

PAUL TEI SIZZLES IN TALK RADIO..

By Ron Levitt

Theatre Critic

One often has the tendency to see a powerful performance and equate its success because the role is so magnificent that it makes the actor stand out, . On the other hand, there is often the case that an actor is so electrifying that he makes the role something extra special.

With the current show at Mosaic Theatre in Plantation (Talk Radio), Paul Tei epitomizes the latter. He is so dynamic that he dominates the stage for 100 minutes in this excellent show (intermissionless), ably directed by Mosaic's Executive Director Richard Jay Simon. It is the fifth time Tei – usually found at his Mad Cat Theatre Company in Miami -- has worked with Simon, a combination which seems to explode each year, Think Glengarry Glen Ross, Match, Art, and Dealer's Choice!

In Talk Radio, Tei plays the abrasive Barry Champlain, a shock jock radio host who smokes drinks and occasionally snorts coke while telling listeners the terrible state of the world and insulting his audience and those who could be closest to him (all of this taking place when he finds out his Ohio-based show will soon be going national). Tei takes this self-loathing, swaggering character to new heights. You are transfixed watching this actor dominate the stage, bringing Champlain to life.

The drama itself is a revival of one written by Eric Bogosian in 1987 and revived on Broadway this past year for a limited four-month run. But, it is not lost in the past. It is meaningful today as it was when it was written and you will think of Don Imus, Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh and other broadcast personalities who have dominated shock radio over the past 20 years.

Simon and the author also allow several characters the spotlight – the lovely Irene Adjan as Linda (the shock jock's love interest); the hilarious Johnny Mineo as a creepy adolescent prankster; Pete Rogan, as Champlain's loyal radio co-worker; and Dave Corey, as the at-wits-end station manager. In fact, the entire cast shines – including Beverly Blanchette, Noah Levine, George Schiavone, Erin Joy Schmidt, Terry Helin and Stephanie Simon.

And, let's not forget the production staff, including, Sean McClelland (Resident Set Designer), Jeff Quinn (Lighting Designer), K. Blair Brown (Costume Designer), and especially Matt Corey (Sound Designer). Corey brings radio to reality!

All of that said, it should be reminded that this is one heck of a production for Mosaic to launch its seventh season. Call 954-527-8243. Talk Radio runs through Oct, 7.