

GILBERT JOHNSON "PRESENT LAUGHTER" SET DESIGN MENTIONS IN REVIEWS:



**San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Reviews
"PRESENT LAUGHTER" Eureka Theater**

SF CITY Review by Barry David Horwitz

. . . The delightful period costumes, the smart, pale green and yellow Art Deco set, the rich suits, dresses, and furnishings all evoke a between-the-wars period of wealth and self-indulgence for the stylish class. . .



SF CITY Review by Richard Connema

. . . Gilbert Johnson's set design is a wonderful detailed depiction of Garry's living room, while David Draper's costumes are chic for the 1930s appeal. . .

MY CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Review by George Heymont

. . . Working on a handsome art deco set designed by Gilbert Johnson with costumes by David Draper, Fisher's added ... touches include: . . .

Vmedia

THEATRE ARTS REVIEWS AND EVENTS

. . . Scenic designer Gilbert Johnson's set is stylish in all sky blue with gold and silver lined art deco studio room that features a few doors to keep the cast coming and going and rooms to hide. A large entrance alcove with a big window and additional rooms are elegant.

for all Events

VICTOR CORDELL

. . . The staging is handsome, with an Art Deco parlor room and unobtrusive lighting and sound. . .


THEATREWORLD

Internet Magazine

Review by Kedar K. Adour MD

. . . The expectations of being entertained by a Noel Coward sophisticated drawing room comedy are set in motion by a stunning art deco drawing room set and a member of the cast singing two Noel Coward songs and playing an upright piano in the area that could be called the pit. . .



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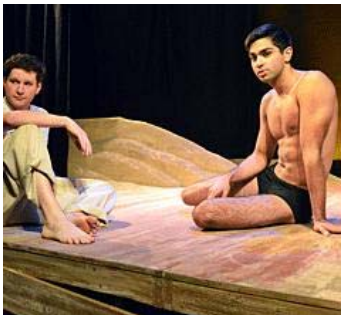
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Entertainment :: Theatre

"Something Cloudy, Something Clear"

by Richard Dodds
Bay Area Reporter
Friday Jan 11, 2013

PRINT EMAIL COMMENTS (0)



Aaron Wilton plays a young writer who becomes infatuated with a draft dodger (Kayal Khanna) during a summer at the beach in Tennessee Williams' "Something Cloudy, Something Clear." Photo: Gilbert Johnson

It's rare when you can experience a great playwright collaborating with himself at both the beginning and end of his career. Certainly, Tennessee Williams had the proclivity to return to plays that missed the mark the first time around, making changes in plot, tone, and even titles. But "Something Cloudy, Something Clear" differs from these other adjustments. Instead he is working with a short play written in 1941 - three years before the world took note with The Glass Menagerie - and interweaving two of the characters from it 40 years later, for rueful ruminations on what took place on a Provincetown beach in 1940.

Theatre Rhino Executive Director John Fisher has an interest in exploring the crannies of the Williams canon plays that are often overlooked, having entered 2012 with "The Two-Character Play," and now another new year with "Something Cloudy, Something Clear" at the Eureka Theatre. The 1940s play that drew Williams back to his typewriter 40 years later was titled "The Parade," or "Approaching the End of a Summer," and it's unlikely he could have

imagined a society that would allow it someday to be produced.

The end of that summer brought an end to Williams' first head-over-heels romance, and the play was his personal eulogy to the affair. Not even the name of the object of abject desire has been changed. He is Kip, a draft-dodger from Canada with a resemblance to Nijinsky who sways the playwright away from his usual habit of messy one-night-stands. But Kip comes with a wife, sort of, who also serves as a pimp, sort of, and this menage a trois can't quite figure out what to do with itself.

While you can certainly hear viscous Williams poetry in the dialogue, it seldom finds the lift or humor that's found even in the playwright's heavy-handed later works, owing in part, perhaps, to the solid Aaron Wilton's earthbound performance as the young playwright. It is also hard to hear poetry as Gwen Kingston declares her lines as if she were a character in a musical comedy on her way to a box social. Kayal Khanna takes more of an understated approach to Kip, while Jeffrey Biddle and Maryssa Wanlass play a series of visitors to Provincetown including a B-movie villain actually named Bugsy.

Gilbert Johnson's scenic design captures the feel of sand-swept dunes around a Provincetown beach shack. But what the play and this production can't capture is an essence of Williams that usually can be counted upon to make an appearance - be it graceful or clumsy - in whatever bears the playwright's name.

"Something Cloudy, Something Clear" will run through Jan. 13 at the Eureka Theatre. Tickets are \$15-\$30. Call (800) 838-3006 or go to www.therhino.org.



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A Beautiful Production of Tennessee Williams "Something Cloudy, Something Clear"

[01-10-2013](#) / [Richard Connema](#)

A Beautiful Production of Tennessee Williams "Something Cloudy, Something Clear"

It is indeed uncommon to see this Tennessee William's play these days and the Theatre Rhinoceros is presenting that rare look to see one of the playwright's most daring plays. "Something Cloudy, Something Clear" is Williams' dream like autobiographic play written in 1975. It was considered experimental for its time. However it is not totally about the playwright's early life since the drama speaks for us all. We all have moments in which we recall definite portions of our lives with astonishing clarity. "Life finally seems to occur all at one time" as the play's main character, August, tells us.

Tennessee William's final play is different from "The Glass Menagerie" since in this play Williams in not a narrator outside the action looking back at an earlier time but the author playing the part of a playwright and existing in two time frames simultaneously. The poetry of the drama is fresh here: it feels distinctively Williams. You feel each of the central three characters both from outside and inside with flashing sympathy and criticism. . It's an astonishing work and gorgeously rendered by John Fisher and the Rhinoceros Company

The play is set in Provincetown in the summer of 1940. Twenty Nine year old August (Aaron Wilton), as ambitious playwright living in a beach house and an noticeable stand-in for Tennessee himself, has the "hots" for young Kim (Kayal Khanna), an unemployed Canadian dancer and draft dodger who is suffering from a brain tumor. Sly August tries to meet Kip through his "sister" Clair (Gwen Kingston) who also had diabetes problems and she is happy enough to pimp Kip since, as she explains to August, they are both the sort of people who have to live off others. This sort of reminds me of Blanche Du Bois's reliance of the kindness of strangers in "A Streetcar Named Desire".

There is a sub plot involving August rewriting "Battle of Angels" for his intended Broadway debut ("Battle" ultimately fold in its disastrous Boston tryout). The injections of some of the past characters into his present world seems to be a bit awkward but we are introduced to the arrival at the beach house Tallulah Bankhead, who will play the lead in August's new play (although actually she didn't). Tallulah's outrageous behavior, as spectacularly evoked by Maryssa Wanlass serves a comedy relief in this drama

Aaron Wilton as August makes an extremely appealing figure and he has the gestures and nuances of Tennessee Wilson along with a nice Southern accent. Rayal Khanna is charismatic as Kip and even does dance moments reminiscent of Martha Graham in the first act. The match of these two men is exciting. Gwen Kingston is excellent as a person who doesn't have a coy bone in her body as the fiercely protective Clair. Maryssa Wanlass is especially strong as actress Caroline Wales who champions the young playwright's work and reads his sexuality clearly. Jeffrey Biddle gives good account of himself in various roles including a gagster named Bugsy, a Merchant Seaman and Maurice the producer of the play.

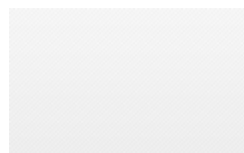
Scenic Designer has devised an interesting beach set made mostly of wooden planks. John Fisher direction is sharp. "Something Cloudy, Something Clear" runs through January 19th at the Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson Street, san Francisco. For tickets call 800-838-3006 or on line at www.TheRhino.org

Categories: [Richard Connema](#)

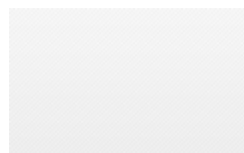
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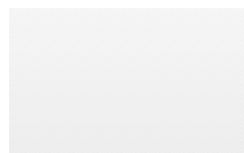
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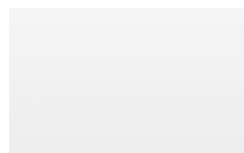
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TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' "THE TWO CHARACTER PLAY"

Theatre Rhinoceros, America's longest running professional queer theatre presented the little produced Tennessee Williams drama "The Two-Character Play" at the Eureka that closed on January 15th at the Eureka Theatre. "The Two Character Play" opened at the Hampstead Theatre in London in 1967, 20 years after "A Streetcar Named Desire". This bizarre discombobulating piece about a brother and sister who half act out a play about a brother and sister met with mixed reviews. The play was redrafted as "Out Cry" and died a death in New York and was then rewritten again in 1976 as "The Two Character Play. John Fisher directed the new version with two excellent actors playing the brother and sister.

Felice (Ryan Tasker) the brother and Clare (Alexandra Creighton), the sister is playing in a small touring company in a deep Southern Town after a series of big-time failures. The couple find themselves stranded in a rundown old theatre, broke and abandoned by their fellow actors. Struck with each other on a strange set with an audience demanding to be entertained, Felice and Clare begin to perform "The Two Character Play", a work by Felice that Clare loathes because it forces her to confront real-life terrors. The play within the play is about two penniless persons who have an irrational fear of public open spaces after witnessing their parents' grisly deaths. There is also a hint of incest between this brother and sister.

Tennessee Williams' drama is reminiscent of Jean Paul Sartre's "No Exit" with a little bit of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" thrown in for good measure. The script is rambling and sometimes muddled as it worked out its complex representation on one personality splitting into two and then two more in a play within a play. The actors dip and out of the performance, sometimes rushing over the dialogue of the play within the play by the sister hitting a key on a piano that is located on stage. Sometimes it becomes increasing difficult to differentiate the actors from the characters and reality from illusion. However the confusion is interesting and is was moving portrait of the confused state of the playwright's mind in those despairing years. Actually the playwright was committed to a mental institution in 1969 by his brother Dakin.

John Fisher directed the play with delicacy and Ryan Tasker and Alexandra Creighton are well cast in this one hour and 40 minute play. Alexandra Creighton gives a touching performance as the spaced-out and unfocussed Clare. Ryan Tasker gives the dialogue a rich verbal delivery it demands. Gilbert Johnson's aptly cluttered theatrical set which includes a Elizabethan throne and a large painting of the face of man that might have been in George Orwell's *1984*. Rover Spotts' lighting uses portentously darkening lights along with Kai Morrison's ethereal taped score are a great asset to this production.

The Two Character Play closed on January 15th at the Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson Street, San Francisco.

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

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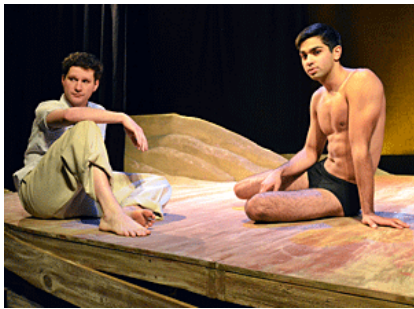


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Tennessee Williams on the beach Theatre

by Richard Dodds

Published 01/10/2013



Aaron Wilton plays a young writer who becomes infatuated with a draft dodger (Kayal Khanna) during a summer at the beach in Tennessee Williams' *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*.
 Photo: Gilbert Johnson

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B-movie villain actually named Buggy.

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Hey, Kids, Let's Put on an Opera: Bennett, 18, Does Just That

Review by Stephen West



Aug. 19 (Bloomberg.com) -- If Red Bennett becomes a famous composer someday, you heard about him here first.

Bennett, 18, didn't spend his summer at the beach after graduating from high school in May. Instead, he helped organize last weekend's world premiere of his first opera, "What They Seem: A Fantasy Opera for Adults and Children" in a polished production in San Francisco. . .

. . .The 50-minute production, directed by Michael Mohammed, was also aided by **Gilbert Johnson's** fairy-tale sets and costumes, which added some visual wit to the show. . .

The Opera Tattler

Reviews Of Operas And Their Audiences

August 16, 2008

What They Seem Premiere



[Interlochen Academy of the Arts](#) graduate Red Bennett's opera [What They Seem](#) premiered yesterday evening at the [Mission Cultural Center](#) in San Francisco. . . .

. . . The set, designed by **Gilbert Johnson**, was sweetly threadbare and not overly complex.
