

### ... about *Phaedra x 3*

“By the end of this marvelous experience—and it is an experience—you’ll not only appreciate theater more, but you’ll understand the process too.

How’s this for ambition: six actors and one director set out to train in Greece for a month and then come back to perform three dramatically different versions of *Phaedra* in repertoire. There’s the classic (Racine’s *Phedre*, as opposed to Euripides’ original), the modern (Matthew Maguire’s *Phaedra*) and the neo-expressionist (Sarah Kane’s *Phaedra’s Love*). Each has its own unique vision and flair, but *One Year Lease*, by giving theatergoers the opportunity to compare and contrast all three, has triumphed with an overall production that can only be titled *Phaedra x3*. The classics are made contemporary (and vice versa), and while there are some imbalances throughout, this is edutainment for anyone interested in theater.

The only constant for each production, beyond the cast and crew, is a brilliantly minimalist set, designed by James Hunting. Plastic sheets that swing on hinges double as columns, windows and walls—only semi-transparent, they lend a ghostly air to each scene and play well with the lighting. Two lonely gray benches only accentuate the empty space, and it’s nice to get away from all the bells and whistles that plague today’s theater. This bare-boned approach forces the actors to really tell the story with themselves, and that singular focus is more grounded in the theater than any big-budget extravaganza.”

-Aaron Riccio, *New Theater Corps*, December 10, 2005

#### **On Matthew Maguire’s *Phaedra*:**

If *Phaedra* was music, it would be jazz. Along with a little bit of erratic techno, that’s the soundtrack director Ianthe Demos has chosen for Matthew Maguire’s adaptation. This sense of dance infuses the show with slow-building passion and then smoldering heat. The plastic walls swivel around and props—like the single wooden chair with a red cushion—become the actor’s in one long, slow, sultry dance. The whole thing is a sleek machine that slows only to revel in its own masterfully modern poetic language. . . . The whole cast of *Phaedra x3* has this version down best—especially Gregory Waller, whose rigid brooding and wry deliveries are a perfect match for the manipulative, all-business Thomas (Theseus), CEO (ruler) of a major corporation (kingdom).”

#### **On Sarah Kane’s *Phaedra’s Love*:**

“It may not be the *Phaedra*, or even the theater, that you expect: but it is a masterful work regardless.”

-Aaron Riccio, *New Theater Corps*, December 10, 2005