Abstract

Sketch comedy is a grand artistic tradition. It’s rich with history, ritual, and craft. And yet, to most of us, it is an artifact of late-night television and YouTube videos, associated with outlandish wigs and ministries of silly walks. Unbeknownst to many, live sketch comedy theatre is a legitimate genre of theatre, a sacred exchange between performer and audience, and a forum for cultural commentary and intense emotional honesty. For my honors thesis, I wrote, directed, and performed in a full-length sketch comedy show, aiming to bring the style of Chicago comedy to Ball State. On March 18th and 19th, my ensemble and I performed *Nobody Panic (But the Emergency Exit Is Locked)* to four sold-out crowds who laughed, thought, and ached with us. Over the course of 90 minutes, we played 102 characters - 102 voices in my head, all sorting through the chaos of the world and looking for a hand to hold.

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