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TV Not On TV: Local shows that emulate the tube



From left: Jocelyn Mills and Clare Kelly rehearse for *Improvvised Simpsons*.

By Evan Minsker January 13, 2010

Have you ever thought, "Boy, I sure do like TV, but I wish I could go and experience it out in the real world"? Well then, extremely unimaginative made-up person, you're in luck. In the first two months of 2010, an unlikely trend is popping up in Chicago's venues, theaters and bars: live-action television. Scripted readings, improv shows, musical tributes, and other homages to TV are sprouting up all over the city. In light of this, *The A.V. Club* decided to take a look at the local "TV not on TV" attractions and see how they size up to their screen-based counterparts.

Various shows, Gorilla Tango Theatre

Shows referenced: *The Simpsons*, *Sex And The City*, anything by Joss Whedon, and ABC's TGIF shows

The live show: The Gorilla Tango Theatre is hosting a series of improv-based homages to various TV shows. *Improvvised Simpsons* and *Improvvised Sex And The City* take the characters from those two shows and put them in zany improv situations. The *Improvvised Joss Whedon* show is a big "what if" scenario in which characters from various Whedon programs (like *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and *Dollhouse*) meet each other. But the most promising of the bunch is *TGIF: RAW*, which takes scripts from old ABC TGIF shows—the network's old Friday line-up from the late '80s, such as *Perfect Strangers*, *Family Matters*, and *Full House*—and gives them a dark, grittier edge. Our suggestion: a Danny Tanner heroin-addiction subplot.

Compared to the original: This mostly feels like fan-fiction. It's a creepy telling of beloved characters in situations that can sometimes become disturbing. (What if Marge Simpson fell in love with a character from *Family Guy*?)

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Tomorrow Never Knows: Prescott Tolk + Cameron Esposito, James Fritz, Adam Burke, Mike Sheehan Schubas, 9 p.m.

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