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On Stage

THEATER • DANCE

GNP on the Rise

There has been no dearth of doofuses on the political scene this election year — all fodder for John Simmons and Christine Thompson of Gross National Product. As founder of the comedy troupe, Simmons has been skewering politicians since 1979; Thompson joined in 1991. These days, the troupe has slimmed down to the duo, who are married to each other and to GNP.

Their latest show, "Son of a Bush," is a mix of scripted and improvised scenes, many with audience participation. Recently back from a run in San Diego, it plays on

Saturday nights at Warehouse Theater on Seventh Street NW. Simmons says they've discovered "the audience likes to be a part of the process. We can find out where they're leading before the newspapers can, because they're honest."

"Son of a Bush" opens with Thompson taking a musical jab at Congress to the tune of "All That Jazz," titled "All That Graft." Simmons does a cranky, fidgety Dubya (on health care, "two words — don't get sick"), sharing the stage with Thompson's bewigged, self-absorbed Hillary Clinton ("I've always been for *and* against the war").

Thompson says she has "real respect" for the senator: "She loves herself and I love her, too. . . . It takes a village, or it takes a Village People." But seriously, folks: Thompson has been spoofing Clinton for a while. During the 1992 presidential campaign, she played her and Simmons played Republican nominee Bob Dole. "How do you wake up with smeared Bob Dole makeup and [smeared] Hillary Clinton makeup and think 'We're good bedfellows'?" she asks dryly.

While Thompson keeps her political views more or less to herself in an interview, Simmons makes no bones about his take on the Bush administration: "Katrina put the nail in the coffin as far as I'm concerned, showing Homeland Security couldn't protect Americans."

Thompson recognizes that the political emergence of Nancy Pelosi as House speaker-elect and other female leaders means she has her work cut out for her. Back in 1992 she recalls, her roles consisted of Rep. Pat Schroeder, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler and Nancy Reagan. "I never in my wildest dreams, even though I hoped for this, thought there would be so many women" on the political scene.

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The current political climate has been good for "Son of a Bush," with Christine Thompson as Hillary Clinton and John Simmons as the president.