

'Streetcar' still rouses emotions

By BARBARA MICHALS

Man's desperate need to cling to illusions, a favorite theme in Tennessee Williams' plays, is poignantly illustrated in "A Streetcar Named Desire."

The Farmington Players' current production of this modern classic is still an emotional heavyweight, even if the storyline no longer holds, as it did when the play opened 30 years ago.

Overall, the players offer impressive performances. Director Nancy Harrover keeps the pace pleasantly brisk, and all technical aspects of the show are well-polished.

"Streetcar" centers on Blanche Dubois, a fading beauty and tattered remnant of Southern aristocracy. Having just lost the family mansion, an impoverished Blanche moves in with her younger sister Stella and Stella's working-class husband, Stanley Kowalski.

Review

BLANCHE IS horrified by their seedy two-room apartment in New Orleans' French Quarter. She is even more shocked by Stanley's overt earthiness, which she characterizes as disgusting animal-like.

It is soon apparent that the earthiness Kowalski finds so repulsive in Stanley is really a side of her own nature she refuses to acknowledge. Feeling guilty over a youthful tragedy with her homosexual lover, Blanche has ever since sought solace with passing male.

Nevertheless, she desperately clings to her illusions of gentility. When these illusions are irreparably stripped away, Blanche can no longer function.

OTHER CAST MEMBERS succeed with low-key approaches. As Stanley, Ray Turek is thoroughly convincing. Sable's facile expression help convey Stanley's coarseness, rather than the Neanderthal grumpiness famous by Marlon Brando in the role.

Sandy Dritsch gives a fine job as Stella, the soft-spoken, level-headed sister who supposedly has no illusions about herself or her marriage. Eventually, though, she too must seek the comfort of self-deception.

Jack Gruke gives a moving and sen-

sitive performance as Mitch, the lonely young man Blanche grasps as her last chance for respectability. An awkward and vulnerable suitor, Mitch is foiled by Blanche's pretensions but seems to be.

In a small role, Shirley Kolbasa is very effective as Eunice, the Kowalski's coarsely sexual neighbor, and Gary Strong and Douglas Buckley are satisfactory as Stanley's beer-guzzling buddies. As a nurse, Sharlan Douglas is the epitome of de-sexed institutionalism.

The women's costumes and hairdos capture the essence of their characters. Sable's plain frocks and straight hair, Eunice's tight shorts and up-do, and Blanche's clinging, gemstones and carefully arranged coiffure.

"A Streetcar Named Desire" continues at the Farmington Players' playhouse tonight through Sunday, Nov. 12, and Thursday-Saturday evenings, Nov. 16-18.

New York actors head cast of drama

Five New York actors will comprise the cast for the Meadow Brook Theatre's forthcoming production, "The Little Foxes," which will have a four-week run tonight at 8:30 on the campus of Ossining University near Rochester.

Two OTHER returning favorites in the five-member cast are Richard Jamieson and Eric Tavaris. Jamieson played the title role in Meadow Brook's 1977 hit, "The Show-Off," which also toured the state. Eric Tavaris was seen here last season in "She Stoops to Conquer" and "Table Manners."

Opening week performances are scheduled at 8:30 p.m. today and Friday, 2 and 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 6:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 6 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Sunday and 2 p.m. Wednesday.

Tickets for all Meadow Brook Theatre performances may be purchased at Hudson's or by calling 377-3301, the Meadow Brook Theatre box office.

During the course of their evening together, the four victorious but now evenly-matched team members drink only beer, and the coach, who rallies the team to victory by morning up their old will to win. He appeals to their sense of nostalgia and infects them, as he always has, with his own shop-worn, corrupt and unethical guides to success.

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