



ALL THE RAGE

Dark Brew Productions at Manhattan Theatre Source

On a set consisting of a few chairs and a floor that resembles a cracked yellow brick road, the unhappy characters in Keith Reddin's hilarious and tragic *All the Rage* wander in and out of each others' lives, leaving behind misery and more unhappiness.

Everything falls apart when Helen (Anne Bobby) discovers her husband, Warren (Greg Stuhr), covered in blood and holding a gun over a dead man. Understandably, this is the final straw for Helen, and she flees Warren and his increasingly demented jealousy. Along the way, plenty of peripheral characters are drawn into Warren's and Helen's paths, including Chris (a wonderful Benjamin Jaeger-Thomas), a gay man who has just purchased his first gun; retired cop Tyler (Steve Deighan, so hard-boiled he could have walked out of a Jim Thompson novel); and tough guy Sydney (Ryan Michael Jones), who insists on protecting his younger sister Annabel (Laura Schwenninger) despite the fact that "you could get a venereal disease just looking at her."

The heartbreakingly lonely Chris may come closest to defining what drives the characters when he touchingly explains that he gave up on searching for love in order to look for comfort. But even simple comfort has eluded him, leaving him dependent upon mood stabilizers and old movies. It's only a matter of time before even the gentlest of Reddin's characters succumb to their insecurities and fears; having set out on their yellow brick road, they lose themselves along the way and end up destroyed. The ones who survive are the ones who can face life head on with wit, courage, and guile. And so it is Helen and Tyler who escape the turmoil swirling around them unscathed. And it is Anne Bobby who coolly and confidently steals the show in her second scene, delivering a tour de force monologue about adultery and pasta that is so effervescent and perfectly timed that one breathlessly awaits her next entrance.

*Presented by Manhattan Theatre Source and Dark Brew Productions
at Manhattan Theatre Source, 177 MacDougal St., NYC.
July 31–Aug. 23. Wed.–Sat., 8 p.m.*

(212) 352-3101 or (866) 811-4111 or www.theatermania.com or www.theatresource.org.

Reviewed by Mark Peikert

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