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THEATERWORKS duplicated in exact detail the room at the Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King stayed the night before he was assassinated. "The Mountaintop" centers on an encounter between King (Jamil A.C. Mangan) and the motel's maid, Camae (Courtney Thomas).

AT THEATERWORKS

TIME CAPSULE

The Set of 'The Mountaintop' Recreates King's Motel Room

By **FRANK RIZZO**
frizzo@courant.com

Audiences at Hartford's TheaterWorks production of "The Mountaintop" will be transported in time and place, not just by the power of the script, staging and actors, but by the specificity of place: a dingy '60s motel room in Memphis, with soiled carpeting, faded drapes and a very special guest.

Katori Hall's play is set at the Lorraine Motel on April 3, 1968, the last night of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. Earlier that day he delivered his "I've been to the mountaintop" speech at the Mason Temple. On April 4, he was assassinated on the motel's balcony. King was 39.

For the production, Room 306 is recreated in exacting detail.

"A set design is always a character because it creates the atmosphere," says Evan Adamson, associate scenic designer with David Gallo for the Broadway production of "The Mountaintop." He who is overseeing TheaterWorks' design. The play is in previews and opens Friday, continuing through May 5.



SET DESIGNERS aged a new doorknob to recreate the worn one from the Lorraine Model.

"I don't think it would work if it's just any door or window," says artistic director Rob Ruggiero, who is staging the play which centers on an encounter with King and the motel's mysterious maid. "This play is so grounded in this particular room and time. He even says in the play, 'So this motel room will be my tomb.'"

Adamson's aim for the set is "not to do a heightened

ROOM, D2

Room

Continued from Page D1

reality version of it or to push a metaphor or concept. We really wanted the Katori's script to be the driving force behind the evening."

Hall's play premiered in London in 2009 and won the Olivier Award for best new play. A Broadway production opened in 2011 with Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Bassett.

The designers of the Broadway production went to Memphis where the motel is now a national civil rights museum. King's room is preserved behind glass with Gallo and Adamson the only people to have entered it since 1991 — other than someone who occasionally dusts.

"It was an amazing research opportunity," says Adamson. "I was also overcome with emotions, too, to realize where I was, to put myself in his place and to know what happened just outside that door, knowing that door was the last thing he saw."

They took photos of the room, the tired motel paintings in the room, the Memphis telephone book, bed covers. They made swatches of the colors in the room. "At times it felt like a 'C.S.I.' episode."

But will the audience notice a tiny detail??

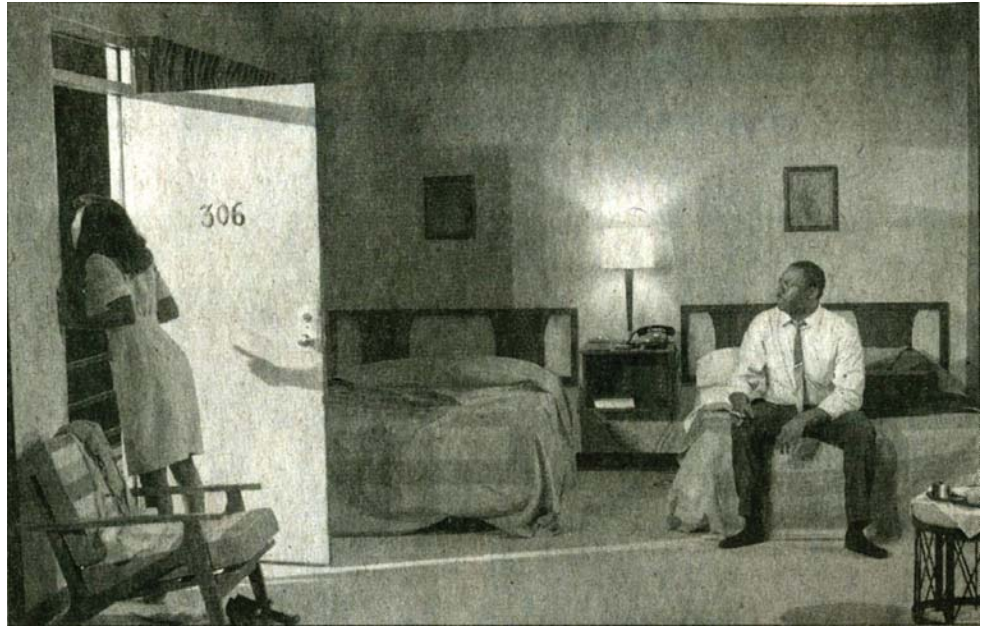
"I never ask that," says Adamson. "I always think everyone will notice."

TheaterWorks has a modified thrust stage, so the set is a more authentic recreation of the room than in the Broadway production, which has a wide proscenium. An exhibit called "Room 306" about the motel and the re-creation of the room through the design process is up at the Hartford theater's gallery.

The Right '0'

The TheaterWorks production team spent many days getting the details just right: how the drapes and bedspread don't exactly match, how the "0" in 306 is upside down, how weathered the door jam is, recreating exact placement of scuffs, even making sure light switches were just off-center by a small angle.

"Our whole production staff became so engaged," says Ruggiero. "It's exciting, moving and disturbing in all the right ways. There's a thrill factor to see how close can we get to make that chair look like the real chair. The thinking is maybe if we get all



PATRICK RAYCRAFT | PRAYCRAFT@COURANT.COM

COURTNEY THOMASS and Jamil A.C. Mangan in a scene from "The Mountaintop" now in previews and opening Friday. Set designers wanted to get the details of Room 306 just right.

these details right some magic will happen. I just got goosebumps."

This is not a biographical play. "There's nothing like, 'I grew up, this happened...' It's this particular moment of time," Ruggiero says. "And Katori has written him as a man — not someone who is revered. He comes in, washes his face, uses the bathroom, takes off his shoes. We see a private moment behind this man."

"This is a fictitious account of him facing things about himself less than 24 hours before his death. It deals with the idea of someone who has an opportunity to understand the impact of his life just before it ends. That's what's so moving about the play."

Ruggiero says he hopes the details of the set register with the audience and the actors: Jamil A.C. Mangan who plays King, and Courtney Thomas who plays Camae.

"We have a duplicate of his briefcase, with an exact copy of what was in it," says Ruggiero. It includes that day's Memphis newspaper, a periodical called "Soul Force," and two of King's own books. It also has the monogram of MLK on it "that only Jamil will see but it will help him become the character. It all adds up."

"To me," says Ruggiero, "it's about truth. Maybe the audience doesn't know that a sign mistakenly says Lorraine 'Hotel'"

instead of "Motel," but if it has that kind of specificity throughout that the sum of the experience will feel like the truth so, in the end, you forget the room and just live with these characters."

THE MOUNTAINTOP is in previews and opens Friday, April 5, at TheaterWorks, 233 Pearl St. Hartford. The show runs through May 5. Tickets are \$50 to \$63; student rush is \$17; seniors at Saturday matinees, \$35. Pay what You Can on Wednesday, April 3. Performances are Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; weekend matinees at 2:30 p.m.. Information: 860-527-7838 and www.theaterworkshartford.org.

Read Frank's blog on theater, the arts and entertainment at www.courant.com/curtain. And be the first to know by following him on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/ShowRiz.

Audiences are transported to the eve of the civil rights leader’s assassination not only by the script, but through a meticulous recreation of room #306 at the Lorraine Motel by Set Designer Evan Adamson.

- Broadway World, Lauren Yarger
[LINK to full article](#)



Photo taken during the survey of Room 306 at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN

Evan Adamson’s depiction of room #306 in staggering as it replicates, in every way, the space. He was part of the design team which traveled to Memphis in preparation for the Broadway production of The Mountaintop a couple of years ago. As he fashioned the room for TheaterWorks, Adamson was intent on recreating each scuff mark and specific color tones of drapes and bedspread to correctly realize the past.

- Talkin Broadway, Fred Sokol
[LINK to full article](#)

Evan Adamson’s detailed set is flawless, and provides a link to time and place integral to the story.

- In the Spotlight, Jarice Hanson
[LINK to full article](#)

...rendered in haunting detail by Evan Adamson...

- The Hartford Courant, Frank Rizzo
[LINK to full article](#)

Evan Adamson’s fine set is a re-creation of that seedy motel room in which King spent his last night on earth.

- The New York Times, Anita Gates
[LINK to full article](#)



Photo of the set from the TheaterWorks production in Hartford, CT

Set designer Evan Adamson [has] recreated in stunning detail an authentic version of the actual Room 306, which Adamson was able to visit in Memphis.

- The Examiner, Andrew Beck
[LINK to full article](#)

Hartford Courant.

[LINK To Hartford Courant’s interview](#) discussing the process of designing the set after documenting the actual Room 306 at the Lorraine Motel.

NEW YORK

[LINK To New York Magazine article \(Oct 10, 2011\)](#) featuring the rendering I created for the Broadway production along with photos taken during the survey of the actual Room 306 in Memphis



NEW YORK

OCTOBER 10, 2011

THEATER

IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME RE-CREATING THE ROOM WHERE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SPENT HIS FINAL NIGHT.

BY ERIC BENSON



REBORN FOR THE STAGE

"We started off with a perfect depiction," Gallo says, "but we had to open it up to the necessities of the theater." The room got bigger; the beds were reoriented. There were other changes, too. Though nobody's stayed in Room 306 since 1968, "in the seventies and eighties, you could slip the night guy ten bucks, and he'd unlock the door." Some visitors left with mementos, and those pieces had to be replicated.



THE CHAIR

The one in the room is a replacement, so Gallo had the original reproduced from photos.

306

THE DOOR

The number on the outside of the front door was replaced sometime after 1968, but Gallo liked the feel that the zero had been mistakenly installed upside down and decided to mimic that in the set.



THE BEDS

When Gallo visited the room, he matched the bedspread's color with a sample book and photographed its texture. The bed itself was built based on Gallo's measurements.



THE TELEPHONE

Research revealed that the framed prints on the wall were later additions to the room. Lacking evidence of what they replaced, Gallo included them on the set anyway. Other items, like the lamps and the phone, were verifiably original.



THE CURTAINS

Gallo found that in King's room, the curtain track had been bulky and the drawers stuck. "We deliberately put in some practical problems," Gallo says, adding, "306 is one of the shabbier rooms—307, where King stayed on previous visits, is much slicker, but it only has one bed, and King didn't like to be by himself." (Fellow activist Ralph Abernathy shared the room that night.)



THE SINK

It would have been too expensive to re-create certain items, like the sink and baseboard heater, and "people tend to collect beautiful antique fixtures, but no one collects the junk," Gallo says. "We went into condemned apartments and salvage yards and just pulled stuff out. It was all mass-produced, so we were able to find stuff that was right on the money."

ON APRIL 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was shot to death on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Since then, Room 306, where he'd spent the previous night, has become a shrine. "There are very few places on Earth where time stopped," says David Gallo, the scenic designer for *The Mountaintop*, a play set on the last night of King's life that opens October 13. Since 1991, the motel has been the National Civil Rights Museum, and the room, virtually untouched, is viewable through glass. For his work on the play, Gallo was allowed inside the room, spending eight hours measuring and photographing every fixture, wall panel, and cigarette burn. He walked us through his work.



THE STAR

"When I was presenting the set," Gallo says, "I said to the company, 'Almost nobody's ever been in the room.' But Sam Jackson [who plays King] came up to me during a break and said, 'I have.' He had volunteered at the museum a few years ago, and they'd let him go in. He got it. We talked about how amazing it had been to be in this piece of history."

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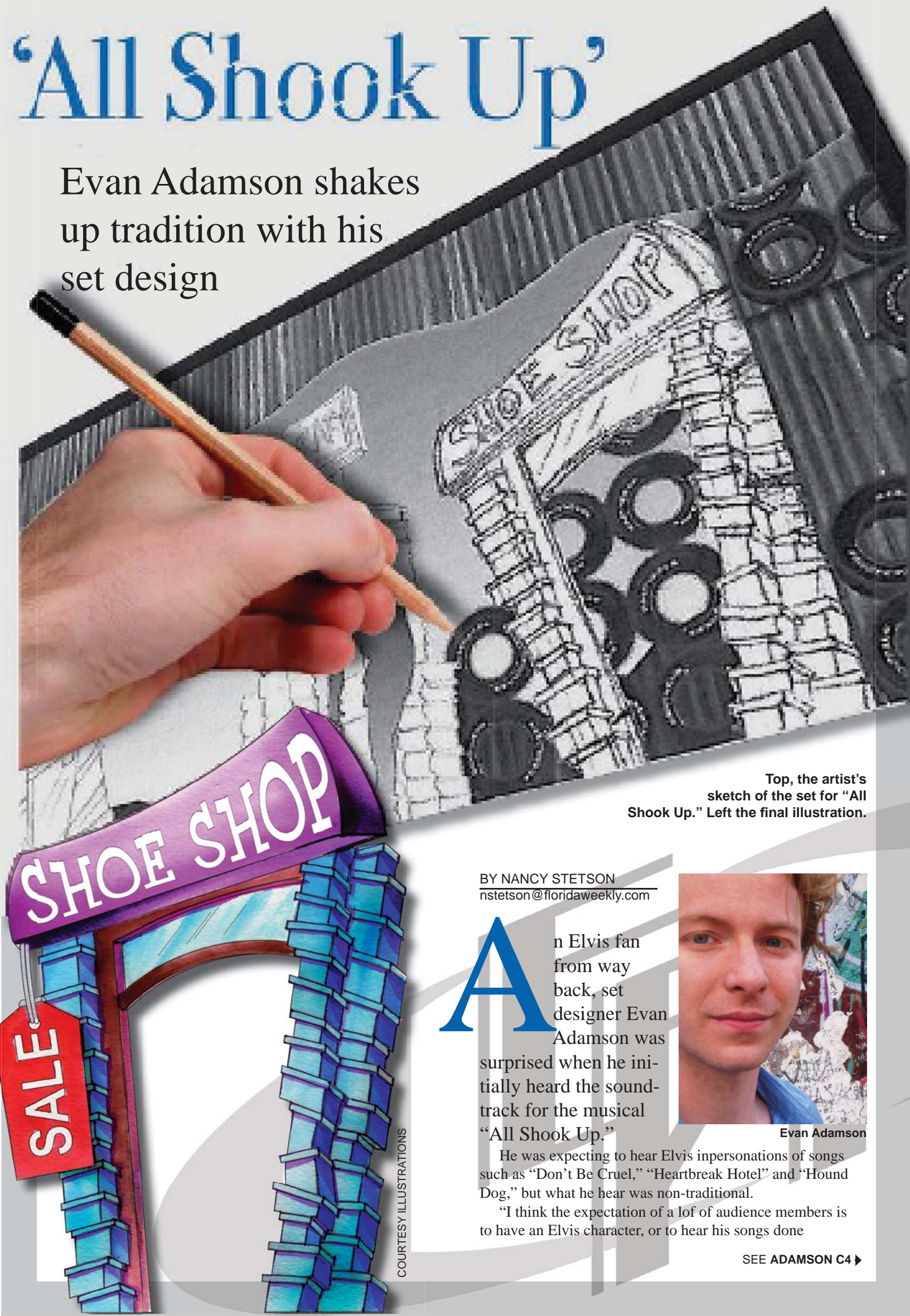
[LINK to online article](#)


ON THE COVER



'All Shook Up'

Evan Adamson shakes up tradition with his set design



Top, the artist's sketch of the set for "All Shook Up." Left the final illustration.

BY NANCY STETSON
nstetson@floridaweekly.com

An Elvis fan from way back, set designer Evan Adamson was surprised when he initially heard the soundtrack for the musical "All Shook Up."

He was expecting to hear Elvis impersonations of songs such as "Don't Be Cruel," "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Hound Dog," but what he heard was non-traditional.

"I think the expectation of a lot of audience members is to have an Elvis character, or to hear his songs done



Evan Adamson

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ADAMSON

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in the way that he would perform them,” Mr. Adamson says from his home in New York. “But the show takes departures from that. So the music is a surprise to them. But I think it’s a successful way of using his material to create something new and a little bit different from expectation.”

So the set designer tried to take what he heard and interpret it visually. Or, as he puts it, “That sort of reinterpretation of something traditional is something we tried to reflect in the design of the set as well.” For example, the red-and-white poles outside the barbershop are “completely over scale,” out of proportion, and instead of bricks in the walls of the shoe shop, there are shoeboxes.

“There’s no sense of traditional architecture at all,” he says. “It’s a playful and more vibrant approach to something. That was done, really, to mimic the way that the story is being told, a new approach to these classic songs that everybody’s typically familiar with.”

This production of “All Shook Up,” which has played at previous Prather theaters in Pennsylvania and Arizona, plays at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater in Fort Myers from Feb. 19 through April 11.

“I remember being in the thick of it a year ago,” Mr. Adamson says. “It’s remained one of my favorite shows. It’s a pleasure to work with Marc Robins, the director, in particular. We had a very easy time collaborating with each other, and encouraging each other’s ideas.”

When he first listened to the musical’s score, it was jarring.

“Once I realized that it was different, and I listened to the songs again, it opened up a whole new take on them and a whole new vibrancy. That was my immediate reaction both in reading the script and in hearing the music.”

And that was what he wanted to do with the show’s set design too, to present something completely different than what audiences might expect.

“I wanted it to be as successful as the music was,” he says. “And of course, I hope it was. But that’s traditionally how I work: whatever grabs me the most in the script or in a piece of lyric or music, typically, I try to cling on to that. That’s my initial reaction, and I try to emphasize that as much as I can.”



Initial sketches for one part of the set of “All Shook Up”



As the set looks on stage.

Of course, he says, he tries not to go too far away from the root source. So the musical has a jailhouse set and a carnival set, to represent “Jailhouse Rock” and “Roustabout.”

The sets are “Seussical in a way,” says Broadway Palm General Manager Susan Johnson. “They’re over the top, larger than life, crazy, fun. They’re zany.”

Mr. Adamson, she says, has designed sets for more than a dozen shows at the Broadway Palm, including “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,” “Godspell,” “The Full Monty” and “Singin’ in the Rain.” He also designed the set for the upcoming production of “Peter Pan.”

There’s also a traveling theme in “All Shook Up,” he says.

“The story itself is a constant reiteration of people moving, both figuratively and literally,” Mr. Adamson says. “They’re always going from place to place in the script. And figuratively, quite a few of the characters are taking journeys for themselves, starting the show off in one place, and ending the show with a different mind frame, and consequently, in a happier place. So the theme of travel is something we wanted to emphasize.”

So Mr. Adamson created a background of old tires and license plates all over the set. In Sylvia’s Restaurant, for example, the bar is the front bumper of a car and the stools are made of old car seats.

When he was growing up, Mr. Adamson wanted to be a painter, but couldn’t figure out how he could make a living at it. He’d never been to the theater, except for his brother’s high school productions. Then one year his parents took him to Radio City Music Hall in New York City to see the Radio City Christmas Spectacular.

“I’d never seen anything like that,” he says. “I’d never been in a theater as large as that before. I’d only seen high school productions. It blew me away.”

Because he was sitting very far to the left, he could see men moving sets around backstage.

“I could see how much went into a production,” he says. “And that moment is probably what propelled me into designing scenery. Because it was the first time I realized that someone has to figure out all this stuff. Never had it crossed my mind in the theater or in the movies, either, that

someone has to draw all these things up and create them, that there were soundstages in movies. It just never dawned on me that there was a great deal of process that went into creating environments.”

He was hooked. He began watching movies and analyzing the design. He’d ask himself: why did they do that? What would I have done? Could I have done it as well?

“That’s something that lives with me to this day,” he says. “I can’t watch a movie without asking myself why those choices were made, or what choices I would’ve done to do it better, or do it differently. The same goes for theater. I see any piece of theater, and I critique the set.”

The ideal is to have the audience respond to the set subconsciously, emotionally, he says.

“I never want to have such a bold set that the audience thinks, ‘Oh, that set was designed,’ or ‘Oh, look how cool that set is.’ There’s never been a playwright who thinks: ‘Now I’m going to write something in this story that I want the audience to think how cool the set is.’

“I never want to take away from the audience’s experience. I just want to help it along without it being known. It goes back to when I was a kid and I never thought about it. A great example is ‘Star Wars.’ I watched that when I was 6 or 7, and it was a great movie, and I didn’t know why. I just remember being in awe of seeing two suns in the sky. It was crazy. But it wasn’t until I was in my teens that I realized that someone had to think that up, had to put two suns in the sky. Well, they didn’t have to, but the fact that they did made that scene so interesting.”

Mr. Adamson does pencil drawings, mechanicals, then develops the images even more, using everything from watercolors, acrylics, collage, markers, pastels. The pieces themselves are works of art.

Life came full circle for Mr. Adamson when he was asked to redesign the Radio City Christmas Spectacular for its 75th anniversary. It was the very show that had inspired him to become a set designer.

“It was amazing,” he says. “I dropped everything when I got called to work on the redesign. We redesigned about 90 percent of the show. And when I got called, I pretty much dropped all my other projects, to work on that. Because to this day, I remember sitting in that theater, and looking backstage and seeing things, and I actually was very critical. I thought that they were doing some things wrong. I was actually frustrated, as a kid, thinking, ‘Why can I see these guys back there? They’re moving stuff around!’”

The entire time he was working on the show, he’d remember what it was like as a kid, seeing it for the first time.

He’d worked on a team that redesigned Radio City’s touring shows, so when the 75th anniversary redesign came up, it was just natural that he’d be asked to work on it.

Mr. Adamson’s worked on Broadway and off-Broadway shows, including the 2003 production of “Fiddler on the Roof,” which was nominated for a Tony for best set design. Currently, he’s working on “Beauty and the Beast” as an associate designer and right-hand man for Tony Award-winning designer David Gallo. The show will play in different countries, including Russia, Spain, the Netherlands, and possibly even the United States.

“It’s great,” Mr. Adamson says. “I love working with David, and I’m learning just from being around him. I’m learning about design, and how to handle situations in a theater environment. And it’s great, it’s really great.” ■

Now, this is what a psychiatrist's office should look like. The wall of books; the African art; the Greek, Roman and Egyptian artifacts on the desk; the Oriental rugs; and the imposing, tapestry-draped couch. This is the sunlit London study of Dr. Sigmund Freud in TheaterWorks Hartford's decidedly satisfying new production of "Freud's Last Session," and what better place to debate the existence of God?.... Evan Adamson created the handsome set, and one of its most appealing elements is the windows, framed by hints of greenery outside, with pinched drapery panels letting in an alluring soft light.

- The New York Times, Anita Gates

[LINK to full article](#)

... splendidly designed by Evan Adamson with a telling attention to detail is the study in Freud's home in the outskirts of London.

- Berkshire Eagle Staff, Jeffrey Borak

[LINK to full article](#)



Photo of Freud's Last Session from the TheaterWorks production in Hartford, CT

Maxwell Williams tightly directs the intellectually satisfying debate that plays out in Freud's well-appointed study designed by Evan Adamson.

- Broadway World, Lauren Yarger

[LINK to full article](#)

As Germany invades Poland, Freud (Kenneth Tigar) sits in his office in London, admirably crafted in delicious detail by set designer Evan Adamson, awaiting the arrival of Lewis (Jonathan Crombie).

- Connecticut Critics Circle, Geary Danihy

[LINK to full article](#)



Photo of Freud's Study at 20 Maresfield Gardens, London

The men meet, at Freud's invitation, in his beautifully appointed study, designed by Evan Adamson, as hundreds of mythological god totems sit everywhere, welcoming revelations.

- By Bonnie Goldberg, The Middletown Press

[LINK to full article](#)

Kenneth Tigar, as he sits in his London office, marvelously designed to meticulous detail by Evan Adamson, who captured the essence of the Lorraine Motel so stunningly in last year's Theaterworks production of "The Mountaintop." Adamson has filled the room with antique furniture, cloths and draperies, including an upholstered settee, along with sagging bookshelves containing Freud's voluminous library and Freud's large desk with its collection of figurines representing gods and myths from the world's cultures.

- The Examiner, Andrew Beck

[LINK to full article](#)

Another “character,” albeit not living or breathing, is the set design by Evan Adamson. Every bit of “decor,” from the minutia of the location of a filthy burnt pan to the large unmade bed strewn with smelly blankets (well, they looked smelly) is exact.

- In the Spotlight, Shera Cohen
[LINK to full article](#)

Evan Adamson’s design for a grungy, dirty trailer (one can imagine its scent) is superb.

- Talkin’ Broadway, Fred Sokol
[LINK to full article](#)



Photo of Annapurna scenery, prior to set dressing. TheaterWorks production in Hartford, CT

Evan Adamson’s scenic design is meticulous in the amount of detail and specificity he has provided for Ulysses’ much-lived-in home.

- Connecticut Critics Circle, Tom Holehan
[LINK to full article](#)



Photo of Annapurna scenery. TheaterWorks production in Hartford, CT

Technically, the production is well detailed. Evan Adamson’s set design is breathtaking with a view of bright shining snow-covered mountains outside of the awful trailer.

- Connecticut Critics Circle, Rosalind Friendman
[LINK to full article](#)

So, too, are the constant references to Ulysses’ slovenliness, a mode of existence that is evident even before the start of the play, for all the audience has to do is take in Evan Adamson’s impressively detailed set design of the interior of the trailer to understand that here lives a slob.

- CT Theater News, Geary Danihy
[LINK to full article](#)

Evan Adamson has created a perfect set -- a small trailer that looks both worn out and messy. It, like Ulysses, is decaying in front of us.

- Two on the Aisle, Karen Isaacs
[LINK to full article](#)

Another key element of the play is Evan Adamson’s set, a realistically detailed interior of a messy, unkempt trailer with piles of clothes strewn across the floor and under the unmade bed, with dirty dishes and mugs piling up along the messy counters and swollen boxes hide unhappily squeezed beneath the bed. Even with a panorama of the Rockies visible outside the door and windows of the trailer, Adamson has done a great job of recreating the claustrophobic atmosphere of the dwelling where Uly has exiled himself.

- The Examiner, Andrew Beck
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Violinist teaching secrets of the strings

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Simplicity of 'Our Town' touches hearts

By Theodore P. Mahne

Contributing writer

Thornton Wilder's classic American drama, "Our Town," brings to mind a mangled maxim à la Yogi Berra. Of a popular restaurant, Berra once declared, "No one goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

"Our Town" was once so popular that its licensing agency declared that barely a night went by that the show wasn't being performed on some stage somewhere. Today, however, most of our familiarity with the show comes not from professional productions, but from amateur high school drama club presentations, or from long ago encounters reading it in an English class.

As a result, the current staging, which is opening the new season at Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre, is a refreshing rediscovery. Though not perfect, the production satisfyingly makes the case that "Our Town" deserves its ranking as the Great American Drama. Other great works would certainly follow, but it was Wilder who blazed the trail for Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee and so many others.

In all its deceptive simplicity, director Maxwell Williams presents a traditional staging that includes expressive details amid the pantomime actions of the actors.

The groundbreaking concept from its 1938 premiere of performing the play on a mostly bare stage, using no curtain and no scenery, may no longer be new. In that bareness, however, Williams and his cast cut to the core of the timeless emotions of the play. In the seeming ordinariness of it all, nothing much happens in Grover's Corners. Nothing but life itself.

Our guide to that life in the town is the Stage Manager. In casting Carol Sutton in the role, Williams establishes the entire tone of the production. While the Stage Manager is often portrayed as a God-like overseer of the village, Sutton supplants the typically stiff Yankee reserve with neighborly, distinctly Southern warmth. Never falsely sentimental, she captures the omnipresent power of the part while remaining loving and genuinely funny. It is a smartly rich performance.

Some of the more quaint lines of the script elicit more humor today than in the past, and while Williams handles those moments tongue firmly in cheek, he doesn't allow a modern post-ironic cynicism to invade the mood.

Indeed, there is no need for that, as Wilder himself didn't write a syrupy story. There is a gentle but critical bite to his view of village life. The town's treatment of Simon Stimson, the alcoholic choirmaster, is one example. Played with rich intensity by Leon Contavesprie, the character is seen as scandalous by the gossips around town, while the community at large lives by an unspoken agreement to ignore his problems. In the end, the results are tragic.

The other leading roles are generally strongly played. Ann Dalrymple is touching as the sympathetic Mrs. Gibbs. She well captures one of the play's key themes of dreams deferred.

Silas Cooper carries a serene authority as Dr. Gibbs. His moment quietly correcting his son, George, about helping his mother is particularly gripping.



JOHN B. BARROS

Greg Chandler Maness and Sara Miner star in 'Our Town.' Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre opens its 99th season with Thornton Wilder's classic American drama.

Michelle Benet brings a sharper edge to Mrs. Webb, while James Howard Wright gives Mr. Webb an easygoing attitude and wise spirit.

The central focus of the play revolves around the relationship between George and Emily, as the audience watches them as high school students falling in love, eventually marrying, and facing life with all its "awful and wonderful" moments.

Though they make an attractive couple, Greg Chandler Maness and Sara Miner are too old to be convincing as teenagers. While they have enough of a spark between them, they do not convey enough of the innocence of first love in the second act. By the emotionally moving finale, however, the sense of loss from each is palpable.

"Our Town" is not a piece to be rushed. Williams sets a pace, especially in the first act, which invites the audience to slow itself down, and enter into the rhythms of small-town life. The effect pays off well, bringing rich rewards in the final two acts.

With the generally bare stage, in which Evan Adamson's set designs consist of little more than a few chairs, a couple of tables, and a pair of folding stepladders, attention is strongly drawn to other production elements.

Alison Parker's costumes are off-the-rack serviceable, generally fitting the characters. The outfits chosen for Emily, however, are the exception, fitting neither the character nor the time period. Prancing around in an immodest pair of too-short and too-tight lace shorts, she looked like she was working Main Street. The loose dress of the second act was cut so high that George might've been able to see the lights of lower Broadway.

Mandi Wood's lighting is atmospheric and focuses the action well. Fitz Patton's sound designs are assets to the production adding subtle detail without becoming overwhelming.

At one point, Sutton's character cheerfully describes what will be included in a time capsule being placed in the cornerstone of a new building, to be opened "in 1,000 years." Whether anything from our culture will be remembered 1,000 years from now is questionable, but for now this well-conceived production shows just how timeless a work "Our Town" remains today.

Theodore P. Mahne is a contributor to The Times-Picayune.

OUR TOWN

What: The Little Theatre opens its 99th season with Thornton Wilder's classic American drama about life, love and death in the small town of Grover's Corners, N.H. The theater's artistic director, Maxwell Williams, directs. Carol Sutton stars as the Stage Manager.

Where: Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre, 616 St. Peter St.

When: Performances at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and at 3 Sundays, through Oct. 18.

Admission: \$35-\$50. For information, call 504.522.2081.