The Lyric Stage simplifies Williams’ “Streetcar”

**A STAGECRAFT NAMED DESIRE**

By JULIAN WEST

**PERFORMED AT THE Lyric Stage, 54 Charles St., Boston, MA 02116**

BY BARBARA MASI

Each new production of "A Streetcar Named Desire" seems to offer a different interpretation. These interpretations are varied; some are too literal, others too subtle. Yet, each time they remind us of the beauty of the play and the talent of its authors, Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan. This particular production brought a sense of grace and restraint to the material.

Blanche, unbefitting of the production throughout. Complementarity provides the pressure for the play's movement, beginning with the audience's first encounter with Stanley and Blanche, their sister-in-law. When the two characters meet, their relationship is strained. Blanche's behavior is often bizarre, revealing a distant, delicate creature, frail, lost. Within minutes the audience is forced to absorb the dialectic of characters that will play the dynamic tension. In "Streetcar," Williams aims for complementarity and balance - a difficult challenge, but a necessary one, for it holds the key to the play's meaning and tragic effect. In the Lyric Stage production, directed by Ron Ritchie, Blanche's balance was lost; I did not realize until the final scene that she was playing. There, in Blanche's behavior, I saw the tragedy of the play for the first time. As Blanche begins, the audience witnesses Stanley's command of the stage - he is the dominant force. As Blanche enters, he is withdrawn, reserved, showing merit. Yet, the play's tension is broken. The audience is left with a sense of the beauty and the tragedy of the play.

KRYSTIAN ZIMERMAN

At Symphony Hall, Oct. 17.
A Wagner Celebrity Series event.

By JULIE CHANG

I NTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED PIANIST Krystian Zimerman gave a most impressive recital at Friday night at Symphony Hall. The winner of the 1995 Chopin International Piano Competition, Zimerman's performance strove for Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. With his flawless technique and remarkable musicianship, the Polish pianist proved himself to be a master of the keyboard. The first work, Beethoven's Sonata in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2, was played with just the right balance of restrained emotion and clarity. The interpretation was not overly passionate, yet not bland. Zimerman's clear, delicate touch, combined with his great range of color, allowed him to capture subtle nuances of the work. The last movement, Presto, was particularly impressive. With seemingly no effort, Zimerman played the difficult fugue with amazing speed and dexterity while still maintaining the exquisite qualities of the music.

Next, Zimerman played Schubert's Impromptu Op. 90, D. 899. Exhibiting great contrast in touch and tone among the pieces, the pianist made the most of the stratospheric and expressive qualities of the theme. Though the performance was technically difficult, they can be characterized as passionate unless they are played with great sensitivity and feeling. But Zimerman captured the charm and effervescence of these pieces quite well.

The last work on the program, Schumann's Sonata in F minor, Op. 11, was played with great power and grace. The first movement, Introduction: Un poco adagio, Allegro vivace, was full of interesting surprises, with strong momentum building in a logical, beautiful crescendo.

Zimerman conquered the difficult technical passages with virtuosity, capturing the emotional tension of the piece, showing himself to be an exceptional pianist of the highest order. Zimerman's command of the keyboard is unequalled; his refined and thoughtful. The performance not only captured the intellectual, but also the emotional. The pianist had the audience on the edge of their seats, and the audience responded in kind.