



Tennessee Williams: A Guide to Research and Performance (Bibliographies and Indexes in)

Philip Kolin

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The plays of Tennessee Williams are some of the greatest triumphs of the American theatre. If Williams is not the most important American playwright, he surely is one of the two or three most celebrated, rivaled only by Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller. In a career that spanned almost five decades, he created an extensive canon of more than 70 plays. His contributions to the American theatre are inestimable and revolutionary. *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) introduced poetic realism to the American stage; *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) explored sexual and psychological issues that had never before been portrayed in American culture; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) dared to challenge the political and sexual mores of the Eisenhower era; and his plays of the 1970s are among the most innovative works produced on the American stage. But Williams was far more than a gifted and prolific playwright. He created two collections of poetry, two novels, four collections of stories, memoirs, and scores of essays.

Because of his towering presence in American drama, Williams has attracted the attention of some of the most insightful scholars and critics of the twentieth century. The 1990s in particular ushered in a renaissance of Williams research, including a definitive biography, a descriptive bibliography, and numerous books and scholarly articles. This reference book synthesizes the vast body of research on Tennessee Williams and offers a performance history of his works. Under the guidance of one of the leading authorities on Williams, expert contributors have written chapters on each of Williams' works or clusters of works. Each chapter includes a discussion of the biographical context of a work or group of writings; a survey of the bibliographic history; an analysis of major critical approaches, which looks at themes, characters, symbols, and plots; a consideration of the major critical problems posed by the work; an overview of chief productions and film and television versions; a concluding interpretation; and a bibliography of secondary sources. The volume concludes with a selected, general bibliography and a comprehensive index.

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