

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## Race

David Mamet

The Playhouse Company in Durban

Assembly George Square

31 July–25 August 2014



The approach of this production from South Africa to David Mamet's legal drama differs from both the original version on [Broadway](#) and also the [London première production](#).

Here, director Clare Mortimer for The Playhouse Company in Durban treats the play as a slick drama of the kind favoured by American TV producers.

This really plays up the comedy, as a consequence devaluing the moral issues that should be centre stage throughout.

The plot is powerful. Charles Strickland, a Master of the Universe played by Michael Gritten, has been accused by the courts and the press of raping a black woman.

He sees his only chance of redemption deriving from a legal firm run by Andre Jacobs as Geoff Lawson and Peter Butler playing Hank Brown (white and black respectively).

They are a great comedy double act, supported by *True Blood* star Nondumiso Tembe's Susan, a young trainee who is also black and has enough attitude to dominate the drama.

Through 80 gripping minutes, the act (or not), its aftermath and ramifications are debated and lead to unexpected outcomes.

This is a powerful play that will please Edinburgh audiences but needed greater gravitas to hit its targets more accurately.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)