

Finding Harmony in Chaos

by Andrew Bailes

FST Improv Presents
A Very Special Episode
Saturday Nights at 8:30
FST's Goldstein Cabaret

When I'm on stage during an improv show, my number one goal isn't to try to be funny.

I know what you're thinking, as you take a brief moment after reading that first line and say, "Honey, we should try to see if we can get our money back for these tickets to Saturday night's improv show!"

After all, isn't that the point of improv, to make people laugh? Funny line here, audience laughter there...

Well, not really.

My first goal as an actor is to establish a workable environment on stage that my scene partner can add to, thus making something entirely out of nothing. "Agree and add," the number one rule of improv.

It is after the improv team as a whole lays the foundation of a scene that the comedy unfurls.

And man does it unfurl!

One night you might find Chris Friday performing as a sheltered child prodigy offering to analyze your dreams. Or perhaps you'll witness Zac Chase and Rachel Oakes improvise a musical about a modern day signing of the Magna Carta. At an improv show, literally anything can happen. The cast manages to find humor in anything and everything, from discussing the next candidate for the upcoming



Andrew Bailes (left) and Zac Chase

presidential election to figuring out which scent of underarm deodorant to buy.

Each week's cast is a different line-up. Every show is different and unique. Offering such a variety gives the audience an opportunity to come see the show multiple times without seeing the same cast over and over again. In fact, you may never see the same line-up twice. And with a rotating cast, each show presents a dynamic ensemble ready to splatter a blank canvas (the stage) with fresh ideas, topics, and themes.

I imagine that experiencing an improv show would be comparable to watching Jackson Pollack paint; witnessing someone achieving harmony out of what at first glance appears chaotic. The end result is often brilliantly hilarious, and a joy to be privy to.

As the audience, you have the envious privilege of witnessing the creation, watching in anticipation as scenes are formed before your very own eyes. And understanding that no two shows are alike, you are participating in something that will never be seen again. An improv show is special, unique, and one of a kind...

All that and free popcorn, too.

So come out and enjoy these extraordinary occasions, every Saturday night. Even though being funny isn't my number one goal, I promise it'll still make you laugh your socks off.

Improv performer

Andrew Bailes first joined FST as an intern in June of 2004. He has since received a bachelor's degree in theatre arts and English from Flagler College in St. Augustine and become a full time teaching artist with FST's Education and WRITE A PLAY program reaching thousands of children each year. In addition to performing in the weekly FST Improv show, he also has graced the stage in many of FST's children's theatre productions including most recently UNDER SIX and The Princess and the Pea.