

For Immediate Release**Contact Ted Vitale****Provincetown Repertory Theatre Announces Its 1999 Summer Season****The Trip To Bountiful** June 15th - July 3rd

By Horton Foote

The Trip to Bountiful tells the story of a frail old woman living in the city with her family in a cramped two room apartment. She longs to escape to a town called Bountiful, her childhood home and all the wonderful memories that have kept her company for so many years.

The Glass Menagerie July 13th - August 8th

By Tennessee Williams

Perhaps the greatest of all memory plays, this semi autobiographical play is Williams masterpiece of symbols and irony, performed in the round to capture all of its intimate subtleties.

An As Yet Untitled Piece August 17th - September 11th

By Edward Gorey

From the "Master of the Macabre", the author who brought us such classic works as Amphigorey, The Unstrung Harp and The Bug Book, we bring you an evening of new unpublished works filled with stories, songs and dance. A World Premier. (note: there will be no performance on August 28th)

Barbara Cook In Concert August 28th

The world renown cabaret performer comes to Provincetown Town Hall for one night only.

The Future Of American Theatre: A Playwrights Forum Oct. 2nd

A panel Discussion of today's top Playwrights including Terrance McNally, A.R. Gurney, August Wilson, John Guare, Lanford Wilson, Christopher Durang and Jon Robin Baitz discussing the future of American Theatre in the birthplace of American Theatre.

All performances begin at 8pm.
For Tickets and information please call
Provincetown Reservation Systems

At

508-487-6400

Subscriber line

508-487-0600

"Trip to Bountiful" will take you home

By Sue Harrison

BANNER STAFF

The Provincetown Repertory Theatre began its season Tuesday night with a powerful rendition of Horton Foote's "The Trip to Bountiful." This two-act show delivers a solid performance all around with moments that are dazzling in their emotional impact and a fluid set that is visually captivating.

Jacqueline Scott as Carrie Watts, the old woman who has been trying for 20 years to get out of Houston and back to her beautiful Gulf Coast hometown of Bountiful, could scarcely be better. She nails every nuance of her character's struggle to regain some scrap of dignity while living in the cramped city apartment with her son and daughter-in-law and uses her entire body to evoke a veritable roller coaster of emotions. Watts is one of those performers who can hold your attention even when she's sleeping on stage.

Playing opposite her is another very strong actress, Charlotte Booker, who has the role of Jessie Mae Watts, the daughter-in-law. Booker's

part, if played by a lesser actress, could easily have become a one-dimensional bitch, but that never happens. Instead, in large part because of Booker's dead-on sense of comic timing, Jessie Mae becomes a more human character, one who even though you may not be crazy about, you can't quite hate.

Jerry O'Donnell plays Carrie's son Ludie Watts, and what almost appears to be a slight stiffness in his performance is later revealed to be an intentional emotional distance when Ludie finally lets his feelings out from behind the veneer he's created by being a man who finds remembering the past and dealing with the present a little too painful.

Alison Crowley is just plain terrific as Thelma, the young wife that Carrie meets on the bus when she finally takes her hidden pension check and makes a run for home while Jessie Mae is at the drugstore drinking cokes and reading movie magazines with her girlfriends. Crowley is so sweet as Thelma that I'm not sure how she avoids being cloying, but she comes across as one of those really nice people you'd want to meet if you were in a jam.

THEATER REVIEW



Photo Brad Fowler

Thelma (Alison Crowley), the young bride (left), and Mrs. Watts (Jacqueline Scott), the older woman trying to get home one last time, strike up a friendship on the bus in Provincetown Rep's production of "The Trip to Bountiful."

Ted Vitale makes a convincing sheriff who becomes even more convincing once he decides to help Carrie get home, and Edward Blanchard, as the third ticket man Roy, holds his own in a very emotional scene with Carrie.

Ben Iannitti's brief role as the bored and officious first ticket man is well-executed, and Stanley Wilson as the second ticket man is fine.

The ensemble players, Halcyone Hurst, Adona Butler, Iannitti, Vitale, Wilson, Blanchard, Keith Amato, Margie Mahrtd, Michele Couture and Crowley weave in and out of the scenes, creating vignettes that provide all the background that is needed.

Rep artistic director Ken Hoyt has chosen this play for his directorial debut, and it's a good bet this won't be his last turn in the driver's seat. Hoyt's touch is evident from the blocking and character direction to the sets he designed with Vitale.

The stage area is long rather than wide, and the walls are canvas curtains which mask the comings and goings of the cast. A large antiqued rust-colored platform on wheels topped by a large armoire-like box takes up a sizable portion of the area. The box should almost have its own billing since it plays such an important part in all the scenes. It is like the magician's stage prop box where pigeons go in one drawer and rabbits

trailing knotted scarves come out the other. The box plays the role of closet, ticket counter, bus, bus stop and finally, the old homestead.

Craig Kennedy's lighting is superb, from the below-lit blue spots that turn the between-scenes, prop-moving cast into living silhouettes taken from an old scrap book, to the essence of moonlight and then to a dappled summer morning.

Costumes by Carol Sherry are well done and both sound (Johanna Doty) and management (Ernest Williams) came off without a hitch.

Like the sound of crickets on a summer's evening in the south signaling relief that the heat of the day has begun to break, this staging takes its sweet time building up the complex emotional relationships between Carrie, Ludie and Jessie Mae before letting some breath of hope for a better tomorrow in. And like many slow buildups, it's worth it.

Provincetown Rep's 'Glass Menagerie' clear-sighted

By **DEBBIE FORMAN**
FEATURES EDITOR

PROVINCETOWN - Performed on a thrust stage, "The Glass Menagerie" takes on a greater intimacy as we gather around the Wingfield family for a visit with the harsh realities of life.

The Wingfields do their best to insulate themselves with dreams and illusions in Tennessee Williams' first great play, which is a beautifully crafted and sensitively written script about how illusion can sustain us in a disappointing and frustrating world.

Theater REVIEW

The Provincetown Repertory Theatre's production of this 1945 play is well-conceived with fine direction by Ronn Smith and some well-etched portraits by the four actors.

M. Lynda Robinson subtly develops Amanda Wingfield's Southern-belle charm as she describes the era of gentlemen callers when she would entertain sometimes 17 in a day. Amanda is a devoted, but overbearing, mother trying to do her best since her husband, "a telephone man who fell in love with long distances," walked out on the family. She struggles with poverty and painstakingly endeavors to make something of her children's lives.

Robinson manages fluid switches between the frothy frivolity of Amanda's Southern-belle persona and the shrewlike haranguing that often characterizes her relations with her son and daughter.

Amanda is continually arguing with her recalci-

On Stage

■ **What:** "The Glass Menagerie"

■ **Written by:** Tennessee Williams

■ **Presented by:** Provincetown Repertory Theatre

■ **When:** 8 p.m., Tuesdays-Sundays, through Aug. 8

■ **Where:** Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, 1 High Pole Hill Road, Provincetown

■ **Tickets:** \$19

■ **Telecharge:** (508) 487-2400

trant son Tom, who supports the family with a menial job at a warehouse, and yearns to follow in his father's footsteps. No wonder. His mother has saddled him to her elusive dreams, which means he must sacrifice his own.

Edward Blanchard passionately develops the angst and frustration of Tom, who also is the narrator, presenting a luminous poetic monologue in the beginning of the play.

Amanda's awkward daughter Laura is the great sorrow of her mother's life. Laura is lame, but it is her shy-

ness that is the greater handicap. She hides from life and occupies her time with her collection of miniature glass animals, that glass menagerie of the title, which symbolizes the frailty of our illusions.

Diana Harlin gives a restrained, but effective, portrayal of Laura's fears. With her dreamy looks and lingering stares, Harlin provides a vivid picture of this unfortunate young woman, who is plagued not only by her own frustrations but also



Brad Fowler

Diana Harlin plays Laura Wingfield in the Provincetown Repertory Theatre's production of "The Glass Menagerie."

because she must live in her mother's shadow.

The first act is occupied with developing the Wingfield characters and setting the scene for the Gentleman Caller, whom Tom brings home to have dinner with the family in the second act.

The reality the Gentleman Caller introduces into this household is jarring. This young man is a refreshing breeze; he is quick to pick up on an understanding of the psychological forces in this family and his practical approach to their problems pierces the gloom.

Joseph Holmgren's breezy approach for the Gentleman Caller works nicely. He portrays the character's earnestness and candor with sincerity and gives him an endearing quality.

"The Glass Menagerie" was Williams' first theatrical success. This play marks the beginning of his lifetime exploration of the illusion-vs.-reality theme, which was masterfully developed in "A Streetcar Named Desire" and revisited in later works in the 1950s.

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Living Arts

THE BOSTON GLOBE • WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1999

Gorey sketches delightfully warped

By Bill Marx
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

PROVINCETOWN - The intricate black-and-white images of Edward Gorey are paradoxical - they create a charming world of Manichaean mystery. Are the writer and illustrator's Edwardian figures - caped gentlemen and kids in sailor suits - pastiches of Victorian melodrama? Or are his enigmatic rooms - strewn with shadowy gewgaws - surrealist homages to an England that never was? In his mordant children's stories, such as "The Doubtful Guest" and "The Insect God," the artist continues in the nonsense tradition of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear, though he adds a unique note of laid-back sadism. Best known for the fussy grisliness of his opening credits for PBS's "Mystery!," Gorey specializes in deadpan deviltry.

His impish vision lends itself to the theatrical as well. Gorey's costume designs for 1977's Broadway production of "Dracula" won a Tony Award. In the mid-'80s the artist moved to Cape Cod and staged skits inspired by his wittily macabre tales. A 1994 collection of musicalized Gorey pieces, "Amphigorey," ran off-Broadway. Now the Provincetown Repertory Theatre is presenting the

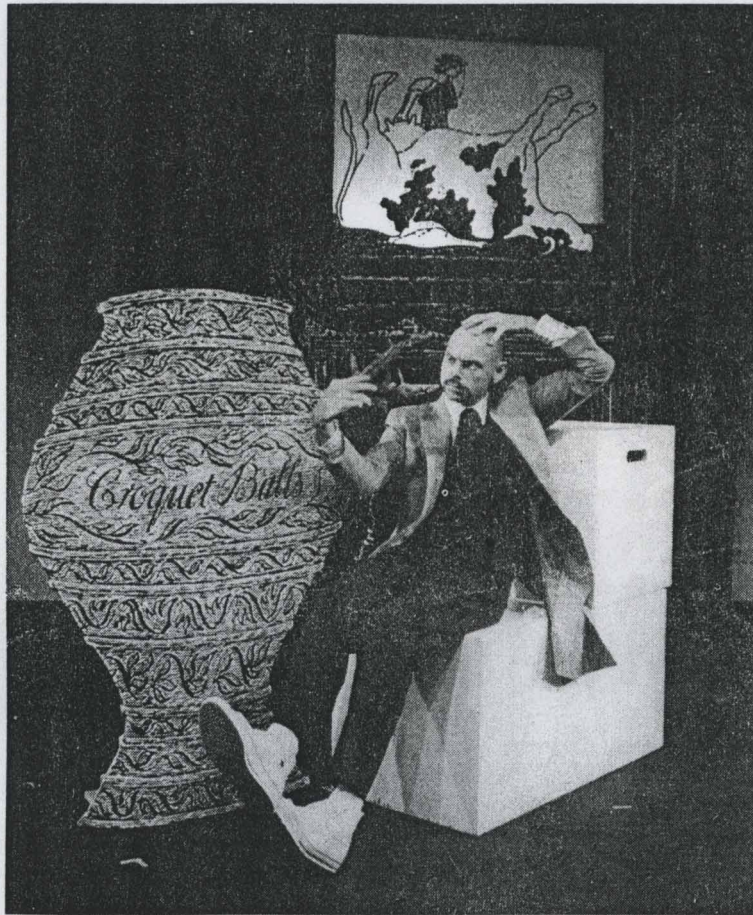


PHOTO / BRAD FOWLER

Kevin McDermott in Edward Gorey's "Amphoragorey."

world premiere of "Amphoragorey," which adds new material to the earlier assemblage. "Amphigorey" composer Peter Matz is back at the piano, as is the show's director, Daniel Levans, and actors Allison De Salvo, Kevin McDermott, and Claire Stollak. The result is a delightful concoction that sends little nasty tingles of happiness up and down your spine.

The hallmark of Gorey's music hall is death, often visited on small children who are sacrificed to giant insects, snatched by the "Wuggly Ump," or who simply wander away

and freeze to death. The latter tale, "The Woeful Waking," receives the evening's most exhilarating musical adaptation - Matz's barbershop quartet treatment perfectly fuses old-time sentiment with Gorey's sinister nonchalance. Matz's usual approach is more sedate but still satisfying, matching vaudeville melodies (with allusions to contemporary tunes) to such Gorey yarns as "The Doubtful Guest," where a penguin-like creature in a scarf shows up at a Victorian home and never leaves: "In the night through the house it would

AMPHORAGOREY

A musical entertainment in two acts adapted from the works of Edward Gorey. With music by Peter Matz. Directed and choreographed by Daniel Levans. Set, Doug Kraner. Costumes, Carol Sherry. Lighting, Craig Kennedy. Sound, Johnna Doty. Presented by the Provincetown Repertory Theatre At: Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, Provincetown, through Sept. 11.

aimlessly creep."

My only grouch is that a touch of the atonal in the score would bring out more of the unsettling aspects of Gorey's work, its intimations of mortality amid the ornate milquetoast. As for the 10 performers, they have the challenge of animating Gorey's figures without making them cuddly. Some of the cast members are a bit too young to play the starchy denizens of Gorey's books, but they generally have strong voices and do a fine job. Thankfully, the cast plays the warped Victoriana straight, contorting their limbs into amusingly melodramatic postures.

Kevin McDermott plays the narrator, Ogdred Weary (an anagram of Edward Gorey), and supplies plenty of grim majesty, though even he can't compensate for the sour glory of Gorey's crosshatched drawings, with their spooky perspectives. A wonderful set - festooned with enlarged Gorey images - helps. And the artist's words are wry delights, from the ditty about the weird plant that makes a child commit hari-kari ("The Unknown Vegetable") to the ersatz Greek passion of "The Inanimate Tragedy," where needles, pins, and buttons meet their maker, violently. "Amphoragorey" is a marvelous evening of songs and poems that go Gorey in the night.

CAPE COD TIMES

The Cape and Islands' Daily Newspaper © 1999

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29, 1999

Review captures quirky, perverse world of illustrator Edward Gorey

By **DEBBIE FORMAN**
FEATURES EDITOR

PROVINCETOWN - Edward Gorey's words - whether merely sounds or ones with meaning - call forth an array of images beyond those that cover the pages of his books or the sets on a stage.

And so in the Provincetown Repertory Theatre's production of "Amphoragorey," a new concoction of the often familiar Gorey words and pictures and Peter Matz music, images emerge of ill-fated children and diabolical adults, of murder and mayhem, of sweet revenge and pun-gent retribution.

Gorey has the ability to spin the grisly in such a way that it evokes humor instead of horror. He turns the mask of tragedy upside-down so that the down-turned mouth curves into a grin, a little sinister perhaps, but nonetheless a smile.

A Yarmouthport neighbor, Gorey has had several works produced on the Cape. He won a Tony Award for his costume designs for the 1977 Broadway production of "Dracula," and is well known for his books of macabre tales in Edwardian settings and the opening and closing drawings for the PBS "Mystery" series.

"Amphoragorey" draws material from Gorey's 1994 off-Broadway pro-

duction of "Amphigorey: The Musical," which won a Drama Desk Award nomination. This show brings together director Daniel Levans and lead actors Kevin McDermott, Claire Stollak and Allison De Salvo, who were part of the off-Broadway production.

"Amphoragorey" is a finely tuned set of little escapades with the actors jauntily portraying various horrific and bizarre occurrences in the merriest of manners. The performances are beautifully articulated stylistic gems. Lots of antics and exaggerated postures bring out the humor of the quirky and often perverse stories.

Some of it is so much nonsense, or fantastic tales of impossible events, but Gorey is almost always provocative. Catch some of the titles of the vignettes that make up the show: "The Weeping Chandelier," "The Unknown Vegetable," "The Wuggly Ump."

Gorey, Matz and Levans borrow from vaudeville and turn-of-the-century music-hall styles to shape this trapeze through the unusual. "The Forty-Seven Questions" plays like a silent film with sound. The final question? "What does it Matter?"

"The Woeful Waking" features a delightful barbershop quartet. Those of

Theater REVIEW

On Stage

- **What:** "Amphoragorey"
- **Written by:** Edward Gorey
- **Music by:** Peter Matz
- **When:** 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays through Sept. 11
- **Where:** Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, 1 High Pool Hill Road, Provincetown
- **Tickets:** \$19
- **Telecharge:** 487-6400

you who have come to the end of your ropes with summer guests will feel somewhat relieved after seeing "The Doubtful Guest," about a strange creature who arrives and proceeds to take over the house.

"Der Traurige Zwolfpfunder, or The Blue Asp" features a femme fatale opera singer. "The Inanimate Tragedy" is the tale of buttons, strings and needles, all designed in Gorey's inimitable style, and played like puppets by the actors. "QRV" is a sprightly song of a cure-all potion.

And in some ways, so is "Amphoragorey," as it takes you along its mer-

ry way through the eccentric and grotesque and leaves you wondering what it's all about, yet all the while not really caring, because it's so entertaining.

Matz's music is delightful with as many bouncy twists and turns as Gorey's stories.

Doug Kraner's set design of Gorey's delightful black-and-white illustrations, complete with Edwardian characters, large urns, fireplace and book-lined walls, is wonderful.

Carol Sherry's imaginative costumes feature fashions of the era: big hats, swallow-tailed coats, sailor suits, feather boas - and sneakers. Mostly done in black and white with dashes of color here and there, the costumes are beautifully integrated with the set.

The show requires a talented cast to bring it off, and this ensemble is grand. The 10 actors all have a sure sense of conveying Gorey's extravagances. McDermott, who plays the "well-known author" Ogdred Weary (Gorey?), and often narrates the little tales, has a spectrum of expressive gestures at his command. Even his eyebrows can tell a story.

So if summer has gotten you down and you're up for a little pickup, take a trip to Provincetown for an escapade through the weird world of Edward Gorey.