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Stupid Kid

by Dale Reynolds
EDGE Media Network Contributor
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Joe Hart, Taylor Gilbert, Rob Nagle, Allison Blaize and Ben Theobald

Sharr White's world premiere "**Stupid Kid**" is an amusing, if ultimately unsettling, dramedy about a lower-class family: mother Gigi (Taylor Gilbert), father Eddie (Joe Hart), a shady politician uncle, Michael (Rob Nagle), his much younger abused girlfriend, Hazel (Allison Blaize), and a nosy next-door neighbor, Frannie (Michelle Gillette), all of them noisy and uncaring of themselves and of each other.

Young Chick (Ben Theobald) has finally been released from fourteen years in the pokey for some crime or another, which he insists he didn't commit, and returns home to a

disappointing and less-than-stellar welcome from those he is closest to (in fact, the only people he's remotely close to anymore).

Director Cameron Watson has taken this offensive play and shaped it into something watchable with excellent actors who, in truth, make it a meaningful event. That there is no one to root for, including everyone in this low-IQ'd family, and the young woman who is so evilly abused by good-ol'-boy Uncle Mike, makes it a rough time. And White's tacked-on "happy" ending doesn't help it.

However, it's always rewarding to attend specific theaters that invariably turn out strong material, such as The Road, even those plays, as is quite true of "Stupid Kid," that are creepy and disturbing. Especially with no one to care about, it remains a chore.

On a superlative set by Jeff McLaughlin, which turns itself outside-in between the acts, the always insightful cast carries the action. Kudos to them all, especially Gilbert (co-artistic director of The Road), Nagle (a stalwart leader of Antaeus Theatre), and Hart, for letting it remain watchable.

"Stupid Kid" runs through November 12 at the Road on Magnolia, NoHo Senior Arts Colony, 10747 Magnolia Blvd. in North Hollywood. For tickets or information, call 818-761-8838 or visit

www.RoadTheatre.org