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Erik Ehn
Nick Fracaro
Gabriele Schafer

April 23, 1987

"I love the rebel, not his cause." Jean Genet

Dear Reviewer:

The search for a polemic theatre began with Thieves Theatre's genesis, working with 'The Con Artistes' in Illinois State Penitentiary. Inspired by both the Con Artistes and the playwright Jean Genet, we have sought to create a nexus between opposing views of reality. The "good" and "bad" thief of the Biblical story argue it out as the guy in the center, himself stigmatized, keeps his mouth shut. Our stance is without irony. We embody the "bad" in us as fully as the "good" in us will allow and vice versa. The hybrid should be a mediator alternately cherished and stigmatized from both sides. Perpetually adolescent, theatre is both the idealism and delinquency that is always out of accord with its double.

The polemics:

"Justin J. Finger, director of the civil rights division of B'Nai B'rith's Anti-Defamation League. 'We purposely did not say anything; sometimes the quarantine treatment works'." NEW YORK NEWSDAY

"Gabriele Schafer, founding member of Thieves Theatre, said the play was selected because 'maybe it could incite people to think in ways they weren't accustomed to'." NEW YORK NEWSDAY

"After I read the script ... I... considered for a moment forming a picket line. After viewing the play opening night, I decided to express my viewpoint in print." DOWNTOWN

"How can one be offended by a character as dumbly blatant as one called The Rich Jew?" COVER

"A well-known city discoteque manager, who prefers to be addressed only by his first name Rudolf, known as the son of a helper's helper of Nazi war criminals and is alleged to have grown up in Argentina, graciously declined to contribute one night's disco income to Thieves Theatre. The man let it go. The club belongs to Eli Dayan, the son on Moshe Dayan." SPIEGEL

For five months an ensemble of 20 actors have studied techniques of acting and production which Thieves Theatre has explored in previous productions in Chicago and Toronto. The nine month process leading to the underground success of the Marat/Sade production in Toronto formed the basis for Trash, the City and Death. Peter Weiss' blending of the almost polar aesthetics of Brecht and Artaud in Marat/Sade flowed seamlessly into the anti-theatre Fassbinder employed in creating Trash, the City and Death.

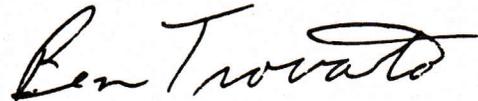
"Thieves Theatre combines a random, self-consciously sleazy amateurism with weirdly intense conviction -- true to descriptions of the 'anti-theatre' company for whom Fassbinder originally wrote the play." THE VILLAGE VOICE

"If Fassbinder had been looking down from heaven, one knew he would have been pleased. For it is the clear intention of the director, Nick Fracaro, to épater us with all the means at his disposal... it could not have received a production better suited to its merits." THE NATION

"Fracaro has mounted a nice, crude, exciting (if uneven) production of this brilliant and flawed play ... studiously committed to Fassbinder's anti-theatre aesthetic, and it's the only stance to take with this piece." NEW YORK NATIVE

"Trash, the City and Death is a posthumous present to Fassbinder. He would have enjoyed the production." STERN

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ben Trovato". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Ben Trovato
Publicist
TRASH, THE CITY AND DEATH