

Dalhousie
Theatre
Department
Productions
Presents

Sexual Perversity in Chicago

Written by
David Mamet

Directed by
Emmy Alcorn

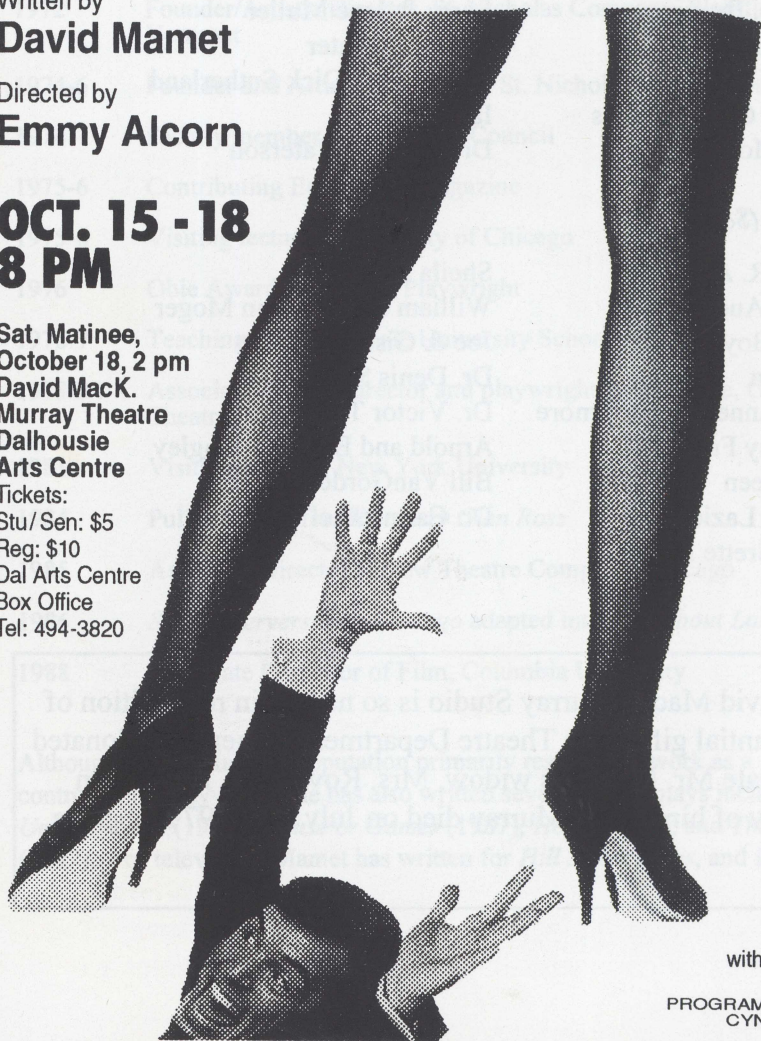
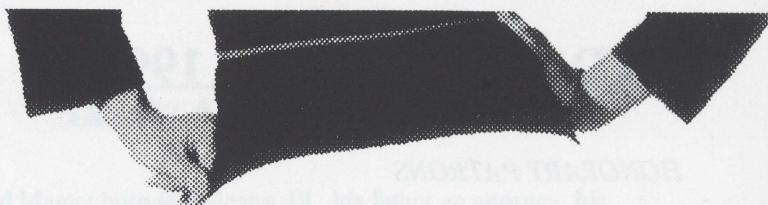
OCT. 15 - 18
8 PM

Sat. Matinee,
October 18, 2 pm
David MacK.
Murray Theatre
Dalhousie
Arts Centre

Tickets:
Stu/Sen: \$5
Reg: \$10
Dal Arts Centre
Box Office
Tel: 494-3820

Produced by
special arrangement
with Samuel French, Inc.

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The David MacK. Murray Studio is so named in recognition of a substantial gift to the Theatre Department, generously donated by the late Mr. Murray's widow, Mrs. Rowena E. Murray, in memory of him. Mrs. Murray died on July 21, 1997 at the age of 90.

MAMET: A CHRONOLOGY

- 1947 David Mamet born in Chicago, Ill., his father an attorney, his mother a teacher.
- 1968 BA, in English, Goddard College, Vermont
- 1968-9 Studied Acting at the Neighbourhood Playhouse School, New York
- 1969-70 Stage Manager for *The Fantasticks* in New York
- 1971-3 Artist-in-residence, Goddard College
- 1972 Founder/Artistic Director, St. Nicholas Company, Plainfield, Vermont
- 1974-6 Founder and Artistic Director of St. Nicholas Players, Chicago
- 1974 Faculty member, Illinois Arts Council
- 1975-6 Contributing Editor, *Oui* magazine
- 1975-6 Visiting lecturer, University of Chicago
- 1976 Obie Award, Best New Playwright
- 1976-7 Teaching Fellow at Yale University School of Drama
- 1978-84 Associate Artistic director and playwright in residence, Goodman Theatre, Chicago
- 1981 Visiting lecturer, New York University
- 1984 Pulitzer Prize for *Glengarry Glen Ross*
- 1985 Associate Director at New Theatre Company, Chicago
- 1986 *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* adapted into film *About Last Night*
- 1988 Associate Professor of Film, Columbia University

Although David Mamet's reputation primarily rests on his work as a controversial playwright, he has also written several screenplays including *The Untouchables* (1987), *House of Games* (1987), *Hoffa* (1992), and *The Edge* (1997). For television, Mamet has written for *Hill Street Blues*, and *LA Law*.

THE PAST SUCCESS OF SEXUAL PERVERSITY IN CHICAGO

In 1974 David Mamet emerged as a new and explosively fresh playwright. He penetrated the world of the absurd-- theatre that is typically associated with Harold Pinter and Edward Albee. Mamet presented a new kind of absurdity in his plays. *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* and *The Duck Variations* are two pieces of theatre where the presentation of mundane life exposes the absurdity of people's behaviour as well as its inconsequentiality.

Sexual Perversity in Chicago is an episodic, fast paced work which explores sexual stereotypes and the pathos of urban life. In the 1970's these were relevant issues and this, along with Mamet's tremendous skill at playing with language, was what made *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* a successful play from the very start. The play was first produced by the Organic Theatre Company in Chicago in the summer of 1974. Due to its success, Mamet made his New York debut in the off-off Broadway St. Clement's Theatre in the late fall of 1975. This production was directed by Albert Takazauckas, with Robert Townsend as Bernard, Robert Picardo as Dan, Jane Anderson as Deborah and Gina Rogers as Joan. This production was described as "tantalizing" by theatre critic Mel Gussow and a "multi-paneled comic strip" by editorial writer Walter Kerr. In general the production was vastly successful with positive responses from both the public and the critics.

Takazauckas remounted the production in order to make it accessible to a wider audience. In June of 1976, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* re-opened in the off-Broadway Cherry Lane Theatre. The two women cast members remained the same but Murray Abraham and Peter Riegert played Bernard and Dan. Once again this shocking play with its orgasmic, fantastical rhythm was a success. Richard Eder from the New York Times wrote "Mamet has made a perfectly coherent play: not complex nor particularly profound but certainly marvellously observant." He then goes on to say that all the cast members were splendid in their roles and

that: " if Miss Anderson and Mr. Riebert seem a touch more perfect, it is probably because their parts are a shade better. "

The world of theatre welcomed David Mamet with his first play and gave him an Obie award for his achievement in 1976. He went on to write many other powerful and socially significant works of theatre, and broke through into the world of film as a screenwriter. In 1986, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* was adapted and made into a film called *About Last Night* with Rob Lowe and Demi Moore.



Dalhousie Theatre Department Productions
presents

Sexual Perversity in Chicago

by David Mamet

Director	Emmy Alcorn
Assistant Director	Mike LeBlanc
Scenography	Peter Perina
Assistant Designer	Eleanor Creelman
Costume Design	Elaine MacKay
Lighting Design	Marigold Chandler-Smith, Bruce MacLennan
Voice and Speech Coach	Susan Stackhouse
Dramaturge	Natasha MacLellan

CAST

Deborah Soloman	Jessica Bastow
Danny Shapira	Richard Davidson
Bernard Litko	Brett Delaney
Joan Webber	Tiffany Jamison-Horne
Stage Manager	Shahin Sayadi
Assistant Stage Manager	Stuart Greer

Camera and tape recorders are not allowed in the Theatre.
No smoking, please.

For This Production:

Props Crew Chief	Ingrid Hu
Props Crew	Amanda Cheverie, Rubina Hakim, Tamara Smith
Lighting Crew Chief	Patrick Wood
Lighting Crew	Krista Blackwood, Bethana Briffett, Beth Denny, Heather Lewis, Geoff McBride
Lighting Board Operator	Geoff McBride
Sound	Aubrey Fricker, Mike Mader
Construction Crew Chief	Steven Mahaney
Construction Crew	Tarek Abouamin, Dave Adams, Melodie Daniels, Ryan Grant, Raymond MacDonald, Ahmed Yousif
Costume Cutters/Sewers	Crystal Blackburn, Isabel Burns, Meg Carignan, Nicole Chaffey, Meghan Cole, Chera Cruickshank, Carolyn Easterly, Kathie Fraser, Judy Gates, Sherry Halfyard, Katka Hubacek, Mariela Huergo, Stacy Kehoe, Katie Killey, Dianne Kristoff, Krystal MacDonald, Corinne MacMullin, Colleen Mahoney, Kristina Metcalf-Titus, Constance Moerman, Darlene Nadeau, Krista Nauman, Wendy Nichols, Victoria Rockwell, Cathy Seiler, Tamara Skerratt, Joanna Titus
Costume Dressers	Tanya Apostolidis, Lori Fromm, Danielle Herrington, Jessy Lacouriere, Julia Lowe
House Manager	Nicole Thibeau
Photographer	Hannah Thomson
Poster Design	Cynthia Henry

SPECIAL THANKS

CBC Props, Neptune Theatre

ARISTOPHANES OF THE INARTICULATE

A great deal of attention is paid to language in Mamet's plays. What is the need for such harsh profanity? What effect does it have on the play? Can the play succeed without using profanity?

Though it is true that David Mamet has been accused of writing deliberately outrageous and misogynistic material, Mamet claims that his aim is not to score cheap laughs out of the obscenity and sexism in his plays. Each word is carefully sought out and hand placed in the text to create a sort of rhythmic poetry. Much like the rhythm Shakespeare observed, in Mamet's plays every line, and every word must be scanned correctly. Mamet's poetic and rhythmic gifts enable the language to become much more than dialogue--it becomes the shape of the play itself. An example of this occurs in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, where the length of the scenes directly reflects "the characters' inability to sustain an interest in anything beyond the present moment. Because of the fear of incipient boredom, their sentences are short and pithy, and so too are the scenes Mamet creates to accommodate them", as Anne Dean has put it.

Mamet is captivated by the way in which language can actually influence action in a scene and motivate behavior. Mamet once said: "My main emphasis...is on the rhythm of language--the way action and rhythm are identical. Our rhythms describe our actions--no, our rhythms prescribe our actions. I am fascinated by the way the language we use, its rhythms actually determine the way we behave rather than the other way around".

But we are still left asking if Mamet specifically chooses words for rhythm, poetry or action to properly represent the world he is dramatizing, then why does he repeat the vulgarities so often in the play? Could it be a way to numb the audience after they've been shocked out of their seats? Does it absolve the harshness and cruel effects? Is it redundant? Or could it be that every word is counted and refined until Mamet is satisfied that its job is done?!

RANDOM OBSERVATIONS

It seems to me that the Theatre has always been associated with sexual license. - *David Mamet*

The general pattern for American society consists in increasing the frequency of interaction between male and female. - *William Partidge*

For the true nature of the world, as between men and women, is sex and any other relationship between us is either an elaboration, or an avoidance. - *David Mamet*

Great passions, my dear, don't exist: they're liars' fantasies. What do exist are little loves that may last for a short or a longer while. - *Anna Magnani*

Sexual Perversity in Chicago is like a sleazy sonata of seduction involving two couples; Mamet is the first playwright to create a formal and moral shape out of the undeleted expletive of our foul-mouthed time. - *Time Magazine*.

True love is like ghosts, which everyone talks about but few have seen. - *Francois De La Rochefouchauld*

'Male bonding' is an odious phrase meant to describe an odious activity. - *David Mamet*.

Romantic love, in pornography as in life, is the mythic celebration of female negation. For a women, love is defined as her willingness to submit to her own annihilation.... The proof of love is that she is willing to be destroyed by the one whom she loves, for his sake. For the woman, love is always self-sacrifice, the sacrifice of identity, will, and bodily integrity, in order to fulfill and redeem the masculinity of her lover. - *Andrea Dworkin*

CHICAGO

- In 1955 Richard Daley was elected mayor of Chicago. He served as mayor until he died in 1976.
- In 1968 Chicago hosted the Democratic Convention. There were many anti war demonstrators protesting the use of American troops in Vietnam. The protest began to get rowdy, and to stop it, Mayor Daley and 12,000 police began clubbing and gassing demonstrators and innocent bystanders. The entire event was captured on national television.
- During the 1970's, 55,000 people each year moved from the city of Chicago into the suburbs
- Throughout the 1970's the Chicago Police Department was filled with so much corruption that Federal investigations were constant, and each year at least five senior officials lost their jobs because of corruption, racism, or both.
- With 7.1 million people, Chicago was the second largest city in the United States in the 1972 census.
- The Loop in Chicago--the traditional shopping and entertainment district-- was losing its business to the suburbs and to the North Side of the city.
- By the mid-1970's the Loop began catering to the black population, and soon became the commercial centre for the black community.

DIRECTORS' BIO

EMMY ALCORN was raised along the east coast, from Trinidad to New Hampshire to Nova Scotia. Everything she knows she has learned on the street or by jumping in head first (and she has the scars to prove it). Emmy has been fortunate enough to have bumped into many fine people who have been willing to take a chance on her enthusiasm and naivety. She has worked for Festival Antigonish, Mulgrave Road Theatre, Mermaid Theatre, Red Snapper Films, Picture Plant, NFB, CBC and Da Da Kamera, doing everything from stage managing to composing music to performing to directing. All of this has given her the guts to run Mulgrave Road Theatre in Guysborough while raising her seven-year old son, Cailen. She is thrilled to be at Dalhousie and surrounded by the unbridled energy of youth.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Where is the love? That is what I asked when I first read this play. During the rehearsal process, we found a few glimpses of that love, only to watch it succumb to the destruction of pain and alienation. I believe this play challenges us to find love in our own lives and hang onto it with all our might, lest we be destroyed ourselves.

Upcoming DTDP Production:

The Crucible

by Arthur Miller

November 26 - 29, 1997

Sir James Dunn Theatre

Dalhousie University Department of Theatre

*Full and part-time Faculty, Special Instructors,
Technical Scenography Staff and Costume Studies*

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Kelly Beale.....	Feldenkrais
Ann Bradley.....	Singing
Jane Butler.....	Stage Management
Patrick Christopher.....	Acting, Introduction to Acting
Robert Doyle.....	Costume Studies
Kathryn Edgett.....	Jazz
Jure Gantar.....	Criticism, Dramatic Literature, History
Bruce MacLennan.....	Light and Sound
Elaine MacKay.....	Costume Studies
David Overton.....	Dramaturgy, Performance, Playwriting
Peter Perina.....	Scenography
David Porter.....	Properties Master, Space Booking/Rental Agent
Susan Rainsford.....	Costume Studies
Colin Richardson.....	Rental Crew Chief
Susan Stackhouse.....	Voice and Speech, Introduction to Acting
Lynn Sorge.....	Costume Studies
Rhea Theriault.....	Costume Studies
Ian Thomson.....	Construction Supervisor

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Gisela O'Brien.....	Administrative Officer
Betty Gould.....	Secretary

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James Beddington.....	Lighting/Technical
Marigold Chandler-Smith, Raymond MacDonald.....	Construction
Steven Mahaney, Shahin Sayadi.....	Props
Raymond MacDonald, Shahin Sayadi.....	Office
Beth VanGorder.....	Office

Dalhousie University's Department of Theatre offers the largest and most comprehensive range of theatre programmes in the Maritime region. B.A. programmes are available that lead to degrees specializing in acting, technical scenography and theatre studies; diploma and advanced diploma programmes are offered in costume studies. Graduates of the department are successfully pursuing careers in all aspects of the professional theatre, including acting, scenography, costume design and creation, stage management, directing, playwriting, etc. and in related fields such as teaching, criticism and dramaturgy. The programme has established itself nationally and our graduates work in all the major theatre centres in Canada, as well as in the U.S. and Britain.

We wish you a rich and rewarding theatre experience, and welcome your comments and suggestions. For further information about the department and its programmes, please contact: **Dr. Alan R. Andrews**, Acting Chair, Department of Theatre, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS B3H 3J5.