Ed Gibson (left) and Dick Nalbandian play in Drama shop's production of "The Dumbwaiter" last Friday night in Kresge's Little Theater.

Photo by Conrad Grundlehner

The production directed by Hans Picard was generally well handled. The staging was good which gave the production fluidity. The main problem was a lack of variety. Phyllis Maek was a fine choice for Florence. As an actress she is lovely, moved well and had an understanding of the girl's fickleness.

Her performance was credible, elegant, sympathetic. Caroline Crawreud as the Cadilier was delightful with a fine sense for comedy. Unfortunately the rest of the cast was not up to challenge. The day before a fighting by Conrad Jaffe was perfect, it did much to enhance the mood.

The lighting also deserves a mention. All in all it was an evening well spent at the theatre.

The MIT Drama Shop should be congratulated on its choice of two one act plays by distinguished playwrights of this era. The first play on the program was the "Dumbwaiter" an early work by the young English playwright, Harold Pinter, who creates quite a stir when his first full length play "The Caretaker" was produced in Boston and New York last season.

Mr. Pinter's talent as a writer lies in his ability to depict the most morbid and terrifying aspects of life and to blend this with the humorous. The "Dumbwaiter" is a story of two hired killers, gambling in a room of a run down hotel for the final instructions concerning their next victim.

Ben, the more intelligent and calmer of the two spends his time reading a newspaper while Gus constantly interjects his observations about life and the situation on hand. With each comic exchange, the tension begins to mount. Finally Ben receives the call the next victim while Gus is getting ready in the next room. Suddenly the front door opens and Gus is hurled into the room by some unseen force and becomes the next victim.

This production directed by Roger Gans lacked force. It was never clear what he was getting at. As a result the actors rambled on aimlessly. The production never built to a climax since the underlying tension never came through. Pinter does throw up many questions unanswered in the play but the job of the director is to show how these questions arrive in the best of his ability for the actors so that in turn they can create a full situation for the audience. As a result the actors created caricatures and never got below the serious level of the play. Part of this fault may also lie in the fact that the actresses weren't sure of line readings.

The cut away setting designed by James Dorr did not help matters. It was so obtusely dreary that the total effect was lost. The placement of beds against the back wall prevented the actors from moving about freely and resulted in awkwardness in staging. The lighting was too artificial to convey the mood of the play. The Key to designing a production of this sort is Simplicity.

The second half of the program was "Song of Songs" by Jean Giraudoux in which he deals with the problems of love. A young woman Florence comes to a cafe to meet her aged lover, the President. She tells him she is about to marry a young man Jerome that afternoon. Through a series of speeches she begins to rail at the young man down; this becomes her lament or song. As she reaches the peak of her diatribe with him she begins to rebuild him again and finally convinces herself how really fine he is which allows her to choose Jerome over the President in the end.

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