

**P.A.P.A./  
PROVINCETOWN  
THEATRE COMPANY**

**FEB. 7—24**

**TRUE WEST  
BY SAM SHEPARD**

**MAR. 28—APR. 14**

**A THURBER CARNIVAL  
BY JAMES THURBER**

460 COMMERCIAL STREET

**TICKETS/INFORMATION: 487-2695, 487-3466**

IN COOPERATION WITH THE PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOCIATION AND MUSEUM

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:** FRANK CULLIN, LAURA GREEN,  
ALIX RITCHIE, W.O.M.R., REMEMBRANCES OF THINGS  
PAST, TRURO CENTRAL SCHOOL, PROVINCETOWN  
PUBLIC LIBRARY, PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOCIATION  
AND MUSEUM, RICHARD ENGLISH. *Maureen*

*Blanches Dress*  
THE P.A.P.A./PROVINCETOWN THEATRE COMPANY'S 1984—85 SEASON IS FUNDED  
IN PART BY MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES, A STATE  
AGENCY.

P.A.P.A./PROVINCETOWN THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS  
AN OTHER STAGE PRODUCTION

*The  
Hotel  
Elysee*



# “THE HOTEL ELYSEE”

by David Hamilton Simpson

Staged by Stuart Bishop

## CAST

Eugene Gladstone . . . . .	Doug Best
Matthew . . . . .	George Libone
Thomas Lanier . . . . .	Bill Meves
Mary Tyrone . . . . .	Barbara Dennis
Blanche DuBois . . . . .	Karyen Lebel

**Place:** The Hotel Elysee, Provincetown

**Time:** The Eternal Present

*There will be one ten-minute intermission*

## PRODUCTION

Production Manager . . . . .	Judy Poor
Technical Director . . . . .	Donald McNeilly
Sound . . . . .	Lee Robinson
Poster/Program Design . . . . .	John Bertram
Sound Technician . . . . .	Michael Dwyer
Lighting Technician . . . . .	Dan Larkin
House Managers . . . . .	Ardis Markarian/ Marty Davis
Moderator . . . . .	Ray Wells
Tuxedos . . . . .	Watson's Mens' World

The author David H. Simpson “Arrived in Provincetown on the day of Tennessee Williams’ death and wrote ‘Hotel Elysee’ to pay homage to him, Eugene O’Neill and the magic of Provincetown.” Earlier, David had written three one-act plays in N.Y.C. While living in Maui, Hawaii, he published several poems. He also authored a volume of poetry, “The Complete Unknown.”

Welcome to The Provincetown Theatre Company’s second OTHER STAGE production of the 1984—1985 Season. OTHER STAGE has been created to showcase original or experimental theatrical challenges the Theatre Company find worthy of sponsorship - not only to encourage our artistic community, but for the community to encourage the artist.

Tonight’s offering, THE HOTEL ELYSEE, by David Hamilton Simpson is more than a “work in progress.” It is the premiere of the work itself. Not only will you, the audience, be viewing Mr. Simpson’s work for the first time—so will Mr. Simpson. A “work in progress” is a great deal like going through growing pains. The author has written the words, they have been committed to paper, but what will happen during that translation from typed paper to speaking actor to listening audience? How will the child survive the ordeal? What changes will have to take place before the child is complete - reaches maturity? Tonight we give the author, with your support, the opportunity to see his child out in public for the first time.

Because poetry is such an introspective and subjective art form, only the bravest of poets write for the theatre which is such a public art form. Christopher Fry, T. S. Eliot, Robinson Jeffers and Maxwell Anderson are but a few successful modern poets in theatre memory. Alas, like Robert Browning, most burning poetic dramas are more than often relegated to that leprous category—“closet drama.”

Why a staged reading? There are several reasons stemming from the workshop atmosphere of the piece. Time is of the essence. It allows the performers to concentrate solely on the script. It provides the author the opportunity to focus on his words as he wrote them without the trappings of sets, props, costumes and make-up. A staged reading strips the unessentials to bring the core of the author’s words to the limelight so that his work alone becomes of prime importance. Tonight is for the poet . . . for his words, his imagery, his heart.

After the performance an informal symposium will be held. The Provincetown Theatre Company invites your views and comments on THE HOTEL ELYSEE.

STUART BISHOP

Other Stage production opening tonight

# 'Hotel Elysee,' poetic dialogue onstage

By Marilyn Miller

Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill wrote plays in Provincetown, although at different times, but picture both men, if you will, meeting and coming to grips with such dramatic subjects as death, hell, rebirth, paradise, and immortality in a poetic dialogue that transcends time constraints.

That is what Playwright-Poet David H. Simpson has done in his two-act play, "The Hotel Elysee," which opens tonight in staged-reading form as an "Other Stage" production of the Provincetown Theatre Company.

The play, which runs through Sunday, opens at 8 p.m. each night at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, 460 Commercial St.

At the end of each showing, the audience will have a chance to question the playwright, the director and the actors regarding the performance.

Although 20 years separates the death of O'Neill from that of Williams, Simpson breaks down this time barrier by creating an imaginary encounter between O'Neill, who died in 1953, and Williams, who died in 1983, which takes place in Provincetown, where both their ghosts must walk if there be such things as ghosts.

Since imagination recognizes no time or reality constraints, the conversation between O'Neill and Williams can be joined by two of their most memorable stage characters—Blanche DuBois, from Williams's "Streetcar Named Desire," and Mary Tyrone from O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey Into Night."

Simpson, 40, conceived of his play in late February, 1983, when he arrived in Provincetown to discover that Williams had died that very day in New York City at the Hotel Elysee which, literally transcribed, is the hotel of heaven.

"Williams died the day I arrived in



David H. Simpson

Advocate photo by Marilyn Miller

magic of Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill in Provincetown all sort of came together," Simpson said.

"I worked on the play for a year, from the first day I arrived in town until last summer."

It was selected to be one of the Provincetown Theater Company's "Other Stage Productions," a series of presentations of new and experimental dramatic works made possible through a grant from the Massachusetts' Council on the Arts.

A native of Portsmouth, N.H., Simpson has lived in Provincetown for two years, managing the Lowell, Limited shop in the West End, which features carved duck decoys. The shop and house are owned by friends, but "in a strange kind of way it is my house," said

spent five years living in Maui, Hawaii, where he published several poems. Prior to that, he spent several years in New York City where he wrote poetry and his first one-act plays, none of which has been presented.

"I wrote a few plays in New York in the 1960s, but they aren't very good," Simpson said. "They're stashed away somewhere, but they aren't worth producing."

He has a volume of poetry to his credit, which was published privately, and despite his first attempts at playwrighting in the 1960s, he considers "The Hotel Elysee" his first real play.

"When I came to Provincetown, that's when playwrighting started for me," said Simpson.

"The Hotel Elysee" stars Douglas

bara Dennis as Mary Tyrone, and George Lebone as Matthew, a waiter at the hotel.

The poster art advertising the play depicts the Hotel Elysee as similar to Provincetown's Anchor Inn, a fact that has not been objected to by the Anchor Inn owner, Peter Boyle, who considers it free publicity, said Alix Ritchie, president of the Provincetown Theatre Company.

"Hotel Elysee" is directed by Stuart Bishop, who has directed plays on Broadway, Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway. Bishop directed "Deathtrap" for the Provincetown Theatre Company last season. His work has been seen in civic centers, dinner theatres, colleges, regional theatres, and summer and winter stock theatres across the country.

Bishop hesitates to call himself director of Simpson's play.

"I don't even consider myself a director on this," he said. "I'm staging it. It's a staged reading."

The characters will appear in formal attire, speaking to the audience from podiums with a minimum of sets, lighting and props.

"There is some furniture, but there are no costumes," said Bishop.

"One of the reasons for this is, because of the workshop atmosphere of Other Stage Productions, time is of the essence, and we only have 10 to 14 rehearsals in which to get it all together. The nature of the place is so poetic that the cast would literally have to have the scripts together for at least six months before they could memorize it," Bishop said.

"It's a very complex piece, verbally, and the production of it is so that the author can hear his words as he wrote them.

"When you do a play, you only have a certain number of rehearsals," Bishop said. "Because this is a poetic piece,

# 'Hotel Elysee'

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are letting the author hear his words just as he wrote them."

The play "is a fascinating piece, or else I wouldn't have gotten involved with it," Bishop said. "It's easy to say 'No.'"

The meeting between O'Neill and Williams in Provincetown "is a fascinating premise to start with, and I think the author is a very fine writer," Bishop said.

"It is not a play as we think of a play or a drama. It is more of a conversation, more of a meeting of four people reminiscent of Steve Allen's "Meeting of Minds." It has that kind of feeling about it," Bishop said.

"Come tonight, not only is the audience going to see it for the first time, but so is the author."

Simpson acknowledged that he has not attended all of the rehearsals and is looking forward to seeing tonight's maiden

"It is very poetic, in some ways too much so, but the actors are doing very good work at making it understandable," he said. "It has undergone some changes under Bishop, not major changes, but just in the way he has orchestrated it. He has actually choreographed it," said Simpson. "It's like a dance the way he has done it."

The play is called a work in progress, but as far as Simpson is concerned, what is seen tonight and over the weekend is the final version of his two-act play.

"I'm pretty much finished with it," Simpson said. "A few things have changed since working with Bishop, but it's a very tight play and I'm happy with it. I'm starting another one now, which is also based in Provincetown."

"I've been to several rehearsals," said Simpson. "I like the way it is going. It seems to be very smooth, very well-orchestrated, and I consider myself fortunate to have some of the town's best actors and one of the best directors around for it. For a first play, that's not