



'King Hedley II' Invokes Strong Emotions

Guest Reviewer: Gregory Cantrell

"King Hedley II" is a deeply complex, dark and moving story with powerhouse performances by an excellent cast.

Presented by the KC Melting Pot Theater at Just Off Broadway, Director Harvey William's production of August Wilson's play is superb. This was an amalgam of excellence – the acting, the direction, the lighting, the costumes, the stage and the sound.



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"King Hedley II" is a riveting, angst-filled, and exemplary production that faithfully re-tells the story of King Hedley II, an ex-con with no job prospects, who is trying to rebuild his life after a prison stint by saving \$10,000 selling stolen

refrigerators to buy a video store with his friend. Set in the backyards of Ruby and Stool Pigeon in Pittsburg, PA there's a portent of dread permeating the entire performance.

The cast, is anchored by Lewis J. Morrow playing King Hedley II. Morrow's Hedley II scowls and stalks the stage, commanding audience attention throughout the performance. Morrow completely inhabits King Hedley and whether he is planting and attending to seeds that don't seem to take root, or in a heated discussion with his mama Ruby or his wife Tonya, the audience can feel his pain and understands his tortured soul.

Morrow is surrounded by a stellar cast consisting of Sherri Roulette Mosley as Ruby; Dennis Jackson playing Stool Pigeon; Lanette King as Tonya; Jerron O'Neal as Mister and Theodore (Priest) Hughes who plays Elmore.



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Each actor has moments that shine in Williams's rendition. Of particular note was Lanette King as Tonya, arguing with Hedley II about getting an abortion and not wanting to bring a child into their world that lacks any prospects for a positive life. Her raw emotions and portrayal position the audience like voyeurs intruding into this very personal and difficult time.

In addition, Dennis Jackson's Stool Pigeon, as a Bible quoting neighbor, is notable as he challenges his neighbors with his interpretations of scripture and that "...God is a bad m***f'er!"

The production is long, running at more than 2 ½ hours, but the story is taut and moves along with a richness and authenticity in telling the everyday struggles and lost dreams

of these character's lives. King Hedley II builds to a dramatic and shocking ending that makes every minute of the play worth the time.

The top-notch production team consists of: Melonnie Walker – Assistant Director; Emily Kenneback – Stage Manager; Robert Coppage III – Asst. Stage Manager; Charles Moore – Set Designer/Builder; Robert Crone – Costumer; Dennis Jackson – Sound Designer;



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"King Hedley II" runs from Sept. 20 through October 5 at the KC Melting Pot Theater at Just Off Broadway in Kansas City, Missouri. For specific dates, times, prices, and tickets, go to the [Melting Pot Theater website](#).