

On Stage

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1995

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NEW THIS WEEK

A NEWT WORLD ORDER — (By Gross National Product at Arena Stage's Old Vat Room, indefinitely)

As the new Republican majority has already noticed, it's a lot easier to poke than produce; and GNP has a raft of new pokers in the fire. Though preserving some features of previous productions (notably the audience-participation improves such as the not-a-Clue murder game), "A Newt World Order" allows GNP to flex its satirical muscles with a glee it hasn't shown since the glory days of the Reagan-Bush empire. Cutting government, it turns out, inspires cutting wit. Bland-faced and self-satisfied, Bob Heck's impersonations underline not only how much Clinton and Gingrich resemble each other, but how much both resemble the Pillsbury dough boy. Bright-eyed bim-bette Christine Thompson and edgily humble Liz Demery are the yin and yang of "girl" parts, and Tim Gore, who has a great scene as a visual-aid signer, is a reluctantly defiant Milquetoast. The palpably panicked Bob Garman resembles a sad sack on speed ("Look at him, ladies and gentlemen—the man's a mime!"). And with the beginning of Bob Dole's official campaign, that pen John Simmons is clutching should prove poisonous.

— Eve Zibart