

Triple your laughter, triple your fun

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Members of The Titanic Players perform a skit Friday evening at the IMU.

The event was a comedy summit with Awkward Silence Comedy, Full-Frontal Comedy and The Titanic Players from Minnesota.

Any performer knows atmosphere is key to a good performance, and Friday night, the air was filled with laughter as audience members were treated to not one, not two, but three comedy troupes in a single show.

In addition to Bloomington's Full-Frontal Comedy and Awkward Silence Comedy troupes, the Titanic Players from the University of Wisconsin also performed as a stop on their 10-day winter break tour.

"It's like bands ... if you want to tour, you get in touch with the local band and they hook you up," said Lauren Schaefer of Full-Frontal Comedy.

The Titanic Players are the largest collegiate long-form improv and sketch group in the U.S. Established at Northwestern University in 1994, they expanded to UW last year, due in large part to the efforts of Titanic Players co-founder Mike Abdelsayed, who makes the three-hour commute from Chicago to Madison on a regular basis.



Friday night's show started off with a long-scene improv performance by a combination of Full-Frontal and Awkward Silence Comedy performers, followed by a long-scene performance by the Titanic Players. Awkward Silence Comedy founder Brian M. Frange said long-form improv is "a series of scenes that may or may not be connected" and usually lasts 20 to 25 minutes. On the other hand, short-form is generally three to four minute games, such as those seen on the television show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"

For the grand finale, the troupes did a long scene with all members and the theme of "Worst Ever." Audience suggestions led to scenes such as "Worst Musical Ever" ("Hitler, the Musical,") "Worst Pick-Up Lines Ever" (which included knocking a girl down and asking "Can I pick you up?") and "Worst Tila Tequila Ever" (Season Two – "This time, we have men, women, reptiles, amphibians and we're even bringing back a dinosaur!").

An audience favorite was a recurring "voices on my shoulder" theme, where Frange would duck behind Full-Frontal Comedy member Nate Gold and perform the hand-puppet – sans puppets – version of an angel and devil on his shoulders. Other notable scenes included "So you're interested in joining the Church of Satan" ("I'm allergic to holy water,") "Twilight Zone Bubble Wars," and a reenactment of "West Side Story's" Sharks and Jets.

Lines such as "God doesn't know Gummi Bears, child; He knows sin," "I feel like I'm inside the uterus!" and "Do you think Dad'll like these 'Happy 50th, only one year closer to your death' balloons?" kept the

audience laughing throughout the performance.

So what do the performers love most about doing improv comedy? For some, it is the synergy of creating something with other people.

“It’s an amazing experience to feel the group mind,” Titanic Player Leah Cowen said.

For others, it’s a way to unwind.

“College can be really stressful, so it’s nice to, you know, twice a week go and make a jackass of yourself,” Schaefer said.

Often, it’s about the audience.

“I’ve always loved making people laugh, and that’s the most important thing,” said Sean Liston of Awkward Silence Comedy.

Audience member Nathan Mensah said he appreciated the effort “so we could all laugh triple the amount.”