

Accomplice

By Rupert Holmes, directed by Simon Levy

February 12 - March 13, 2005

The Colony Theatre

Reviewing a murder mystery is always a prickly task, a tricky balancing act to describe the story line without divulging any of the plot twists and surprises. And *Accomplice* is chock full of both.

Mr. Holmes (The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Say Goodnight, Gracie) has written an award-winning witty send-up of the murder mystery genre, complete with double-crossing spouses, dashing handsome lovers, and a busty dumb blond. Almost every conceivable method of killing was attempted (poisoning, stabbing, shooting, death by chandelier), and at last count, there were 11 plot twists, including a surprise appearance towards the end. Though certainly entertaining, *Accomplice* is more of an extended Saturday Night Live sketch than murder mystery. With plot lines flying fast and furious, the actors never have an opportunity to sink into their characters, but provide entertaining yet farcical renditions of their ever-changing roles.

Mr. Simon was blessed with a competent and even cast who have wonderful on stage chemistry. And although the English accents are rather iffy at the beginning in Act I, it all becomes clear in Act 2. Or does it? In this play-within-a-play, Janet (Lisa Pelikan), a neglected and bored housewife is married to John (Larry Cedar), a wealthy financier and talent-less boob with a non-existent sex drive. His business partner, Derek (J. Paul Boehmer, played by his understudy Bart del Gatto at this performance), is heartbreakingly handsome and married to Marilyn (Samantha Raddock), the above-mentioned dumb blond, but carrying on with Janet. Or is he? Janet and Derek conspire to get rid of their respective spouses... Or do they? That is the mysterious fun.

Desma Murphy's elaborate, two-story English countryside home includes a rotating fireplace, and Kathi O'Donohue's lighting was spot on, although Shon Le Blanc's costumes were inconsistent. Despite very minor glitches, the entire production was polished and professional, and the pacing marred only by the unnecessary use of stagehands to remove one or two props. The Colony Theatre Company has consistently provided award-winning theater, and *Accomplice*, which each and every audience member unwittingly becomes by the end of the evening, is no exception.