

Comedy show about funny, not flesh

Second City alumni bring all-women show to Newmarket

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

These mature women are fully clothed. (Please read on: It really does get more exciting.)

Five renowned Canadian comedy artists are coming to York Region to share their unique brand of humour.

It's a show in which women use their intellect and their sense of

humour, not their bodies to entertain, says Robin Duke, who was nominated for an Emmy for her writing on Saturday Night Live.

"Finally, women with their clothes on. We're not young girls running around in our underwear."

Women Fully Clothed, a touring sketch comedy act, began in May 2003 when a charity asked the Second City improv group to gather female alumni for a show.

That show included Robin Duke, Debra McGrath, Kathryn Greenwood, Teresa Pavlinek and Jayne Eastwood.

The five women had such a great time performing together, they decided to continue.

Women Fully Clothed is a 90-minute show made up of short vignettes of sketches and music, a kind of mini Saturday Night Live. The topics for the sketches are diverse.

"It's showing up at a PTA meeting with pink eye. It's seeing how low you can get jeans to go past (age) 40," Ms Duke said. "It's moms in the trenches ... women in the wilderness."

The all-female cast writes the material but decided to hire a male director — John Hemphill.

Ms Duke explained the reason behind this move.

"It's so he could say 'I don't get it' and we could say 'That's too bad.'"

The cast ranges in age from Teresa Pavlinek, who is in her 30s, to Jayne Eastwood, who is in her late 50s.

Part of the show's appeal is that it has material people can relate to, Ms Duke said.

"It is based on our life experiences as moms, sisters, friends and women with careers."

She is calm and laid back until she is asked if the show can be compared to the Vagina Monologues, the off-Broadway play often considered risqué. Ms Duke is indignant.

"We're not anywhere near the Vagina Monologues. It's light and funny. It's a good time. It's not Menopause, The Musical (either).

It's the slings and arrows (of everyday life)."

Several cast members have ties to Newmarket, where the show is playing. Ms Duke has a cousin who lives in Newmarket and, after visiting the Newmarket Theatre, she thought it would be a great venue in which to perform because of its size and the sense of excitement and pride residents have about the theatre. Two other cast members also have relatives in Newmarket.

Women Fully Clothed runs April 8 at 8 p.m. at the Newmarket Theatre. For tickets, call the 24-hour ticket hotline at 905-953-5122. Tickets are \$30. For information, go to www.womenfullyclothed.com

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Katherine Greenwood, Teresa Pavlinek, Jayne Eastwood, Robin Duke and Debra McGrath appear in Women Fully Clothed, a sketch comedy showcase, at the Newmarket Theatre April 8.

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