grant and studying playwriting at the New School in New York. During the early years of World War II, Williams worked in Hollywood as a scriptwriter.

The dialogue in The Glass Menagerie seems very real, and perhaps it is. Read this excerpt about Williams’ family life:

“During his last years of high school, Williams and his family moved to five small rooms at 6254 Enright Avenue. Though Williams went off to the university in Columbia in 1929, he returned to the apartment for summers and to live in 1932, when his father could no longer afford to finance his education. It was events at this address that Williams depicted in The Glass Menagerie. His older sister, Rose, who suffered from phobias and hysteria and had twice been hospitalized, was living at home and retreating more and more into herself. The social call that is at the heart of The Glass Menagerie occurred in 1933, when Tennessee’s mother tried unsuccessfully to set Rose up with one of her son’s college friends. Williams’ younger brother, Dakin, later recalled that ‘the events of The Glass Menagerie are a virtually literal rendering of our family life at 6254 Enright Avenue.’”

(http://queerestplaces.wordpress.com/2009/01/21/tennessee-in-st-louis/)

[Image 50x520 to 221x681]

[Image 23x697 to 99x770]
Around 1941, Williams began the work that would become *The Glass Menagerie*. The play evolved from a short story entitled “Portrait of a Girl in Glass,” which focused more completely on the character of Laura than *The Glass Menagerie* does. In December of 1944, *The Glass Menagerie* was staged in Chicago, with the collaboration of a number of well-known theatrical figures. When the play first opened, the audience was sparse, but the Chicago critics raved about it, and eventually it was playing to full houses. In March of 1945, the play moved to Broadway, where it won the prestigious New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award. This highly personal, explicitly autobiographical play earned Williams fame, fortune, and critical respect, and it marked the beginning of a successful run that would last for another ten years. Two years after *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams won another Drama Critics’ Circle Award and a Pulitzer Prize for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams won the same two prizes again in 1955, for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

The impact of success on Williams’ life was colossal, but in his estimation far from positive. In an essay entitled “The Catastrophe of Success,” he outlines, with both light humor and a heavy sense of loss, the dangers that fame poses for an artist. For years after he became a household name, Williams continued to mine his own experiences to create pathos-laden works. Alcoholism, depression, thwarted desire, loneliness in search of purpose, and insanity were all part of Williams’ world. His life’s work adds up to twenty-five full-length plays, five screenplays, over seventy one-act plays, hundreds of short stories, two novels, poetry, and a memoir. Five of his plays were also made into movies.

### Tennessee Williams

**Given name:** Thomas  
**Setting:** Family moved to St. Louis, Missouri in 1918.

- Grandfather squandered family fortune.  
- Father a travelling salesman, worked for a shoe company.  
- Father had a drinking problem.  
- Mother is a faded southern belle.  
- Brother named Daken.  
- Sister’s name is Rose.  
- Sister develops mental illness later in life, undergoes a frontal lobotomy and is institutionalized for the rest of her life.  
- Williams turns to movies and writing for solace.  
- Williams goes to college, but is forced by his father to quit for a time and work for a shoe company.  
- Tennessee’s mother tries to arrange a date for Rose with one of Tennessee’s college friends.  
- Williams graduates from college and spends time wandering from city to city.  
- Williams becomes a multi-award winning playwright.

### The Glass Menagerie

**Character and narrator:** Tom  
**Setting:** St. Louis, Missouri tenement housing in the 1930s.

- Father left the family, leaving them in poverty.  
- Tom works in a shoe warehouse. A job he despises.  
- References to the father drinking, and Tom abuses alcohol.  
- Mother is a faded southern belle.  
- No brother character in the play.  
- Sister’s nickname is Blue Roses, a mispronunciation of the illness pleurosis.  
- Sister is crippled, fragile, painfully shy, and retreats into her own world.  
- Tom goes to the movies for solace and writes poetry at home and work.  
- Tom does not go to college but must work in a shoe warehouse to provide for the family.  
- Tom’s mother asks him to arrange a gentleman caller for Laura with one of his co-workers from the warehouse.  
- Tom gets fired from his job at the shoe warehouse, abandons the family, and joins the merchant marines.

---

Activity: Memory Play

The Glass Menagerie is a memory play. It opens and closes with monologues from the character and narrator Tom, who places himself in both past and present as he tells the story. The following writing activity is designed to help your students gain insight and interest in the idea of a memory play and may be assigned as a lesson for a class period or as homework for your students.

Objectives: Students will analyze the opening monologue in the play The Glass Menagerie. Students will use their own experience and history to write three scenes describing an event in their past. Students will write short opening monologues as part of their own memory “play.”

Materials needed: Copies of The Glass Menagerie, paper, pens, and/or drawing materials.

Set: Read the opening monologue aloud to your class or ask students to take turns reading aloud. Ask students to notice that Tom begins in the present time, he is a narrator and character in the play, and that he declares the play a memory play. To your students: How is Tom setting up the story? What types of things is he telling us? (The time period, the characters in the play) Tom also tells us something important - that he is about to tell a true story “in the pleasant disguise of illusion.” From this we realize that the events probably really happened, but it “being a memory play, it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental...” – meaning it has been romanticized and/or dramatized to a certain degree. Tom then jumps into character and into the past where the action of the play begins. Consider ideas for your own memory play.

Procedures: Let your students know they will not perform or read their work in front of the class. They will turn it in to you at the end of the class period.

To your students:
- Think of a major event in your life, a time when you or your parents made a distinct change or decision that changed the course of your life. Was it a happy and/or peaceful transition? Was it traumatic or hard? What was the decision? Who was involved? If you had to list a cast of characters, who would they be? Take a moment to write down the memory of the major event and the people that were involved. For example, your parents decided to uproot the family and move out of state, or you decide to hang out with a different group of friends, or you make a good or bad decision about something at home or school. It is a major event or decision that changed things for you.

- Now think of three scenes or still pictures. The first being a moment in time or the scenario leading up to the decision. What happened to make you or your parents even think of the decision? Is it something you’ve always wanted to do or were you inspired by something? Or did something happen that made you think differently than you ever thought before. Who is in this picture and what are they doing? Take a moment to jot down your first scene.
• The **second** scene is the moment when the decision was being made. What happened to you and to those in the first scene when the decision was made? What would your decision scene look like? Take a moment to write it down.

• The **third** scene or picture is years later – or sometime after the decision was made. Did it turn out the way you imagined? Are you happy? Do you have regrets? Make a note of your third scene.

• So to recap, the first scene or picture is the moment or scenario leading up to the major event or decision, the second scene is the action of the decision being made, and the third scene is years later and the consequences, good or bad, of the decision. Take another look at your three scenes and re-write them as short paragraphs titled Scene 1, Scene 2 and Scene 3, or draw 3 pictures depicting each scene.

• Think of your scenes as three scenes in a play. Consider *The Glass Menagerie* and the opening monologue. Write an opening monologue for your scenes including the same types of details Tennessee Williams used for his memory play - introducing time period and characters, as well as leading us into the action of the first scene. How will you introduce your memory? Take the next five minutes to write your opening monologue.

**Closure:** To your students: What are the benefits of being both the present narrator and a character in the past retelling the story? How have your perspective and feelings changed from the time of your personal story? If you could go back and do it over again, what would you change about your situation or decision?

**Assessment:** Students should turn in their scenes and written monologues. Assessment should include analysis of grammar, spelling, clear explanation of the story, as well as recognition of narrator style or personal voice.

**Additional activity:** Read aloud the closing monologue from *The Glass Menagerie* and analyze it in the same way as you did the opening monologue. Ask your students to consider their memory scenes and write a closing monologue. The closing monologue should include what they now think of the characters in the story and how they feel about the decision now that time has passed.

“The scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart.”

- Tennessee Williams
Activity: Reading Scenes

The following activity will prepare your students for the style and language of *The Glass Menagerie* as well as help them practice reading aloud. The entire play may be read aloud over three 50-minute class periods. If you do not have that kind of time to devote to this activity, choose one or two scenes to read during one class period. Assign a different “cast” of students for each scene so more may participate by reading aloud.

**Objectives:**
- Students will read or listen to scenes from *The Glass Menagerie*.
- Students will practice respectful behavior and positive theatre etiquette.

**Materials needed:** Excerpts or copies of *The Glass Menagerie*.

**Set:** To your students: After a play is cast, the first rehearsal usually consists of the cast and stage manager reading the play aloud while seated together at a table. Today, we will conduct a play reading of scenes from *The Glass Menagerie*.

**Procedures:** As the teacher/director of this activity, you may assign characters or let your students volunteer.

- Each scene should include the appropriate number of characters and a stage manager. For example, if you choose to read scene 1, you will need 4 students, 3 to portray the characters and 1 to act as the stage manager and read the stage directions. All other students should read along at their desks.

- Position the students reading the parts in the front of the classroom either at a table or at their desks, side by side. Students should remain seated during the reading. Ask the first student acting as stage manager to read the character descriptions which should be listed before Scene 1.

- To your students: You may choose to “act” by using voice inflection, but you should not use that as a distraction or to be funny for the class. The purpose of a reading is to help the cast gel in their respective roles and to better understand the meaning of the story.

**Questions for Closure:** After each scene is read aloud, ask students to recap the scene in their own words. What happened? What did this scene disclose about the characters? Why did Tennessee Williams include this scene in the play?

**Assessment:** Teacher will assess reading fluency (including accuracy and proper expression) and student “audience” behavior during scene readings.

**After the performance at TPAC:**
Ask students if the characters in the performance were what they expected. Were their own characterizations different from the actors’? How so? Ask your students how they would rate the audience behavior during the performance? How did audience behavior enhance or distract from their personal viewing experience?
Activity: Place and Time

The following activity will help your students understand the time period and setting of the play The Glass Menagerie. The activity is a class discussion and assumes your students are familiar with the story or are reading it currently.

Objectives: Students will define tenement housing in their own words. Students will infer and discuss living conditions in tenement housing and affluent Southern plantation housing as these settings relate to The Glass Menagerie.

Materials needed: Pictures provided (full images provided on picture inserts.)

Set: To your students: The Glass Menagerie takes place in the 1930s in a tenement apartment in St. Louis, Missouri. Tenement apartments were generally inhabited by the lower-middle class. A tenement apartment may consist of 2 to 5 rooms.

Procedures: Show your students picture 1.

- To your students: Imagine living in these apartments during The Depression and a time when there was no Internet, no cell phone, and no television. Look closely at the individuals in this picture. Who are they? A mother and daughter? Imagine more about their lives. How do they entertain themselves? Have they always lived here or do they come from somewhere else? What do they hope for? What do they dream about? What do you assume about the living conditions inside these apartments?
Show your students picture 2.

To your students: Tennessee Williams writes, “The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerates of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class population…”

- Discuss the following:
  - What does this type of setting tell you about the characters’ situation in the play?
  - Do you think this situation contributes to Laura’s retreat from reality?
  - Amanda, Tom and Laura’s mother, seems desperate and controlling, and constantly talks about wanting her children to do well in life. Does this setting make you more or less compassionate towards her?

Show picture 3 to your students (below).

- To your students: This is the type of Southern plantation home that Amanda probably thought she would live in, have a family in. Her expectation was that she would be taken care of by a wealthy husband and have servants.

- Discuss the following:
  - What do you assume about the living conditions in this house?
  - If the family lived here, how do you think Amanda and Tom would get along? Would she support his writing talents?
  - Would Laura be considered eccentric rather than an outcast if she lived in this house? Explain.
  - Do you think Tom could feel as trapped here as he did in the apartment?
  - Could the story of The Glass Menagerie take place in this house? How would it be different?

- In The Glass Menagerie, the action takes place in an apartment in a living room, kitchen, and on a fire escape. How do you think the set designer will reveal the fact that the story takes place in a tenement apartment? What do you expect to see on stage?

Closure: Ask students to define “The American Dream.” How does the idea of the American dream play out in the setting of The Glass Menagerie?

Assessment: Students’ definition of tenement housing in their own words and participation in class discussion.
Further Study

Ask your students to research the time period of the 1930s.

- What were some of the movies that Tom would have seen during this time?
- What type of music was popular in St. Louis, Missouri?
- What types of events were going on in the world during this time?
- What kinds of jobs were available to a single mother?
- Amanda tried to make extra money as a telemarketer for women’s magazines. Research magazines of the day for both men and women and compare them to magazines today. How are they similar and different?

Symbolism

In Scene One while setting up the story, Tom describes himself as having a “poet’s weakness for symbols.”

Ask your students to list and explain some of the symbols in The Glass Menagerie.

- How is Laura’s glass menagerie a symbol?
- What is the importance of the broken unicorn?
- What does the fire escape symbolize?
- What does the character Jim O’Connor symbolize?

Ask your students, if they had to choose an object, what would symbolize them?

Post-Show Discussion Questions

(from the Walnut Street Theatre Company study guide)

- Who do you think is the main character of the play—Tom, Laura, or Amanda? Why? Is the main character the protagonist? Is there an antagonist?
- What might happen to Laura after Tom’s departure? What might happen to Amanda?
- How does the fact that Tom is the narrator affect the style and content of the play? Would your appraisal of the events be different if there were no narrator?
- In what ways might The Glass Menagerie be a different play if Williams had chosen one of the other characters to tell the same story? What story might Laura tell? Amanda? The gentleman caller? How would their stories differ? What would you say is the “truth” of memory?
- How has Williams used humor in The Glass Menagerie? What does this suggest about the Wingfield family?
- In what ways does Jim O’Connor reflect the reality of the 1930s? What are his ambitions and values? How is Jim different from the other characters in the play?

~ Tennessee Williams

“Life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quickly you hardly catch it going.”
Notes from set designer, Andrew Thompson:

Please describe the set or concept behind your set for The Glass Menagerie.

The set for the Walnut Street Theatre’s Production of The Glass Menagerie has dreamlike qualities and also realistic qualities as well. Williams writes a play that comes from a memory, mainly Tom’s memory. I took this idea and started thinking about memories. What causes a memory? Bill Van Horn (the director) and I started to discuss time, place, feeling for the production back in April 2010. After reading the play, I wanted to take it to a place that becomes a memory.

The concept is that Tom has just come back to St Louis after his time with the merchant Marines; it is around 1945-46 when we start at the top of the play. He goes to a warehouse - possibly the one he worked at or a storage place in St Louis - to pick up some belongings: his sister’s, his mother’s, his own. Bill and I believe that 10 years have passed and the family is not together; possibly Tom’s mother, Amanda, has passed way, And Laura may be in a home or institutionalized. As Tom starts looking for things in the warehouse, he starts to open crates from the apartment and his past. The things that Tom begins to uncover and pull out of the crates trigger his past and the memories of what happened in the apartment when he was in St Louis ten years ago, 1934-1935.

Objects hold memories; As Tom opens up crates he starts to create his past in front of the audience. This opens the door, setting the stage and the set. Take for example the crates: they become the side tables that were in the house. Dustcovers become tablecloths. The objects that he finds become his memories and tell the story of his past. Objects hold memories.

Will you incorporate Williams’ original design as far as using music and screen projection to underscore themes and symbols?

With the concept that Bill and I are playing with, we do get away from Williams original design with the use of projection, although the set will have a dreamy feeling to it. The entire set is mainly a neutral blue gray in color and in feeling. I found this great texture for all of the back wall and the show deck. As you go upstage it become less real and more dreamy; and going downstage becomes more real.

Lighting will play a major part in this production. Shon Causer is the Lighting Designer. I gave Shon a very big palette to work from. The set once lit will change in color and texture as we get through the play. Although we are not using any projections, with Shon’s lighting we will see the under scoring of themes and mood and dark to light.

As for sound, Chris Collucci, the Sound Designer, will have a vast sound landscape. Not unlike objects holding memories, sound also holds memories for the listener. The way the door opens, the sound of a floor board squeaking can trigger a memory as well. I believe Chris will be using a glass player as his main underscoring for parts of the show. Music and sound are as much a character as the four actors on stage.
Walnut Street Theatre is the oldest theatre in America, celebrating 200 years in 2009. Standing at the corner of Ninth and Walnut Streets in Philadelphia for two hundred years, Walnut Street Theatre's National Historic Landmark structure has housed two centuries' worth of American popular entertainment. Most noteworthy American actors of the 19th century and many from the 20th century have appeared on stage at the Walnut. Some of the Walnut's shining stars include: Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, Edmund Kean, the Drews, the Barrymores, George M. Cohan, Will Rogers, The Marx Brothers, Helen Hayes, Henry Fonda, Katharine Hepburn, Marlon Brando, Jessica Tandy, Ethel Waters, Audrey Hepburn, Sidney Poitier, Lauren Bacall, George C. Scott, Jane Fonda, Robert Redford, Julie Harris, Jack Lemon, and William Shatner. Over the years audiences have clapped and cheered for circus, opera, vaudeville, lectures, music, dance, motion pictures, and of course, the live theatre productions for which it is best known today.

In 1964, Walnut Street Theatre was designated a National Historic Landmark. Then in 1969 the theatre was renovated again to become a Performing Arts Center. During this period a variety of live entertainments were represented at the Walnut including dance, music, and theatre. In 1976 the Walnut hosted the first televised Carter-Ford presidential debate.

The Walnut began its most recent incarnation as a self-producing, non-profit regional theatre when Bernard Havard took the helm in 1982, founding the Walnut Street Theatre Company with a vision of once again creating theatre in a space that is so steeped in the American theatre's traditions and history.
TPAC Education
PO Box 190660
Nashville, TN  37219
615-687-4288

Visit us online at www.tpac.org/education
Picture 2  Activity – Place and Time, TPAC Education guidebook for The Glass Menagerie, 2011
3 Activity – Place and Time, TPAC Education guidebook for The Glass Menagerie, 2011