



NICOLE BENGIVENO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Makela Spielman, in the title role, with Leon Ingulsrud in "Antigone" at Dance Theater Workshop.

Sophoclean Tragedy, Served Neat

Sitting around a sturdy square table dressed in business casual minus footwear, the debaters in Anne Bogart's staging of "Antigone" look as if they were at a corporate retreat. They

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present their arguments cleanly, with little fuss, and then, when things get heated, the baldheaded Kreon (Stephen Duff Webber) pulls his hand back theatrically and gives someone a slap. To be precise, he mimes a slap, and then a sound effect does the rest. These mannered, mock-violent punctuation marks are a metaphor for the entire style here — deliberate, modest and yet never quite connecting.

"The play speaks to our

Antigone

Dance Theater Workshop

Bogart in the program, but it's unclear what she's referring to. If anything, this production seems more interested in universal themes than contemporary relevance. The play's arguments about competing loyalty to family and state, political imagery, justice and civic order are laid out nicely. The chorus, always one of the thorniest problems and greatest opportunities when mounting Greek drama, is shrunk to one oddly glib man (Will Bond), and Jocelyn Clarke's translation, streamlined and cogent, emphasizes clarity.

aims for a sleek, black-box look. She resists intrusive critical readings or high concepts. The closest you get to specific political echoes is talk of "insurgents," "the homeland" and balancing security and liberty. But even these references, which earn knowing chuckles, seem like remnants of the Bush era.

Mr. Webber brings a sober gravity to Kreon, the stubborn ruler of Thebes who refuses to bury the brother of Antigone in the wake of a civil war. Playing his son Haemon, who is to marry Antigone, Leon Ingulsrud communicates a sad-sack persona in a few subtle shrugs. Makela Spielman's Antigone is steady, better at articulating ideas than passion.