

Lions and Tigers and Zombies? Yes, please

Posted By [Erin Petersen](#) On November 12, 2010 @ 4:00 am In [Life & Leisure, Pop Culture](#) | [No Comments](#)



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The ladies of Broadminded Comedy

Comedy Sportz rec league.

Broadminded collectively recognized that there was a bit of gender disparity on the comedy scene, and perhaps because it was more male-dominated, the possibilities for women in comedy were somewhat limited. At the same time, the "broads" say that trailblazing female comedians of the 70s and 80s were an inspiration to try new things.

Anne Graff-Ladisa even credits the aforementioned Sweeney Sisters (played by Jan Hooks and Nora Dunn) as one of her own influences. "I remembered so many details from that sketch — I must have hit the "record" button in my 10 year-old brain. It made me think about how seeing these women perform at a young age influenced me, and made me say 'yeah, I could do that someday.'"

While Broadminded may be the city's only female-centric comedy group, make no mistake — the number of women entering comedy is on the rise. They're taking risks, breaking gender boundaries and turning out smart, funny routines.

"I think women are really getting out there more than ever and taking center stage — you don't just have to be one of the boys either," says Melissa. "We try and keep our humor smart and gender neutral, but the reality is not too many men would write a sketch about a lactation consultant ,or at least not take the perspective we did."

"With four women together, we can do scenes like "Lady with a Baby" where a bunch of pregnant women are out to lunch," adds Megan. " I suppose all men's groups could do that too- we also have scenes where we all play male deer hunters- but you don't really see that much. In a way, I guess that means that we have plenty of ground to cover that hasn't been covered before."

Last Monday, NBC aired a special called "The Ladies of SNL" — a compendium of Saturday Night Live's funniest female cast members from Jane Curtain to Kristen Wiig. I didn't get a chance to watch the program, and was considerably bummed at missing out on some of (in my opinion) the more hilarious parts of a show that sang its swan song a long, long time ago.

When I do happen to catch episodes, the laughs are few and far between, and it has me missing the glory days of the [Sweeney Sisters](#) [2] and [Roseanne Roseannadanna](#). [3]

Luckily, the following Monday evening made up for what I was missing since I got to take in a preview of [Broadminded Comedy's](#) [4] latest show, *Lions and Tigers and Zombies?*, a hilarious 90 minutes with four very clever comedians.

Milwaukee's premier all-female sketch comedy troupe was created in 2006 after members Melissa Kingston, Stacy Babl, Megan McGee and Anne Graff-Ladisa met while performing improv with the

[5] Broadminded's newest show covers plenty of ground, leaving no stone unturned as it lampoons everything from pop culture to politics, even taking a few playful jabs at the class lines that divide our fair city in "The Wicked Witches of Metro Milwaukee."

"We come from four different perspectives and that gives our comedy so many different levels," says Stacy.



Lions and Tigers and Zombies incorporates themes drawn from *The Wizard of Oz*, *Resident Evil*, *The Real Housewives* series and zombies, of course, with a few side-splitting infomercials peppered throughout. And then there are the musical components. Not only are these broads clever, but they can sing, too! Several members have backgrounds in music, and say that they've been trying to incorporate that element into their shows.

Whether it's a DJ-style mash-up (courtesy of Megan "Badass DJ Name" Mcgee) or an open-source operating system narrating a sketch to the tune of "Thriller" — it adds an extra layer of hilarity to the performance, and is a testament to Broadminded's smart writing.

"*Lion and Tigers and Zombies* seemed to mesh our desire to do a musically based show which could also hold up an alternative theme, which became more zombie-focused," says Melissa. "Its sort of a mix between our desire to challenge ourselves to do more music pieces and use Halloween as a focus for writing. The timing of the show made sense too."

The clever mix of nerdy, dry wit and lyrical styling is a winning combination. I mean, once you hear a zombie Scarecrow sing "If I only had a brrrrrrraaaaaaaiiiiiinnnn" (insert growling undead sounds here) to an increasingly uncomfortable Dorothy, you'll never be able to look at the original in the same way. And that's a good thing.

Lions and Tigers and Zombies? opens tonight at the Alchemist Theatre (2569 S. Kinnickinnic), 8 p.m., with repeat performances on Nov. 13, and also Nov. 19-21. For more information, click [here](#). [4]

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