



**PACINO BACK IN CLASSIC IN DIFFERENT ROLE:** Al Pacino in *Glengarry Glen Ross*.  
**Photo:** Scott Landis



## *Theater Review*

# ***Glengarry Glen Ross* returns: Superb ensemble cast is highlight of Mamet classic**

### **GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS**

**Written by David Mamet**

**Directed by Daniel Sullivan**

**Through January 20, 2013**

**Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre**

**236 West 45th Street**

**(212-239-6200), [www.BroadwaysBestShows.com](http://www.BroadwaysBestShows.com)**

**By David NouNou**

Greed, scamming, double dealing, backstabbing, theft and, most of all, desperation are the basic ingredients of this new revival of David Mamet's 1984 classic, *Glengarry Glen Ross*; and then there are the good points. Here is a beautifully layered and textured play that has to be seen and heard on a live stage to be fully appreciated. Movie audiences know that Al Pacino played the wily, conniving Ricky Roma in the 1992 film version (for which he received an Oscar nomination). Now he is playing Shelly Levene, the desperate, down-on-his-luck real estate salesman that was brilliantly portrayed by Jack Lemmon.

Times are tough in a Chicago real-estate office; the salesmen Shelly Levene (Mr. Pacino); Ricky Roma, (the incredible Bobby Cannavale); Dave Moss (the equally good John C. McGinley); and George Aaronow (Richard Schiff) are given a strong incentive by John Williamson, their office manager (David Harbour) to succeed in a sales contest. The first prize is a Cadillac El Dorado; second prize is a set of steak knives; third prize is the sack. There is no room for "once were has-beens" in this dramatically male-dominated world; only "closers" will get the good sales leads. There is a lot of pressure to succeed, so a robbery is committed and has unforeseen consequences for all the characters.

Considering it was recently revived in 2005 by the same producer, Jeffrey Richards, one might ask if it was necessary to have a revival of the same play so soon? The answer is an overwhelming yes, for Mr.

Richards is a visionary who has a knack for bringing quality to the theater. He is the last of a dying breed known as a producer. He may not always hit the bulls-eye (as we saw in this month's short-lived Mamet play, *The Anarchist*; he at least gave us the wonderful actresses Patti LuPone and Debra Winger). Just consider the wonderful evenings he has provided for the theater in recent years: *August: Osage County*; *The Merchant of Venice* with Mr. Pacino; the excellent all-star revival of *Gore Vidal's The Best Man* with James Earl Jones and Angela Lansbury; *Speed-The-Plow*; and the current *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, just to name a few. He is a producer for all seasons; one of the few supplying dramas to Broadway.

One can also perceive this as a vanity project for Mr. Pacino, and indeed it might be, but he is the reason the show is selling out. Is this the right reason? No, for there are far better motives for seeing this show. First of all, this is an ensemble piece in its best form. It is not a star-driven vehicle. As a star-driven vehicle, it undermines the rest of the ensemble and the purpose of the piece. Mr. Pacino is fine in act one, expressing desperation to his office manager. However, by act two, Pacino indulges in shtick. Gone are the brilliant subtleties he imbued in his 2010 Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Instead, we now see a grizzled Pacino, mugging to what the audience has paid big bucks to see.

The acting dynamo in this production is headed by Bobby Cannavale. This is one actor who is constantly growing with each successive performance. He was impressive in his Broadway debut in *Mauritius*, incredible in 2010's *The Motherf\*\*er with the Hat*; and now as the smooth- talking snake oil salesman, Ricky Roma, he is a marvel. He is equal parts slick, seductive, and terrifying.

The other standout performance is TV's "Scrubs" lead, John C. McGinley. As the smarmy, manipulating and abrasive Dave Moss, he is a sensation.

Daniel Sullivan has a keen eye for the play and the rest of his cast. He extracts good performances from Richard Schiff as another desperate salesman, George; David Harbour as the office manager; and Jeremy Shamos as the milquetoast client, James. If only he could have reined in Mr. Pacino as he did in *Merchant*, but then again, who can? After all, he *is* Al Pacino.

***Edited by Scott Harrah***

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