

Composer, conductor, and pianist André Previn left his native Germany in 1938 to live in Paris and to subsequently settle in Los Angeles in 1940. His early career of orchestrating film scores at MGM led quickly to conducting engagements of symphonic repertoire and on to an international career as Music Director of such orchestras as London, Los Angeles, Oslo and Pittsburgh. In the 1980s, he concentrated increasingly on compositions for the concert hall and opera. His own richly lyrical style underscores his love of the late Romantic and early 20th-century masterpieces of which his interpretations as conductor are internationally renowned.



Photo by Lillian Birnbourn

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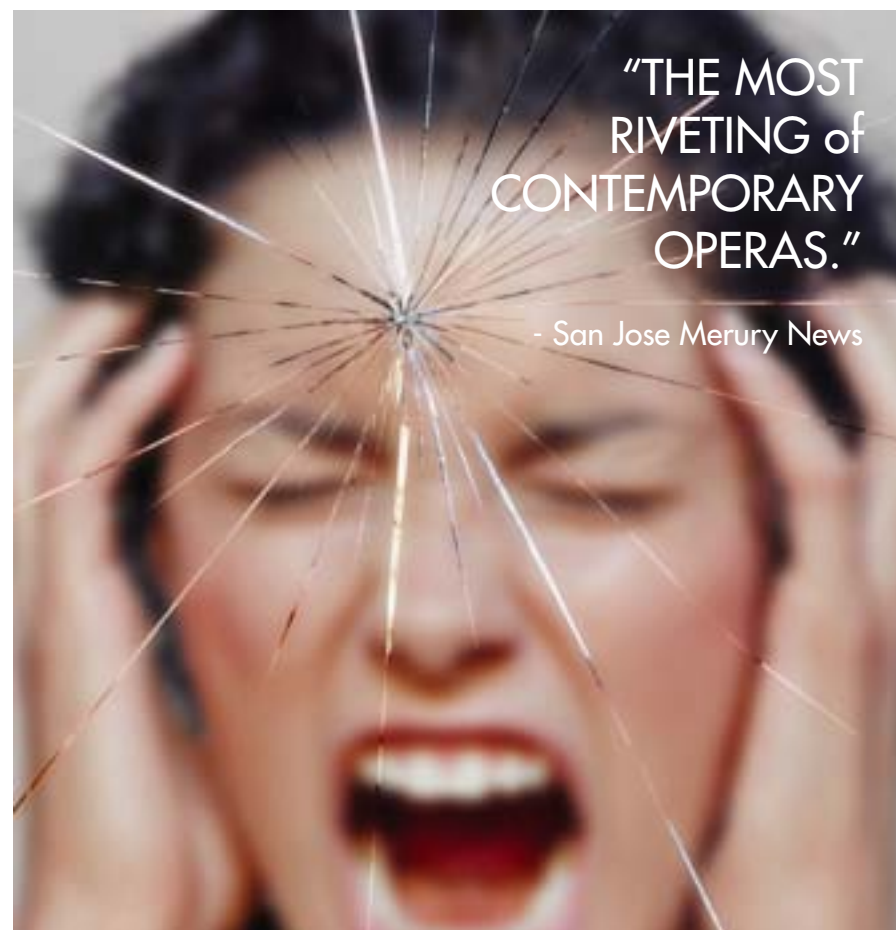
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# André Previn

## A Streetcar Named Desire

An opera in three acts (1998)

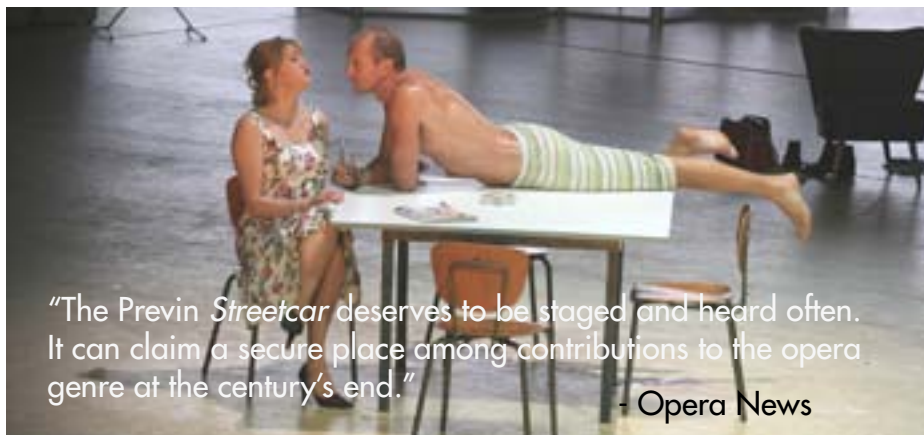


"THE MOST  
RIVETING of  
CONTEMPORARY  
OPERAS."

- San Jose Mercury News

# A Streetcar Named Desire

An opera in three acts (1998)



"The Previn *Streetcar* deserves to be staged and heard often. It can claim a secure place among contributions to the opera genre at the century's end."

- Opera News

Libretto in English by Philip Littell, based on the play by Tennessee Williams

Duration: 2 hours 45 minutes

World Premiere: September 1998, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco, CA.

Commissioned by the San Francisco Opera, funded in part by Mrs. Paul L. Wattis, the Carol Franc Buck Foundation, Arthur Anderson and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## cast list

BLANCHE DUBOIS: *Soprano*

STELLA KOWALSKI: *Lyric-coloratura soprano*

EUNICE HUBBELL: *Mezzo-soprano*

STANLEY KOWALSKI: *Baritone*

HAROLD MITCHELL (Mitch): *Tenor*

PABLO GONZALES: *Actor (non-singing)*

A YOUNG COLLECTOR: *Tenor*

A MEXICAN WOMAN: *Mezzo-soprano*

A DOCTOR: *Actor (non-singing)*

A NURSE: *Actor (non-singing)*

SATB Chorus

## orchestration

3(2pic+2aff).2(ca).3(2Ebcl+asx+bcl).2(cbn)/4331/timp(bdr).2perc/hp.cel/str

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

#### Scene 1

Blanche Dubois has suffered the loss of both her ancestral home and job when she arrives in Elysian Fields, New Orleans to visit her sister Stella, who has married Stanley Kowalski, an ex-G.I. trucker.

#### Scene 2

Stanley, infuriated by Blanche's airs, her suggestive behavior, and what he regards as her loss of his wife's birthright, is determined to expose Blanche's past – which is more tragic and sordid than even he imagines.

#### Scene 3

During a poker game that night, Blanche meets a workmate of Stanley's, Harold Mitchell (Mitch) who is a true "mother's boy." Blanche sets her sights on him.

Stanley, drunk, breaks up the evening and strikes Stella, for siding against him with Blanche. Later, against Blanche's advice, Stella returns to Stanley's bed. The next morning Stanley overhears Blanche entreating her sister to leave him.

### ACT II

#### Scene 1

Stanley tells Stella that he has a friend making inquiries about Blanche in her hometown of Laurel. When he and his now-pregnant wife go out for the evening, Blanche attempts to seduce a young paper-boy, but ends up only stealing a kiss. She later goes out with Mitch.

#### Scene 2

An amorous Mitch unburdens his heart to Blanche, who in turn tells him of her brief

marriage to a young homosexual and how she blames herself for his suicide.

### ACT III

#### Scene 1

Mitch is late for Blanche's birthday party. Stanley, who feels that his home and marriage are threatened by Blanche, breaks up the celebration by revealing Blanche's reputation in Laurel for seducing young men, and that she has been told to leave town. He hands Blanche a one-way ticket home and tells her that Mitch knows everything and will not be returning. Thus begins the fragmentation of Blanche's mind.

#### Scene 2

Stella is in the hospital for a premature delivery. Mitch, drunk, invades the apartment and bitterly reproaches Blanche for her deception. His denunciation of her as someone too unclean to enter his mother's house and the appearance of a Mexican woman selling flowers for the dead trigger the unhooking of Blanche's mind.

#### Scene 3

Blanche's fragmentation is completed when Stanley rapes her.

#### Scene 4

Blanche prepares to visit a fictitious admirer. Stella, unable to believe Blanche's accusations against Stanley, packs Blanche's clothes for the asylum when the doctor arrives. Blanche leaves, declaring that once again, she depends on "the kindness of strangers."