

Cat On A Hot Tin Roof

by Jonathan Sears

The Playhouse has some distinctive smells about it. On January 23, these were supplemented by the fragrances and odors of a full house eager to whiff TNB's interpretation of Tennessee Williams *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. As the scents settled on my drama starved brain, a performance unfolded on-stage that enveloped the whole space, and carried the audience into the heart of the hot blooded south.

A cat, a drunk and a Patriarch—these are the parts in this production truly worth performing, and worth watching. Although the usurping Matriarch runs a close honorable mention, the above trinity crafts the terrific tension that made Monday's performance worthwhile.

The atmosphere created was as make-up should be: generously complementary, while still unnoticeable. The highlight of this aspect was the use of cigarettes and cigars. In addition to providing the necessary outlet for the cat's fidgeting, and the chasm's—edge tension throughout the second and third acts, the smoking element treated my scent palate. Imagine: the lights are down, beginning the second act, when the distinctive smell of a cigar rolls off the blacked-out stage into the audience. At first a gentle hint of the ambiance of the cotton/tobacco belt of America, it becomes the unmistakable harbinger of the Patriarch, big daddy. A brain of genius. Thanks TNB.

In order of theatrical impact: Cigar prelude, Big Daddy (Patriarch)—Douglas Campbell, Maggie (the Cat)—Sarah Orenstein and Brick (the Drunk)—C. David Johnson; who gets the best line, and I quote: "Maggie, you're spoiling my liquor".

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