



## The brutal dysfunction of Tennessee Williams' 'Cat On A Hot Tin Roof' wraps up Theatre UAF's season

Tennessee Williams' "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is a modern theater classic and is performed annually by theater companies around the world. One of the reasons for the 1955 Pulitzer Prize-winning play's popularity is its timeless themes, such as the repression of self-identification, desire, greed and social mores, according to Rebecca George, who is directing a production by Theatre UAF.

"Williams is just a really incredible playwright, and there's so many layers to this play," said George, a guest artist for the troupe who also teaches acting at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. "There's some real interesting relationships between the men and the women in the play, and it kind of becomes Maggie's story. It's an empowering story for women."

The story takes place during an evening in the home of a dysfunctional Southern family, the Pollitts, who are embroiled in a common crisis. While they're celebrating the birthday of family patriarch Big Daddy, the family must own up to past untruths and come face to face with mortality. The heart of the story is the relationship between Big Daddy's son, Brick, and Brick's wife, Maggie.

Mary Conlin is portraying Maggie. Conlin is a theater major who transferred to UAF from Missouri last semester, and the role of Maggie is her first main stage role at UAF. George praises her performance. "Mary is incredible," she said. "She is just really good, and I'm so happy to be working with her."

Brick is portrayed by Jaron Carlson, another relative newcomer to Fairbanks. He has a degree in theater and has spent much of the last seven years performing in Anchorage theater.

Katrina Kuharich, who is graduating from UAF this spring, plays Mae. "She's bringing lots of fun stuff to that role," George said.

George also pointed out that the costumes are designed by another UAF student, Amanda Casterline, who received an URSA (Undergraduate Research & Scholarly Activity) grant from the university for the project.

"It's her thesis project," George said. "She's very excited about this work. She put it in her portfolio and got a job this summer in a regional theater."

Since Big Daddy and Big Mama are older than traditional college students, George tapped a couple of local actors to fill the role. Steve Mitchell, who has been involved with local theater since 1975, is Big Daddy.

"He usually plays comedic roles," George said of Mitchell. "He's got some real intensity and does some great dramatic work."

Big Mama is UAF theater professor Siri Tuttle. Adam Gillette, the technical director at UAF, did the set design and did an incredible job, George said. The production is using the entire Salisbury stage, which is needed for a successful production of this play.

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is Shakespearian in scope, George said, which gives the actors a lot of room in which to build their characters.

"This play deals with the extremities of human emotion and life circumstances that are real and happen but are dramatic and extreme," she said. "We're using the whole space at the Salisbury Theater to give the actors the challenge to really embrace the passion it takes to portray these very intense life situations."

"A lot of contemporary plays are like television, kind of toned down. This is a medium you can really go big with."



L-R: Thomas Petrie as Gooper, Katrina Kuharich as Mae, Steve Mitchell (sitting) as Big Daddy, Jaron Carlson as Brick, Mary Conlin as Maggie and Siri Tuttle as Big Momma in Theatre UAF's "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" April 15-24, 2016  
Kade Mendelowitz photo / UAF



- Cast
- Mary Conlin — Maggie
  - Jaron Carlson — Brick
  - Steve Mitchell — Big Daddy
  - Siri Tuttle — Big Mama
  - Thomas Petrie — Gooper
  - Katrina Kuharich — Mae
  - Sam Thompson — Reverend Tooker
  - Michael Shaeffer — Doc Baugh
  - Molly Cable, Elizabeth "Lizzy" Cable, Josie Adasiak and Charlotte Phillips — The children

### IF YOU GO

**What:** Theatre UAF's "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof."  
**When:** 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday, and April 22 and 23; 2 p.m. April 24

**Where:** Lee H. Salisbury Theatre in the Fine Arts Complex, UAF Campus

**Tickets:** Online at [www.uaf.edu/theatrefilm](http://www.uaf.edu/theatrefilm), \$8 students; \$12 seniors/ military/UAF; \$16 adults. At the door, a \$2 service fee is added. Tickets are also available by calling the box office at 474-7751

**FYI:** More information at [www.uaf.edu/theatrefilm/current-season](http://www.uaf.edu/theatrefilm/current-season).