

# Times Out ON STAGE

## Strong performances sell testosterone fuelled show

A SHARP and punchy production of David Mamet's award-winning 1984 play about the murky tactics of real estate sales was at the Edward Alderton Theatre last week, writes Steve Spencer.

Peter Griffin directed a strong cast for the production of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, managing the complexities of Mamet's nuanced and stuttering text with conviction and credibility.

The play focuses on four Chicago real estate salesmen and their supervisor who work together (and often against each other) to sell undesirable real estate at inflated prices.

It is the end of the month and emotions are running high as they vie to win the prized Cadillac and avoid the sack for worst performance.

We first meet the characters in a Chinese restaurant wheeler-dealing and plotting to secure the top prize.

Levene (John McLaren) is desperate to salvage his floundering career with the aid of Williamson (Stuart Keil), the office supremo who assigns the salesmen their leads; Moss (Richard Self) bullies Aaronow (Roger Gollop) into carrying out a break-in to steal leads; while Roma (Michael Martin) browbeats Lingk (Mark Campbell), an unwitting diner into closing a deal.

Peter Griffin's direction of the three vignettes showed a firm understanding of Mamet's

**OFFICE POLITICS:**  
Michael Martin, Richard Self and John McLaren.



interest in language and communication: individuals talk and listen but don't necessarily hear what is being said; unfinished sentences reveal half-truths; pauses, a moment for reflection for one becomes a chasm to be filled with more linguistic garbage by another; interruptions and non-sequiturs abound;

words are clipped. The minimalism of Act

I gave over to a stunning and "beautiful" symmetry in the real estate office of upturned chairs, raided filing cabinets, strewn papers and far flung sales ledgers (which earned a round of applause in its own right). Peter Griffin teased out an array of testosterone, male posturing, finger-wagging and palpable blood, sweat and tears as deals were closed, tricks exposed and careers deposed with the aid of investigator Baylen (Ian Long). All of this played out under the approving gaze of

Ronald Reagan's tiny presidential photo on the wall, a timely reminder to the salesmen (and to us) of 80s Reaganomics.

With a uniformly solid cast, effective sound and cogent direction, this was a splendid evening's entertainment. Well done EAT!

**STRONG:**  
Mark Campbell and Michael Martin.

## From Russia with love

THE Churchill theatre hosted the Imperial Ice Stars in a spectacular version of *Cinderella* last week, writes Edward Martyn.

Fourteen tonnes of ice and 34 hours work were needed before the performers could launch themselves into this Russian version of the classic tale. The troubled story of Cinderella's early life begins with her mother lying on her deathbed while Cinderella and her father mourn the passing of an adored wife and parent.

Ten years later, and in the village square a poster for *Swan Lake* (Sold

out) is posted up. The townspeople twirl and leap in anticipation of this special event, and Cinderella is entranced. A gypsy woman glides in with her crystal ball, and over this happy scene clocks are whirring everywhere in a mute warning that all is not going to be well.

On cue, Cinders' step-mother appears with her two ravishing, but spoiled, daughters.

No ugly ducklings, these two are genuine rivals, as they run rings round the innocent girl. Her father tries to defuse the situation by dancing with his

adored daughter, but is distracted by constantly consulting his pocket watch and being swept away by his beautiful, but demanding, second wife.

Next scene is the ballet studio, where Cinderella is receiving instruction from a young and attentive ballet master. They twirl and glide in a hypnotic dance, and it is clear that Cinderella has a special talent. Suddenly we are onstage at the theatre where *Swan Lake* is about to start. Cinderella is in the Corps de ballet, much to her sisters' disgust, and the curtain rises at the back of the

stage revealing a beautiful Victorian playhouse crammed with eager theatre-goers. The ballet begins, and in the middle of the swans' dance the lead-

glides in with her crystal ball, and unable to continue. To the horror of her watching sisters, Cinderella is chosen to take over the role and save the show. Romance is in the air, as the prince and she meet after the show and dance together in the rain.

This is a truly theatrical event, with everything from lavish costumes to thrilling skills and moving moments.

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