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## Timid owl wows young crowd

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Photos by K.T. GOH

EXCITED screams and giggles abounded as a nocturnal fledgling underwent a high-flying but humorous journey of self-discovery in the children's play, *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark*.

The stage adaptation of Jill Tomlinson's best-selling children's book, performed by the England-based Blunderbus Theatre Company, told the story of Plop, a barn owl who feared nighttime, contrary to the instincts of its kind.

But through meeting people and discovering their experiences, the owl finally realised nighttime wasn't so bad after all, and eventually came to love it instead.

In the play, Plop was represented in different scenes by actors in costumes, or by a soft toy often 'swooping' around the arena, or a puppet.

Throughout, [audiences](#) were kept entertained by interactive elements, be it sprinkles of water or projectiles of 'bird poop'. It was bound to have the young ones breaking out in laughter.

"It is important for the audience to be immersed in our story, as we wanted them to join in and be part of the adventure.

"The response was wonderful, and we couldn't have asked for a better audience. They loved getting covered in water!" said Blunderbus manager Jeannette Longworth.

The three-member cast comprised Mark Collier, Chloe Phillips and Helen Crevel, who each played several characters throughout and found themselves thoroughly enjoying the experience.

"It's been great fun. I became an actor because I like playing different characters and interacting with children. But most of all, it's wonderful to be able to take our story to [different countries](#), and put a smile on people's faces," Collier said.

The play, which debuted in England last year, came about when the company's director Bill Davies decided to come up with a stage production of the book which he had always enjoyed as a child.

It is targeted at children, as well as adults who still sleep with the lights on.

The show in Penang, presented by Gardner and Wife Theatre, will play again today at 10am, Saturday at 11 am and 3pm, and Sunday at 2pm and 5pm, at PenangPAC in Straits Quay. For inquiries, call 04-8991722.

The play will then move to the PJ Live Arts centre in the Klang Valley, where it will run from March 15 to April 1.

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