

Stage to Screen: Great Films from Great Plays

4 monthly sessions on Zoom: Thursdays, , Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7, Feb 4 | 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Tuition: \$200, \$180 Delancey Society and Members

Led by Toby Zinman, *Philadelphia Inquirer* Theater Critic

Courses sessions will be held on Zoom. You will receive a link before the first meeting.

At a time when many of us are desperately missing theatre, let's explore four famous American plays that have been adapted for the screen; we'll all read the playscripts and then watch the movies privately; we'll then get together (so to speak) to discuss them--both as an interpretation of the play and as an adaptation, noting the various cinematic techniques that create meaning. This is especially interesting with movies which are excellent in their own right; starry casts also give us a chance to examine the differences between stage acting and film acting.

At the start of each meeting, I'll provide some background and suggest a few ideas to explore. If there is extra stuff that might be useful, I'll email it before each meeting.

All the books and movies are available on Amazon.

November 5

#1 *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, by Eugene O'Neill; he described this autobiographical play as "old sorrow, written in blood and tears." It stars Katherine Hepburn, Ralph Richardson and Jason Robards Jr. (who later became the premiere interpreter of O'Neill). Fantastic camera work and sound design will give us much to notice.

December 3

#2 *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams, starring Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor (who may have been two of the most beautiful people on earth). This adaptation is a perfect illustration of Hollywood's influence on theatre and Tennessee's shocking willingness to bow to big studio rules.

January 7, 2021

#3 *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee (who wittily and crankily commented after seeing the black-and-white film that he was sure he had written the play in color). It stars (the now older) Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton as the battling married couple who were, famously, a battling married couple in real life. This film raises the question of whether a script should be "opened up"; the camera can travel outside the stage box and because it can, it does, but should it?

February 4, 2021

#4. *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange. This is a more contemporary movie and a far more radical adaptation of Shange's play about the Black female experience; it raises the issue of how far an adapting filmmaker is entitled to go. Originally a series of monologues which Shange called "choreopoems," the movie

gives us, instead, realism, with Kerry Washington, Whoopi Goldberg, Janet Jackson and Phylicia Rashad among others.

Toby Zinman is a recently retired Professor of English at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia; she was a Fulbright professor at Tel Aviv University and a visiting professor in China; she publishes widely and lectures internationally on American drama; her fifth book, *Replay: Classic Modern Drama Reimagined* (Methuen), and her essay, "American Theatre Since 1990" is included in the newly published, *Visions of Tragedy in Modern American Drama*. Toby Zinman is also the chief theater critic for the Philadelphia *Inquirer* where she reviews New York and London as well as Philadelphia. She was named by *American Theatre* magazine, "one of the twelve most influential critics in America."