



# 'Who's Your Baghdaddy?' pokes fun at flawed theory with consequences

Cynthia Levin/The Unicorn Theatre



Leave it to The Unicorn to find quirky, inspirational, new-to-Kansas City plays that leave patrons seeing their world with new perspectives and inspired chatter.

"Who's Your Baghdaddy? Or, How I started the Iraq War" presents an interesting take on global events that spin out of control through a series of mismanaged communications, shoddy background checks, faulty assertions, and uncontrolled internet communications.

The play opens as a support group, assembled to discuss their

involvement in the Iraq War and to own their fair share of the blame for the war's inception. The play concerns a written piece illustrating a "what could happen if..." scenario finds its way onto the internet. While most people ignored the flawed theory, the ideas presented land in the wrong hands. Although intended as a theory based on facts, a flawed concept can only result in a flawed end. As a result, errors in judgement lead to bigger and more grandiose escalations of a plot.



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Funny, conceivable (in an inconceivable way), absurd, outlandish, and humanly possible, "Who's Your Baghdaddy?" takes the audience on a jaw-dropping scenario of what mis-steps could have led the United States into the Iraq War. Translations and near-translations can and do make a difference in this piece that allows reality and fiction to co-exist. The world can change on the translation in interpretation of a single word. Precision is tested.

'Inspired by real world events, this boisterous new musical opens up with a handful of government cronies at a support group for people who started the Iraq war. Crashing through time and re-mixing musical styles, 'Baghdaddy' takes a witty and irreverent look at the questionable intelligence and

hubris that led to one of the most colossal military blunders in recent history,” The Unicorn said.

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With book and music by Marshall Paillet, lyrics and book by A.D. Penedo, the play looks at a comedy of errors by government officials involved in creating the Iraq War. Director Sarah Crawford and music director Anthony T. Edwards, cast a talented group of singing actors to bring this comedy with bite to life.

Beautifully conceived and directed, “Who’s Your Baghdaddy?” moves quickly through its story-line with myriads of laughs and musical numbers. The voices and character deployment could not be better for this piece. Crawford selected a cast of seasoned and relative new performers for this ensemble piece, with each actor having a chance to portray several colorful characters.

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The ensemble cast brought life and electricity to the performance with constant movement, quirky characters, unique delivery and an energetic chemistry that fortifies the story they tell. The voices are all outstanding and the chemistry among the cast was explosive. One could tell they were invested in the performance and worked well together.

Bri Woods as Berry Stanton, Steve Hitchcock as Jerry Samuel, make a dynamic duo of agents as they question yet believe the prepared reports of espionage. Marc Liby prepares a flawed theory with the sincerity to sell it as fact. Zach Faust portrays a foreign agent seeking asylum and provided necessary fodder to advance a flawed story. Daniel Verschelden portrays a junior investigator who needs further training to break down terrorists. Those are just a few of the standout performances. Add to that John Cleary's strong voice and his stiff character and you get a wonderful mix of exotic characters in a humorous take on lies and deceit fed to the public.



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The cast is Marc Liby as Martin Bouchard, Daniel Verschelden as Richard Becker, Zach Faust as Curveball, John Cleary as Tyler Nelson, Bri Woods as Berry Stanton, Steve Hitchcock as Jerry Samuel, Darrington Clark as Man, Katie Karel as Woman, Kelly Urschel as The Assistant.

As for the behind the scenes magic, the tech crews all helped create the on=stage magic. The lighting was really strong throughout. The sound was always crisp and clear. The costumes captured the time and the different locations, and the chirography was fun and inspiring.

The creative team, lead by Sarah Crawford is: Anthony T. Edwards, musical director, Kyle Mullins, choreographer, Tanya Brown stage manager; Emily Swenson, scenic design; Alex Perry, lighting; David Kiehl, sound design, Arwen White costume designer, Eric Palmquist, properties master; Logan Black, dramaturg; Taylor Jene Sullivan, production assistant.

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“Who’s Your Baghdaddy? or, How I Started the Iraq War” opened Sept. 7 and continues through Sept. 29 at The Unicorn Theatre. For tickets and more information, check [The Unicorn website](#).

Tags: “Who’s Your Baghdaddy?” review, The Unicorn Theatre, Kansas City Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment