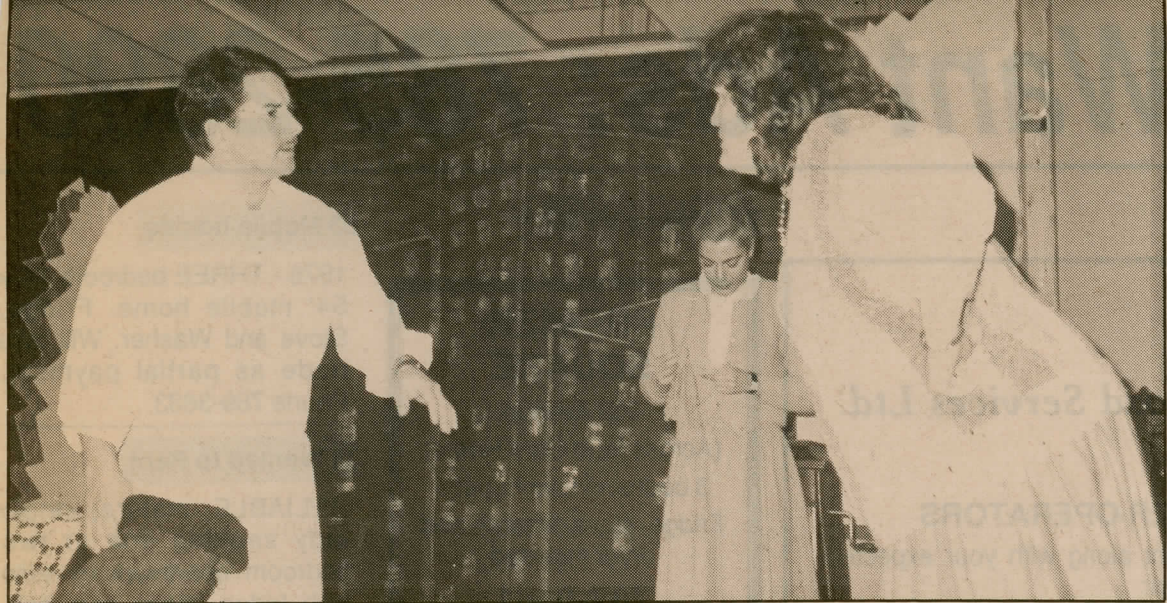




Photo by Tom Kirschner

REHEARSALS ARE underway for the Stage North production of Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie". Featured are, from left, Connie Martin as Laura, Dennis Szalai as Tom, Betty-Ann Xenis as Amanda and Kevin Truscott as The Gentleman Caller. The play will open Feb. 23 at the Just Before Stage at 10032 - 99 Avenue with a reception afterwards.



Dennis Szalai and Betty-Ann Xenis battle in Glass Menagerie rehearsal.

FEB 15, 1989

'Menagerie' to open Feb. 23

Stage North's newest production, Tennessee Williams' classic drama, *The Glass Menagerie*, will open Feb. 23, at the Just Before Stage, at 10032 - 99th Ave. The play traces the deterioration of the Wingfield family during the great depression. Each of the characters is in some way crippled by a fear which prevents he or she from making contact with the real world.

Amanda, the mother, played by

BettyAnn Xenis, holds on to the dreams and memories of her past, failing to really live in the present. Tom, the son, played by Dennis Szalai, feels trapped in a job and a life that is going nowhere. Laura, his sister, played by Connie Martin, is crippled inwardly by a fear which causes her to withdraw from the outside world and identify with the fragile pieces of glass she collects.

Jim, the gentleman caller, played by Kevin Truscott, appears

to be the only character living an adjusted life in the here and now, but a closer look reveals that he is holding fast to his former glory and popularity which deserted him after graduation from high school.

Tickets can be purchased at the Artspace and show dates are Feb. 23, 24, 25, March 2,3,4, 8:00 p.m. Opening night will be followed by a wine and cheese reception. Producer of the show is Linda Scarfo and Daniel Vecchio is director; Madelena Hannon is stage manager.

NUP

Original score adds to play

BY PAMELA DEN OUDEN

"The Glass Menagerie", Stage North's production which opened last week, is "full of delicate flavours, that need to be held in the mouth to be tasted."

The opening strains of the original score, composed and performed by Esther Oosterbaan, set the pensive, reflective mood. The floating melody strings the scenes together and gives them shape in the mind of the listener.

With a cast of only four characters, this memory play explores the inner lives of the Wingfield family.

Amanda, the mother, played by Betty Ann Xenis, seems bewildered by life. She clings to her gracious and popular past as a much-sought after southern gentlewoman. Her anxieties about the fate of her children make her dominate them, hope for them, cling to them.

She knows what happens to "bird-like women without any nest." Anyone who has ever struggled against a dominating mother will identify with Xenis' portrayal - fluttering, fussing, fierce.

Connie Martin plays the daughter, Laura: a pathetic waif of a girl, clinging to a few shreds of contact with the real world. Her "frightened, apologetic manner" are convincingly portrayed through Martin's excellent control of voice, facial expression and body movement.

MAR 1, 1989
Crippled inwardly and outwardly, Laura has one brief moment of strength in the opening scenes, where Amanda discovers that she has been deceived by Laura. This cleverness of Laura gives some spark of hope that things could change for her.

The son, Tom, played by Dennis Szalai, is trapped in a job at a shoe warehouse that offers no hope for him. The boxes of shoes symbolize "something to wear on a traveller's feet." He longs for adventure, and plans to get it the way his father did, by leaving his family. This character also is the narrator of the play, offering comment on the action in a wistful, wishful way.

The confrontation between mother and son percolates and finally explodes in a riveting scene that carries in it the lost dreams and desires of each character. Martin's statue-like stance during these moments evokes pathos and tears for her fragile character.

Kevin Truscott plays Jim, the gentleman caller, whose visit is magnified in Amanda's mind to a pre-nuptial event. He crystallizes what little bit of life resides in Laura, and erases momentarily the vacant look that enshrouds her.

The technicians have done a superb job with the sets and lighting, from the crunching of the gravel underfoot in the alley in front of the house to the haunting photo of the absent father.

DW

Stage North dominates zone drama festival

The Stage North Theatre Society of Fort St. John dominated the awards list at the Peace River Zone Drama Festival held in Fort St. John.

Their production of "The Real Inspector Hound" was named the best production in the festival.

Other groups from Fort Nelson, Dawson Creek and Hudson's Hope also participated and they all received awards from adjudicator Bindon Kinghorn.

Doug Xenis received the award for the best set and was named best director in conjunction with the "Hound" presentation.

Marian Truscott and Ted Thoveson were double winners for their make-up and costumes in the Stage North production.

There was a joint award for best actor, going to Tom Kirschner (Birdboot) and John Kelly (Moon) for their work in "Hound".

Best actress was also shared, going to the Hudson's Hope Portage Players Marian Williamson (Mrs.) and Bonnie Townsend (Mr.) who played the Martins in "Gas and Candles".

The best supporting actor was Ward Washington who played the role of Ray in the Dawson Creek Dionysus Theatre presentation of "Lone Star".

The play also received an award of merit from Kinghorn who said the group "deserved the utmost credit for a fine job".

Kinghorn did not present a supporting actress award, explaining that there were only two candidates and they were equal: "no one stood out".

"Hound" will go to Kelowna in late May to take part in Mainstage which is a provincial drama festival.

Kinghorn said a decision won't be made about its status until after several other festivals around the province have been adjudicated. It may be a workshop play, or compete.

The adjudicator also recommended "The Kentucky Marriage Proposal" put on by Phoenix Theatre of Fort Nelson as a play for the workshop on scene development at Mainstage.

Kinghorn said he had not visited the Peace region before and it was gratifying to see so many people from so many different places.

"I don't know where your money comes from for travel but I have great respect for everyone who gave up their time to be here."

He said Fort St. John theatre "displayed tremendous spirit in the community".

The head of the festival, Linda Scarfo, made special presentations for extra effort to Dennis Szalai and Marian Truscott.

Stage North also put on "Bleeders" as part of the festival.



Stage North won the award for best production and several others in the festival