

Punk Through the Ages

Rude Mechanicals adapts Greil Marcus's punk chronicle for the stage

By Eric A.T. Dieckman

"Right now, we're in Minneapolis. It's *cold* here!" says Shawn Sides, director of ***Lipstick Traces***, an adaptation of Greil Marcus's book of the same title. Her Austin-based theater collective, Rude Mechanicals (referred to by devotees as Rude Mechs), is just closing the northern portion of its national tour, an astonishing feat for a troupe in only its sixth season.

If that's not impressive enough, this is not the first time Rude Mechs have taken their act on the road. Last year, the Foundry Theatre produced *Traces* off-Broadway at the Ohio Theatre in Soho. For many troupes, it takes that long just to build a local following, and these cats already have a home theater and blurbs everywhere from *The New York Times* to *The Village Voice*. They even sport an altruistic side, mentoring at-risk high school kids in theater over the summer. What do you have to say to that, Infernal Bridegroom?

Troupe member Kirk Lynn adapted the work for the stage with Marcus's blessings and generous permission to take whatever artistic license Rude Mechs found necessary. It was an arduous undertaking considering that the epic *Traces* chronicles punk as a series of historically neglected negationist movements dating back to the Middle Ages.

"It was kind of a crazy idea, being the long book that it is, and so vast in what it covers. We decided it would be our adaptation, and that's what Greil gave us the permission to do: distill the book to what the most important parts to us were, to what our favorite parts were, and then make that play." The initial version held significantly more material than they could use. Meeting in a bar, Rude Mechs cut it down to its essential elements told through the characters of Dr. Narrator and Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren. What the audience gets in place of Marcus's colossal pot of anarchist coffee is a double shot of Rude Mechanicals punk espresso, no foam.



A Rude Mech player

Details

Who / What:

Rude Mechanicals

Details:

8 p.m. Thursday, January 31, through Saturday, February 2. \$20. For reservations, call 713-223-8346.

Where:

DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (at North Main)