

THEATER

# Second-City Detroit steps up to serious satire challenge

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It's a man's world, so they say, except at The Second City-Detroit where, for the first time, women outnumber men on the Mainstage cast.

Music director Marc Evan Jackson also plays a big role in the revue, tickling the audience almost as much as he tickles the ivories.

"It's very cool, you get to play a broader range of characters," said Mary Jane Pories, one of seven cast members. "We're not just a rarity. Instead of just playing the mother, wife and whore, we play doctor, lawyer, co-worker — regular people. We're only separated by our ability to play the characters."

Celebrating its fifth anniversary, The Second City-Detroit opened its 15th revue, "Impachment and Cream," on March 17.

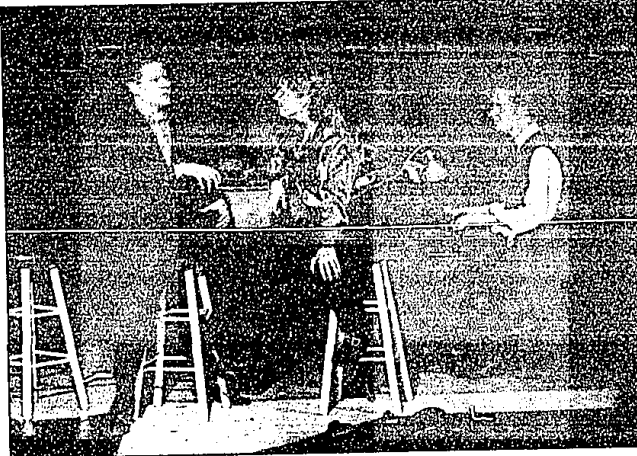
"Do the right thing," is a theme that weaves in and out of the show. "Are we on our own, or are there angels, forces that have an impact on what we do? Our job is to raise the question," said Margaret Exner.

Ignore the title, it's a joke that hardly ever has anything to do with the show. There are a few clever Clintonesque quips, but that's it.

In one scene, Keegan-Michael Key promises to have "affairs, lots of affairs. I love America, I love Americans. I will try to love each and every American to the best of my ability."

Directed by Michael Gellman, who also directed the hilarious "Down Riverdance," this show is satirical in a serious way. Gone is the low shallowness that marked the last revue. In its place is insightful, cleverly written material. The show is tightly written, and the intergenerational humor is something everyone can relate to.

Nyima Anise Woods said that often it's a question of looking at an issue being posed, and putting the characters in that



Glance meeting: Marc Warzecha (left), Mary Vinette and Marc Evan Jackson in a scene from The Second City-Detroit's new revue, "Impachment & Cream."

position such as abuse of power or status. If you're working as a temporary employee, you'll love the scene about the "Temp God" who tells the temp to "steal pens and Sweet & Low and make long distance phone calls to college friends."

Current events, relationships, Motown humor, this show covers all the bases with lots of surprises thrown in.

"We've got a lot of nice musical variances in this show," said Woods. "It's all Detroit sounding — Motown, Soul and R&B."

Antoine McKay plays the father whose son (Key) doesn't know "anything about history or work." As they're sitting in a boat fishing, McKay sings "I heard it through the grape vine." Key answers "I love those California raisins," showing his ignorance. As the skit progresses, Key explains that his father's work ethics are obsolete. "You like what you do," his father says after hearing Key talk about work. "I do," Key answers. "I wish I could say the same thing," says the father who worked at Ford Motor Co. all his life. "I know you want to leave me," the father sings. "Temptations," says his son, giving the correct answer.

Mary Vinette, who is also new to the cast, said the new show is a lot more theatrical. "It's more

story driven than being joke to joke," added Exner. "The scenes take longer," said Pories.

That's true. In a downtown Detroit vintage clothing shop scene, Vinette plays store owner Mary. Danielle (Pories) lives in Section 8 housing and comes to the store every day. Danielle has an angel hat, one for every day. She even makes a sale while Mary's in the back room. Clearly disabled, Danielle is optimistic offsetting Mary's pessimism. Mary's friend Dee (Exner) dismisses Danielle. "There's something wrong with everyone," says Pories. "It's just shows more on me."

If you were to make a play

about the whole City of Detroit, it might sound a lot like Second City-Detroit.

"You got to know these people," said Pories about the current show. "You know where you've been."

It's no easy feat, especially when you're wearing a lot of different hats. It's high pressure you have to develop the material and then rehearse it.

Working at Second City-Detroit is challenging, but also fun.

"You have the opportunity to do anything you want within reason," said Exner. "It prepares you to step out of here and be more employable as an actor," said Vinette.

With a hip audience, represented by a wide range of ages and cultures, Second City-Detroit is, agree the women, "theater for the common man."

"It was the first place to be integrated," said Exner. "We need an arena to represent all cultures in town."

"What we do on stage reflects life," adds Woods. One of the keys to their success is the women say they write about what they know and their own foibles. The scenes are about stuff they've experienced, they're not there to preach.

The three new cast members — Antoine McKay, Mary Vinette, and Marc Warzecha — add freshness and new ideas.

Look around at all the develop-

**"Impachment and Cream"**  
What: The Second City-Detroit's 15th revue.  
Where: The Second City-Detroit, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit.  
When: Performances 8 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday with addition shows 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The cast also performs a free improvisation set, free of charge, after the 10:30 p.m. show on Fridays and Saturdays.  
Tickets: \$10 Wednesday, Thursday & Sunday; \$17.50 Friday; \$19.50 Saturday. Call (313) 965-2222 or Ticketmaster (248) 545-6556. Order tickets online at www.ticketmaster.com

ment as you walk around the corner from the parking structure to Second City-Detroit. Ever wonder how the people who live there feel?

"There was a time when Detroit sat empty and quiet; what has happened to our ghetto home?" the cast sings. "What they saw as a wasteland, what we see as a store ain't no place to squat no more."

For Vinette it's like jumping out of an airplane. "Improv is my form of jumping out of an airplane," she said. "Jumping out of airplanes is something I would never do, but it's the same rush."

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