

Time Out

New York

THEATER



WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION
Melissa Rauch instructs in *The Miss Education of Jenna Bush*.

Lord of the fringe

TONY has the short list for this year's Fringe winners By David Cote and Adam Feldman

After eight years and around 1,400 productions, what is left to say about the New York International Fringe Festival? It's the biggest. It's impossible to see it all. It's a theatrical flea market, with valuable gems mixed in among cheap costume jewelry. In terms of commercial viability, the summer behemoth's success rate is minuscule (*Urinetown*, *Debbie Does Dallas* and *Matt & Ben* are the rare noteworthy transfers) but enough to still attract artists who see the festival as the fast track to finding a producer. Of course, most participants are pure-hearted folks who—God love 'em—just want to put on a show! Here's a handful of productions (out of more than 180) that caught our eye.

Scion of the times

Last year's Fringe ushered in a heap of election-year political satires that were the ideological equivalent of bathroom graffiti (*BUSH SOX!* was the consensus). *The Miss Education of Jenna Bush*, happily, makes no bones about its frivolity. Starring perky stand-up comic Melissa Rauch, this monologue imagines the First Daughter preparing to teach a class at a Washington, D.C., public school (a career move that the real Jenna has considered). "It's the eve of her first day on the job, and Jenna's recovering from a huge blowout kegger the night before," explains co-writer Winston Beigel, who hints at surprise revelations. "You'll learn that our Jenna has had more to do with public policy than Karl Rove," Beigel says.