

By Jane Horwitz  
Special to The Washington Post  
Tuesday, October 3, 2006; C05

## War and Rees

If the war news makes you crazy, angry or both, the Rude Mechs, an experimental troupe from Austin with an off-Broadway notch in its belt ("Lipstick Traces" in 2001), want to help you vent. They don't much care which side of the issue you're on.

In "Get Your War On," at Woolly Mammoth Friday through Oct. 14, the Mechs use overhead projectors, microphones and an admittedly "manic" physical style to create a sort-of PowerPoint presentation of the popular Internet comic strip "Get Your War On," written by David Rees. (He will sign books Friday and Saturday before the show and join in after-curtain discussions.)

The strip features middle-management types mulling the news from Iraq and Afghanistan with bitter, often profane sarcasm. Said of the U.S. president: "Come on, he improved the situation in Iraq -- Shiite death squad productivity is way up for the quarter."

Playwright and performer Kirk Lynn, who co-adapted Rees's strip, describes "the feeling that we get while performing" as "very much like the oldest aspect of theater in the world, which is catharsis . . . it passes from humor into this level of hysteria at times."

Lynn says at first "we actually had more people than we expected from Austin saying 'we hate the show' or 'you're wrong.' " Others objected to the cursing. "As the years have gone by and as public opinion has changed," he says, "I think the audience has changed to mirror some of that."

© 2006 The Washington Post Company