

## Light Sensitive

[Theatre District at the Cast](#)

Runs: 11/5/2004 - 2/18/2004

What are the odds of a play season containing two different plays about recalcitrant blind men meeting their emotional match? Both written by veteran TV writers? Jim Geoghan (*Three's Company*, *Family Matters*, *Kate & Allie*, *Silver Spoons* and *Mama's Family*) takes his turn with *Light Sensitive* (Garry Marshall's *Wrong Turn at Lungfish* was the other), with somewhat mixed results. Predictable and at times illogical, *Light Sensitive* is populated by a trio of characters straight out of Central Casting: Lou (Jim O'Heir), the George Wendt-like best buddy looking to change his life; Tom (David Rousseve), the blind man who wants things to stay as they are; and Edna (Alice Ensor), the volunteer case worker who believes in miracles and improbable love.

After a freak accident in which Tom is blinded, Lou becomes his sole life line to the outside world. Eight years later on Christmas eve in Tom's pigsty of an apartment, Lou announces that he's been taking a film appreciation class at The New School and is ready to move to Vermont and start a new life with his new lady friend. Enter Edna, a volunteer from the Blind School, whom Lou has managed to recruit as a replacement. "Shockingly", Tom not only rejects this feisty Edna person, but banishes Lou from his life. Tom is Edna's first - and only - client. And although she is there as a reader, she does not even once read to Tom. The rest of the story - taking place between Christmas and New Year's - revolves around how love, need, whatever, conquers all, and they all live happily ever after. Not that the story does not have its moments, but there are so many dangling threads left that the telling is a bit frayed.

Director Macario Gaxiola does not help matters much with what seem like arbitrary choices in blocking, direction, and effects. As just a couple of many such examples: what, pray tell, does the sputtering light in the kitchen represent? Other than annoying, it does not seem to flicker at any specific or symbolic time and eventually appears to represent the battle of wills between Lou and Edna. (Note: the bulb does not appear to favor either of them.) Or Tom's singing, which is never repeated and offers a glimpse of a character that never materializes. Rhythm-wise, the buddy banter between Lou and Tom is overworked, reaching it's raucous, fevered pitch from the get go. And in terms of logic, why would Lou toss a bottle cap onto a nice clean floor after protesting for years that Tom clean the place up? And why, oh why, after eight years of mess and dependency, is Lou's most shocking discovery about Tom's eight day transformation that he has a fire escape?

Tom, Lou and Edna, do manage some touching moments in this unevenly written piece. Tom is convincingly blind, and his character the most emotionally articulated, although I suspect that the initial silent treatment between him and Edna (encompassing his anger towards Lou and his bewilderment towards these catastrophic changes in his life) was truncated by the director, who is clearly uncomfortable with silence. Edna is unflappable, dogged, and deadpan hysterical at times, but completely out of character in her chest-thumping emotional purge at the end. Lou is a fire-hydrant of energy, but unable to modulate it to achieve the finesse

required for his final revelation and/or change of heart. Clearly meant as a symbolic "love conquers all" and a literal "love is blind" story, *Light Sensitive* overreaches and does not achieve the depth it clearly set its sights on.