

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Improv Group Serves Up Laughs, Generosity

Kimberley Johnston
A&E Editor



It's good to see performers being themselves.

It's different to see people who have to perform so many different characters letting their own

personalities be visible to the audience. The members of 4 Skit's Sake are by no means carbon copies of each other - nor are they polar opposites. They're complete individuals who let their dynamic personalities shine through, both while sitting and chatting and during their Improv games on stage. While their interests vary, the group all agreed they should help out families who were having hard times through the holidays.

The award-winning comedy troupe offered \$1 off the price of admission to their December 29th show at the Arts Guild to people who brought in a non-perishable food item for the food bank. UPEI graduate Adam Gauthier said Islanders have done so much for the group, they would just like to give back to those who have given so much, and more importantly, to those who do not have a lot to give.

"I think we just like to give back to the community. We don't have enough money to form a (not-for-profit) organization so we thought we would encourage people to donate to the food bank. People who have food take it for granted. There are so many people out there in dire need of it. A little gesture can go a long way to make a huge difference for someone."

Not only were audiences served with a heaping helping of generosity on behalf of the troupe, but they were also exposed to an evening of laughter as well- which they were able to control by throwing in imaginative suggestions the improv artists had to work around.

A varied audience is as important to the show as the different backgrounds of the actual performers, explained Fraser McCallum. The Concordia communications student says

one of the things that makes the troupe's show stand out is its audience accessibility.

"What's different about this show is that every one can come to it. We get audience members from all walks of life - from actors to pig farmers. We get five-year-olds to 85-year-olds. We've got something for everyone."



As for their award-winning improv technique....Derek Bondt says he's got a strategy.

"I've always said less is more", said the third year biology student "The more we space it, the better the build-up." Bondt later put his comedic philosophy to work - doing a perfect FEZ (from that 70s show) impersonation during a Dating Game improv skit.

The guys said they have learned a number of different skills since starting the troupe. They have to do much of the work (such as marketing, printing, and technical aspects) by themselves - and they enjoy the challenge.

"We're having fun and we're learning at the same time," said McCallum.

All except for web design. The communications student is not into HTML programming

"I don't do web design," he stated.

The guys are currently looking for someone who will do a webpage for them and be paid with show tickets. The guys are hoping a webpage will generate more interest in the show so more people will come and see it.

"It's definitely worth catching," said Colin MacDonald, whose dry wit complements the other styles nicely. If you haven't seen a show yet, you haven't missed your chance- the boys will be back in town this summer — and they have high expectations of themselves, said McCallum.

"Our goal is to make the show as good as possible. Watch for our show next summer because this will be our best summer yet," he said.

For more information about the web programming job, contact Colin at 368-3642.

Betrayed: Lengthy, But Worth the Read

Betrayed: The Assassination of Digna Ochoa by Linda Diebe

Stacey Murray
Reporter

Betrayed: The Assassination of Digna Ochoa is a riveting true story about the life and death of a prominent Mexican human rights lawyer. It gives a detailed account of injustices she fought for, but also the hardships she herself faced until her death in 2001. While her death was termed a suicide at the close of the case, the novel reveals evidence that implicates members from many levels of Mexican government who could be responsible for Digna's death.

The novel also serves as a useful text on the history of Mexican human rights during the past 25 years. It discusses the NAFTA agreement, and its effects on poverty in Mexico. The novel goes into great length about the despairing situation that plagues the lives of many Mexicans. Accounts of torture, forced confessions, death squads and a complete lack of human

rights surface in the novel and bring to light the hidden side of Mexico. The novel was intriguing, but an extremely dense read. It appears that the author, Linda Diebel, is passionate about uncovering the truth, but she uses endless detail that makes the important information of Digna's story pale in comparison to the injustice faced by other Mexicans.



On the other hand, it's an excellent read if you want to see a side of Mexico that tourism brochures attempt to hide. It clearly shows that all is not well in Mexico, and that it won't be until the abuses against average Mexican citizens are halted. Overall, I would recommend this novel to those who enjoy paying great attention to detail, and have an interest in foreign policy, as well as anyone interested in human rights.

New Online Database of Island Artists Formed

The PEI Artists Directory is a free online directory to Island Artists. A project of the Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts, the directory is open to all Island Artists and listings are free.

The value of the directory will be a result of participation from the Arts community. At the Council, we are often contact and asked for information, particularly contact information that we are unable to release for reasons of privacy and confidentiality. Now, with the directory, you can provide all the information that collectors and consumers need to find you and your studio. You can even select which information to release and which to hide from public view. You can upload images to your online portfolio and, in the near future, artists will be able to upload film clips, sound files, and text excerpts.

Registration is free, and can be completed online by going to <http://www.peiartists.ca/en/register.asp>.

A Mixer, A Mixer, A Theatre Mixer

On January 19-21, EDGE Players will be hosting a Theatre-Community Mixer at the Guild from 6:30PM to 7:45PM. Members of the theatre community are invited to attend the show and promote their upcoming workshops, productions, and event. It will be a great opportunity to network with your peers and connect with a captive theatre-going audience at little or no cost. The theatre-mixer will precede the EDGE Players production, Roger Rueff's *The Big Kabuna*. *The Big Kabuna* won the 2005 PEI Theatre Festival Awards for Best Actor and Best Production. This show, the complete full-length production as playwright Roger Rueff wrote it, will take place January 19-21 at the Guild at 8:00PM. *The Big Kabuna* is a contemporary production about three salesmen trying desperately to survive in the world of cutthroat business. Audience members are welcome to attend the Theatre-Community Mixer prior to the show. Tickets are \$15 for regular admission and \$12 for students. Mature Content. For more information about the show and the EDGE Players, check out their web-site (www.edgeplayers.com).