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THEATER REVIEW / 'ALL THE RAGE'

All God's Children Got Guns, and a Few Axes to Grind, Too

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For those who relish a good wallow in depravity, “All the Rage,” a play by [Keith Reddin](#) at Manhattan Theater Source, answers the need. Originally at the Goodman Theater in Chicago in 1997, “Rage” was also later made into “It’s the Rage,” a little-seen film, though it’s hard to imagine how it would translate. Perhaps someone thought of it as a timely plea for gun control, or a marketable Tarantino-esque exercise. But it is more than that, and its brand of morbid caricature and contrivance is best served on a stage.



Photo: Benjamin Jaeger-Thomas

Anne Bobby and Greg Stuhr in a scene from “All the Rage.”

The story introduces a succession of pairs: Warren (Greg Stuhr) and his wife, Helen (Anne Bobby); Tim (Rich Fromm), Warren’s lawyer, and Tim’s needy live-in partner, Chris (Benjamin Jaeger-Thomas); Tennel (Jeffrey Plunkett), the fastidious secretary to Norton (Peter Reznikoff), a rich, reclusive eccentric; Tyler, a soon-to-retire detective (Steve Deighan), and his colleague Agee (Medina Senghore); and Annabel (Laura Schwenninger), an under-age gold digger in a disturbing relationship with her brother, Sydney (Ryan Michael Jones), a nihilistic ex-convict.

Most of these people, whose paths often overlap at cross-purposes, have one bond: their direct, or indirect, access to firearms. Warren, who obsessively suspects his wife of infidelity, has shot a man, presumably a burglar, in his house. Chris, unstable and resentful of Tim’s neglect, has bought a pistol. Annabel revels in baiting her admirers and inciting the trigger-happy Sydney to “protect” her. Tyler, meanwhile, on Warren’s trail, is simply weary of gun violence.

The play is consistently entertaining and, thanks to Daryl Boling’s steady direction, advances briskly. Colorful comic digressions — like a monologue by Mr. Jaeger-Thomas on embracing one’s inner child to justify murder, and delightful flights of absurdly high-flown rhetoric from Helen and Norton — add leavening, while surprising reversals toward the end yield unanticipated insights.

“All the Rage” succeeds best as a rogues’ gallery of avarice, suspicion and promiscuity. In a solid cast Mr. Stuhr, Ms. Bobby, Mr. Jaeger-Thomas and, as a voice for reason, Mr. Deighan, are particularly watchable. While the portraits are the main attraction, connoisseurs of depraved acts can take heart: there is no skimping on the bloodshed.

“All the Rage” continues through Aug. 23 at Manhattan Theater Source, 177 Macdougall Street, Greenwich Village; (212) 352-3101, theatermania.com.