

'Lady' friends take the stage

NU alumnae find humor in the trials and tribulations of female life

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The laughs didn't stop at graduation for Rebecca Fox, Heather Simms and Laura Grey. The Northwestern alums got their start in improv five years ago with The Titanic Players, and their sketch comedy show opens tomorrow at The Playground Theater, 3341 N. Lincoln Ave. Here's what Fox and Simms had to say about performing in their group, Triplette.

PLAY: What goes on at your show, "The Lady Troubles?"

Rebecca Fox: We've got original scenes, songs, video. It's a tech-heavy show and a really good time that we hope will provoke some conversation.

PLAY: Who came up with the concept?

Heather Simms: We came up with it together. We began writing and saw that many of our scenes were focused around being a girl. From there, we thought of our title, "The Lady Troubles" and just kept writing with that in mind. For a few months, we were just improvising. We'd have these brilliant, complex worlds going on onstage, and we were so sad that [they] were dissipating as soon as the show was over. So we decided to start writing down what went on in the scenes, because we wanted to keep those ideas around.

PLAY: Is there anything you miss about being at Northwestern?

HS: I didn't have to pay back my student loans while I was in school -- I miss that.

PLAY: How does performing sketch comedy compare to improv?

HS: In improv, you don't have to learn any lines or do lots of technical rehearsals. That's all changed since Triplette began doing sketch comedy. Not only do we have to memorize, we also have to write everything too.

PLAY: What is improv performing like?

RF: When it's with people you trust and respect, it's a wonderful, kinda mystical-ecstatic experience. Being in the space and building with a good group is a real creative thrill.

HS: We all got our start together at NU, so we've got a lot of experience improvising together. After five years of doing it, it's still a challenge, and yet not that difficult. I work now as a professional improviser at ComedySportz, so it's my career ... and it's awesome.

PLAY: What's the best part about being an improv performer?

RF: There's an honesty in the way things come out in an improvised scene, and we try to stay true to that spirit, even if the scene radically changes in its scripted development. Which it does. Change. A lot.