

Stupid Kid Interviews



The Road Theatre on Magnolia is proud to present a world premiere play by Sharr White entitled Stupid Kid. After 14 years in prison for a crime he swears he didn't commit, Chick returns home to find his flat-broke family under the thumb of his dangerous Unclemike. A rollicking Gothic Western tale of a family isolated by shame, Stupid Kid explores power, guilt and the limits of maternal love. The play will begin previews on Saturday, September 16 at 8pm and officially opens on Friday, September 22 at 8pm running through Sunday, November 12 at the Road Theatre on Magnolia.

*Each week we will spotlight members of the cast and/or creative team. This week we take pride in placing Stupid Kid's director **Cameron Watson** centerstage.*

Heralded by The Los Angeles Times as "one of our finest contemporary directors," Watson began his professional career in New York City studying acting with the legendary Herbert Berghof at HB Studio. He soon landed the starring role in the original production of Horton Foote's The Widow Claire at Circle in the Square, replacing Matthew Broderick, which led to a lifelong relationship and collaboration with Mr. Foote, as well as a successful and enduring acting career. Watson's triumphant revival of Tennessee Williams' Cat On a Hot Tin Roof recently closed a sell-out run at Antaeus Theatre Company. He is a true Renaissance man: a director, a filmmaker, a teacher and an actor.

What is your perspective of the play? Tell us about the message and what it offers the audience.

Stupid Kid is a very unexpected play about unexpected people and an unusual situation that we very rarely see in the theatre. These folks are Gothic Western Colorado working class folks. They had a very loving lower-middle class existence as a family once, and now they have nothing. Literally. Barely food. No money, no income. No family. A son imprisoned for fourteen years. And on this particular day, no phone, as it has been cut off. I was drawn to this play because of these people. When I first read it, I laughed out loud at them, I was in amazement of how they treated each other, I laughed even more, and then, all of the sudden, I wept for them. I saw their damaged hearts and I wept. They want what they had before. And the fact that they can't have it truly broke my heart.

How does the playwright achieve his goal via his various characters? Does he involve them in an especially fascinating way?

Sharr's execution of these characters in this play is extraordinary. It is rare to be able to laugh, then be offended, then be blindsided, then to care deeply about a character. In one scene alone he manages to give each of them such fully rounded dimension, it blows me away. They exist. They breathe and sweat and hurt and fall apart and pick themselves up.

Talk about your cast.

You hope above hope that your cast is perfect and that they bond and that they form the ensemble that is on the page and in the playwright's mind and heart. And boy, these six actors that I am blessed to have certainly do all of that, and much more. Casting is everything. The cliché is true. But when you get it right? Oh, man – it makes my job so much easier. I have the expertise of brilliantly seasoned pros like Taylor Gilbert, Joe Hart, Rob Nagle and Michelle Gillette, and then these two new, young discoveries in Allison Blaize and Ben Theobald. They are the real thing. Their skill, to be as young as they are, is jaw dropping. I think, no, actually I know, I have two new shining stars on my hands here.

Anything you care to add?

This play will surprise you and catch you off guard. It will make you laugh hard. It will shock you. And it will make you clutch your heart.