

WORKERS UNITE — IN SONG

It's the dream of every show at the Fringe Festival: to follow in the footsteps of "Urinetown: The Musical" and make it to bigger audiences.

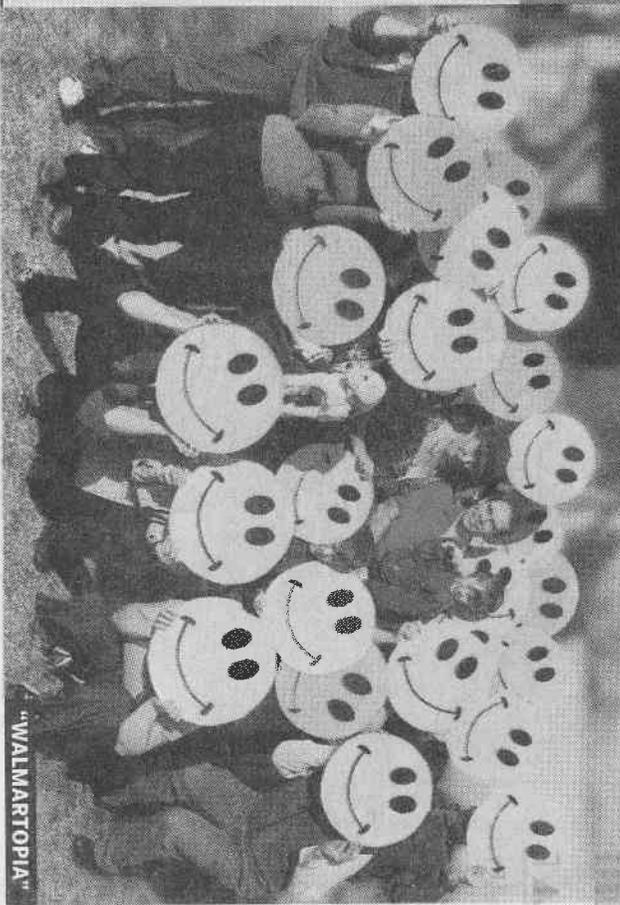
On Aug. 21, last year's breakout hit "Walmartopia, The Musical" begins previews at the Minetta Lane Theater for a Labor Day opening. A pointed satire of life spent laboring for the massive chain of stores, "Walmartopia" skewers perhaps the most demonized — and shopped-at — corporation in America, all set to songs.

"We first did the show in 2004 as a one-act in Madison, Wis., just a little thing," explains Catherine Cappellaro, who wrote the book. (Her husband, Andrew Rohn, did the music and lyrics.) "It was 40 minutes long and in a festival, and there were lines down the block to see our little show."

When the "little show" came to New York for the 2006 FF, buzz grew even louder for the satirical story of a single mom who struggles to maintain her dignity while employed at the discount behemoth, then travels 30 years into the future, to a time when Wal-Mart rules us all.

It didn't take Cappellaro and Rohn long to realize that the show was a hot-ticket item again. "We had a weird time slot, but someone came back and said, 'It's sold out!'" recalls Rohn.

Now the duo, who moved to New York last winter, have restocked "Walmartopia." But a bigger sign of success, they joke, is when they'd heard Wal-Mart had created their own musical for its annual shareholders meeting. Hm, inspiration, or comparative shopping? *Michael Giltz*



"WALMARTOPIA"