



PEEK BEHIND  
THE  
SCENES  
OF  
*A DELICATE BALANCE*

Compiled By Lotta Löfgren

## To Our Patrons

Most of us who attend a theatrical performance know little about how a play is actually born to the stage. We only sit in our seats and admire the magic of theater. But the birthing process involves a long period of gestation.

Certainly magic does happen on the stage, minute to minute, and night after night. But the magic that theatergoers experience when they see a play is made possible only because of many weeks of work and the remarkable dedication of many, many volunteers in order to transform the text into performance, to move from page to stage.

In this study guide, we want to give you some idea of what goes into creating a show. You will see the actors work their magic in the performance tonight. But they could not do their job without the work of others. Inside you will find comments from the director, the assistant director, the producer, the stage manager, the set designer, the props mistress, the costume designer, the lighting designer, the master carpenter, and the dramaturge. These people all do crucial work.

But we should not forget the people who do not have a voice here, people who freely give countless hours to Live Arts – the people who build the sets, paint the sets, scramble to dress the set and find props; people who work the light boards and sound boards, who make sure that you have a chair to sit in where you can actually see the action on the stage, and many, many others.

All these people join together to create the performance you will see tonight.

## As You Watch the Play

Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* is a difficult play: difficult to produce, direct, perform, and (above all, perhaps), to understand. At first you might think that there isn't much to this play: it seems like just a typical day in a typical upper middle class home with typical spoiled upper middle class people. You might at first think that most of what they say is drivel.

But, as Fran our director points out, not a word of this play is extraneous; the play is as carefully crafted as a symphony. People talk drivel because they are terrified of facing their own frailties and mortality. They engage in a delicate dance – they try to keep a delicate balance – between coping with life's vagaries and ignoring them.

Consider Edna's exclamation in the first act: why is she so terrified if there is nothing there? Because looking into the heart of the universe and seeing nothing *is* terrifying. So much of what these people do involves hiding from the vast emptiness of the universe. So much of their silliness is a running away from the grim truth that life has no meaning. They all have their own ways of doing this. Claire drinks; Julie gets married over and over; Agnes acts superior to everyone else; Tobias does what he can to stay passive and to make no decisions. All their drinking, trips to the club, canasta, needlepoint, pointless chatter, etc., etc. is just a smokescreen to keep from seeing the void in their lives and in the universe.

As you see the play, you may want to ponder these questions:

- Why is the play called *A Delicate Balance*? The characters have to find a delicate balance in their lives in several ways. For one, they must find a delicate balance between terminal silliness and terror. But the play's title refers to many other struggles as well.
- The play raises hard questions about what we owe to others. Do Agnes and Tobias have an obligation to house Claire and Julie, and Edna and Harry? What do they owe to each? What do Agnes and Tobias owe each other? How successful is any character in fulfilling his or her obligations to others?
- Why does Tobias beg Edna and Harry to stay in the end? What does he need from them? Why do Edna and Harry decide to leave? What, if anything, have they learned in these two tumultuous nights?
- Aside from the characters we see on stage, one invisible character influences the action throughout the play: Teddy, the dead son, brother, and nephew. What is his role in the play? How does he influence the action?
- Finally, what does Albee suggest are the minimum requirements for happiness? How do we best counter the meaningless universe? Are there ways that we can create our own meaning?

Enjoy the show!

-- Lotta Löfgren (dramaturge)

Director: Fran Smith

A director first has to find a play that she is passionate about. She can recommend a play to the artistic director, or she may find a play in the season that particularly inspires and challenges her. This is crucial because the director has full accountability for the production and must believe in it completely.

She then meets with staff to help put a design team together and presents her vision of the play to the designers. Design meets begin about 15 weeks out and continue to meet weekly throughout the rehearsal process. The director should work closely with staff, stage managers, and assistants to keep the process running smoothly.

Once the design team is established, the director calls for auditions, which usually span 3 nights, including a night of callbacks. From these, she selects the cast, paying special attention to the chemistry of the actors.

The director schedules an informal read-through with cast, stage manager, producer, and anyone else who cares to come. This allows the actors to familiarize themselves with the play and become more comfortable with each other. They become a kind of family (in this case one that gets along a lot better than the family they portray on stage) in the course of the rehearsal process. Although the sense of family is short lived, it creates a strong sense of camaraderie. We're in this together. No one is less or more important.

The director creates a rehearsal schedule addressing individual cast conflicts. (This can be daunting.)

Rehearsals for my productions happen four evenings a week for 2 ½ hours. Initially we talk about the play and the playwright intent. When we get to the stage of the process where we run through the entire play in each rehearsal, rehearsals get a bit longer.

Early rehearsals can be rather tedious for directors when actors are busy memorizing their lines. I encourage my cast to get off book as soon as possible. Each actor has his or her own way of learning lines. The director needs to be respectful of these differences even as she works to coordinate the process and move the actors forward at the same pace.

Rough blocking [determining the way the actors position themselves on stage] the movement of a play at the beginning needs to be flexible as we decide what works. We need early on to be attentive to sightlines: can everyone in the audience see the action? This challenge increases with a "theater in the round" layout such as the one

in this play – that is, the members of the audience surround the stage. The actors must seem to move around naturally while always being attentive to their position relative to the audience. Final blocking gets adjusted as furniture, props, and stage business are brought to completion. This is the most exciting part for me: creating beautiful moving life images on stage, a kind of moving sculpture.

Once the actors have learned their lines, the all-important fine-tuning of the play begins. I can suggest better ways to convey the emotion of a scene, inside and between characters. My mantras: Trust the text, listen to each other, don't flap your arms or overuse gestures, ground yourself, establish eye contact, vary speech patterns, use your full range vocally.

During "tech week," all the technical directors, who have been working mostly independently up to this point, are drawn in to put all the pieces together – like an intricate but living puzzle, one that needs to be tightly constructed yet which looks somewhat different every night. This is a wonderful, magical time of collaboration, so important for the actors to realize their roles fully.

Suspending disbelief is always my main goal: the actors need to pull in the audience until it forgets the outside world and sees the action of the play as a complete world in itself.

The director also has to function as a key PR person for the production. She participates in interviews, photo shoots, and does what she can to promote the production.

I look forward to opening night when my job is over and the stage manager takes over. I must admit for a week after opening night I have to readjust my life a bit.

I have directed many productions over the last 40 years. Each journey is a new experience

As I delved into the world of Edward Albee's text for *A Delicate Balance* I was reminded what a profound wordsmith he is. Albee captures familial dysfunction with such eloquent and precise language. Perhaps it is my vivid imagination that allows me to bring the written word to life in my mind. I'm a dreamer. When I read a script I can visualize the characters vividly – how they should move, what they should look like. Directing allows me an opportunity to manipulate and create a vision for a chosen work. This experience has allowed me that privilege with this Pulitzer Prize winning play. "Cast it well" and the process of bringing a play to the stage is much easier. I've been very fortunate to have such a cast. Such gifted, generous actors (Chris, Boomie, Jamie, Kiri, Jane, and Tim) who were willing to take the emotional journey that Albee's *A Delicate Balance* provides – that coupled with a dedicated crew who magically transformed a simple black box into what you will witness tonight. (It's hard work.)

Seeing a play together strengthens our sense of community. I hope you will be moved by our efforts.

#### Assistant Director: Tim White

Other than “Producer,” the “Assistant Director” is probably one of the more nebulous non-acting positions in the world of the theatre or movie genres. In most cases it will depend on the needs of that specific director. Some directors are “micro managers,” and they wish to be in charge of all the decisions made for a production; they are not really interested in the thoughts of anyone else. Other directors feel totally confident with the A.D., especially if they cannot attend a rehearsal.

*A Delicate Balance* is the third show that Fran Smith and I have collaborated on in less than three years: *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *The Realistic Joneses* the other two. Prior to *Mockingbird* we had known each other professionally for 30 years, but had never worked together on a production.

Fran is a director who does her homework; she knows exactly what she wants. However, she sees our partnership as “Fran looks at the big picture” and “Tim looks at the details.” I guess this is true. Although I can easily look at the big picture, I try to focus on the smaller things with Fran.

Fran and I communicate chiefly by email and phone. I try not to add my thoughts during a rehearsal, unless I feel that it is a significant comment or observation that could, or should, be considered at the moment. She often finds herself reading lengthy emails from me. I know that she will always consider my suggestions and observations.

I have been acting longer than I have been directing. As an added bonus as an Assistant Director, I am capable of filling in for an actor should they be absent for a rehearsal. I try to mimic the role as the actor has been doing it in rehearsals. In some cases I do the character’s blocking (movement on stage.) I have also read character’s lines during auditions to help out the actor who is trying out.

These are just some of the responsibilities of an Assistant Director for a production. Taking on this job can also be an excellent training ground for someone who might like to direct in the future.

Producer: Bob Button

No, unlike Broadway, a producer at Live Arts is not responsible for raising all the money needed to launch the production. That job is in the very capable hands of the Live Arts staff and Board of Directors.

So what does the Producer do? Much of the job is coordination and communication – and then to be available to respond with help wherever needed.

As the primary link between the Production Team and the Live Arts staff, the Producer chairs weekly production meetings that begin several weeks before the show is even cast. That is where the Director and designers – set, costumes, props, lights and sound – bounce around ideas relating to time, place, theme, mood and story to be developed and how that can best be created on stage, so each can utilize his or her talents to fit into the larger concept. For example, during discussions for *A Delicate Balance*, a key issue was whether the play is set in the late '50s or mid '60s, a decision that affects everything from set decoration to costumes and to use of cigarettes. The decision, ultimately, was to go with 1966, when the play was first produced on Broadway – and designers took a second look at their plans.

Later, designers share drawings, plots or other ideas as a base for discussion by all involved and give progress reports. The Dramaturge is a key resource in these discussions, blending the text of the play with the historical context and information about previous productions on Broadway or elsewhere. The Production Stage Manager takes notes and in fact “manages” the production details so the creative talent can focus on their work. The Master Carpenter is concerned about how ideas for the set can best be realized in the shop. Live Arts staff members who contribute to production meetings are the Production Manager, Technical Director and Producing Artistic Director who also oversees marketing. It is they who are ultimately responsible for what happens on stage.

But then there are the unknowns, the surprises that inevitably affect the production process. Every director stresses the critical need for actors to learn lines as written, but there is usually a little wiggle room. I was especially pleased at a line rehearsal about three weeks out when the actors asked to be corrected on every phrase or word, even contractions – the goal to be absolutely faithful to Edward Albee’s script.

One problem inherent in the first show of the season is that work starts in the middle of the summer – and vacation season. Certainly, that affects the rehearsal

schedule as different actors have different conflicts. But in this case the Director was on vacation for a week, while the Assistant Director took control and moved forward; the Production Stage Manager was also out of town for two weeks. Since I have stage managed a number of Live Arts shows, it was relatively easy for me to slide into the PSM's job as needed, and I loved the chance to be engaged with the cast at nightly rehearsals and able to see what was happening on stage as well as off. The best plays are produced by a company of talented people sharing their unique skills, commitment, and enthusiasm. The key is in the way they work together, and in this marvelous company, everyone did everything they were asked and went far beyond to support each other. That is a Producer's dream and you can share in the result on stage tonight.

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## Set Designer: Gwyn Gilliam

The set designer starts to work with the director on the set design as soon as the play has been identified. The set designer's work is the prime physical manifestation of the interpretation of the play, of taking the play from the page to the stage.

The set designer has to juggle many requirements. First, she must create a set that respects the vision of the playwright. Second, she must adhere to the vision of the director. Third, she must bring her own artistic interpretation to the creation of the set.

In addition, she must become intimately acquainted with the space itself, to make sure that all these visions put together will actually work in the performance space. She must remain always mindful of the practical limitations of the space. For example: will the actors be able to move freely around the set? Will the audience on all sides be able to view the action?

In this particular space, creating a set that allows for the required number of seats took many small revisions of the original plan. When a theater receives permission to produce a play, it has to promise to make available a certain number of seats for each performance. In addition, in order to make revenue predictions, Live Arts needs a certain number of seats to be occupied, and all the seats need to have adequate sight lines. In a theater as small as the Founders' Theater, this poses a real challenge.

This play, set in Westchester County in an upper-middle-class home in the 1960s, is an intimate look inside a family's living room during one weekend. Locating seating on all sides and treating the walls of the theater as living room walls with color, drapery, and artwork helps the audience feel as if they are in the living room with the actors instead of in a typical black box.

The curved entry walls and the echoing curved staircase create a sense of movement through the space and anchor the central seating area. I wanted to create an element of elegance in the set and therefore designed an arched entryway from the front door and combined it with a curved staircase and curved bar. These elements had to be combined very efficiently in order to allow space for as many seats as possible in the theater. The bar was particularly tricky as it had to be large enough to fit all of the bottles and glasses and be readily accessible without obstructing the actors' paths.

Lighting Designer: Steven Reid

### It's All About Lighting

While the title of this may seem a little self-aggrandizing, without stage lighting, you have... radio. The audience must be able to appreciate the gorgeous costumes, feel the texture of the furniture, move inside the set, and above all else, experience the emotions of the performers. Without proper lighting, all the work of the actors and other designers is lost. So my goal in lighting any production is to show off the work of everyone else.

The first consideration for me is always color. When working on a large-scale musical, the designer can go a bit crazy with flashy colors, but on an intimate play, like *A Delicate Balance*, color is far more subtle. I've primarily washed the stage in lavender and pink. The purpose of this is to add warmth and life to the actors' faces while pulling out the fabric colors in the costumes and furniture. These colors help reinforce the mood Albee creates with his carefully worded dialogue. Watch for a couple of times where the mood intensifies and the lighting will make a subtle shift to reflect the characters' emotions.

The most challenging aspect of this production is also what makes it special for the audience: the intimacy. When I work lighting in a black-box theater set "in the round," the challenge becomes showing off the actors, while not blinding the audience. Stage lights are intense. They need to be so that everyone gets a perfect view of the action. Actors are accustomed to the brightness of stage lighting; many are like heat-seeking missiles looking for the hottest spot on the stage to "find their light." But, when the actor is only a foot or two away from the audience, the lighting must focus on the actors while keeping the audience shrouded in the shadows.

My hope with this and every production I light is for no one to notice the work I've done. If people leave discussing the lighting, I've either done it poorly (and the actors were standing in the dark), or I've stolen focus from the characters and their emotional trials of the script. I hope that you enjoy this production of Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* and that I have maintained my own balance between illumination and mood.

Costume designer: Martha Stafford

I think costumes are very important to character development. Our choice of clothing tells other people how we expect to be treated and where we see our place in the world. To get a sense of the period of the play I watch movies and look at magazine articles and fashion history websites. I also look at pictures of past productions of the play; in this case I was able to watch the movie version starring Katherine Hepburn. I'm looking for shapes, hemlines, heel heights, necklines, pant lengths, tie widths and shoe styles that are unique to the time period. I start a journal where I jot down ideas and make simple drawings. I collect the actors' clothing and shoe sizes and put them in the journal. I take the journal with me everywhere because I never know when or where I'll find the right piece.

Then the search begins! I comb through the Live Arts costume shop, all the thrift and consignment shops in town, department store clearance rooms, discount chains, and websites looking for clothing that will flatter the actor and tell the audience who their character is. Once I have a few choices for each character then we play dress-up so I can see how everything fits and if the actor looks natural in the clothes. Finally a few weeks before opening we see the costume in action at the costume parade. The costume parade gives the director a chance to see how things look under the lights and how the colors work with the set, and to request changes if they don't agree with a costume choice. The final weeks before the show adjustments are made so that the audience is not distracted by costume malfunctions and can focus on the play.

Each play comes with its own set of challenges. For this play the director initially wanted to have it set in the late 1950's. Despite the fact that the play opened in 1966 and the playwright said the time period was "the present". I spent the summer trying to figure out how I was going to evoke the late 1950's through costumes. Most people immediately think of women with small waists in full skirts but these are hard to find and the actors would have to wear girdles to achieve the cinched waist style. So I settled on variations of the pencil skirt and sweater sets. The pencil skirt was introduced in 1954 by Christian Dior. Obviously we still wear this style and I knew I could find them new and vary the lengths and fabrics for the women in the play. For the character of Agnes I initially wanted her to wear a classic look that would evoke the late 1940's and early 1950's because a women of her class would be wearing well-made clothes she had owned for a long time as opposed to following current fashion. This all changed when the director decided to go back to the original time period of the play, which was 1966. With the help of two more experienced costumers, Tricia Emler and Amy Goffman, we assessed what I had already done to see what needed to change. The character that had to be completely recreated was the daughter Julia. She is 36 and living in New York. I was using her character to exemplify the high style of the time. Her original costume was a tight red pencil skirt hitting just below the knee, a short sleeved black cashmere jewel neck sweater with a circle pin, a black jacket with 3/4 length sleeves and a

cowl neck that fastened on the side and black stilettos. Her updated costume features over the knee boots, a style introduced by Balenciaga in 1962, and a "mini" dress, a style pioneered by British designer Mary Quant and French designer Andre Courrèges in the early 1960's. I also ended up completely changing Agnes away from the late 1940's to the more timeless tweed skirt, silk blouse, and cardigan sweater.

Another interesting challenge was costuming the character of Claire. Claire is Agnes's sister; she lives with Agnes and Tobias and is the most rebellious of all the characters. When studying past productions I found that all the Claires were unique to the actor playing her. There was no Claire "look" and everyone had a different opinion on who she was and what she would look like. Claire's costume kept evolving through the rehearsal process and the end result was a collaborative effort between the costumer, director and actor.

Other issues that come up are technical. I had chosen white button down shirts for the men but had to change to blue because I learned, from lighting designer Steven Reid, that white washes out the actors faces under stage lights and that it takes on other colors so can appear pink, red or blue depending on the lighting. A zigzag patterned knit dress I'd chosen for Julia was busy and clashed with the set and the fabric rode up and stayed which would have been distracting for the audience. Some of the costumes in this show were contributed by the actors themselves. Making it a collaborative effort is part of the fun for me. It's important that you feel good on stage and that you have a costume that makes you feel confident.

## Stage Manager: Kathleen Mueller

Wikipedia defines a stage manager as an individual who has overall responsibility for stage management and the smooth execution of a theatrical production.

The first step for me is to get to know the director's vision and hear how best she works with rehearsals and schedules; I need to know her priorities and discover how she would like to form a team of actors who may not know each other into the family who will perform. Then I start on getting to know the cast and production team while filling their inboxes with numerous emails regarding schedules and lists of things that need to get done.

I feel that my job is best done when I am not inserting myself into or in between, but listening, asking questions when needed, and communicating with all. Another huge part of my job is to enable the cast to have the best performance they can and not have to think about where the next prop is coming from – laying out a smooth performance by preparing the theater so that all is as expected – always put those magazines in the same place, making sure the bar is set the same each night, etc. I believe muscle memory is as much a part of performing as learning lines, and if a performer has to think about where a prop or set piece is because it moves each night then I, as stage manager, have just made their job much harder.

*A Delicate Balance* has not presented me with too many “balancing” moments. The production team, Fran, and the Live Arts staff have been extremely professional, hugely creative, and earnestly collaborative. All of this makes the job of coordinating the smooth execution of this play a dream.

As a volunteer at Live Arts, I have had the pleasure of stage managing many shows, each show presents me with new relationships, new challenges and always lots of fun.

I want to thank the whole *A Delicate Balance* team and Live Arts for opening their hearts and allowing me add my piece to the many layered cake that makes up each and every production.

## Props Mistress: Eliza Abbey

The properties for this play and the procurement thereof began by first deciding what year this play would be set (Albee did not specify), and how the homeowners would have lived. Although there are many ways to interpret a play (much like painting), the choices narrowed down easily, and we as a collective decided to stay as 'real' as we could and not to move toward a more modern, minimalist or vividly hip- as one might expect a play set in the '60's to be.

Instead, we chose props and set furnishings that reflect a broader range of ages and tastes. In truth, all I really had to do was reflect on what my parents and my friends' parents had in their homes, what my grandmothers had in their homes. Happily, I was able to find props- mostly classic- suitable for the time and place.

But honestly, there's more of that 'upheaval' in the costume designs and choices than with the props- with Julia and Claire specifically. The costumes reflect that time; the costumes of the two older couples and those of the younger (or more wayward) women. The items on set are more 'classics' than edgy, and the cocktails totally classic. Nothing even hinting at 'new' cocktails and bar-tending gymnastics we tend to think of.

Had I felt more secure (I've never done this before), I might have chosen a small sculpture and/or wall art reflecting tentative moves toward the modern, but the truth is that household items, the majority of the props for this play remain in the past while the clothing- the fashion, as always, is a little more reflective of the changing times.

The props reflect a more traditional life, for two reasons. First, the props must not call too much attention to themselves and "upstage" the characters or the action. They are part of the background and need to be functional more than anything else: they need to help the action move forward. For instance, when Tobias pours himself a drink, he must have liquor appropriate to the era (both the brand and the type of liquor), and he must have the right kind of glass appropriate to the drink. Second, the traditional props (and here the bar is crucial) illustrate that the family members, each in his or her own way, try desperately to achieve calm and predictability in their lives, even as their lives are spiraling apart.

## Master Carpenter: Samuel Carannante

My responsibility as MC is to bring the set designers vision to life. We are given drawings (anywhere from freehand sketches to complete architectural plans) and a budget to guide us through the builds.

A material list is created and supplies are purchased. We are in constant contact with the director and the set designer, tweaking things as we progress.

As with any construction project, safety is first priority for all involved, i.e. actors, stagehands, set builders, painters and set dressers, both on the set and in the shop. Work schedules are created and assignments are given out according to the very varied skill levels of our available volunteers.

We spend many hours in the shop and on the set to complete this process effectively.

## Dramaturge: Lotta Löfgren

Working as a dramaturge varies a great deal from play to play, for directors have many different ideas about what they need from the dramaturge. Being a dramaturge usually involves fewer hours and less work than that for any other members of the crew; the dramaturge exists more often in a “stand by” capacity. Here are fundamental duties:

The dramaturge works as a resource for the director and the rest of the crew and cast to answer questions that will clarify and deepen everyone’s understanding of the play.

This might involve any of the following:

- Creating a biography of the playwright
- Reading the playwright’s other plays to arrive at a deeper understanding of the author’s techniques, recurring themes, and concerns
- Studying the time period of the author and of the play (which of course are not always the same) to understand the context of the playwright’s world and the world of the play
- Offering advice on accuracy in staging, costuming, and sound design
- Being available as the cast and crew develop the production and come up against problems or questions. For example, what are the origins of the several vague references to other literary works in the play?

The dramaturge’s experience of this particular process:

- The dramaturge provided cast and crew with a brief biography of Edward Albee and contextualized the play both in terms of Albee’s other plays and of the period in which he wrote it.
- Since this is a contemporary play, the director needed little historical research, which in other productions can be one of the dramaturge’s major tasks. But the director did want research into 1960s interiors, dress for men and women, and hairstyles of a particular social class.
- The dramaturge attended auditions and callbacks and offered her observations to the director.
- The dramaturge was available throughout the process to offer her interpretation of the text.
- She attended several rehearsals and gave feedback on all aspects of the play.
- She answered a call to paint sets.
- She compiled this study guide.



## A Brief Biography of Edward Albee

Edward Albee (pronounced AWL-bee) was born on March 12, 1924 and died on September 16, 2016.

Albee is indisputably one of the greatest American playwrights of his generation. His career had an auspicious beginning: his 1959 one-act play *Zoo Story* premiered in a double bill with Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in Berlin in 1959. More than any other playwright, he brought Absurdism to the United States; he never gave up his loyalty to that style in his long career as a playwright.

Albee won three Pulitzer prizes for drama: *A Delicate Balance* (1967); *Seascape* (1974); and *Three Tall Women* (1994). *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was selected to win in 1963 (it had won the Tony for best play in 1962), but the Pulitzer Advisory Committee decided at the last minute not to award a prize in drama that year. Lots of chaos and protests ensued. Later in life, Albee was showered with awards, among them the National Medal of Arts in 1996 and a 2005 Lifetime Achievement Tony Award.

Most of Albee's plays deal with the same subject matter: the dysfunctional East Coast upper middle class family. Albee was adopted shortly after his birth and carried this chip on his shoulder for the rest of his life. Albee injects the typical realistic drawing room play with elements of the absurd in order to expose the rotten core of traditional American family life. In play after play, he depicts a family consisting of a strong, domineering mother, a weak and ineffectual father full of indecision and yearning, and a child who, no matter what the gender, tries with varying degrees of success to rebel against familial influence.

The Albee family was steeped in theater: Edward's grandfather Edward Franklin Albee owned several theaters, most of which were known for vaudeville acts. Like Beckett before him, Albee was influenced by the Absurdism of vaudeville. Albee's father, Reed Albee, followed in his father's footsteps. It may seem odd, then, that the families in Albee's plays reside in such traditional upper-class environments, for his own was not that traditional. But his mother was a socialite who thrived on more traditional upper-class activities. After being kicked out of several schools, Albee left home at 18 and settled in Greenwich Village.

Although Albee was not much for his own formal education, he was a teacher and vital influence to countless playwrights. For example, Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1963) was the result of a playwriting workshop with Albee, and he produced many plays of young promising playwrights, for example Amiri Baraka's early plays, including *Dutchman* (1964). Read this play alongside *Zoo Story* some time, and you will get a sense of what a great influence Albee was on him. Baraka, true to form, tried to minimize this influence by mocking Albee for his homosexuality and upper class background in his essays. But that's another story.

The following information is taken from Wikipedia:

## **AWARDS**

- 1960: Drama Desk Award Vernon Rice Award: *The Zoo Story*
- 1963: Tony Award for Best Play: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
- 1967: Pulitzer Prize for Drama: *A Delicate Balance*
- 1975: Pulitzer Prize for Drama: *Seascape*
- 1994: Pulitzer Prize for Drama: *Three Tall Women*
- 1995: St. Louis Literary Award from the Saint Louis University Library Associates<sup>[30]</sup>
- 1996: National Medal of Arts
- 2002: Drama Desk Award Outstanding New Play: *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*
- 2002: Tony Award for Best Play: *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*
- 2005: Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement
- 2005: Academy of Achievement's Golden Plate Award
- 2008: Drama Desk Award Special Award
- 2011: Edward MacDowell Medal for Lifetime Achievement
- 2011: Pioneer Award for Lifetime Achievement, Lambda Literary Foundation
- 2015: America Award in Literature

## **NOMINATIONS:**

- 1964: Tony Award for Best Play: *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*
- 1965: Tony Award for Best Author of a Play: *Tiny Alice*
- 1965: Tony Award for Best Play: *Tiny Alice*
- 1967: Tony Award for Best Play: *A Delicate Balance*
- 1975: Drama Desk Award Outstanding New Play: *Seascape*
- 1975: Tony Award for Best Play: *Seascape*
- 1976: Drama Desk Award Outstanding Director of a Play: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
- 1994: Drama Desk Award Outstanding Play: *Three Tall Women*
- 2001: Pulitzer Prize for Drama: *The Play About the Baby*
- 2003: Pulitzer Prize for Drama: *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?*
- 2005: Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

## PLAYS:

Works written or adapted by Albee:

- *The Zoo Story* (1959)
- *The Death of Bessie Smith* (1960)
- *The Sandbox* (1960)
- *Fam and Yam* (1960)
- *The American Dream* (1961)
- *Bartleby* (adapted from the short story by Herman Melville) (1961)
- *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962)
- *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1963) (adapted from the novella by Carson McCullers)
- *Tiny Alice* (1964)
- *Malcolm* (1966) (adapted from the novel by James Purdy)
- *A Delicate Balance* (1966)
- *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (adapted from the novel by Truman Capote) (1966)
- *Everything in the Garden* (adapted from the play by Giles Cooper) (1967)
- *Box and Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* (1968)
- *All Over* (1971)
- *Seascape* (1975)
- *Listening* (1976)
- *Counting the Ways* (1976)
- *The Lady from Dubuque* (1980)
- *Lolita* (adapted from the novel by Vladimir Nabokov) (1981)
- *The Man Who Had Three Arms* (1982)
- *Finding the Sun* (1983)
- *Walking* (1984)
- *Envy* (1985)
- *Marriage Play* (1987)
- *Three Tall Women* (1991)
- *The Lorca Play* (1992)
- *Fragments* (1993)
- *The Play About the Baby* (1998)
- *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* (2000)
- *Occupant* (2001)
- *Knock! Knock! Who's There!?* (2003)
- *Peter & Jerry*, retitled in 2009 to *At Home at the Zoo* (Act One: Homelife. Act Two: The Zoo Story) (2004)

- *Me Myself and I* (2007)