

... about *Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell that Was Once Her Heart (a rave fable)*

“In bringing playwright Caridad Svich's demanding play—with its many characters and multimedia components—to visceral life, directors Ianthe Demos and Danny Bernardy create a tone poem for our blitzed-out, hyperkinetic, media-saturated age.... One Year Lease, which has a reputation for high production values, does not disappoint. The rave party in the industrial wasteland at the city's outskirts is vividly rendered by set designer James Hunting with cinderblocks, sawdust, and metal steps and hanging rods. On three onstage TV screens, video engineer Brian Michael Thomas projects hyper-paced news clips and live streaming video that offer counterpoint and comment on the action. Mike Riggs's inventive lighting, Kay Lee's exuberant costumes (Iphigenia's designer ball gown with its scooped-out miniskirt front is exquisite), and sound engineer David Chessman's pulsating techno music all add to the heady atmospherics of what the rave party's DJ describes as ‘this synthetic, hard-core fantasy we call a new century.’ While sensory overload is the norm, the directors and their production team also appreciate the power of stillness. Thus they add a fascinating silent tableau of Iphigenia and her parents at the dinner table as a prelude. In some of the concluding scenes, after Iphigenia embraces her fate, the torrent of words, lights, and images tapers off and a still, softly lit landscape emerges where the TV screens reflect only the action itself onstage. The cast deserves credit for maintaining its focus and poise amid the swirl. Stinehelfer captures the conflicting mix of naïveté, petulance, and fear that pulls Iphigenia in different directions. Susannah Malone is powerful both as the alcoholic, withholding mother and the apparition Violeta. The three male actors, playing multiple characters, are suitably creepy as the Mexican Fresa girls, while also excelling in their roles as Achilles (Danny Bernardy), the intrepid news anchor (Nick Flint), and the callous general (Gregory Waller).... *Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart* makes for an absorbing night of theater.”

-Deidre McFadyen, “Meeting Her Fate,” *OffOffOnline*, September 8, 2006

“The production is visually stunning and in its most successful moments really does wrench the myth into the present and show its darkest underbelly in an eerie and compelling way.... I found many of the individual elements extraordinarily allusive and compelling: the virtual MC, a radio/video voice that serves as a sinister modern analogue to the Greek gods, all-knowing and heard everywhere; the highlighting of the way political families become pawns of the media; the omnipresence of the media, and the way their commentary becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, making the news anchor stand in for the seer in the original story; the moment when Iphigenia, unaware of the naïveté of her own privilege, idealizes the crosses marking the deaths of the Fresa Girls, the poorest of women. And some of the design elements are stunning, especially James Hunting's decaying industrial landscape of a set and Mike Riggs's lights.... Co-directors Ianthe Demos and Danny Bernardy find some beautiful, evocative images, juxtaposing the videos and the live action nicely (in which they are helped by the sprawling, multilevel set). . . . There's a lot to admire in *Iphigenia*.”

-Loren Noveck, *NYTheatre.com*, September 8, 2006

“The opening image of this production, directed by Ianthe Demos and Danny Bernardy, says much about the play and its characters. As theatregoers take their seats, a father, mother, and daughter tensely share a meal center stage, surrounded by set designer James Hunting's fascinating environment of construction detritus, a chain-link fence, and several televisions. Kay Lee's costumes — a military tunic for the man, a pink Jackie Kennedy-inspired jacket for the young woman — define character. Composer Brian Simerson's eerie soundscape places the trio in a universe in which anything can happen.”
-Andy Propst, *Backstage*, September 11, 2006

“It's easy to admire James Hunting's stunning set: televisions lie among cinderblock ruins and characters descend down metallic platforms and cross a dust-covered floor till they rest against a corroded steel fence that leans, like an abandoned anachronism, against another wall.”
-Aaron Riccio, *New Theater Corps*, September 10, 2006

“The physical use of space, coming from the double direction of Ianthe Demos and Danny Bernardy, is excellent, and when the play focuses on a microcosm of emotion, as in the scenes between doomed Iphigenia and her lover, Achilles, the show becomes truly theatrical.”
-Aaron Riccio, *New Theater Corps*, September 10, 2006

“Yes, there are glow sticks. But every other visual aspect of Ianthe Demos' production of Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell that Was Once Her Heart (a rave fable) reverberates with timeless oddity.... One Year Lease has taken Caridad Svich's poetic reinterpretation of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* and hyper-stylized it by way of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” and “Die, Mommy, Die!”. . . . Kay Lee's costumes of towering green beehives and flowing pink dresses, combined with Mike Riggs' gem-toned rays of light, create a striking visual feast.”
-Kerri Allen, *Total Theater*, September 2006

“The co-directors clearly adore a rich mise-en-scene, and they and set designer James Hunting, video designer Brian Michael Thomas, and light designer Mike Riggs do arrive at moments of stirring beauty. Lit obliquely by a single misty beam, a girl lies spread-eagled in the dust; cat-eyed Achilles (Mr. Bernardy), trained to be androgynous since birth, rises dripping from a forest pool.... Ms. Melone hits the right notes—literally—with her stripped and strangely breathy voice. When she talks, you hear how dry the air must be, how long she has been railing against fate, and for how long she has gone unheard.”
-Helen Shaw, “The Greeks, Latin-Style,” *The New York Sun*, September 11, 2006