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Wednesday, March 12, 2008

More Hits than Misses

Theater Reviews

By Russ Bickerstaff

Sketchcomedy is never consistent but the format is universally familiar: A series of brief, light comic interactions hit the stage. Some moments are good; some are bad. The mind is gradually pummeled into a generally pleasant state. Of course, if it's bad sketch comedy, the experience is altogether unpleasant. Running through March 16 at the Alchemist Theatre on South Kinnickinnic Avenue, local comedy group Broadminded's sketch comedy program *Cookie!* rests somewhere comfortably between extremes. It's successful enough at dodging the mindnumbing tedium of painfully obvious jokes to make it well worth the price of admission.

Broadminded consists of four women: Stacy Babl and Megan McGee who graduated from the Second City Conservatory program and Melissa Kingston and Anne Graff LaDisa from ComedySportz, Milwaukee. The four women drift from sketch to sketch, occasionally striking a brilliant moment of comedy.

The recurring segment featured a certain cookie monster from a certain children's television show trying to rehabilitate from a dreadful cookie addiction. It represents humor one may have felt more inclined to cringe through than actually laugh at. Scattered amongst the less entertaining bits was some pretty good stuff about the ever-present clash between left and right on the political spectrum, pregnancy and that nauseatingly precise person at the office everyone hates. One of the best moments of the evening was a twowoman piece entitled "Anything You Can Do." Its roots go back at least 40 years to the type of comedy popularized by John Cleese, Graham Chapman and company in Monty Python's "Four Yorkshiremen," sketch. In that sketch, four men brag to each other about how bad their lives were growing up, each one trying to establish his childhood as the worst. In "Anything You Can Do," Broadminded takes a brilliant modern twist on the sketch with a pair of office employees trying to outdo each other by comparing how bad their lives are now and how completely unaffected by it they are because they are just so completely well-adjusted.

The piece is clever on many levels. Broadminded would have done well to expand it to include all four members and discard something else that didn't work as well. With about a dozen sketches that hit more often than not, Broadminded shows a great deal of promise. The show runs through March 16.

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Dick Richards: It is obvious that Blind Melon

dougfood: Wow Dick you sound really

bmelon: It's OBVIOUS from your Blind Melon

Meredith: I just want to know, on that blurb about

Mr. Soul: NICE!!! Lookin' forward to seeing Bobby

mkelvr: Miller moving its corporate headquarters

Mark Lep: Hold all that against Obama. But he is

MrRight: This is truly classic. Once again, when

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