

Six schools' improv groups compete for UAB last laugh

By [James Harrison](#)

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College comedians from across the nation descended on the International Center on Saturday night for Comedy Soup, a celebration of improvisational and sketch comedy. The event was sponsored by the University Activities Board, or UAB, and local MSU comedy troupe Your Mom Improv.

About 300 people attended the event, said Jake Lestan, director of spirit and traditions for UAB.

"I'm most pleased that we could get six schools to come together to do the event. That's unheard of for UAB," the marketing sophomore said. "I think it went very well."

While Lestan admits the rainy night may have kept some people away, those who did attend got to see some of the best comedy troupes from Eastern Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Case Western Reserve University, Purdue University, Northwestern University, Ohio State University and MSU.

The price of the event helped attract people.

"I was walking and saw a billboard and saw that it was free," economics senior A.J. Foote said. "I thought 'Yay! Something I can do!'"

The various groups came out with high hopes for the evening.

"If we can disturb the audience, make them question the existence of mankind, we've succeeded," said Ryan Bradley, a member of Central Michigan's group, After Hours Improv.

Each group was given about 30 and 40 minutes to perform its own unique form of comedy.

After a quick opening game by MSU's group Your Mom - who performed small skits in between each group - Ohio State's 8th Floor Improv took the stage, performing long-form improv based on an interview with an MSU student. The student's need to ask a friend to come on stage to help her answer basic questions became a recurring theme for 8th Floor, as they quickly and nearly effortlessly bounced between various quick skits.

Central Michigan-based Three Dull Guys followed 8th Floor, proving to be one of the highlights of the evening. An opening sketch about the renaming of Beaner's Gourmet Coffee had the whole audience laughing.

Sketch comedy videos followed, as the audience was treated to MSU's own "Sideshow" and Eastern Michigan's "The Corner."

Following the videos, the show hit a rough patch, as After Hours and Purdue's Ship of Fools Improv played to a dwindling and tired audience. Help came in the form of the other groups, who filled in seats and helped rebuild audience energy.

The evening ended strong with a "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"-inspired performance by Case Western's IMPROVment and an uproarious long-form performance based on the word panther by Northwestern's group, The Titanic Players.

A quick game using all the troupe members closed the night.

For the audience, the night had been a mostly entertaining evening.

"Some of the groups were really creative," English senior Jessica Migliore said. "Some were really good."

To the entertainers, however, the event clearly was a triumph.

"It was a pretty good success," theater junior John DeFour said. "We had a good turnout and all the groups were funny."

The night wasn't just about laughs for Your Mom. The evening also gave them a chance to see what the competition was doing, DeFour said.

"We're the only improv group at MSU," he said. "It's nice to finally get a chance to see other groups."

Both UAB and Your Mom are talking about doing another show next spring. They hope to use what they've learned from this year to improve the event in the future, said DeFour.

"Any minor things that've gone amiss, we'll do better next year" he said.

Comedy Soup will have the last laugh for years to come.

Staff writer Liz Kersjes contributed to this review.