

# **cat on a hot tin roof**

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

## **Resources, Content Warnings & Self Care Pack**



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# Self-Care Guide: Cat On A Hot Tin Roof

This document has been designed to support audiences attending performances of *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* By Tennessee Williams  
24 MAR 23 - 29 APR 23

We've created this document for those who would be comfortable with more information and give you a little insight into the show. We hope the information and resources in this document will help audiences experiencing the show, and support planning for anyone who may be concerned about their visit.

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# Show Information

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## Content Warnings

- For ages 12+
- Mild Violence
- Sexual References
- Depictions of Smoking
- Strong Alcohol References
- Themes of death and family bereavement
- Explores themes of sexuality & infidelity
- Loud live music and singing



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## Running Time

3 Hours 10 Minutes running time with a 15 interval. Please make all students aware.

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## Travel Recommendations

### Trams

If your school or college is near a tram stop you can get your students to us for just £1 each and £2 per teacher. A great way to save money on coaches and also give students the life experience of how a lot of our audiences use public transport to access our theatre. More information [here](#).

Fares and passes for young people | [Transport for Greater Manchester \(tfgm.com\)](http://Transport for Greater Manchester (tfgm.com))

### Coaches

There is a space on Cross Street where the coach can park up and drop you off . Usually if you mention to the coach company you are using, they will know where that is.

# A bit about the show

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“But the one thing I don’t have is the charm of the defeated, my hat is still in the ring, and I am determined to win!”

Secrets and lies are as oppressive as the Mississippi heat, suffocating Maggie and everything she’s fought for. It’s Big Daddy’s birthday and the family are home for one helluva celebration. Big Daddy is dying, except he doesn’t know it. But his family does, and so begins an ugly battle for succession. Dripping in ambitious flattery Gooper and his wife Mae are poised to win – but Maggie is ready to pounce. Maggie spits, viper-tongued, fighting like a cat on a hot tin roof while Brick sinks to the bottom of a bottle – waiting haplessly for the ‘click’.

A Pulitzer Prize winning classic, CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF is a turbulent and brutal comic drama from legendary playwright Tennessee Williams (A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, THE GLASS MENAGERIE) and is directed by the Royal Exchange Theatre's Joint Artistic Director Roy Alexander Weise (THE MOUNTAINTOP).



# Meet The Cast

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**bayo gbadamosi**  
*BRICK*



**bruce mcgregor**  
*REVEREND TOOKER*



**daniel ward**  
*GOOPER*



**danielle henry**  
*MAE*



**jacqui dubois**  
*BIG MAMA*



**lucas cheong smith**  
*DOCTOR BAUGH*



**ntombizodwa ndlovu**  
*MAGGIE*



**patrick robinson**  
*BIG DADDY*

**Scan Me**



**Check out our meet the cast Instagram Reel**

# Rehearsal Snaps

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 Abbey Lam



 Abbey Lam



 Abbey Lam

# Trailer Time

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**Scan Me**



See our official trailer here to get a feel of the show



# Career In The Spotlight - Directing

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In our last resource pack our theatre career in the spotlight was Stage Design with TK Hay. So this time our career in the spotlight is directing. We are very excited to share an exclusive interview with the director of the show and Co-Artistic Director of The Royal Exchange Roy Alexander Weise

## **How is the rehearsal process going?**

Roy Alexander Weise: : It's going great, it really is. On a personal level, I feel really proud of the human beings that we've assembled around the play. More than anything, I feel really privileged to work with all of these actors and the creative team, they're really, really brilliant. Some of the ideas that I have are not necessarily the most straightforward! Some of them are quite conceptual and quite complicated, but everybody's really running with it. Everybody's really playful. I'm enjoying what we're making and how everybody's throwing themselves into the work

## **What do you hope will be distinctive about this production of CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF?**

Roy: Well, this is the second production of note with a predominantly black cast inhabiting the Pollitt family roles. The one that happened [at the Novello Theatre in 2009] with James Earl Jones, Phylicia Rashad, Sanaa Lathan, Adrian Lester – it had a hugely starry cast, but it was done quite conventionally, I think, and was quite period. This one is contemporary. It's set now.

Also, in theatre I'm sort of not that interested in presenting reality any more. The world outside is already what it is, and it's kind of shit and not that exciting. So I want to go into a dream space, into a meditative space, into an imaginative space, a space that is a catalyst for conversation and feelings and experiences. So I feel like what we're making is not necessarily going to feel like anything that an audience would have watched here, or another Tennessee Williams that they would have watched here

Even the edit that we've made of the play, the reintroduction of some of those ideas and languages and moments in the story that I think have been quite uncomfortable, or that maybe other people haven't been able to pick apart and really present confidently, I feel like we're trying to lean into some of those.



Tennessee Williams is not afraid of the ugliness of human existence. I feel like the truth is that, being somebody like me and having lived some of the experiences that I've had, you learn very quickly how ugly the world can be, too. And I think it's meant that I haven't been afraid of really leaning into that and sharing that with an audience, through the vehicle of this great story that everybody recognises, of this story of love and longing, which actually has a really deep meaning underneath it. If people come and watch it and they don't get that stuff, then that's fine. They're still going to watch incredible actors portraying some of their most loved characters on stage, and brilliantly too. But what I'm trying to make is a production that has this underworld of message and conversation as well.

**Some of the play's biggest themes – fear of death, 'mendacity' and lying – seem very pertinent to our post-pandemic, post Partygate world.**

Roy: Most definitely. There are so many that do. But there are also some other themes that feel incredibly poignant and that have really made me like stop and think, like the themes of gender roles. There's like a really interesting journey through the play in each of the generations and how they respond to being sort of trapped or held in very specific conventions. It feels as if all of these characters are going on a journey of trying to break out of that, but in a very subtle way. I find it really fascinating the way in which Tennessee Williams presents these stories. Yeah, those themes of gender have been quite large for me in this journey, too.

Also, one of the things that's been really interesting is seeing the way in which religion becomes this really fundamental interlink between

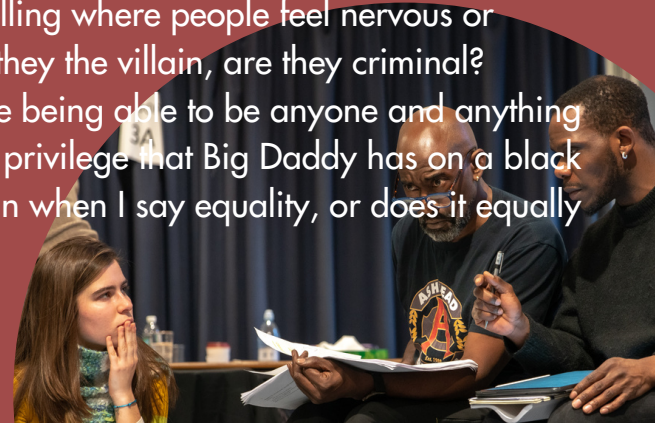
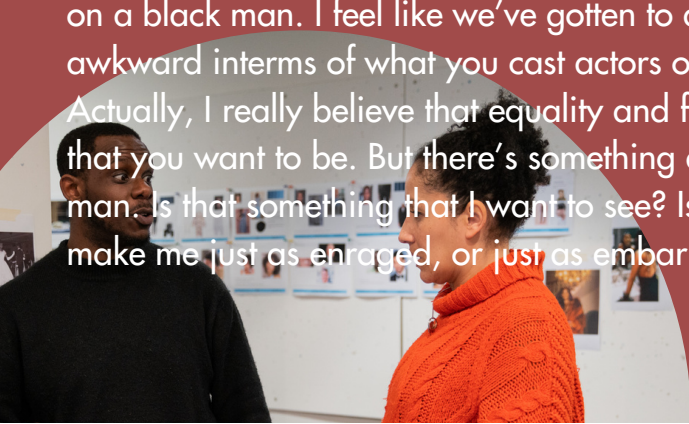
**What impact does it have on the play to cast predominantly black actor in these roles?**

Roy: Well, it's tough, because I don't want to say explicitly what I think it will do. But I might mention some of the provocations that I think it might make.

One of them, and quite a big one for me, is that I was really struck by how connected – and afraid – I was of the character of Big Daddy. I didn't expect that. I feel like I'm umbilically connected to that man. I don't think I'm like him at all, but maybe there is something deeper in the recesses of my mind that I don't really understand yet.

For me, there was something about imagining that level of privilege and grotesqueness and ugliness on a black man. I feel like we've gotten to a place in storytelling where people feel nervous or awkward in terms of what you cast actors of colour as. Are they the villain, are they criminal?

Actually, I really believe that equality and freedom looks like being able to be anyone and anything that you want to be. But there's something about seeing the privilege that Big Daddy has on a black man. Is that something that I want to see? Is that what I mean when I say equality, or does it equally make me just as enraged, or just as embarrassed?



I'm really excited about that provocation – for everyone, actually, to look at a black man with all of that power, a black man who owns a cotton plantation, inside of a system which at one point may have exploited somebody like him or his ancestors.

**Presumably examining those things in this building, itself a former cotton exchange, amplifies that.**

Roy: : Well, that's it. That's the other thing that felt really, really important and one of the things that has led to the fact that our production is going to really try and make use of that space outside of the module, outside the theatre. It feels as if, with the play, there's this outside world that is constantly alive and active and challenging the room inside. I feel like that's the dilemma or dichotomy that we have as a theatre, right? We are housed in this incredible, beautiful building that is really awe-inspiring, but which has an incredibly dark history. Sometimes I walk in here and I'm really challenged by it. I see people coming in and taking pictures, and they're like 'this is incredible!' and that's difficult.

Manchester has a very particular identity related to class and socialism and it feels as if sometimes that's the battle that Manchester is fighting with the South. But actually, what that means sometimes is that the deeper politics underneath, to do with race and the history of all of that in this city, isn't always unearthed. Buildings like this have become different things over time, but the history of that is still there. I feel like in some weird way we celebrate the facade, the outside mask of what it all looks like, but the inside and the underneath, we ignore that.

I feel like we have like a special opportunity here, with plays like this, with the space that we're in, to pull up all of these knotty roots and hold them up to the light and go 'what was that? What is that? Where are we now? How does all of that affect us? How do we untangle some of that, understand it better, so that we can see more clearly what we're dealing with now and where we might be able to go together?'

Because I still feel like in lots of very unspoken ways – and again, this is where mendacity comes in – we pretend things are a lot better than they are, especially with regards to that. Just as the family in the play does. They are completely ignorant to what is going on in the background or what is going on underneath. I feel like this play, and this play in this building, with that resonance of cotton especially, will be really powerful.



# Director Exchange

If you loved Roy's interview above then why not watch our Director Exchange where Roy speaks with assistant director Laura May Brunk in more detail.



**Scan Me**



**Director Exchange with:  
Roy Alexander Weise and Laura May Brunk**

# Actor Exchange

Have a listen at Bayo and Adetomiwa who play Brick and Maggie discuss the rehearsal process and the lead up to the show so far.



**Scan Me**



**Actor Exchange with:  
Bayo Gbadamosi and Ntombizodwa Ndlovu**

# Self-Care Guide: Cat On A Hot Tin Roof

## Family Bereavement

The show really explores the theme of family bereavement with the terminal illness of Big Daddy. What effects that can have on a family is a running plotline of the show.

1 in 29 children and young people aged 5-16 have experienced the death of a parent or sibling – that's at least one in every classroom. So with that statistic we thought it would be a good opportunity to open up a discussion on this and put together these mental health tips and recommendations to perhaps offer some help.

### Tips to help with a family bereavement

1. Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled. Talking about your feelings isn't a sign of weakness.
2. There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel – for example, caffeine and sugar can have an immediate effect. But food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health
3. Friends and family can make you feel included and cared for. They can offer different views from whatever's going on inside your own head. They can help keep you active, keep you grounded and help you solve practical problems
4. A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. It could be a five-minute pause from your homework, taking time out of social media or a weekend exploring somewhere new.
5. Some of us make people laugh, some are good at maths, others cook fantastic meals. Some of us share our lifestyle with the people who live close to us, others live very differently. We're all different
6. Experts believe exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better.
7. We can often drink alcohol to change our mood. Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is only temporary
8. None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things go wrong. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help
9. What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Enjoying yourself helps beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it and achieving something boosts your self-esteem
10. Caring for others is often an important part of keeping up relationships with people close to you. It can even bring you closer together.

<https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/support-for-those-bereaved/>



You can read the full tips list in full here

**NHS**  
nhs.uk

## Alcoholism

Throughout the show we see the theme of alcoholism explored throughout the show. Brick's alcoholism causes many of the other characters pain. It is clear that Brick drinks to forget the guilt he feels over the death of his best friend, Skipper. With this theme so prevalent in the show, we thought it would be a good opportunity to share some resources.

- Nearly 10 million young people, ages 12 to 20, reported that they've consumed alcohol in the past 30 days
- Binge drinking is most common among younger adults aged 18–34. Binge drinking is more common among men than among women.
- Alcohol makes young people particularly vulnerable to the long-term damage caused by alcohol. This damage can include: cancer of the mouth and throat. sexual and mental health problems, including depression and suicidal thoughts

## Drinking Safely

It's inevitable that you will be offered alcohol at some point. But remember a few things:

- There's a strong link between alcohol, anti-social behaviour and sexual activity - if you do drink stay safe by drinking in moderation
- There is a huge risk of drinks being spiked. One in ten British women say they have had their drink spiked.
- Set yourself a curfew for when you should be back
- Discuss how you'll be getting home with parents or friends
- Keep in contact and never leave alone or with someone you don't know, making sure you have enough phone battery, credit, reception and always text you are home safe.
- Never drink on an empty stomach
- Make sure you knows what to do if you or a friend become unwell or put yourselves in danger.

## Drinkline

A confidential helpline for anyone concerned about drinking. Call them free Monday to Friday from 9am to 11pm on 0300 123 1110.

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/advice-info/alcohol-drugs/alcohol-treatment-care-options>



For more tips and info, please go to  
Change, Grow, Live

## Local Events

Listed below are some events and places around Manchester that are relevant to the themes above.

### Andys Man Club



At ANDYSMANCLUB, we want to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health and create a judgment-free, confidential space where men can be open about the storms in their lives. We aim to achieve this through weekly, free-to-attend peer-to-peer support groups for men aged over 18. Watch the video below to find out why.



Find out more here

<https://andysmanclub.co.uk/find-your-nearest-group/>

# Manchester Young Person's AA Meeting



Meet every Tuesday  
Phoenix Mill, 20 Piercy St, Ancoats  
M4 7HY  
Start time: 19.30 - duration 1hr 30mins



<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Find-a-Meeting/manchester>

## Child Bereavement Uk

Click to watch the  
video



Child Bereavement UK runs facilitated groups for young people between the ages of 11 and 25 to meet others who have also experienced the death of someone important in their life. We meet regularly for social activities and to work on projects to create resources that will help other bereaved young people. Sessions are free to attend. We are currently running groups via Zoom - call or email to find out more.

Read more



<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/how-we-support-young-people>

# Helplines & support

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If you're affected by the show's themes and need support, or just want someone to chat to, you can call The Samaritans on 116 123 or Child Bereavement on 0800 02 888 40

If you don't need immediate support but would like to learn more about services that may be available for yourself or someone you know, we'd recommend looking into the organisations Mind, NHS Support and The Samaritans.

The Samaritans: <https://samaritans.org>

Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support/>





# Self Care Suggestions

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If you're concerned about attending the show, there are a few things we'd suggest that might help.

## Before the show

Read the content warnings before deciding to see the show.

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## Sit with a friend

The show can tackle some tough themes so maybe sit with a friend, family member or someone you trust.

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## After the performance

If you've found something in the show triggering we'd suggest talk to someone you trust or one of the organisations we've listed above. You can also talk to a member of our staff who will be able to signpost you organisations around the area

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# Graduate Return!

Ntombizodwa Ndlovu who is one of our Young Company graduates returns home to grace our stage again. We ask her about her return below.



**How does it feel to have been a member of Young Company to now performing in the main space? What would you say to anyone thinking about joining the Young Company?**

Ntombizodwa- It's exciting! I really loved my time in the Young Company. It's a great foundation for young people to gain direct experience and learn more about theatre from industry professionals. It allows you to find a group of people who's interests and passions are so aligned with your own. You'll make friends for life through a process of working experimentally and collaboratively across so many different methods and approaches to the art of creating.

**Find out more  
about Young  
Company here**



## Young Company



Sometimes doing activities outside of school time can open up some great new friendships and connections. The Young Company is the Royal Exchange Theatres', award-winning, resident Company of Young People aged 14 – 21. Providing weekly workshops, production opportunities and free tickets to our main house shows.

[Young Company](#) | [Get Involved](#) | [Royal Exchange Theatre](#)



[Read more](#)

## Young Collective



Under 26? Become a Collective Member to unlock discounts and offers at the theatre, access a year-round programme of workshops and projects, and join a growing network of young creatives in Greater Manchester.

[Young Company Collective](#) | [Get Involved](#) | [Royal Exchange Theatre](#)



[Read more](#)

# Wordsearch

Find all the words relating to the show

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

## Cat On A Hot Tin Roof

Find all the words liked to the show

W Y M A N C H E S T E R T A E H T R F F  
T E T C X B H N D H L L F F O Y I V U Q  
M Y W W F P Y I X C A L X V D F E E M P  
T S T U Q V K X U J F E U E N F V A I N  
S F S K U E Z I G V A Y V V M P G Z T J  
Y I K N P A N Q W U E F P H H G V T F P  
F C I D P E M N I Y B S K S I B Z B X U  
G A P F R A Y N Y A Y D C E D Y N V Y G  
M Y P P X K O D L L R A I P Z P U Z X Q  
C C E Y T A B G C A K Q R M S V I M B Q  
G X R D M V G R J V M Z B S Q O M C W A  
X P E F O O R N I T T O H A N O T A C Y  
X M I S S I S S I P P I B X J K A R Q U  
B U L H Q J Q R M O P C K I F C D A P T  
Z P A Z B I G D A D D Y W W G Y N Y Q K  
N J Z M P V Y R K H M B P Y H M F G O S  
J E G N A H C X E L A Y O R C A O F C M  
W Z D V Q H Z C O S B Q U C Q B F M S F  
C S V E T N Y W R Z I N P B Q G K O M Y  
E U F S C W Y M S B Z G O A L F P C R A

MISSISSIPPI

ROYALEXCHANGE

BIGDADDY

MANCHESTER

BRICK

THEATRE

BIGMOMMA

MAGGIE

CATONAHOTTINROOF

SKIPPER

# What's coming up at The Exchange

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Thank you so much for reading and we hope the resources were useful. Here is what we have coming up over the next few months, we hope to see you again soon.



## CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

A PULITZER PRIZE WINNING CLASSIC, CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF IS A TURBULENT AND BRUTAL COMIC DRAMA FROM LEGENDARY PLAYWRIGHT TENNESSEE WILLIAMS.

24 MAR 23 - 29 APR 23



## NO PAY? NO WAY! BY DARIO FO & FRANCA RAME.

THIS FEROCIOUS AND FEISTY POLITICAL COMEDY IS AN URGENT EXPLORATION OF OUR GLOBAL ECONOMIC REALITY.

12 MAY 23 - 10 JUN 23



## UNTITLED F\*CK M\*SS S\*\*GON PLAY BY KIMBER LEE

STUNNINGLY OBSERVED AND SHARPLY-COMIC, THIS WORLD PREMIERE WAS THE INAUGURAL WINNER OF THE INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR THE BRUNTWOOD PRIZE FOR PLAYWRITING IN 2019.

24 JUN 23 - 22 JUL 23