

The audience was loud and low

But BC Players' standards were high

by Theresa Coleman

The first production of the 1981-82 Bennett Players didn't draw record crowds, but it deserved them.

On Nov. 23, "The Glass Menagerie" was performed in a theater less than half full.

Tennessee Williams' play, which revolves around four principal characters, had two exceptional actresses, Joan Walker as Amanda Wingfield and Delores Gibbs as Tom Wingfield.

The story tells of the struggle of Amanda Wingfield, the mother, and her two children, Tom and Laura. The play, situated on the border between fantasy and reality, shows Amanda and her daughter caught in both worlds. Amanda, somewhat an eccentric, reflects on Southern tradition often and attempts to force her Southern-Belle past on her children.

Laura, who is crippled and rather timid, retreats into the world of her glass menagerie and her victrola. Tom, frustrated by the naggings of his mother, contemplates his departure.

Amanda is eager to see her daughter married. A crisis occurs when Tom, at his mother's wishes, brings home a young man from his job to meet Laura. The caller's visit is anxiously awaited, mostly by Amanda. When the caller arrives, Laura is temporarily at ease with herself and surroundings, but the climax comes when the gentleman announces he is engaged and Laura's and Amanda's dreams crumble. Eventually Tom leaves to join the Merchant Marines.

Joan Walker's portrayal of Amanda was fiery and seemed almost effortless. Walker portrayed the Southern mother with romanticism and a certain giddiness needed to make Amanda Wingfield believable. Another delightful performance was delivered by Delores Gibbs as the drunken, sometimes distraught, and al-

ways dreaming Tom. Gibbs' quips to Amanda were sharp and amusing. Together Walker and Gibbs are a duo to keep an eye on. Others in the cast were Angela Wilkins as Laura, Anthony Pace as the Gentleman Caller and Daisy LeGrand (Mary Hopkins) as the Narrator.

It should be mentioned that the two performances of the play, Nov. 22 and 23, were cast with two different sets of

actors and actresses. In the first showing, the play's director, Mary Hopkins, gave her version of Tom Wingfield, the son.

Hopkins, while directing and starring, also rewrote some of the play, changing several aspects. For one, in the original presentation, Tom narrates the story. In the Bennett Players' version, a retired school teacher narrates. Another variation was to up-

date the dialogue. In one scene, ballplayer Reggie Jackson is mentioned. This would be fine except that the scenery and costumes would suggest that Jackson had not yet been born. This small gap in the play was not disastrous. And yet another change came when lack of male actors made female Players take the roles.

These minor alterations weren't as disturbing as some of the variations that came

from the audience. An audience's lack of consideration can affect a play's impact. Two men chattered throughout the performance. In the future, such rudeness should not be tolerated by other viewers or the actors. Perhaps a security guard should attend subsequent productions.

In the future, we hope to see more and better plays from the Bennett Players, with better conduct from the audience.



Senior Joan Walker gives a stirring interpretation of a Nikki Giovanni poem during the Kwanza program. Walker's talents as an actress are highlighted in two reviews of her recent portrayal of Amanda Wingfield in "The Glass Menagerie" (above and below). (photo by Shelly Coston)

Security is source of happiness

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there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35)

Before my last class of the day, I continue to ask students their thoughts on happiness. "Presently, it means I've found a major that is satisfactory," responds Leslie Barr, an English major. Valeshia Watson, a nutrition major, defines it as "enjoying life's simple pleasures."

"Happiness is being with the people you care about," says Kimberly Ray, a social welfare student. It is "having someone to love and someone to love you in return," adds Dawn Roberts, also majoring in social welfare. Medical technology major Lisa Williams answers that "happiness is sharing your love with someone or some persons who love me." Also, it is "feeling good all over, feeling the warmth and closeness of another and being able to say I love you and feel good about it," replies Daphne Wright, a nursing student.

What is to one, may not be to another. Happiness is one experience in life that no two people can definitely agree on. It can be a complicated notion to be in constant search of, and not a feeling to be acquired easily, or it can be spontaneous simple, charming, heartwarming.

"Happiness is simply laugh-

ing and smiling, sometimes, and being able to accept things as they come and how they are, not letting one event affect one's whole life," explains Robin D. Wilson, a sociology major.

"Are you happy?" I ask. The answer is usually yes. Avis Douglass, a "yes" person, defines happiness this way: It "is the ability of two people to share all problems and good times together." Valorie Fee, a chemistry major, tells me that "being happy is feeling good without any kind of drug or external stimulus." Pre-dentistry major Pauline Nzeribe says that she is happy and that to her it is "just feeling good all over."

"For me, happiness is for everything to go in a simple way with as few complications as possible," relates pre-med major Donna Wilson.

After carefully weighing each response I asked myself just what determines happiness? To many students, a new car would be the magic key to their happiness. For some it would be better grades or graduation. Still some will find their happiness in the experiences and challenges as a college student. I'm inclined to agree with Tracey Cooper, a psychology major. She says, "Happiness is loving God, and loving everyone else in a special way."

Walker glitters in 'Glass Menagerie'

by T. M. Johnson

The Bennett College Players presented their rendition of "The Glass Menagerie"—a play by Tennessee Williams Nov. 22-23. It is the story of Amanda Wingfield, a woman who is a carry-over from the age of Southern gentility.

Amanda lives in poverty in a St. Louis apartment with her children Tom and Laura. Amanda works eagerly to guide her children to succeed in life, though she becomes more of a hinderer than a help to her children.

The action of the story arrives when Amanda persuades Tom to invite a friend home to meet Laura. Amanda has resolved to marry Laura off since it has become evident that Laura will have no part of the business career that her mother has arranged for her.

Laura and the caller get along well enough despite Amanda, and Laura is temporarily transported out of her world of illusions. The crash comes when both Amanda and Laura find out that

the gentleman caller is engaged to be married. The world of illusion Amanda and Laura have created collapses and Tom is finally driven to leave home. The Players presented this play in five acts.

The most enjoyable aspect of the Players' presentation was the fact that Drama coach Mary Hopkins performed the part of Tom on opening night. Hopkins' interpretation was both strong and amusing. Hopkins revealed a new aspect of her talents, and she clearly became the highlight of the play.

Kathy Lewis, who was featured in the role of Amanda on Sunday evening, was at best faltering and many times less than acceptable in her performance. Lewis, who returned to Bennett this semester after a year's leave, disappointed many of her fans with a rendition of Amanda which was hesitating, uncoordinated, and in many instances, less than acceptable.

Newcomer Diane M. Ewings, a freshman, won much of the audience on Sunday

with her portrayal of Laura. Ewings' charming work left the audience with the impression that she will be someone to watch for in future productions.

On Monday night, Joan Walker dazzled in her portrayal of Amanda. She played the role with fluidity and confidence which stir the imagination. It was easy to become involved in Walker's portrayal, and as a result, the play as a whole.

This reviewer wondered aloud why Walker was not permitted to perform on opening night. Delores Gibbs was engaging in her performance of Tom on Monday night. As a result, both Walker and Gibbs become the focal points of the second evening's presentation.

Also featured was sophomore Angela Wilkins. Wilkins took on the role of Laura on Monday night and was quite enjoyable. The audience hopes to see her involved in many future productions.

Overall, both performances were quite skillful. Despite a

few hindrances, the production was presented well on both evenings and was much

respected and enjoyed. Nevertheless the smash of both showings was Mary Hopkins.

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