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Guerrilla Girls On Tour promote female empowerment

By Bobby Feingold

As the lights dimmed in afterHOURS last Wednesday, a voice recording played overhead: "In this theatre, the taking of photographs and the use of recording devices is strictly prohibited," the flight attendant-like voice said. "If any women in the audience begin to have a hot flash, please stand up."

Seconds later three women in Guerrilla masks charged into the room with bananas in hand.

Enter the Guerrilla Girls On Tour.

Under the stage lights, the Guerrilla Girls On Tour entertained and informed students with their brand of comedy. The all-female theatre trio used songs, sketch routines and humorous slides to make a forceful point. As they entered afterHOURS, hooting and making monkey noises, the three women threw bananas at the unsuspecting audience.

"This is the first time the audience has refused bananas," said one of the women under the alias of Gracie Allen, the female counterpart of the comedic duo Burns and Allen, whose success spanned decades.

Each of the women onstage adopted the identity of a dead female artist, shifting the focus away from their individual personalities or careers. The group's purpose is to shine a light on the issues of sexism and discrimination - changing the world one sexist city at a time, they said.

The other two women honored Aphra Behn, a 17th-century dramatist considered one of the first professional English female writers, and Josephine Baker, a pioneer for black women on Broadway.

The Guerrilla Girls were originally an artist collective in the '80s that created controversial feminist works like the New York City posters that protested gender bias and sexism in art exhibits. The "Banana Split" occurred in the mid '90s, when the group branched into three factions. The theatre girls. Guerrilla Girls On Tour,



www.guerrillagirlsontour.com

has been touring college campuses nationally since 2001.

The Guerrilla Girls' performance had a comedic undercurrent to inspire the audience for change. Toward the end of the show, the women pulled Kerry Cardoza, FSO vice president, onstage. The senior English major performed in a skit about the difficulties

of being a female playwright. At the end she joined the group in a dance routine that had the audience laughing.

"When you take things too seriously, it makes people scared about the issues," Cardoza said. "But jokes make the issues more approachable. The Guerrilla Girls On Tour make people more aware."

"The show was very entertaining, very informative," said Mike Ariel, a sophomore, music industry major, who also works at afterHOURS. "The Guerrilla Girls On Tour said they use comedy as a tool to reach audiences and spread their message of female empowerment. "Comedy is very effective to get people's attention," said the actress who portrayed Behn. "It's easier than being hit over the head with statistics. Students at the show said they were extremely impressed."
