



Five of the city's funniest women dish up a full meal of sketch comedy.

comedy review

# Dressed to kill

Women Fully Clothed unbuttons laughs By **GLENN SUMI**

**WOMEN FULLY CLOTHED** written and performed by Robin Duke, Jayne Eastwood, Kathryn Greenwood, Debra McGrath and Teresa Pavlinek (Winter Garden). See Comedy Listings, page 113. Rating: **NNNN**

THE TITLE OF **WOMEN FULLY CLOTHED** is fitting. In a business where women are often judged by how much cleavage they reveal, here are five female performers who are dressed to the nines with wit and wisdom. The only thing they're baring are human truths. Actually, that's not quite all they're

revealing. **Kathryn Greenwood**, in one of the show's most memorable sketches, gets to show off her less-than-toned midriff as a woman who's trying to fit into a pair of low-cut jeans, while a snotty store manager (**Teresa Pavlinek**) and a nosy salesclerk (**Robin Duke**) look on.

The sight of a person in major denial that she's too old to dress like Britney Spears is funny (and dead-on clever) enough. But the trio make the sketch richer by fleshing out the characters, especially Duke's pretentious European salesclerk who owned her own boutique for 25 years.

Most of the beautifully crafted show's sketches send up the difficulties of modern womanhood. The night opens strongly with a look at competitive professional women who've given up their careers to become stay-at-home moms, and ends with a brilliant bit about making family dinners, written and performed as a gospel number.

Pavlinek and Greenwood shine in two scenes, one a bittersweet sketch about two former college roommates who meet up again by chance and realize they've got nothing in common (one's an overworked mom, the other's a single world traveller), another a note-perfect look at those pioneering multi-tasking working moms, Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Trill.

And **Debra McGrath** gets laughs of recognition as a woman who's just about to head out the door and gets stuck talking on the phone with her guilt-inducing mother.

The sketches, directed with efficiency by **John Hemphill**, are aimed primarily at women, but the humour is universal. Anyone who's been distracted at the movies by idiots unwrapping candies or talking on cell-phones will appreciate the act one closer, which also includes a couple of choice zingers targeted at the Canadian film industry.

Even the one or two less successful sketches contain terrific moments. One sketch about a group of women who find out their recently deceased portaging partner was a lesbian contains a great line about J-Cloths, while a rambling sketch set at a fortune-teller's home lets Duke create one of the most pissed-off wives ever seen on a comedy stage.

This is the most consistently funny sketch show I've seen in a long time. © glenns@nowtoronto.com



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