

LOVE LONDON LOVE CULTURE

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Interview With....Anthony Almeida

We chatted to the director about the revival of Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, currently touring the UK.

Hi Anthony – how does it feel to be directing such an iconic play?

Exciting. Tennessee Williams: what a writer. But Klaxon: he didn't set out to write an iconic play. What's stimulating to direct this play is to be on a journey to discover what made *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* iconic in the first place. And then, to honour that spirit and those impulses in a way that feels honest and contemporary.

For those who are coming along to see for the first time could you explain a bit more about what it is about?

Well, without giving away spoilers – that tag line would be: a family gather to celebrate a special birthday, but secrets need outing and truth speaking, soon the claws are out. But the great stories are never about what they're 'about'. *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* looks at couples exploring the limits and limitlessness of their lives together. It's about what it takes to exist with yourself, and those you love.

How does it feel to be bringing this production to Curve?

It's invigorating to kickstart Curve's drama line-up this season. We've all been warmly welcomed. It feels like a great coming together of a theatre company, cast & creative team, and audiences. Curve have a rich relationship with their communities, and such an eclectic programme. We hope this production offers something fresh alongside that.

What do you think it is about the play that resonates with people?

There's that saying: the more we change, the more we stay the same. Tennessee Williams taps into a near-mythical sense of what it is to be alive; and to be up against what life throws our way. He was so deeply intoxicated with our desires and impulses; our hopes and fears. This is a story for anyone who has ever had – or might ever have – a family. It's also a story for anyone who has ever – or might ever – experience love. A joyful, messy set of relationships are played out. The characters in the play are people we are, we might be, we could become.

Why would you say that people should come along and see it?

I'd never want to 'should' on anyone. But, hey, after what's been the past 18 months for us all, there's something electric about the chance to get back in the theatre again. What's on offer is experiencing an epic story with a roomful of strangers who maybe, by the end of the night, might feel just that bit closer to you too based on the one-off live experience we've shared. If you don't

know the play; come to witness an epic story. If you know the story, we hope to share with you something new, and hopefully, truer to what Tennessee Williams hoped for. Classics are steeped in assumptions. The only the only way these stories continue to be classics is if they talk to your heart and soul in an immediate and surprising way.