

# LAWEEKLY STAGE

Monday, March 17, 2008 – 7:00pm



**GO ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST** Dario Fo's farce concerns a maniac/master of disguises (Taras Los) who impersonates a magistrate in a Milan police station in order to help oily cops (Adam Edgar, Chris Covics and Stephen Simon) redramatize the events around the "accidental" fatal plunge of an anarchist-detainee from their window — in order to get their story straight. Near the end of Diana Wyenn's staging, one of the actors breaks into a screed about the hypocrisy of U.S. policy in Iraq, layered onto a history of hypocrisy that goes back to the Carter administration, plus how the funding of the war — for the benefit of a few favored contractors — has plunged us into such debt that we're now flirting with an economic depression. The other actors look on askance, pleading to return to Fo's play, which was written before the Carter

administration. Yet this moment defies all laws of probability, which point to the audience checking out during a lecture. Mysteriously and comically, the screed beautifully defines the play's meaning, breaking the action in a play where such breakage is routine. Rarely has screed-as-art been so effective. On its own terms, the farce takes a while to heat up, despite the ensemble's best efforts. Those efforts do pay off in Act 2, when the mystery of what happened becomes unveiled and the presumption of who was to blame gets inverted. The ensemble, which also includes Richard Hilton and Alla Poberesky, gives heroically insane performances, with nicely contrapuntal comic timing and physical humor. Covics' set, with tilting stacks of books and file boxes rising through the ceiling, establishes the madcap whimsy that's sustained throughout. Unknown Theater, 1110 N. Seward Ave., Hlywd.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 6 p.m.; thru March 29. (310) 702-5280. (Steven Leigh Morris)