

Ensemble distills

Mamet's magic

by Dan Wolfe

David Mamet's play, *American Buffalo*, has been on stage at Champlain College's Alumni Auditorium since May 13, with its final performances of the run tonight and tomorrow night, May 26 and 27.

The three actors in this play -- Dennis McSorley, Aaron Masi and John D. Alexander -- have an excellent track record. Alexander in particular over the last several years, has exhibited strong stage presence in everything he's done. McSorley is not far behind Alexander ... and as for Masi, I particularly remember his direction of his senior one-act play at UVM and still consider it the best single student production that I have seen at UVM.

In *American Buffalo*, they make a wonderful trinity of players that uses Mamet's language and its repetitiveness to work its effect upon us. This is the best ensemble acting seen locally in many months. If Mamet has magic -- and in some quarters he's considered to have magic indeed -- these three actors distilled that magic and used the verbal potency to beguile us (and, trust me, one doesn't often think of "Mamet" and "beguile" in the same sentence), for how does violence "beguile" anything? -- and there's enough violence in this play to remind us that sometimes in some quarters of the world, violence of one kind or another is the rule of the day.

Direction by Michael Jordan Evans did not get in the way of the play and seemed to enhance it. A pitifully small crowd -- possibly the number 18 does not even go with the word "crowd" at all -- was present at Sunday night's performance, but they have had larger audiences during the run.

Stage manager Paul J. Soychak did an estimable job keeping everything together.

There are performances tonight and tomorrow night, May 26 and 27 at 7:30 at Alumni Auditorium of Champlain College. If you enjoy really good acting, you might consider going to see the production. You'll be glad you did. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for seniors and students.