

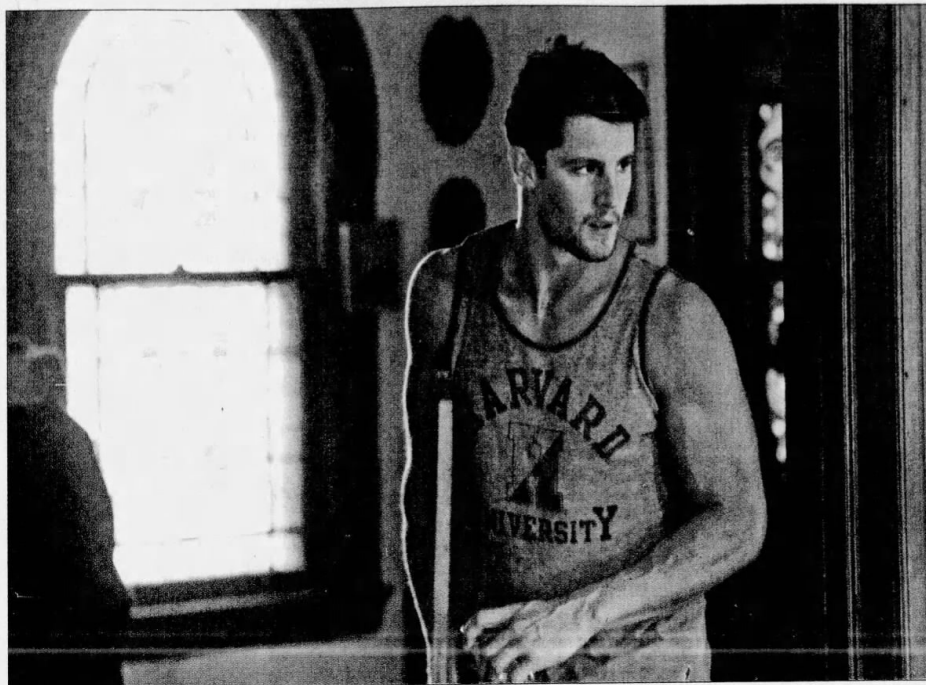
DAYBREAK

The new 'Doctor' is in Page C3



< Emmys to honor Williams

The producer of this month's Emmy Awards says Robin Williams will receive a "meaningful" remembrance during the upcoming ceremony. Plans for the ceremony's traditional "in memoriam" sequence are under discussion. The Emmys will be broadcast Aug. 25 on NBC.



DANA JENSEN/THE DAY

Alex Molina, portraying Brick, enters a scene while rehearsing for Flock Theatre's upcoming production of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" at the home of director Derron Wood on Aug. 7.

Molina's next play

Former football player stars in Flock's 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof'

By KRISTINA DORSEY
Day Arts Editor

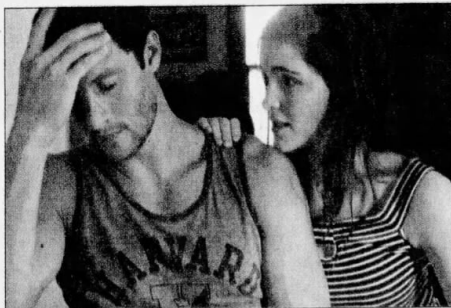
Alex Molina sees some distinct connections between football and acting — and he should know. He was a wide receiver at Waterford High School and the University of Connecticut and is now studying acting at Harvard.

And Molina's latest role just happens to be that of an ex-football player. He's portraying Brick in Flock Theatre's "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," which begins its run Wednesday at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church in New London.

"Originally, what pulled me (to acting) was the adrenaline. It scared the hell out of me. I like that. It makes me feel alive, and that was great," Molina says.

"As I kept on doing it, I realized just how many parallels there were with sports. (It has) teamwork — you have your team working together to get a win, you have your cast working together to put up a great show. There are things you have to go through with a cast — obstacles and struggles you have to fight through — and all of that working with people, it's something I really connect with. And it's fun. I always have fun when I'm doing it."

He discovered acting when he was 22, having just graduated from UConn. He was working as a per-



DANA JENSEN/THE DAY

Alex Molina, portraying Brick, and Madeleine Daurer, as Maggie the Cat.

IF YOU GO

What: Flock Theatre's "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"

Where: St. Mary Star of the Sea Church, 10 Huntington St., New London

When: Opens Wednesday with a preview performance and runs through Aug. 31; 7 p.m. Wed.-Fri., 2 and 7 p.m. Sat., and 3 p.m. Sun.

Tickets: \$25 (\$20 seniors, students, and active military); \$5 less for Wednesday preview

Contact: (860) 443-3119, flocktheatre.org

sonal trainer and had some time to fill. In short, he was looking for a hobby. His father pointed out a notice in the newspaper for auditions for Chelsea Players' "A Devil Inside" by David Lindsay-Abaire. He got cast, and a fellow actor there told him about Flock's plans for "Little Women."

So Molina turned up at those

auditions. Flock Artistic Director Derron Wood recalls, "We were looking for a romantic lead male (to play Mr. Brook). When Alex came in, the women who were playing other roles said (Wood goes into a re-creation of their eager tones), 'He's going to be Mr. Brook, right?'"

Molina did play Mr. Brook. Wood recalls that he came in with no real training but was very open to direction and exploration.

He acted in two plays but then took a detour to play pro football for two seasons in Denmark. A number of European countries recruit players through a website called europlayers.com. American athletes create a profile on the site, and coaches can contact them. In addition to playing the sport, the Americans are tasked with expanding the knowledge of football in Europe.

"While I was over there, I was still kind of searching for what I wanted to do with my life, and I realized I missed acting," Molina says. "I was looking for places to do it in Denmark, but there was nowhere in English I could do it."

When he returned to the U.S., he decided to try to get into graduate school for acting and pursue it as a career. He asked Wood to help him with monologues as he applied to schools.

"It was during that work where I thought, 'Oh, he can be Brick,'" Wood says. "And he could be an ex-football player playing an ex-football player. He could focus on acting the other stuff and not have to worry about the ex-football stuff."

Before "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" came to fruition, though, Molina was accepted into Harvard University's American Repertory Theater Institute for Advanced Theater Training. He started there in July of last year and, as part of the program, spent three months this spring at the Moscow Art Theatre School.

The 2-1/2-year Harvard program is intense — at least 12 hours a day, six days a week.

"I like that. If I'm going to do something, I want to do it full-go and really spend all my waking energy — and resting energy," Molina says.

During his summer break, he's turning his attention to "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." It's his fourth time working with Flock, following "Macbeth" and two versions of "Little Women."

This production marks the first time Flock has done a Tennessee

SEE MOLINA PAGE C2

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Molina Flocks to the stage

FROM CI

Williams play.

"His stuff is tricky because it's so, in a way, type-specific, yet his language is also very lyrical and challenging in a different way than Shakespeare is," Wood says. "I would say it has similar demands of Shakespeare's iambic pentameter but only a different style."

Because of that style, Williams' plays place a high demand on actors, according to Wood. There are extensive monologues and a great deal of subtext.

"Williams writes the show where there's a lot that happens before the play starts," Molina says. "So there's a lot of backstory that we've been talking about, trying to figure out and develop. Every little minor detail makes a difference for the rest of the play."

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof"

deals with the fraught marriage between the beautiful, sex-starved Maggie and the recessive, ever-drinking Brick. (The 1958 movie version famously starred Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman.) An underlying tension between the duo: Brick's relationship with a male friend who committed suicide. Meanwhile, Brick's father, Big Daddy, is dying, leaving his descendants fighting to position themselves to inherit his fortune.

The actress playing Maggie with Flock is Madeleine Dauer, a Seattle native who graduated from Marymount Manhattan College in May. Victor Chiburis, Flock's assistant artistic director, knew her and suggested her as a potential Maggie.

Dauer says she has always loved reading Williams' plays but had never gotten

to act in one. She speaks about the complexity of the relationships the dramatist creates and the "mind-boggling job" he does at creating family dramas. As for the character of Maggie the Cat, Dauer says, "She's fascinating, and I'm having a lot of fun with her."

Maggie and Brick are not only at odds, but their personalities are worlds apart, too. Molina refers to Brick's depression and internal fight — "the storm that's going on in Brick."

On the other hand, he says, "You see Big Daddy and Maggie, and they're out there. They're giving it off. With Brick's struggles, it's all internalized. That's something that's been interesting and challenging to work with and to develop. There's such high stakes in this show, and a lot of it has to come from way deep inside."