The Arts

Sexual Perversity in Chicago

By David Mamet.
MIT Dramashop production.
Directed by Gene Schuster '94.
Kresge Little Theatre, April 26-28 at 8 p.m.

By Jonathan Richmond

Sexual Perversity in Chicago moves beyond frustration. While Beirut, in its strange way, is about fulfillment and is intensely erotic, Sexual Perversity is full of dirty language but essentially an asexual essay about failure. Perversity took a few minutes to come together on opening night, and there were a sprinkling more of missed cues, but the acting overall was sparkling, the entertainment created deliciously wicked.

Craig White. '93 does a stellar job of painting all the sordid little details of Bernice Litko, a guy whose attitudes towards women might just be influenced by the guy who abused him in the movies when he was a kid. White is so convincing at delivering Bernice's BS that it appears Bernie is taken in by it himself. Out of the endless stream of sexual expostives we see a character who is at least pathetic and unable to relate to other people except by orgasm. The character is made the stronger by the construction of a consistent system of logic governing his view of the world. If everything is defined by sex — "What do you have to do in this place to get a drink? Cum on a cracker?" — there are also limits set which make the world within those limits real.

There's a truly earnest expression on White's face as Bernie gets upset by a porn movie: "A woman blowing a man is natural, but a woman blowing a dog is disgusting." Bernie never gets very far with Joan, a character made interesting by Julia Soyer W by her evasiveness. Joan — a schoolteacher — is forever wearing a mask; the blank expression Soyer gives her while she talks to a couple of boys caught playing with each other's genitals is disturbing for what lies behind it; we're not quite sure whether she's more upset by the premature ejaculatory tendencies of her former partner or by her inability to release some decidedly lesbionic (the word is Mamet's) tendencies.

Deborah (Katie Leo '95) and Danny (Daniel Aalberts G) actually get to have a relationship, even though Deborah is rather more open about her iconoclastic leanings. The interchange between them is handled with continual wit. Leo's deadpan is especially hilarious. "Ask me if I like the taste of cum... Das, I love the taste of cum," she says in a matter-of-fact way. "Doesn't it taste a little bit like Clorex?" replies Dan with a befuddled expression, as if he were talking about garlic.

The audience laughs nervously. Aalberts delivers his lines with keen diction, exposing all sorts of ticklish nuances. He disturbs us when he allows his character to become a real, feeling human for some moments, something denied to the other three characters who stay pasted in the land of cardboard cutouts.

The direction of Gene Schuster '94 is nice on target, presenting Mamet's symphony of taboos in an absorbing way. If you're prepared for an evening where almost all the language is dirty and where at least some of your laughter will be accompanied by cold sweat, this production is on target for you. It should be seen before Beirut, to ensure that by the end of the two you will be not only completely shattered but also accustomed to the intensity and professionalism of drama at MIT.

DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN ENGINEERING

Presents

DR. WILLIAM I. KOCH

1992 America Cup: Teamwork, Technology and Talent = Victory

Dr. Koch will describe the approaches and procedures he used in winning the 1992 America's Cup Match. Two notable differences between his approach and other aspirants for the oldest trophy in sports are Dr. Koch's emphasis on teamwork and technology. Through a technology development program based on a scientific background and a disciplined approach, Dr. Koch's team, America's fastest boats amongst the ten competing teams. The use of a technical and design team introduced more useful ideas into the effort than could have come from a more traditional effort involving a more restricted set of individuals.

Date: Thursday, April 29, 1993
Time: 4:15 p.m.
Place: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Building 9'Room 150
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA

Refreshments: 3:45 p.m.