



April 7-13, 2010

## One Night With Hue

*Red* is a battle on canvas. Plus, *Bellona* serves a visual stew while *Lend Me a Tenor* lends laughs.

By Michael Feingold

### ***Bellona, Destroyer of Cities***

*By Jay Scheib, after Samuel  
R. Delany's *Dahlgren*  
The Kitchen  
512 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street, 212-255-5793*

**T**he warring visual elements in Jay Scheib's *Bellona, Destroyer of Cities* (the Kitchen), like those in *Red*, often speak louder and more cogently than its words. Scheib's source, sci-fi doyen Samuel R. Delany's 1975 novel *Dahlgren*, takes place in a dystopian future city that waveringly seems to resemble 1975's New York, or our current one, as often as it does the bleak future. Buildings burn, nothing seems to function, everyone's on the edge of flipping out, and yet, apparently, nobody's starving or more than customarily miserable. They've all adjusted to the anarchic upheaval, compensating for it with heavy boozing and lurches into violent, orgiastic sex, streaked with racist fantasies. (Delany is African American.) Inside the convulsing chaos, a middle-class family comes apart and a young girl who dreams of being a poet gets her wish, and bad reviews.

Erratically acted, these half-perceived, disconnected events (some of which repeat, like theatrical tics), seem less vital to the experience than the visual and sonic stew into which Scheib stirs them. Peter Ksander's set, inventively lit by Miranda k Hardy, cunningly uses a few odd angles and unexpected exits to turn a simple subdivision of the space into a never-ending warren of unrelated rooms. On a vertical rectangle of screen overhanging stage left, Scheib and his co-videographer, Carrie Mae Weems, project a bi-level mix of tape, stills, and live video feed, sometimes echoing and sometimes counterpointing the onstage action. The work's substantive the way a stew is: not a distinct single flavor but a sampling of many. All of them tend toward disquiet: You leave unsure exactly what you've seen, but pretty glad you don't live in that particular future. Oh, right, you do.