



OWNED - Raising the Bar

by Jill Preston



Ed and Ray are friends working at a cozy dive bar in present day New York City. They love their bar, but not their historical baggage that brought them here. Escaping their former misfortunes, the bar has become their stable sanctuary; the living room that everyone wants to visit. When Ed and Ray learn the bar is up for sale, they decide to buy, but their road to ownership is an icy one laden with romantic stop signs and business potholes.

Ed, played quite empathetically by Don DiPaolo, runs a tight ship managing the bar. An almost-famous rock musician who only had “a few gigs above 14th street” he juggles the failures of his old dreams with the longings of his future plans, plaguing him with a blind spot for present happiness.



In contrast, Ray, comically executed by Neil Holland, is the gregarious bartender responsible for the bar’s customers and livelihood. A younger and more eloquent man with some semblance to your typical fraternity brother, Ray is a myopic dreamer whose impulsiveness seems to continually outweigh his bright ideas.

Together, Ed (Don DiPaolo) and Ray (Neil Holland) have great on stage chemistry of both witty rapport and palpable closeness resonating through the characters and spilling onto the stage. As the play unfolds, the plot thickens with the entrance of Morgan. Adorably played by Susannah Hoffman, Morgan is the current owner’s favorite niece. Shrewd, sexy, and something of a renegade, she strategically places each pawn where she sees fit in her life-size game-plan. Like Ed and Ray, she battles with her past and finds solace in the bar as a place to call home.



Through the set, designer Blanca Añón creates an atmosphere that is simple, realistic, and well utilized by the actors. Extensively using many of the props, the actors navigated the space so effectually and effortlessly I felt like a comfortable regular.

Like the set, the costumes in OWNED were also simple (clothing of your average day-to-day person) yet highly illustrative of the character’s personality. Arranged by Nancy Leary, each character’s past and future is carefully reflected in their clothes and hairstyles creating well developed characters I felt like I personally knew.

Knife Edge Productions was formed in 2008 by Neil Holland and a fellow graduate of William Esper Studio to produce a revival of Adam Rapp's Red Light Winter. After the success of Red Light Winter, fellow William Esper Studio graduate Don DiPaolo and director Sam Helfrich joined Knife Edge Productions to stage a critically acclaimed Off-Off Broadway revival of Stephen Belber's Tape in 2011. OWNED marks the company's first premiere of a new play.

Photos by Brian Hotaling

- 1. Neil Holland and Don DiPaolo*
- 2. Susannah Hoffman and Don DiPaolo*
- 3. Don DiPaolo and Neil Holland*

OWNED

Written by Julian Sheppard

Directed by Sam Helfrich

Knife Edge Productions

TBG Theater

312 West 36th Street, between 8th & 9th Avenues

212-868-4444

April 26 through May 11, 2013

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