

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS
By David Mamet
Generic Theater
Jan. 18 through Feb. 10, 2008
Tickets: Call (757) 441 2160

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

As we face an economic slow down and a flat housing market, this 1984 play speaks ala Mamet with blustering power. As times are leaner, workers get meaner. From the smallest companies to the larger corporations closer scrutiny is given to the bottom line.

Cut to a half dozen real estate salesmen. We meet them in pairs in a sleazy Chinese restaurant. Sleaze is the operative word in describing the lives in this play. The men are all desperate. They are without scruple and resort to any and all moral violations to sell undesirable real estate. They have had some success in years past but are now at the end of their ropes. One of them even steals a few bucks from the tip at the next table. They resort to bribery, theft, lying, intimidation, burglary and more. In this production, this first act works far better than the second. Director Jim Mitchell and his quite competent cast seem to capture the now famous Mametspeak more accurately in the twosome scenes.

Mamet has said he was influenced by Becket, Chekhov, Stanislavski, and others. His dialogue is heavily spiced with profanity that defines these men. They also talk to talk and hollow words and ideas become rhythmically hypnotic, revelatory monologues. It is not everyday speech. Underneath it all is the deadly pit bull ready for action. Director Mitchell was concerned about the actors smoking. To smoke or not to smoke is not the inner action of Mamet's work. Rather, it's the dog eat dog mentality that makes for ever increasing desperation, stiletto sharpness and staccato delivery leading to an exhausting climax.. I found these qualities lacking in Mr. Mitchell's softer edged, too slowly unfolding production.

Still, there is much to admire in this highly engrossing evening. The actors work with intelligence and honesty. Wade Brinkley captures the Willy Lowman of Shelly Levene. Jason Kypros, as Richard Roma, perhaps the scummiest scum bag of the lot, finds all the facets of this manipulating cad. Cliff Hoffman is moving and most believable in his contempt for the world that has entrapped him. Mathew Reiss Friedman and Joel Haberli each contribute to the feeding frenzy of greed and male insecurity.

Hank Sparks sets are impressive and efficient. They provide the right atmosphere for these men caught up in a work place where they are forced to lie and cheat for the almighty dollar. This work is a morality play of the business world. One wishes such commercial ventures were in the minority. However, even Dannon Yogurt is being sued for making false claims about the curative aspects of one of its products. Crooked yogurt.! You just never know.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.