

Titanic goes off script at McTrib

By [Lexy Roy](#)

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If the extent of your exposure to improvisational comedy consists of "Scenes From A Hat" and Wayne Brady riffing a freestyle hoedown, you'll come up short when you meet the Titanic Players, a long-form improvisational comedy performance group. Acting off suggestions from the audience, from single words like "aquarium" to the detailed account of the day's adventures by an overzealous audience member, the four teams create scenes and characters to comical effect.

On Jan. 7, the Titanic Players performed for their largest audience ever — a packed house at the McCormick Tribune Center. The Players, organized by seniority into cleverly titled groups like "Sissy Magic" and "Mr. Bendy's Juicebox Break," took the stage one after the other amid cheers from the crowd. Not that the difference in experience showed: Every team roused raucous laughter, and while there were moments of flatness, the "offstage" members were quick to recognize the lull and run across the stage, tagging their fellows out and starting a new scene.

From the couple trying to find Chicago neighborhood Wicker Park and being told to "Get your cappuccinos and ironic boots elsewhere!" to the preschooler claiming, "Yeah, we learned about social Darwinism yesterday," to the sharp lampooning of the Evanston cafe Kafein with a portrayal of an inattentive and uncaring wait staff, the true joy of Titanic comes from the players' quick thinking and ingenious responses, as well as the close-to-home nature of the scenes. That's not to say, however, that the entire night consisted of just ironic witticisms and high-brow humor. There were also the moments of simple silliness: A discussion of how to take on a slow bear in a fight (answer: tickle him, and raise the roof), for instance, as well as moments of political incorrectness, with race, domestic abuse, disabilities and cancer all making well-appreciated appearances.

In the crowd of comedy groups on campus, the Titanic Players have found a unique niche — long-form improvisation has not found a popular representative like its more concise counterpart. But this makes the troupe's performance fresh, satisfying and ultimately a different experience to take advantage of at Northwestern.

The Titanic Players perform the first Friday of every month. This month, the Players have also arranged for a professional improv class on campus by Second City alum Mike Abdelsayed. For more information, visit thetitanicplayers.com.