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(L-R) Jason Liebrecht, Chad Nichols, and Robert Pierson

## Acid Reign

By Bob Mondello

### *Get Your War On*

Adapted by the Rude Mechanicals from the internet comic strips by David Rees

Directed by Shawn Sides

*At Woolly Mammoth to Oct. 14*

Heather Raffo may have the highest-profile Iraq play in town (her *Nine Parts of Desire* opened last week at Arena Stage), but with the help of a decommissioned overhead projector or two reclaimed from the Enron meltdown, the Rude Mechanicals of Austin, Texas, are offering their own idiosyncratic take on the war—satirical, ironic, and generally pissed-off.

"So how're you enduring your freedom," asks a troupe member at the top of *Get Your War On*, and the Rude Mechs are off and running, waxing comic on "the supersizing of grief," mocking the Cato Institute, and riffing on Bushian blunders. Based on David Rees' ironic Internet comic strip, the show takes the form of a PowerPoint presentation in which Rees' clip-art figures are embodied by five performers who race around the stage, manipulating projected transparencies to turn a long horizontal screen behind them into a sort of animated version of the strip.

Planes fly from panel to panel, profanity spews freely (there's an onscreen "fuck" count at one point), and punchlines land with almost alarming precision. "Wouldn't it be weird," asks someone during a riff on war finances and nation-building, "if in 20 years, Iraq had a functioning Social Security system, and we didn't?"

When cast members aren't cracking wise, they're sometimes donning costumes—a cloth cylinder allows one antic fellow to soliloquize as Terri Schiavo's feeding tube—but not so often that the evening descends into sketch-comedy territory. The energy level stays high (fueled by several strategically placed boxes of doughnuts), and the comic tone rarely strays from fiercely literate, with the emphasis mostly on fierce. The performance I attended played every bit as angry as it did funny, which seemed to suit the audience just fine. **CP**