

GO SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER When Tennessee Williams wrote this play in 1958, prefrontal lobotomy was largely discredited, but it remained a hot issue for Williams. His beloved sister, Rose, had been subjected to the process by their mother, Miss Edwina, supposedly because Rose had apparently claimed sexual molestation at the hands of her father. Williams converted family history into a parallel tale of Violet Venable (Kim Miyori), whose perverse son, Sebastian, has suffered a hideous death, as reported by Violet's niece, Catherine (Elaine Kao). Catherine's account belies Venable's most cherished illusions about her "chaste" son, so she seeks to have Dr. Cukrowicz (Leonard Wu) lobotomize Catherine to "cut that hideous story out of her head." It was sensational stuff in 1958, and it remains disturbing, even when told, Williams-style, largely in lyrical monologues. Though it's initially disconcerting to see an Asian cast speaking in Southern drawls, as director Chil Kong suggests, the play reflects Chinese and Korean preoccupation with saving face and honoring the dead. Also refreshing is to see Catherine played by an actress who's authentically young and vulnerable, and then there's Miyori's meticulous performance. Despite some awkward staging, this emerges as a serviceable, at times brilliant, production. Lodestone Theatre Ensemble, 1111-B West Olive Ave., Burbank; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2 p.m., thru Aug. 24. (323) 993-7245 or www.lodestonetheatre.org. (Neal Weaver)