

Neptune's 'Glass Menagerie'

by J.L. Round

There is no play like an old play - especially if it is **The Glass Menagerie**. And that goes doubly when you run across a startlingly beautiful production of it as is Neptune's current project. But that is not the say that the production is perfect. The production on the whole has faults, which will be duly chastised, but there are parts of the play given a cherished treatment of such nature to be of a most moving and stirring quality.



R.H. Thomson as Tom, the narrator and central figure in Tennessee Williams' largely-autobiographical play, gives a surcharge of emotion to this character torn between responsibility and dreams. Although he is least pleasing as the narrator, Thomson's interpretation of the frustrated dreamer approaches the very core of the character's nature. Most impressive is the equivocal love-hate relationship with Amanda, his mother, especially in two of the play's early scenes. In the scene

moments it is hard, and perhaps unfair, to choose one such moment above all others.

Neil Munro's Jim, bursting upon the scene, is a harsh intrusion into the settled dust of dimness and despair within the play. He is in complete discord with the current of the other characters. Bold, brash, impulsive, he is the catalyst who entices the other personalities into the open. The force and subtlety with which Munro invests his character is highly impressive. His face is an extremely expressive instrument, better utilized, however, in parts that incorporate a wider range of emotion.

If I were to choose my favourite performance of the play, it would be Carole Galloway's delicate, fragile Laura. She is frailty itself. Galloway brings such an intense vulnerability to the part that it is almost torture to watch her as she is exposed to the cruelties, however unintentional, of the others. As she slowly emerges from her shell, there is a tangible quality to the fearful hope given to her by this brash young man who has entered her life. But just as she begins to reach out, hope is crushed, and she withers like a cut flower.

As for the play itself, there were certain scenes that tended to be a bit tedious in that they failed to sustain the high-energy level of the rest of the performance. But what I found offensive about the production was its overly abundant, and rather ill-fitting humour. Certainly there is humour in the play, but not to the extent that the audience seemed to find in it. Indeed, it does seem that the audience's initially unsympathetic reaction to Laura's frailty was the source of some of the humour more than was the hand of director, John Wood. Laura's is not an unusual case, where what

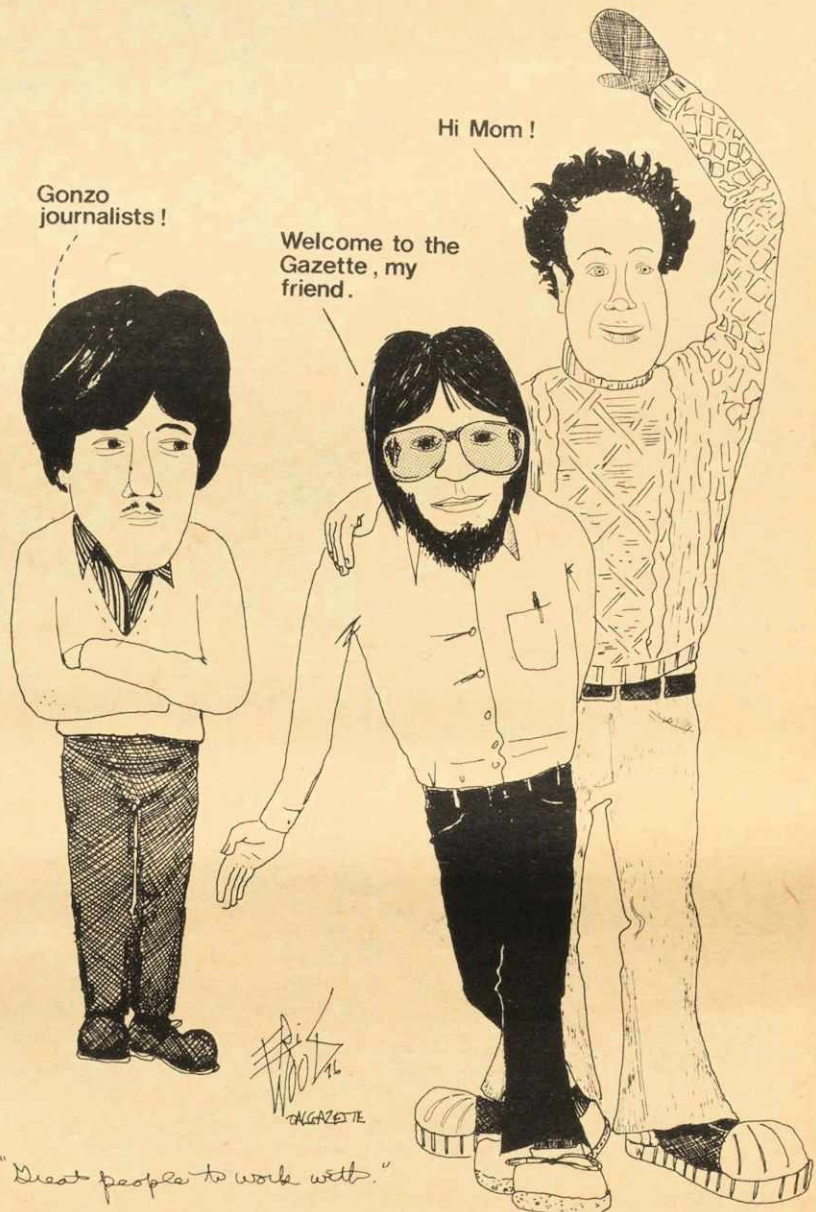
of Tom and Amanda's grand fight Thomson displays a highly explosive and virile talent in what becomes a fascinating moment of theatre, excellently rivalled by Rita Howell as Amanda. Later, in the fire-escape scene, the same shared animation between the two characters is directed with equal fervor, this time in tenderness, which only serves to make the incompatibility of mother and son all the more regrettable.

Rita Howell's Amanda is a slight little woman of great stamina and vitality. She endures the cruel jests of life with a valour that is at once laudable and pitiable. It is possibly the scene in which Amanda resur-

rects the memory of her youth that Howell's subtle abilities are most fully revealed, yet in a play with such an abundance of intimate may seem amusing at first glance is really pathetic when closely observed although, undeniably, there is a rueful humour in the ineffectual actions of this pitiable character.

Where I took offense most was the scene in which Amanda dresses up in her old, preserved finery in preparation for the expected gentleman. Amanda is a character whose behaviour should be equally as dignified as it can be ridiculous. This was not, however, one of those times belonging to the latter

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"Great people to work with."

Women *continued from page 18*

seems insane and the committee headed by Broderic appears to be little more than a "bunch of wild-eyed radicals".

In light of these facts, the aims of the group hardly seem radical. Women need to be represented in the administration structure, which sets the wages and conducts the promotions, demotions, hirings and firings -- for as it stands the highest position held by a woman is the chairing of a department. At the moment the committee knows of only 6 female full professors out of a teaching staff of 844. Not a very good ratio -- and one which Broderic fears could easily get

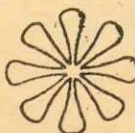
worse: "When economies are instituted, women go first. We have to stand up and be counted now or in two years there may be no women to count."

The committee is modeling its inquiry after similar reports done by other universities. It will basically be a factual report, reviewing salary disparities, hiring practices, and female student--professor ratios, but will also deal with the more subtle biases: "the cultural conditioning biases". The committee is interested in discovering if there are any sexual preferences as to who are called on to speak in class, who are encouraged to pursue certain careers and who are given university scholarships.

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Written applications must be forwarded to Student Council Vice-President Ann Gillis by 5pm on April 18, 1976.