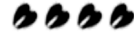




## Review of The Magic Tower



**"Tennessee Williams one act plays"**  
by Peter Saracen on 17/02/14

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The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams is one of my all time favourites of world drama so I was amazed to discover that "The Magic Tower" is a UK premiere. This play and "The Strangest Kind of Romance", deftly directed by Seamus Newham, at the Pentameters Theatre in Hampstead are two of this prolific writer's many one act plays. No exaggeration as apart from that poetic masterpiece of the reclusive Laura Wingfield and her glass animals and several other full-length works Mr Williams penned over 40 of the short variety.

The "Magic Tower" bursts into life with a song and dance routine, (dynamically delivered by Damian Regan and Claire- Monique Martin) which turns out to be just a memory recounted by Linda as she tries to iron her husband's shirt. A very content couple living in marital harmony, the title, being how she thinks of their home. However, we soon realise that this is an illusion, a fragile facade, which collapses when she is left alone. Pulled back to the reality of a shabby run-down attic apartment, rain coming through in several places. While Jim, her husband, is out for a hopeful meeting, her recent past visits her in the shape of two theatrical pals (recalled during the ironing) intent on enticing her back to the vaudeville stage. Will she trade love for the transient world of showbiz?

Julie Taylor as Linda particularly impresses as someone heading towards a kind of madness as she tries to hold together her romantic fantasy, a familiar theme in Williams' dramas. Wim Mellor as Jim gives solid support as an aspiring artist experiencing bitter disappointment. To add to their troubles is Victoria Kempton's amusingly feisty landlady, Mrs O' Fallon trying to obtain her rent, five weeks overdue.

"The Strangest Kind of Romance" presents us with an altogether different landlady played with aplomb and sensual relish by Francesca Wilde. She wastes no time in offering "entertainment" to her new tenant, an Italian immigrant. He agrees to stay if he can look after Nitchivo, a stray cat taken in by a previous and now deceased tenant. A strong clue to his character is supplied by the playwright who lists him only as "the little man". Alex From is easily watchable as this man who finds it hard to exist in the real world and takes emotional refuge in feeding the cat and having one-sided conversations to the bemusement of the landlady. Now and again, her father appears, frustration and low esteem effectively conveyed by Jeffrey Kaplow.

These two shorts, set in 1930's America, are well worth the visit, especially, as for some inexplicable reason, they are hardly ever produced. So, thanks, to Leonie Scott-Matthews for being one of the exceptions and putting these on.

### Event Venues & Times

**Showing until 06/11/16** [Pentameters Theatre](#) | above The Horseshoe pub, entrance in Oriel Place, 28 Heath Street, London, NW3 6TE

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