

Foreign Film Review

Lamerica

BY DAVID MACDONALD

Lamerica is an Italian film made about a year or two ago, and it deals with a couple of con men trying to take advantage of war-torn Albania's government and people by opening a shoe production plant, with the intentions of running off with the government investment and the profits. They feel they've come up with a great idea: pick up an old, homeless, senile Albanian and have him look and act as "president" of the company. This way the investors will feel more confident in having a local run the business, and also will be the one who is blamed whenever it will be found that it is a scam. However, things don't go as planned.

The old man is held in an overcrowded and overworked institution for safe-keeping. One day he decides to take a walk and not return. Of course, the young Italian is rather pissed off when he comes to fetch the old guy -- he has some more swindling of the Albanians left to do. This leads to a search for the old man by the young Italian. The Italian discovers the state of the Albanian people as some villagers rip the wheels off his jeep and all he can do is hitch rides with truckloads of Albanians trying to escape the country to Italy.

He hears the people asking him about what makes Italy better than Albania: are the soccer teams good, what are the roads like, are the girls prettier, are the whores better, and so on. The Albanians see an idealized, hedonistic view of Italy, offsetting the hardships and unhappiness they experience at home. The young Italian sees the slums where many families live in one broken-down house. He sees people grow sick and die in front of him. And he also finds out by accident that the old man is in fact not Albanian, but an Italian jailed for 40 years in an Albanian prison. The old man has lost memory of these forty years, and still believes that he is a twenty-year old Italian, and is still at home in Italy, even as the two men are making their way through the Albanian landscape. In the final shot of the movie, both men are on a boat back to Italy. The old man believes they are actually travelling to America (he still thinks he's in Italy, remember) and this seems to make the point that it isn't just Albanians who dream of a better place than their own, but so do Italians, and possibly everyone else as well.

This is definitely a movie about politics, and therefore not recommended for someone looking for action or romance. However, as a portrait of a society, this film is certainly worth the time.

Rating: ***



Edge players production of *Extremities* @ UPEI barn

BY JOHN KELLY

On March 26, 27, and 28, the Edge Players will be performing the full length production of William Mastrosimone's *Extremities*. *Extremities* is a contemporary piece about the issues of sexual assault and personal security. A stalker is overcome by his own victim and finds himself at the mercy of his vengeful target until her bewildered roommates return home to find a man trapped, beaten, in their fireplace.

Joining *Extremities* will also be a production of the one act play written and directed by Randy Burrows--*The Questioning*, a police drama.

Prior to this production, the group staged *Reservoir Dogs* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* on the UPEI campus. Mike Farrell, Robin Hewitt, Jill McRae, and Francois Weber star in *Extremities*. Mike Farrell, Tony Larder, Luke Leunes, Janet MacDonald, and Jill McRae star in the one act. All are UPEI students. Other Edge members include Matt McRae, Tim Mossey, and Paul

Trahan.

Extremities is the fourth full length play by the Edge Players, an independent theatre group comprised mostly of students. Its members bring a wide range of experience and credits to the stage. Soap operas, London's West End, film projects, dinner theatres, and scores of community theatre productions all fit somewhere into the group's collective (and growing) list of credits.

The Edge Players are currently developing three future projects. Another stage production for the Atlantic Theatre Fringe Festival in Halifax, a feature video project, and a musical staging of *A Clockwork Orange*. They are an ambitious group not afraid of risk-taking in either financial aspects or subject matter. Their productions have delved into a brand of theatre unique to the community.

The Edge Players have

developed a theatre product whereby audience members are invited to walk on the set before the show and to sit practically on it during the show, in a very close proximity to actors in very intense situations. This environment creates unusually intimate relationship between viewer and actor.

Furthermore, the group has thrown caution to the wind in terms of its controversy. Both *Reservoir Dogs* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* garnered a style of dialogue that employed a great deal of profanity and introduced characters that were mired in biases and bigotry. With *Extremities*, the group again has developed a production in the round (where the audience envelopes, in close quarters, the stage and actors) and again is tackling the themes of human depravity. This time though, the quirkiness and humor of the dialogue and characters have been replaced by the sobering and solemn themes of stalking and victimization.

