

... about *Reader*

“Reader, by celebrated Chilean writer and activist Ariel Dorfman, is a psychological and intellectual labyrinth that rewards assiduous consideration. It is one of those shows that is fascinating at first look, but gives you more with each additional viewing. And I intend to experience it again myself.... This piece is as complex as *Death and the Maiden*, Dorfman’s best known play, but in a *Memento* universe. If I were to nominate ten contemporary plays for a ‘most challenging to direct’ category, *Reader* would probably be on it. Therefore I have great admiration for the director Ianthe Demos for her intriguing arrangement and presentation of the flashbacks, illusions, and other inner thoughts Dorfman has laid out for ‘The Pope.’ All the actors deliver their double, sometimes triple, roles with great flair. Lighting design by Mike Riggs and set design by James Hunting deserve special praise for the arousing visual power they inject into the performance.”

-Kat Chamberlain, *NYTheatre.com*, August 15, 2007

“The seven-year-old NY-based theater company One Year Lease (OYL) has dedicated its summer to producing all three of Dorfman’s Resistance Trilogy to which *Reader* belongs. Out of this text, director Ianthe Demos adeptly weaves together an intelligent and visceral production that bursts with vitality and terror.... The performers offer rich, frenzied characterizations prickling with energy. Most notable are Darrell James, who plays the main characters Daniel Lucas and Don Alfonso Morales, and an electric Emma Jackson who plays Irene and Jacqueline. The set, costumes and lighting ground us in a noir space seething with intrigue, mystery and elegance. Dorfman creates a world where tyranny smiles and violates. One Year Lease uses its dexterity to present a tension-filled and alluring imagining of this world. The themes of this play are deeply engaging and strike a cord of relevance to contemporary life without being overt or heavy-handed. Treat yourself to an evening of theater that is both contemplative and animal. See *Reader*.”

-Lauren Lee, “The Power (and Terror) of Words,” *OffOffOnline.com*, August 15, 2007

“*Reader* takes place in a futuristic society, but, at the outset, few indications suggest that it is not set in modern times. The production is at its best when it highlights this ambiguity; one successful scene employs the censorship wielded by the government to alter the play itself, with the cast changing their performances and personalities instantly.... The cast performs valiantly.”

-Nicole Villeneuve, *Backstage*, August 24, 2007

“I have followed Ianthe Demos’s One Year Lease company for the past six years... Their recent New York premiere of Ariel Dorfman’s *Reader* as part of this year’s Fringe Festival, was by far the most successful of any production to date, demonstrating both just how much perseverance to an ideal serves well the development of a company and the ongoing strength of One Year Lease.... As always, One Year Lease’s set design, this time by James Hunting, is hauntingly beautiful—a sparse office, with a backdrop of torn pages (occasionally fluttering down from the wall) that outline a covered window through which spectral demons plague the present. Further, Mike Riggs’s lighting throughout is innovative and, truly, illuminating—which may seem obvious, but, unfortunately, is so often not—in its subtle nuance between what is happening in the present, what has

happened in the past, and what is (un)certainly to come. The actors, Nico Evers-Swindell, Emma Jackson, Darrell James, Susannah Melone, Nick Stevenson, and Zach Griffiths, most playing several roles between the what-was-happening and what-was-written, were brilliant across the board—a testament to both their talent and Demos’s constantly superb direction. James’s descent into the text and into his own disillusionment was particularly impressive, adding another dimension to the many-layered performance by which one lost one’s own grounding in what was real, that is, on the page, and what was the manifestation of his increasing paranoid dementia. It is this aspect of the play, and the performance, that speaks the loudest from the stage; for what is political theatre, and art, if not a whirlpool of cultural dementia that isn’t necessarily paranoid in the slightest?”
-T. Nikki Cesare, *Obscene Jester*, August 29, 2007