

Time Out

New York

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THEATER



PIMP MY TRAGEDY Gibson gets funky, Greek-style.

DON'T MISS!

Abigail's Party

(New Group @ Theatre Row; see Off Broadway) Mike Leigh's 1977 comedy about a tacky hostess gets its belated but groovy American debut thanks to director Scott Elliott.

Bridge & Tunnel

(Helen Hayes Theatre; see Broadway) Shape-shifter Sarah Jones brings her big-hearted paean to the immigrant experience to Broadway.

The Little Dog Laughed

(Second Stage Theatre; see Off Broadway) As a charmingly cynical agent, Julie White blazes through Douglas Carter Beane's sharp satire of Hollywood's sexual politics.

Red Light Winter

(Barrow Street Theatre; see Off Broadway) Playwright-director Adam Rapp breaks new ground with his witty, wrenching portrait of destructive desire between two men and a woman.

The Seven

(New York Theatre Workshop; see Off Broadway) Will Power takes Aeschylus' Greek tragedy about



The Seven

fathers, sons and civil strife and gives it a frisky hip-hop makeover.

Sweeney Todd

(Eugene O'Neill Theatre; see Broadway) High-concept director John Doyle and a phenomenal cast of actor-singer-musicians slice into the dark heart of Stephen Sondheim's masterpiece.

The Trip to Bountiful

(Signature Theatre Company; see Off Broadway) Lois Smith makes a sentimental journey in Horton Foote's tender homecoming drama.

Zomboid! Film/Performance Project #1

(Ontological-Hysterical Theater at St Marks Church; see Off Broadway) Richard Foreman adds video to the scenic schema in his latest beguiling mind attack.

Reviews

The Seven

By Will Power. Dir. Jo Bonney. Choreographed by Bill T. Jones. With ensemble cast. New York Theatre Workshop (see Off Broadway).

What's Aeschylus to us? Or we to Aeschylus? Each season brings a predictable trickle of Greek tragedies, usually in deadly productions at the Pearl Theatre or "topical" Off-Off Broadway versions. How rare it is to see a Hellenic classic that possesses the volcanic narrative force and lyrical flow that our professors insisted the genre did. So credit is due to Will Power's *The Seven*, a jubilant hip-hop spin on Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*. Like poets before him, Power gleefully grabs his source material and bends it to his own issues and idiom. In *The Seven*, the process is dubbed (per DJ lingo) "flipping." And flip it is—an irreverent, glib, refreshing inversion and juxtaposition of cultural signifiers.

Power sets social types in fruitful opposition: His Oedipus (Edwin Lee Gibson) is a velvet-suited, bejeweled pimp who curses his sons, Eteoclus (Manuel Herrera) and Polynices (Jamyl Dobson), for being born of his own incestuous union. Portraying the tragic king of Thebes as a strutting ghetto fop is partly postmodern graffiti-tagging, but it also smartly twins the imagery of tyrants and abusive fathers. The brothers start out united but end in fratricidal hatred, fighting for control of Thebes. While Power's juggling of character, story and wordplay is still evolving, director Jo Bonney and a phenomenal cast ensure that waves of poetic energy never stop coming off the stage. Darron L. West's infectious wall of hip-hop sound and Bill T. Jones's muscular dances cement *The Seven* as a spectacular offering to the theater gods.—David Cote