

'Glengarry Glen Ross' Delivers Lies, Deception, Burglary, And Humor

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"Glengarry Glen Ross" is a comedy about four desperate Chicago real estate salesmen, competing for all-too-rare "premier leads" and the top spot on the board, and for their very jobs, in a cutthroat and unforgiving business. David Mamet's 1984 play won him the Pulitzer Prize for drama, primarily for use of language, both realistic and inventive.

The Cotuit Center for the Arts' production is directed by Daniel Fontneau and features seven talented actors who capture the essence of the dog-eat-dog world of real estate (Mamet worked as a real estate salesman himself, notably, the thrill of being at the top of one's game, and the despair of not being able to close a deal when stay competitive.

The dialogue is raw and natural—street-smart, and deliberately crafted to draw attention to the characters' use of language to deceive, mislead, and manipulate. The characters speak in partial or unfinished sentences, interrupt each other, and exclaim themselves with abundant energy, leading some to refer to the play as "Death of a Salesman."

The play opens with once-successful salesman Shelly Levene (David Allen) pleading with office manager John Williamson (Rick Martin) for some good leads, not "garbage" that Williamson has been giving him. Recalling Levene's prowess as a salesman, Levene insists he is just having a run of bad luck, and getting some of the good leads, the "garry leads," will turn things around for him, and for the office, eventually.

Levene is wonderful in this scene as we can feel, in turn, Levene's energy, his brief self-confidence, and his sense of doom.

Williamson is hated and ridiculed by all the salesmen for his power to hand out the leads, and on the directives of the owners of the firm, and Mr. Levene conveys his security in the



ALAN TRUGMAN

The cast of David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross," from left, Nicholas Dorr as George Aaronow, Larry Zalis as Baylen, Chris Cooley as Dave Moss, Rick Martin as John Williamson, Scott Estrella as Richard Roma, Peter Cook as James Lingk, and David Allen as Shelly Levene.

face of abuse.

Dave Moss (Chris Cooley) and George Aaronow (Nicholas Dorr) provide one of the most memorable exchanges in the play, as Moss tries to manipulate Aaronow into going along with him on a plot to steal the leads. It is a great example of Mamet's dialogue style, as Moss insists that they are "speaking" about an "idea," rather than "talking" about an actual robbery.

Mr. Cooley is excellent here; his energy, and the glint in his eye, as he schemes make this one of the highlights of the evening.

Mr. Dorr's Aaronow is resigned to his fate, holding on to a shred of morality. His uncomfortableness/discomfort in the face of Moss's intimidation evokes sym-

pathy.

Richard Roma (Scott Estrella) is the one salesman still at the top of his game, and we see him in operation, reeling in a gullible customer, James Lingk (Peter Cook). Mr. Estrella is vibrant and fun to watch, as he pontificates and manipulates, using a full array of devious tactics.

Mr. Cook, who recently played King Arthur in the CCftA's production of "Camelot," has a completely different character here, browbeaten and defeated even before he begins. He is very effective, and brings humor to the role.

Finally, Larry Zalis plays Baylen, a police officer who comes to investigate. Tall and imposing, Mr. Zalis only needs to stand on

stage to convey his character's solid legal and authority, everything these real estate salesmen are not.

The sets, a Chinese restaurant in the first act, and the real estate office in the second, are beautifully done by set designer Andrew Arnault, with a nice eye for detail.

The positive side of the real estate business is expressed as well, through the sponsorship of the play by local realtor Robert Paul Properties—a nice touch.

But it is survival of the fittest in Mamet's real estate world, where unethical, illegal acts, persuasion, misrepresentation, bribery, intimidation, and sometimes bur-

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