

PLAYBILL®

THE NATIONAL THEATRE MAGAZINE

September 30, 2013

Volume 31, Number 12

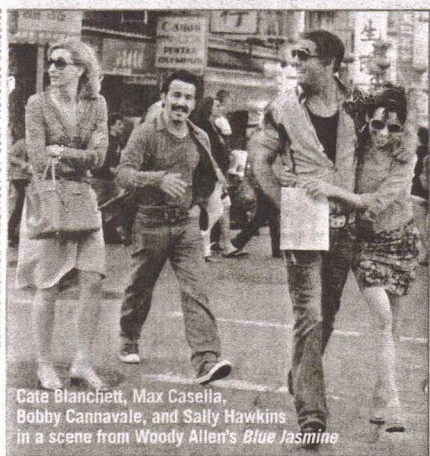
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

by Harry Hawn

Blanche & Blanchett: A *Streetcar* Named *Jasmine*

Forty years ago **Woody Allen** lapsed into his first Blanche DuBois—a momentary, out-of-the-blue apparition where he flightily professes “Physical beauty is passing, a transitory possession,” to a Brando-brutish **Diane Keaton**—in his film *Sleeper*. It still exists on YouTube in a line-by-line stand-off with the real, Oscar-winning McCoy (“The Blanche DuBois Death Match: Vivien Leigh v. Woody Allen”).

MERRICK MORTON / COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

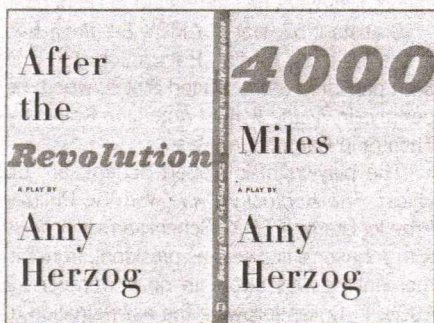


Cate Blanchett, Max Casella, Bobby Cannavale, and Sally Hawkins in a scene from Woody Allen's *Blue Jasmine*

The latest “Woody DuBois,” *Blue Jasmine*, stars **Cate Blanchett** (a Blanche DuBois at BAM in '09) and **Alec Baldwin** (a Stanley Kowalski on Broadway in '92). They play, after a fictional fashion, **Bernie** and **Ruth Madoff**—thus upping the ante of the DuBois girls' ancestral Belle Reve manse to the level of a financial global meltdown. Cate survives with her expensive good taste intact, crawls across the country to San Francisco to stay with her sister, **Ginger (Sally Hawkins)**, who is about to shack up with a crude grease-monkey named Chili (**Bobby Cannavale**)—a union every bit as chaotic and appetizing as it sounds. There is also a wide-eyed white knight (**Peter Sarsgaard**) who can't see her tawdry past until they shop for wedding rings. No line from Tennessee Williams's play is repeated, but the emotional quote marks in the pile-up of scenes is faithfully echoed—and Blanchett's Blanche, who winds up *exactly* as director **Liv Ullman** staged her at BAM, is Oscar-worthy.

Two for the Read

Theatre Communications Group is rushing to market with two new plays each from two of last season's star playwrights: *4000 Miles & After the Revolution: Two Plays* by **Amy Herzog**, and two by **John Logan**: *I'll Eat You Last: A Chat With Sue Mengers* and *Peter and Alice*.



A *Who* among the *Who's Who*...

Susan L. Schulman's scintillating “tell-some”—*Backstage Pass to Broadway: True Tales from a Theatre Press Agent*—has just enough backstage dirt and glitz to be compulsively readable from start to finish. An impressive galaxy of egos and artists is sprinkled like stardust over four decades of theatrical press-agentry and repairs—**Lauren Bacall**, **Zero Mostel**, **Mary Martin**, **George C. Scott**, **Lesley Anne Warren**, **Yul Brynner**, **Bob Fosse**, and **The Mighty Merrick**, whom she actually bested. Worth the price of the book alone is the hilarious chapter detailing the diva doings during *Dream* when La Warren believes she is in that league. Dream on, hon!

