

FAT BOY

By John Clancy

An adaptation of UBU ROI by Alfred Jarry

The Vulgar Little Theatre Company

April 18-May 19

For tickets call 423-4084

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

In 1896 this play caused riots in Victorian Paris. Times have changed. Fat Boy's gluttony and his wife Fudgie's desire for money and power drive them to outrageous acts of cruelty and vulgarity. This unholy couple are cartoon Macbeths in John Clancy's adaptation. Their vocabulary consists primarily of very naughty words that are bleeped on television but are no longer shocking in movies, plays or novels. People who don't want to hear or read such language simply avoid going near it.

The play, a farce, denounces vulgarity in its many forms of existence. It's, concerned with the obscenity of gross consumption and greedy, selfish people who manipulate the world without sensitivity or concern for the planet, and its various forms of life. Fat Boy and his shrew of a spouse want more money than they can ever use.

In this production, it seems to take a long time to say the obvious. Frankie Little Hardin has directed with a very heavy hand. True, the script does indicate shouting, but there are degrees and levels of shouting. Hardin's actors yell excessively to the point where you feel that their vocal cords are being torn to shreds. They are so loud that words are lost. They really work hard trying to be funny but rarely are. I kept thinking of the somewhat ground breaking movie "Borat" starring the brilliant Sacha Baron Cohen. He dealt with extreme vulgarity and made it lively and entertaining with a light farcical touch. In this presentation of FAT BOY there is no (bleep) joy.

Eileen P. Quintin as an alcoholic, corrupt judge has the right stylistic approach to the play. She tosses off her lines with comedic skill and appropriate ease. Amber Elizabeth Sarapata has moments of delight when she doesn't try too hard as Fudgie. She and Brad McMurrin in the title role need to learn about reserve. Good singers and actors always hold back a little, never pulling out the last stop. McMurrin offers brief glimpses of Fat Boy involved with and enjoying what he is doing. Too much of the time, though, he stays on one note doing the same thing over and over.

In a pre-show speech, Director Hardin warned the audience that the "f-word" would be used. I found that odd. Shocking people into understanding true vulgarity is the object of this rather youthful view of society. It appeared as if she were frightened by the piece she was presenting.

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