

# bestoflondonlife

## a quirky look at London Life

18 NOV 2016

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## Tennessee Williams @ Pentameters Theatre Hampstead

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

WILD AT HEART

PENTAMETERS THEATRE HAMPSTEAD

Four 15 minute plays which give the most extraordinary insight into the developing genius of Tennessee Williams:

DON'T MISS!!

Show closing Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 2016 **5pm**

Box Office 02074353648

<http://www.pentameters.co.uk> (<http://www.pentameters.co.uk>)

These four short plays formidably acted by actresses of the highest quality (with able support from the male actors) focus on Williams' view of damaged women who begin life with loads of good looks, were sexy as hell and end up not so good-looking and alone in their heads and basically alcoholic.

The great characters are still to come but in three of these short plays we can see what's in store for Blanche du Bois.

In **At Liberty**, Gloria La Green played by Ava Amande as the (still) good-looking thirty-something girl around a small town is confronted constantly by her truth-telling mother (Victoria Kempton) and is consistently told she is not what she wants to think she is. "Yes, you have lost your looks!"

In **Hello from Bertha**, Sarah Dorsett plays a has-been prostitute, ill and now taking up a room in a brothel where the room she lies in needs to be "really" for the working girls and since she is no longer a cash-cow – move on. Dorsett gave the most wonderful performance of mood change from pride, to rage, to coquetry, to begging.

The most moving and poetic piece was the final sequence: **Talk to me Like the Rain and let me Listen.**

In this, the actress Alice Ivor delivers the most moving soliloquy of how she imagines life might be away from the squalid, inner-city rented room in which she lives. She longs to be somewhere else and tragically to be someone else. She even invents a new name for herself and repeats it with awe.

Tennessee Williams described these plays as “a prayer for the wild at heart living in cages.”

I think also of Marina's Carr's fabled *Portia Coughlan* – a truly great play about (again) a beautiful young woman living in a village which couldn't live up to her.

So, what of men? In **Mr Paradise**, we have a broken down old-guy poet; broken down and broke and (again) living in squalid habitation.

To him- or at least to his address – arrives a beautiful young woman – rich and privileged and enthralled by a book of his early poetry which she “found.”

She wants to resurrect him-make him famous again; his work deserves her efforts, she wants to rescue him from obscurity and neglect – she offers him readings at colleges and on the circuit. Dramatically, he declines, states unequivocally that whoever Mr Paradise is or was – he is an invented name. The old poet tells her his real name and says he wants to die with it; he doesn't want anyone who reads the poems written by Mr Paradise to see the author/poet as he really is.

He wants the ordinary person to die and the work (through Mr Paradise) to live on. He wants no association between author and work. So here there is another wish for loss of identity. But this is theatre! And Pentameters is the place indeed for poetry and ideas. However, I reflect that in real life 2016, I don't know many elderly and skint poets round Hampstead and its environs who would refuse a beautiful young woman's ministrations on such noble grounds.

We know of course what a great genius Tennessee Williams is, so this review need not be about the writing – rather, how were these rare pieces (one newly discovered) presented?

The acting was of the highest standard, the direction (by Seamus Newham) immaculate and the production by Leonie Scott-Mathews (as always) spot on!

I am sorry I didn't see the plays earlier in its run to alert you, but go now -DON'T MISS THIS VERY RARE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE SOMETHING HISTORIC.

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