

# 'Iron' sequel, other Marvel projects set

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LOS ANGELES — This weekend was just the beginning of Hollywood's iron age.

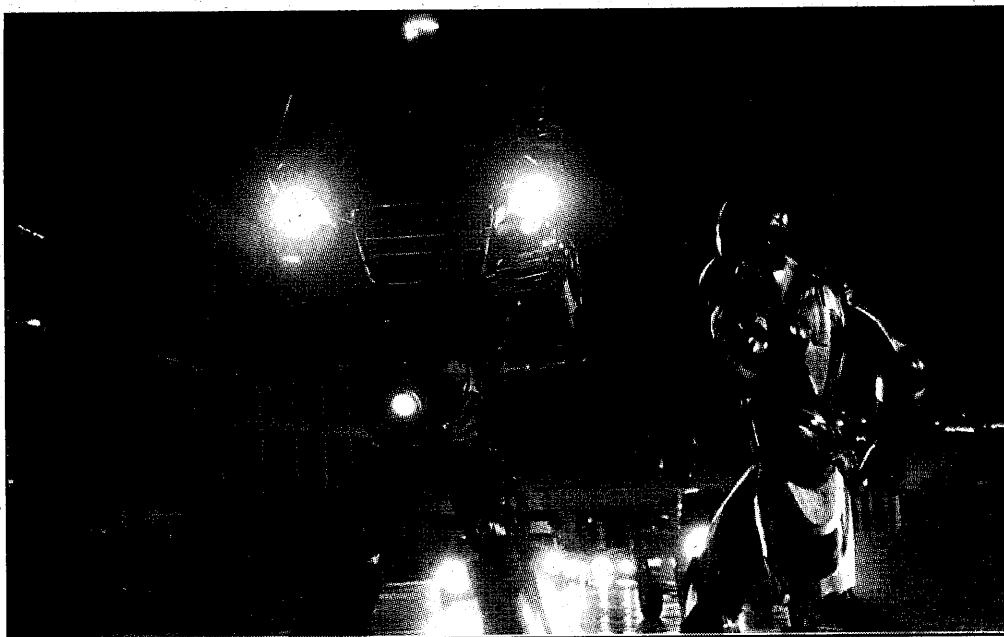
Marvel Studios announced yesterday it would release *Iron Man 2* on April 30, 2010, in the wake of the success of the first in the comic-book franchise — which pulled in \$104.2 million domestically through the weekend and \$201 million worldwide.

Four other films based on Marvel superheroes were also announced: *Thor*, due out June 4, 2010; *The First Avenger: Captain America*, May 6, 2011; *The Avengers*, July 2011; and *Ant-Man*, which is in development but has no release date.

Marvel also has *The Incredible Hulk*, starring Edward Norton, scheduled for release June 13 from Universal Studios.

Just as Robert Downey's *Iron Man* character, Tony Stark, makes an appearance in next month's *The Incredible Hulk*, the Hulk could turn up in *Iron Man 2*, Marvel Studios Chairman David Maisel said during a conference call.

And *The Avengers* consists of a rotating roster of Marvel heroes — including original



A scene from the box-office strongman *Iron Man*

INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC

► *Iron Man*, rated PG-13, is showing in central Ohio theaters.

members Ant-Man, the Hulk, Iron Man and Thor — that could see the return of virtually any of the franchise's characters.

"In controlling our destiny, we can control where the characters are and we can

have our movies connect and be in the same universe," Maisel said.

*Iron Man* was the first film financed by Marvel, which previously licensed its superheroes to Hollywood studios for big-screen hits such as *Spider-Man*, *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*.

Seeking more creative control and a bigger cut of the

receipts, Marvel plans to make future films itself and hire studios to distribute them for a fee.

*Iron Man*, about a weapons designer who builds himself a high-tech metal suit to fight bad guys, exceeded box-office expectations, coming in second only to the first *Spider-Man* for debuts among non-sequels.

## THEATER REVIEW | THEATRE ROULETTE

# MadLab shorts showcase actors' skills

By Margaret Quamme  
FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

In its ninth annual Theatre Roulette festival, MadLab Theatre is rotating nine plays.

Two of them premiered Friday night. David Skeeel's eerie *Dark North* and Richard Martin Hirsch's witty *Noir Lite* might not seem like a match made in heaven, but the different moods made for an intriguing evening that showcased the troupe's knack for diverse styles of acting.

*Dark North* follows a duplicitous TV psychic (Stephen Woosley) and his hard-driving assistant (Amanda Howell) to a house in the Connecticut countryside, where they hope to extort some cash from a wealthy family wishing to make contact with a dead relative.

When they get there, however, they find that the family, led by patriarch Zelthausen (Jim Azelvandre), might be more than they bargained for.

► Theatre Roulette 2008 will continue through May 24 at MadLab, 105 N. Grant Ave. For showtimes and tickets, call 614-221-5418 or visit [www.madlab.net](http://www.madlab.net).

Director Andy Batt wisely downplays the fairly obvious *Twilight Zone* twist to the material in favor of an emphasis on increasing tension among the characters — heightened by the constant sound of rain outside the basement, where the seance takes place.

Woosley plays the psychic with smarmy desperation, while Azelvandre nicely underplays the clan's father, making good use of an unsettling half-smile. In the key role of damaged daughter Kristin, Melissa Bair indulges in an unnecessary number of tics.

Much of the play consists of all seven characters standing around — which means that, much of the time, several of them have nothing to do but leer menacingly or look frightened.

*Noir Lite* is yet another parody of a Raymond Chandler mystery, but Hirsch's script has snap, and, under the lively direction of Linda O'Donnell, the four actresses who tell its mildly feminist story have stylized, melodramatic fun with it.

Vicki Andronis plays Tuesday Monday, Girl Friday, who narrates the story with dry flair. Rachel Wiley plays her irascible boss, and Jennifer Feathers is irresistible as her boa-tossing client, Ophelia. Amanda Howell fills out the rest of the roles with comic verve. Black-and-white costumes add a tribute to the era.

MadLab's cozy theater and enthusiastic patrons add to the pleasure of the evenings. These aren't exactly timeless works of art, but they're performed with dedication and vigor.

They're also cunningly arranged: If the order of the two were reversed, their effect would be much less. As it is, the feisty comedy of *Noir Lite* neatly relieves the tension created by *Dark North*.

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