

A Streetcar Named Desire

Paul Westbrook as Stanley. Picture: Michael Errey



This wrenching production of the Tennessee Williams classic, rooted securely in Greek tragedy, is as mesmerising as a car crash. We witness and can do nothing. Director Michael Baldwin knows when to let his actors have their heads. A door is left ajar. Brendan Fitzgerald's playing can be heard. This is New Orleans, after all, home of music and natural disasters. Stephen Dean fills the space with evocative light and sound. The play's the thing.

Blanche Dubois has lost her home, her husband and her mind. She embodies the virgin/whore dichotomy. Carried by desire she arrives at the Elysian Fields, home of heroes.

Her sister Stella welcomes her but there's a monster in those fields. Stanley Kowalski, ex army, working class and a casual rapist.

Melanie Munt goes beyond the cliches of the faded southern belle in a pitch perfect incarnation. Paul

Westbrook, insolently muscular, stalks her like a beast. He sweats sexuality and can howl 'Stella' to wake the dead.

Melanie Munt as Blanche and Marc Clement as Mitch. Picture: Michael Errey



Around this couple, the others male and female accommodate themselves. Justina Ward is a sympathetic Stella, accepting her husband's violent rages for the lovemaking that follows.

Upstairs, Susan Cilento as Eunice has a much better, though frequently volcanic, relation with Steve, Nathan Brown.

Into this world wanders a young man, Matthew Adams, totally bewildered as Blanche's potential prey. Mark Clement is Mitch, tender, caring, who falls for Blanche and is the saddest victim of her delusions.

Magically the doctor and nurse who come to take Blanche into asylum are played by Peter Green and Pamela Munt. They have guarded the Bakehouse for over twenty years. They lead the tragic heroine out of the building, as if leading the theatre of emotion and illusion to another home.

– EWART SHAW