

Feb / March 1968

NATIONAL THEATRE
NAIROBI CITY PLAYERS

PRESENT

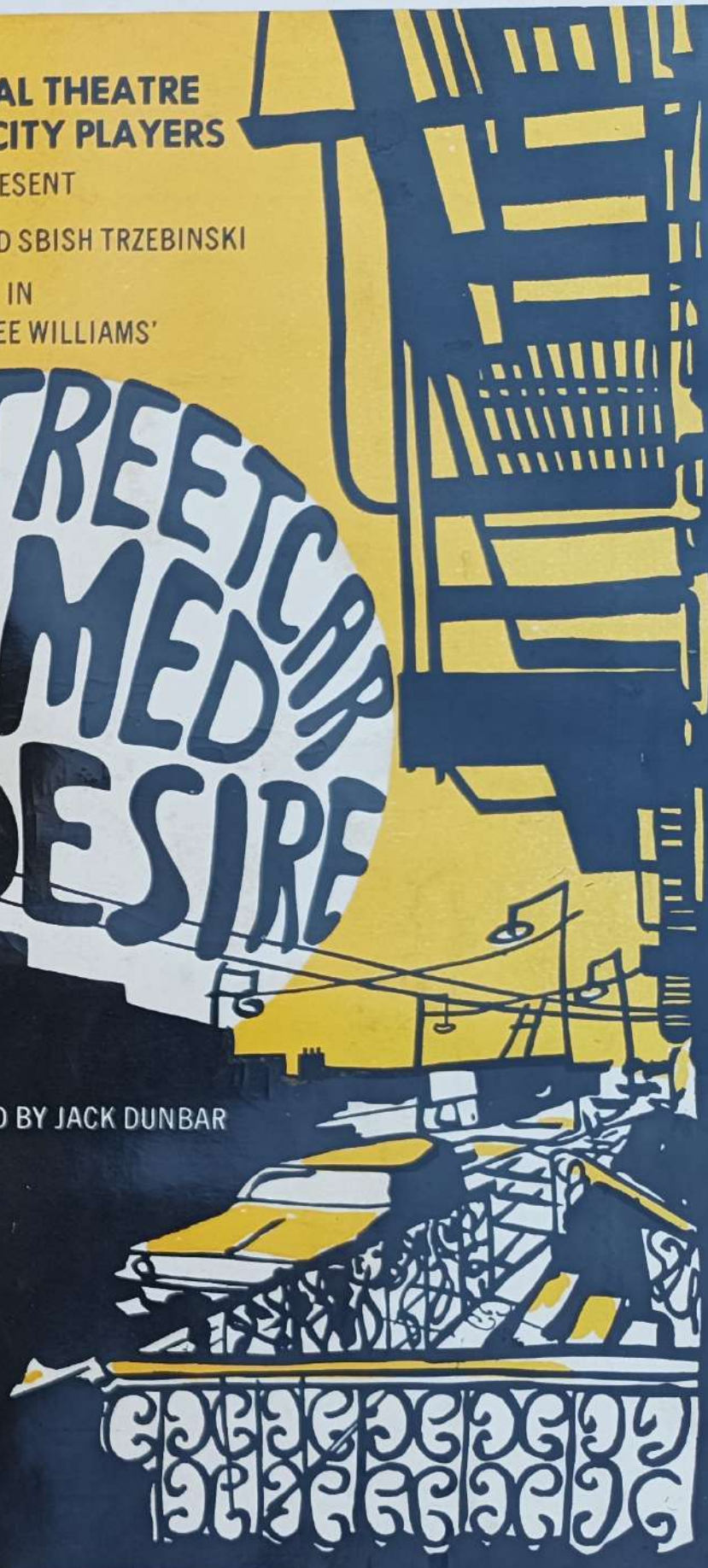
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PAST PRODUCTIONS

The Nairobi City Players is an acting group which was formed in 1956 and has to date presented a total of 45 productions at the Kenya National Theatre, Nairobi. Here is the complete list and we wonder how many of these you have seen and, we sincerely hope, enjoyed.

- 1956 "The Love of Four Colonels" by Peter Ustinov.
- 1957 "The Man Who Came To Dinner" by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman.
"Ring Round The Moon" by Jean Anouilh.
"Payment Deferred" by Jeffrey Dell.
- 1958 "Romanoff and Juliet" by Peter Ustinov.
"Two Gentlemen of Verona" by A. P. Herbert.
(Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1958)
"Carrington V. C." by Dorothy and Campbell Christie.
"Will Any Gentleman" by Vernon Sylvaine.
- 1959 "Rope" by Patrick Hamilton.
"You Can't Take It With You" by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman.
"The Ferozen" by Roland and Michael Pertwee.
- 1960 "The Diary of Anne Frank" by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett.
"Six Characters In Search of An Author" by Pirandello.
"A Farrago" comprising:
"The Proposal" by Chekhov.
"Uneasy Lies The Head . . ." from Shakespeare.
"Red Peppers" by Noel Coward.
- 1961 "The King and I" by Rodgers and Hammerstein.
"The Caine Mutiny Court Martial" by Herman Wouk.
"The House by the Lake" by Hugh Mills.
"The Bespoke Overcoat" by Wolf Mankowitz.
(Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1961)
(Drama Festival Entry, 1961)
"The Hole" by N. F. Simpson.
- 1962 "Caesar and Cleopatra" by George Bernard Shaw.
"The Long and The Short and The Tall" by Willis Hall.
"Men Without Shadows" by Jean-Paul Sartre.
(Placed Third Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1962)
(Drama Festival Entry, 1962)
"No Fixed Abode" by Clive Exton.
- 1963 "See How They Run" by Philip King.
"Annie Get Your Gun" by Irving Berlin, Herbert and Dorothy Fields.
"Irma La Douce" by Marguerite Murnet and Alexandre Breffort.
Excerpts from "St. Joan" by George Bernard Shaw.
(Placed Second Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1963)
"The Resounding Tinkle" by N. F. Simpson. (Drama Festival Entry, 1963)
- 1964 "South Pacific" by Rodgers and Hammerstein.
"Roast" by Terence Rattigan.
"The Valiant" by Holworthy Hall and Robert Middlemass.
(Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1964)
"The Scar" by Rebecca Njau.
(Placed Third Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1964
and also Best Original Play)
- "Oklahoma!" by Rodgers and Hammerstein.
- 1965 "The Country Wife" by William Wycherley.
"The Duchess of Malfi" by John Webster.
(Placed Joint Third Winning Entry Kenya Drama Festival, 1965)
"The Wizard of Oz" by Frank Baum, Harold Arlen and E. Y. Harburg.
- 1966 "A View From the Bridge" by Arthur Miller.
"The Man Who Came to Dinner" (Revival)
by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman
- 1967 "Twelve Angry Men" by Reginald Rose
"A Double Bill" comprising:
"Lunch Hour" by John Mortimer
"One Way Pendulum" by N. F. Simpson.
"The Sound of Music" by Rodgers & Hammerstein.

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A STREETCAR

NAIROBI CITY PLAYERS

A
STREETCAR
NAMED
DESIRE

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

By Tennessee Williams



ABOUT THE PLAY

Considerable controversy raged around "Streetcar" when it opened in London in 1949. Although there were long gallery queues on the pavement outside the Aldwych Theatre and massive advance booking, there was adverse criticism from some well known and influential theatregoers and some sections of the Press. At a London Meeting of the Public Morality Council, Lady Ravensdale was particularly outspoken and asked "Could nothing be done to stop putting on this play?". On analysis it appeared that the criticism stemmed from a complete misunderstanding of the play by some theatregoers who came away with the impression that they had seen the sordid history of a rather tarnished daughter of joy. It is interesting therefore to essay a careful assessment of Blanche DuBois.

Tennessee Williams explains his play as tracing the journeys of two human beings, Blanche and her brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski. Blanche passes from delicacy to decadence and he from simplicity to brutality. Their paths cross when she arrives in New Orleans to stay under his roof and tragedy becomes inevitable. The author had no intention of staging the life of a prostitute. There is no line in the text to suggest that Blanche commercialised her charms. She is just a pitiful figure, hungering for kindness and understanding.

At the age of sixteen Blanche was married to a handsome young man who wrote poetry. She adored him and under normal circumstances would have had a life of happiness and devotion. The fates were against her however from the start. On her honeymoon she discovered with her own eyes that her young Adonis was a degenerate. He could not bear this exposure and so shot himself, leaving Blanche to face the future in melancholy solitude. The loneliness became more than she could bear so she permitted intimacies with strangers, increasing in frequency until sex became an obsession with her. In short, she became a nymphomaniac.

When the play opens Blanche arrives on the streetcar named Desire to stay in the New Orleans apartment of her married sister, Stella. She is not yet beyond hope. Her nerves are broken but with genuine kindness she might yet be restored to health. Only Mitch, a friend of the Kowalskis, shows a sign of providing the comfort and affection for which she has always yearned. Stanley Kowalski, on the other hand, thinks differently. He sees only evil in Blanche and tries to get rid of her as soon as he can. Cruelly he uses the occasion of her birthday to present her with a return bus ticket to the place she had come from. This final blow is too much for Blanche and her delicate mental make up is shattered beyond repair leaving her only the future of a mental home.

The moral pointed by Tennessee Williams is that tolerance by others would have prevented Blanche DuBois becoming a victim of circumstances, had they taken the trouble to discover the cause of her particular misfortune. It is wrong therefore to view the play as merely a sordid picture of a worthless woman. Fortunately for us this view has not been shared by theatregoers and "A Streetcar Named Desire" has played to enthusiastic audiences throughout the world and holds an honoured place in modern theatre.

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