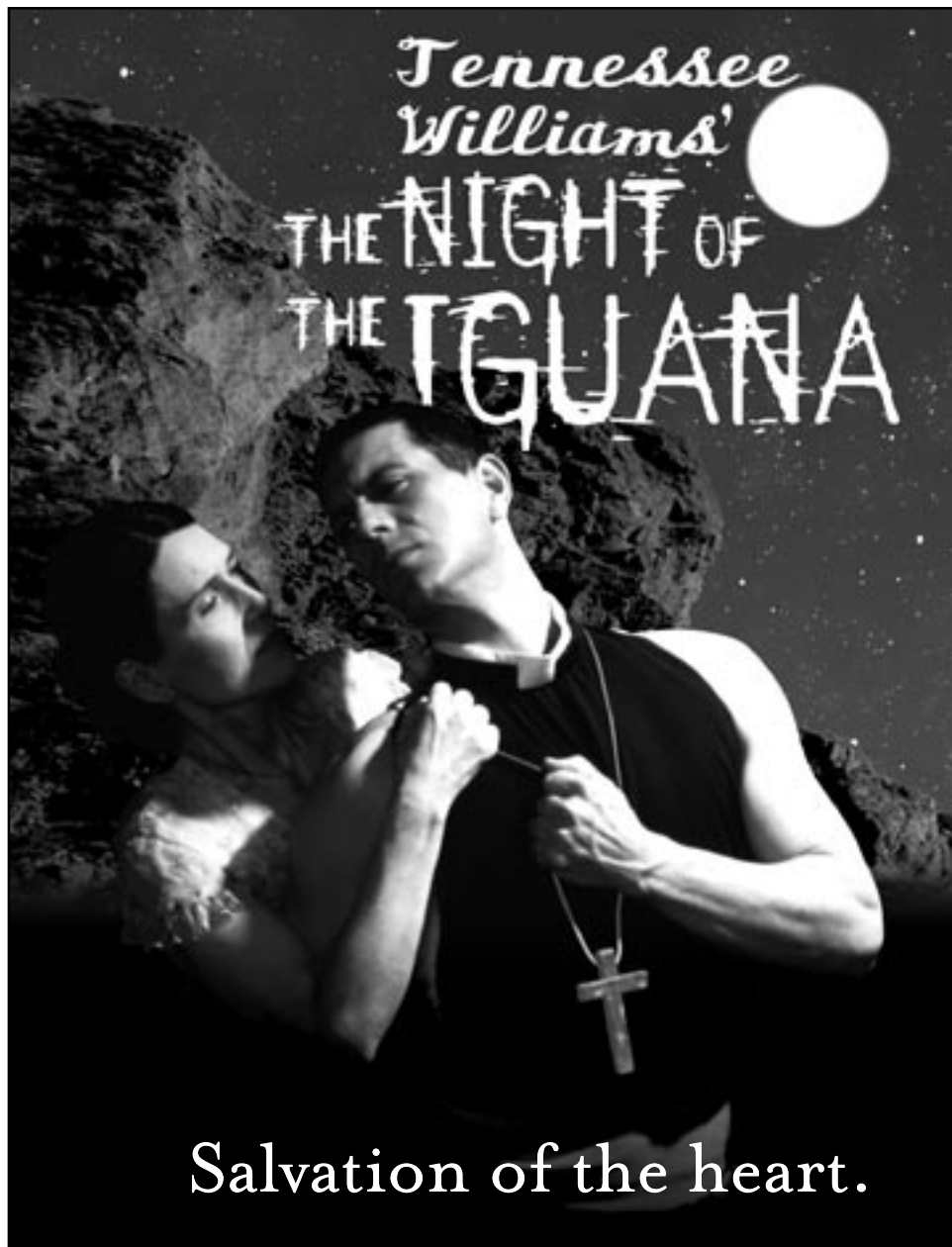


manitoba *theatre* centre

P R E S E N T S



Salvation of the heart.

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

STUDY GUIDE

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Steven Schipper, Artistic Director

Zaz Bajon, General Manager

presents

Stephanie Zimbalist and Richard Eden

in

The Night of the Iguana

by

Tennessee Williams

Director	James O'Neil
Scenic Designer	Gary Wissmann
Costume Designer	Ann Bruice
Lighting Designer	Kevin Lamotte
Composers	Hekar Rivera, Steven Sunnarborg
Sound Designer	Dave Beaudry
Production Stage Manager	Linda M. Tross
Assistant Stage Manager	Suzanne Dixon
Production Assistant (MTC)	Gail Henderson Brown

A co-production with Rubicon Theatre, Ventura, CA

Cast (in order of appearance)

Maxine Faulk	Stephanie McNamara
Pedro.....	Armando Rey
Pancho	Victor Gomez
Reverend Shannon.....	Richard Eden
Hank	Chris Cotone
Herr Fahrenkopf	Rudolph Willrich
Frau Fahrenkopf	Von Rae Wood
Wolfgang	Craig Mulgrew
Judith Fellowes	Laurel Lyle
Hannah Jelkes.....	Stephanie Zimbalist
Charlotte Goodall	Anne Ross
Jonathan Coffin (Nonno)	Efrem Zimbalist Jr.
Jake Latta.....	Joseph Fuqua

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French (Canada) Ltd. and Samuel French, Inc. on behalf of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.

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The Role of the Audience

Students can be led to love the theatre, if they are prepared properly for the experience.

Before arriving at the theatre, please discuss with students the differences between live theatre and the cinema. The differences are not as obvious to students as you may think. Students need to understand that, unlike at the movies, the audience affects the live performance and that the show will never be precisely the same again as when they see it.

Students must employ a higher degree of attention and self discipline than they do to watch a movie – and *much* higher than they do to watch TV.

Other points to mention ... please

- ❖ Arrive at the theatre with ample time to get comfortably seated.
- ❖ Avoid foyer congestion by distributing the tickets prior to arriving at the theatre.

- ❖ Sit in the assigned seat described by row and number on the ticket.
- ❖ Go to the bathroom before the show. Leaving in the middle of the performance disrupts the actors as well as the audience.
- ❖ Using a camera or any type of recording equipment is not allowed.
- ❖ Finish refreshments in the lobby before entering the theatre.
- ❖ Respect fellow audience members and the performers by refraining from talking during the performance. (even whispers carry!)
- ❖ Be moderate with the use of fragrances when attending performances so that those with allergies can also enjoy the performance.
- ❖ Turn off wristwatch alarms, cellular phones and beepers for the duration of the show.
- ❖ Unwrap cough candy, if necessary, prior to the play - the noise can cause distractions for others including the actors.
- ❖ Remain seated until the cast has taken their curtain call at the end.
- ❖ Applaud the actors as a way of showing them how much the show was enjoyed.

The audience's reward for its complete attention is what keeps theatre alive in our technological age: its unrepeatability, its uniqueness, its aliveness.

There is just nothing like it!

Synopsis

The setting: (description from the play)

"The play takes place in the summer of 1940 in a rather rustic and very Bohemian hotel, the Costa Verde, which as its name implies, sits on a jungle-covered hilltop overlooking the "caleta" or "morning beach," of Puerto Barrio on the west coast of Mexico, near Acapulco. However in 1940, the villages were still predominantly primitive Indian villages and the still water morning beach of Puerto Barrio and the rain forests above it were among the world's wildest and loveliest populated places."

The major characters:

Lawrence T. Shannon, former priest, now tour guide arrives at the Costa Verde with a busload of women. He holds the key to the bus and refuses to continue.

Charlotte Goodall and her chaperone Judith Fellowes, are part of Shannon's tourist group who insist on continuing to the scheduled hotel in Puerto Barrio.

Hotel owner Maxine Faulk is happy to see Shannon who has stayed at the Costa Verde before.

Hannah Jelkes arrives with her ailing poet grandfather. They are in financial distress hoping to pay their bill through poetry recitations and the sale of Hannah's artwork.

A German family appears to be the only paying guests. They include a honeymooning couple, the matriarch and the patriarch industrialist, celebrating the Battle of Britain via short wave radio.

The action:

The action revolves around Shannon who is in a state of nervous exhaustion and needs to stay at the hotel to try and gain some equilibrium. The busload of women want to leave and are incensed because Shannon has taken up with young Charlotte.

Maxine also wants Shannon to stay - her husband has recently died and she is lonely for male companionship beyond the Mexican boys who work for her.

Hannah Jelkes also needs to stay because her grandfather has suffered a number of small strokes and is no longer able to travel.

By the end of Act One, Scene One, it is late afternoon. The women on the tour have decided to go for a swim and their luggage has been removed from the bus. Maxine has allowed Hannah and her grandfather to stay for one night.

Scene Two begins several hours later. Dinnertime is approaching and a storm is brewing. The Mexican boys arrive with an iguana, which they tie up under the veranda. The boys plan to torment the beast and eventually kill and eat it. We meet the young, infatuated Charlotte as she pursues Shannon, and get to know more about Hannah and her grandfather. During dinner we see that Nonno is very frail and failing badly. The act ends as the storm breaks.

Moonlight bathes the veranda at the top of Act Two. A new guide shows up to take over the tour. The bus key is wrestled away from Shannon in an angry confrontation, which leads to his total breakdown. The tour ladies leave. Shannon, at his wits end, tries to head for the beach and a "swim out to China." He is eventually restrained and then tied up in the porch hammock. Shannon calms down as he and Hannah talk and have "a little understanding exchanged between them."

The play concludes in a quiet mood as Shannon and Maxine head to the beach for a midnight swim, and Hannah attends to her grandfather who has finally completed his last poem.

Glossary

amoebic - relating to microscopic organisms.

American Plan - a hotel that provides three meals daily included in the price of a room. The modified plan included only breakfast and dinner.

ascribing - attributing.

atheistical - without belief in God.

Aztec Civilization - the Aztecs dominated Mexico for nearly 200 years (1345-1521) and were flourishing when Spanish conquerors arrived in 1519. Aztec relics turn up at every construction site in Mexico City, but are best

viewed at the National Museum of Archaeology, which houses the Aztec calendar and other important artifacts of the Aztec empire.

benedict - reference to being a monk, a person who takes a vow of celibacy.

Berchtesgaden - a holiday resort town in the mountains of Bavaria famous because Mussolini and Hitler met there.

bidet - the bidet originated in France, at a time when full body bathing was done once a week. It was invented to cleanse the "private" areas of the body, in-between regularly scheduled baths. Although this is a common bathroom fixture in Europe and Latin America, it has never achieved popularity in the United States or Canada.

Black Hole of Calcutta - refers to an incident in India's history in 1756 when 146 British soldiers were imprisoned in a small airless dungeon. When the doors were opened the next morning 123 of them had died. This incident was the impetus for British imperialism in India. The truth of this report has been questioned but the saying has come to mean an horrendous place.

bluffing - a show of confidence or assertiveness intended to deceive.

Byronic - clothing in the style of Lord Byron, that is, an open and unbuttoned collar.

capitulation - surrender.

Carlota, the mad Empress - Maximilian's wife, Carlota went insane after his execution.

Carta Blanca - a Mexican beer.

condescending - patronizing, doing something in a manner showing one's superiority.

Conquistadors - name given to the 16th-century Spanish explorers, adventurers and soldiers who brutally brought Mexico and Peru under the control of Spain.

Cortez, Hernando (1485-1547) - Spanish conquistador, conqueror of Mexico.

chancel - the part of a church near the altar usually reserved for the clergy and the choir.

Continental Plan - a hotel that provides a continental breakfast daily consisting of a roll and coffee or tea included in the price of a room.

cornerstone - a basis of something.

Crane, Hart (1899-1932) - Modernist American poet known for his turbulent lifestyle and for committing suicide by throwing himself off an ocean liner in the Gulf of Mexico.

deadbeat - someone who fails to meet a financial obligation.

decrepitude - being worn out by age and infirmity.

defrocked - deprived of official position as clergy of the church.

degenerate - unworthy, low.

delinquent - an offender.

Deutsches Nachrichtenburo - the German news agency.

dilapidated - in a state of ruin.

dysentery - a disease with severe inflammation of the intestines causing severe diarrhea.

emancipated - caused to be less inhibited by moral or social conventions.

Enteroviaform - a drug commonly used at the time of the play to treat diarrhea. It has since been shown to be a potential cause of neurological damage and has been taken off the market in many countries.

exonerated - declared free from blame.

flapper - a young woman of the 1920's who flaunted her unconventional dress and conduct.

foe - enemy.

fornication - consensual sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

frisk - feel over or search a person.

fumigated - disinfect or purify with fumes.

gyp - a swindle in which a person is persuaded to buy something that is worthless.

hemlock - hemlock was the poison given to Socrates when he was sentenced to death in 399 BC.

heresy - a belief or practice contrary to the orthodox doctrine of the Christian Church.

hock shop - a place where an article can be placed as security for the payment of money borrowed.

humiliating - injuring the dignity or self respect of a person.

hustler - an unscrupulous individual.

iguana - a reptile found throughout Central and South America which can grow to between four and six feet.

impregnable - of a fortified position, one that cannot be taken by force.

inconsolable - a person who cannot be comforted in grief.

India rubber - rubber made from "ficus elastica," a plant native to India and Malaysia. An India rubber ball is extremely hard and bouncy.

infantilism - childish behaviour.

intimidate - frighten or overawe, especially to subdue or influence.

Jacobs-Bond, Carrie (1862-1946) - popular American songwriter of the early 1900's. She composed sentimental art songs that attained great popularity.

Juarez, Benito (1806 -1872) - national hero and president of Mexico from 1861 to 1863 and 1867 to 1872. In 1910, the City of Juarez erected a monument to his memory.

kickback - payment for collaboration especially for profit.

libation - a drink-offering usually to a god.

longevity - long life.

Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico (1832-1867) - Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph, Archduke of Austria became Emperor of Mexico when Napoleon III sought to extend French Imperial power. The unsuccessful attempt started in 1864 ended in 1867. Maximilian was executed by Benito Juarez, who was the Mexican president.

Maximilian's Palace - Chapultepec Castle is now the Museo Nacional de Historia, filled with hundreds of paintings and murals depicting the colonial era and military history.

Medea - a vengeful woman from Greek mythology. A sorceress named Medea helped Jason obtain the Golden Fleece. She married him, but when he deserted her in Corinth, she took vengeance by killing their children.

Mickey Finn - an alcoholic drink mixed with a narcotic administered to a person with the deliberate intention of stupefying him.

Montezuma's Revenge - Montezuma was the Aztec emperor of Mexico in 1519 when his country was conquered by Spain. The term Montezuma's Revenge is a colourful term for travelers' diarrhea caused by bacteria and toxins in areas with contaminated water supplies or inadequate food handling. People who live in these areas don't get sick because their bodies have developed some degree of immunity.

Nantucket - an island in Massachusetts.

Nevin, Ethelbert (1862-1901) - American composer of sentimental parlour songs.

oblivious - unaware or unconscious of.

palmetto - a small palm tree.

pariah dog - a vagrant mongrel dog.

patrona - owner.

perambulator - a four-wheeled carriage for a baby.

precocious - prematurely developed in some faculty or characteristic.

peevish - irritable.

petulant - irritable.

persecuting - being subjected to hostility.

prig - a self-righteously correct or moralistic person.

prodigy - a person endowed with exceptional skills or qualities.

providential - by divine foresight.

Rivera, Diego (1886-1957) - great Mexican painter and muralist.

regression - a return to a former state.

rucked - wrinkled, creased.

Rum-coco - a drink prepared in the shell of a coconut by knocking a cap off it and pouring into the nut a mixture of rum, lemon, sugar and cracked ice.

sabbatical - leave from a job usually granted at intervals.

sacked - fired.

San Juan de Letran - this most likely refers to the San Juan Letran district in Mexico City, which at one time was a centre for artists and musicians and has a street with the same name, which early in the 20th century was also a somewhat upscale red light district.

senile - having the weaknesses or diseases of old age.

severance pay - an amount paid to an employee on the early termination of a contract.

Sewanee - The "University of the South" in Tennessee, home to a seminary of the Episcopal Church.

shank - the lower part of the leg.

shank's mare - using one's own legs as a means of conveyance.

Siqueiros, David Alfaro (1896-1974) - Mexican mural artist.

spinsterish - having the qualities of a woman unlikely to marry.

statutory rape - sexual intercourse with a girl who has not reached the age of consent (even if both parties participate willingly.)

stroke - an interruption of the flow of blood to the brain.

Tenampa - in 1923, the cantina Salon Tenampa opened on what is now Plaza Garibaldi in Mexico City and soon became a popular gathering place for artists and businessmen.

Tropic of Cancer - a line of latitude on the Earth at 23.5 degrees north of the equator that is the northern boundary of the tropical region.

trussed up - tie a person up with the arms to the sides.

visisected - dissected alive for purposes of scientific research.

vamp - a seductive woman who uses her sex appeal to exploit men.

voluptuous - derived from sensuous or sensual pleasure.

vocation - occupation.

Wessel, Horst (1907-1930) - a German whose poem was put to music and became the official song of the Nazi Party.

Nazi Marching Song

Let's sing a little song today,
And drink some cool wine;
The glasses should be ringing,
Since we must part, we must part.

Give me your hand,
Your white hand,
Farewell, my love, farewell
Farewell, farewell,
Since we're going --
Since we're going --
Since we're going against England.

Westinghouse - a refrigerator.

wry - dry and mocking.

Xochimilco - the floating gardens at Xochimilco, a popular attraction near Mexico City. Boat rides take visitors through a flower-lined canal system that was built by the ancient Aztecs.

Playwright

Tennessee Williams (1911 - 1983)

"Of course it is a pity that so much of all creative work is so closely related to the personality of the one who does it."

-Tennessee Williams (from "Person to Person", a *New York Times* article, printed as a preface to the text of **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**)

Tennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams in Columbus, Mississippi in 1911 to a traveling shoe salesman and the daughter of an Episcopal minister. His family moved to St. Louis when he was twelve.

He attended the University of Missouri for a time but money was short and he had to drop out. He worked in a shoe factory for a couple of years but was forced to give that up because of ill health. He moved in with his grandparents in Memphis.

Williams did earn some money by writing short stories and was able to attend the University of Washington. Then he enrolled in the University of Iowa's writers' workshop, where he received his degree in 1938 and the nickname "Tennessee" after the birthplace of his father.

His first play **Cairo, Shanghai, Bombay** was produced in 1935.

In 1939, Williams won \$100 in a playwriting contest sponsored by the Group Theater for **American Blues**. He also received a Rockefeller Grant to write a new play.

A prolific career followed:

- 1940 **Battle of Angels**
- 1945 **The Glass Menagerie**
- 1947 **A Streetcar Named Desire & Summer and Smoke**
- 1951 **The Rose Tattoo**
- 1953 **Camino Real**
- 1955 **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**
- 1957 **Orpheus Descending**
- 1958 **Suddenly Last Summer**
- 1959 **Sweet Bird of Youth**
- 1961 **The Night of the Iguana**
- 1964 **The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore**
- 1969 **In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel**
- 1973 **Small Craft Warnings**
- 1975 **Memoirs**, an autobiography
- 1980 **Clothes for a Summer Hotel**
- 1981 **Something Cloudy, Something Clear**
- 1982 **A House Not Meant to Stand**

Throughout his life, Williams struggled with depression, alcoholism, a nervous breakdown and constant fear that he would go insane as had his sister, Rose.

Williams's critical reception - especially on Broadway - cooled in the late sixties as his works became more

experimental in form. However, he did see an era of successful revivals of his older works.

In February 1983, Williams died, leaving behind over seventy play, three novels, eight collections of short stories and poetry. He is buried in St. Louis, Missouri. He is considered one of America's greatest playwrights.

About the Play

The Night of the Iguana was first presented at the Royale Theatre in New York on December 28, 1961 and won the Drama Critics' Circle Award for that year.

Feature Article

Critical Overview of **The Night of the Iguana**

"Many critics believe that **The Night of the Iguana** was Tennessee William's last great play. Howard Taubman of the *New York Times* writes, "For Mr. Williams, **The Night of the Iguana** marks a turning point. When compared with the best of the preceding plays, this work of subtle vibrations reflects a profound change. It goes beyond the elimination of the explosive and shocking gestures, which have given some of the other work the fillip of being sensational and scandalous, and reaches into the playwright's attitude towards life." A concurring critic, Harold Clurman of *The Nation*, finds Williams's writing to be superb. He says, "The writing ... is lambent, fluid, malleable and colloquially melodious. It bathes everything in glamour." Numerous critics believe the character of Hannah is key to the play's success. An unnamed critic in *Life* argues, "**The Night of the Iguana** is Williams's best play in many seasons, and Hannah drives

home - more explicitly than any of his other characters ever has - the heart of his writing." Taubman agrees when he writes, "No character of Mr. Williams' invention had had the heartbreaking dignity and courage of Hannah Jelkes. ..." Even an unnamed critic in *Time*, who calls the plot "sketchy," finds something to like. This critic writes, "It is Hannah's kindness to be cruel." The other main character, the fallen Reverend Shannon, is seen by most critics as more typical of Williams but he still has some distinctive attributes. Clurman of *The Nation* argues that "There is very little indulgence in the portrait of Reverend Shannon." Glenn Embry in his essay "The Subterranean World of **The Night of the Iguana**," believes Shannon's fate defines him quite differently than other tortured souls in Williams's plays. He writes, "The main character of **The Night of the Iguana** seems to escape the violent fate usually in store for Williams's heroes. True, desire has been ruining Shannon's life for the past ten years, but at the climax of the play he manages to form what promises to be a lasting sexual relationship with a mature woman. This optimistic ending appears to make **Iguana** very different from the serious plays that precede it; for the first time hope breaks across Williams's bleak world."

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Activities

Activities for Language Arts Students

1. Shannon refers to his "spook." What does he mean? How does the "spook" affect Shannon's life? How does his relationship to the "spook" affect his relationships with others?
2. Williams quotes a part of a Emily Dickinson poem on the first page of the published play:

"And so, as kinsmen met a-night,
We talked between the rooms
Until the moss had reached our lips,
And covered up our names."

Research the complete poem. How does the stanza relate to the play?
3. Discuss how Williams portrays the split between sexuality and spirituality. Are there specific characters, who portray each of these? How does Shannon's relationship with other characters reveal how he feels about this split in himself?

Activities for Drama Students

1. Tennessee Williams described his plays as "plastic theatre." He wanted to create a multi-dimensional theatre, one that did not rely on language as the principal medium but used all the arts of the stage to create its effects. Discuss plastic theatre in relation to MTC's production of **The Night of the Iguana**.
2. What did you feel at the end of the play? Based on what you have learned about the characters during the play, speculate on what happens to

them the next day, the next week and the next year.

3. Discuss why Williams set his play in Mexico. What would change both in the physical life of the play and in the emotional life if it was set in Winnipeg?

Available at the Winnipeg Public Library:
video recording of feature film - **The Night of the Iguana**
starring Richard Burton, Ava Gardner, Deborah Kerr
directed by John Huston
ISBN 0792809580

www.guthrietheater.org

www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org

Activities for Social Studies Students

- 1 The play is set in 1940. Research World War II. Had the U.S. entered the war yet? What was happening in Europe? Does your understanding of the world situation help you to understand the play? How did you react to the German family? How does Williams use them to reflect what is happening in the larger world?
- 2 Write a review of the MTC production of **The Night of the Iguana**. Reviews typically consist of an introduction including the name of the play, author, theatre director and type of play (e.g. comedy, tragedy etc.); a description of the themes and relevant issues, and your thoughts about how the play conveyed these; your thoughts about various aspects of the production (e.g. music, acting, costumes, set) and a conclusion evaluating the play on the whole. MTC enjoys receiving reviews from students. Please send to MTC, Attn. Nan Carson, Outreach Co-ordinator, 174 Market Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3B 0P8.

Study guide prepared by Nan Carson. Cover design by Doowah.

Resources

Lots of information is available on the web using "Tennessee Williams" or "**The Night of the Iguana**" in the search engine.