

## THE NEW PINK

By Chris Hanna

Virginia Stage Company

Wells Theatre

Oct. 26 - - Nov. 14, 2010

For tickets call: 800-982-2787

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

Chris Hanna describes his quite amusing new play as “an implausible comedy”. There are many scenes that make for a jolly good walk on the funny side of the street. An implausible comedy is very close to describing the play as a farce which is what it actually is. In a farce, the action of the play is possible but not probable. The emphasis is placed on the situation in farcical works and on the characters in a comedy.

The humor in The New Pink definitely comes from the situation and, ay, there's the rub. There's a Sondheim lyric in a tune from A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum that speaks of “cunning disguises, stunning surprises.” Such is the case here. There are many stunning surprises as this whacky plot unfolds. If I were to tell you about them I would spoil your fun. But, trust me, they are there.

In fact there are many humorous moments that the accomplished actors, Tandy Cronyn and Jack Davidson, fail to realize. In fairness, I should quickly add that this kind of humor looks very simple but quite the opposite is true. It takes many performances to find the precise timing that is needed to hit pay dirt and get those really big laughs. At this point, the two actors don't seem comfortable or at home in this play. They lack the crispness and simple clarity that this genre of theatre demands.

Cronyn and Richardson play two average Americans. Gail and Roy. As designed by Samuel W. Flint, their living room, where all the action takes place, has a rather stark and “unlived in” look about it. Perhaps it's meant to be a reflection of their lives up until the present time which is very much today. This middle-class couple assume they have resources to allow them to live their retirement years in comfort. However, when Roy actually does quit working, they discover that their funds are under water or have gone south as the clever money people like to put it in talking about today's economy. So this ever resourceful couple concoct a wild plan of survival. More I cannot tell you, except there is another character named Gary who is very entertaining as performed by ODU student Rob Wilson.

Chris Hanna also directed the production. The rather barren set he elected to work in leaves the actors stranded in space much of the time without anything to do. Still in all, it's a fun, relaxing evening in the theatre that doesn't mess around with your mind or anything like that. It reaffirms that old depression song that says there are “pennies from heaven” even in the worst economies.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.