

Plot twist: fraught tryst

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Members of the Etch-A-Sketch Comedy troupe shake things up at its semester show, “Etch-A-Sketch Comedy Saves the Universe,” staged in the Lab Theatre in McWilliams Hall on the uptown campus over homecoming weekend 2014. From left are Tulane students Sam Baker, Kevin Atkinson, Sam Campbell and Jordan Fried. (Photo by Malcolm Johnson)

There's nothing quite like a plot twist.

High-energy, sharp, current and at least a little raunchy ? “Etch-A-Sketch Comedy Saves the Universe!” kept audiences on the edge of their seats throughout homecoming weekend with unpredictable yet poignant punch lines lampooning familiar, daily events.

“We go through a couple rounds of drafts and revisions to make sure that when it comes time to choose our final set list, we have a lot of solid material to pick from,” said Anna Rajo-Miller, a senior English major. “We had around 40 sketches written and only 16 made it into the last show.”

Though all of the sketches had sides splitting in the audience, one particularly memorable performance was Sam Campbell's portrayal of “Chrissy the TA.” Campbell is a senior majoring in history with a Spanish minor.

The scene begins with a class full of stereotypical college student personalities talking amongst themselves: too-cool-to-care guy, better-than-you girl, eager-to-please bookworm, and so forth. Then Chrissy bursts into the classroom with a personality more suited to a hip-hop hype man than a college teaching assistant. She dances nonstop and loudly disrupts the class repeatedly in attempts to support the professor by engaging the students, who do not respond well to being yelled at.

The twist occurs when the professor tries to calm his TA. Chrissy freaks out and begins to cause a scene, screaming that she is pregnant with the professor's child ? a fact that was clearly meant to remain a secret.

Composed of 12 performers and four behind-the-scenes members, Etch-A-Sketch Comedy is the only sketch comedy organization at Tulane University. The group rehearses four to six hours per week and writes all its own material.

Often, troupe members come into a rehearsal with a vague concept and then the rest of the group brainstorms more ideas. Other times, someone brings in a full draft of a sketch for group editing. Sometimes the group writes a sketch collectively.

“Like Etch-A-Sketch Comedy on Facebook for more information about upcoming shows,” said Rajo-Miller. “And, for those interested in joining the group, auditions are held at the beginning of every fall semester.”

Benton Oliver is a senior at Tulane University majoring in music, communication and German.

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