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### Theater review



## Score one for the ladies

'Girls Only: The Secret Comedy of Women' achieves its goal — laughs

By Amy Nelson  
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For the past 20 weeks, I spent Sunday afternoons watching men compete in the rough, sweaty game of football. With the NFL season finally finished, I spent this past Sunday afternoon at Hennepin Stages watching the lively "Girls Only: The Secret Comedy of Women."

The two have more in common than you'd expect. Granted, there's a huge audience appeal and hormonal difference between the sport of football and

the sport of stage comedy, but "Girls Only" deftly manages to surprise and entertain its audience.

The two-women show opens with a scene both men and women can enjoy: the deconstruction of a Victoria's Secret catalog. Heidi Bakke and Nicole Fenstad bravely welcome the audience in their bras and panties and have a few sharp barbs for the catalog's models. Here's where the football analogies end, as the pair move next to a skit where they read from their diaries, referencing 1970s pop culture hits like Judy Blume's "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret," and then to an improvisation with two audience members' purses and another improv song about the organizational attributes of one lucky audience member named Maureen (whose friends at first couldn't think of anything she was good at ... awkward).

Along the way, Bakke and Fenstad keep the mood light and the ladies laughing. The jokes have the communal, celebratory "we're-in-this-together-girlfriends" vibe instead of the "men-are-so-stupid" mode I was dreading. While there's the groan-inducing breast-feeding PSA with its indignant mom demanding rights to breast-feed her 10-year-old and an "Up With Girls" skit with a catchy song "Vasectomy, Vasectomy" (sung to Abba's "Knowing Me, Knowing You"), there's also a kabuki theater passage honoring the inventions of women (including, they claim, kabuki theater itself).

The most clever skit comes in the show's second half when Bakke and Fenstad dress as senior citizens and appear to be taping a community access channel's "Craft Corner" television show. The pair has devised creative ways to turn leftover feminine products into hotpads, sunblockers, tie protectors and angel ornaments. And, just like with many football games, this show ends with the stars performing a Hail Mary pass to the crowd — but of feminine products.

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**What:** "Girls Only: The Secret Comedy of Women"

**Where:** Hennepin Stages, 824 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Thursdays; 8 p.m. Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through April 3

**Cost:** \$29.50-\$20

**Tickets:** In person at State Theatre box office or online at [hennepintheatretrust.org](http://hennepintheatretrust.org) or [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com)