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## Sweet notes from Pot-Pourri

NISHA SABANAYAGAM

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**Chambers at piano with (standing from left) Rebecca Bode, Jon Bode, Morton and de Jong giving their best in A Night On Broadway**

**NISHA SABANAYAGAM gets goosebumps from A Night On Broadway.**

THE singers had the crowd from the first note sung in Nella Fantasia by Ennio Morricone. Promised a night of popular opera and Broadway hits, the five-member Australian group Pot-Pourri delivered.

Brought in by Gardner & Wife for A Night On Broadway, sopranos Tania de Jong and Rebecca Bode, tenor Jon Bode, baritone Jonathan Morton and pianist Rebecca Chambers peppered their numbers with comedic skits to break up the song routine.

At one point, they even got audience participation when de Jong sat on the lap of one of the men seated in the front row.

Nella Fantasia gave me goosebumps. Delivered by sopranos de Jong and Bode, who are both professional opera singers in Australia, it was easy to imagine that we were all sitting in a opera house somewhere in Europe instead of Actor's Studio in Bangsar.

The first half of the show had the singers performing more opera numbers such as Toreador Song and Habanera from Carmen and Un Bel Di from Madame Butterfly. A couple of friends and I found these a little tedious (and this is a purely personal opinion), but when the foursome sang The Impossible Dream from The Man From La Mancha, it was impossible not to feel inspired.

It was at this point that I decided it was worth buying a CD of the group, and these were on sale after the show for RM60 each.

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Pot-Pourri was founded by de Jong and Morton, who started performing together and were later joined by Bode and Bode — who are married... to each other!

Fans of Phantom Of The Opera will love Jon Bode's version of All I Ask, which he sang from a balcony in the studio. I never knew the place had a balcony and I developed a slight crick (sitting on the right side of the stage) looking up at Bode, but he was worth the discomfort.

The highlight of the evening was when de Jong performed Teresa Teng's The Moon Represents My Heart in Mandarin. I don't speak Mandarin but having listened to it being spoken by my Chinese friends almost all my life, I must say de Jong's pronunciation was not half bad, Australian accent notwithstanding. The idea of singing an Asian number for their shows in Asia is a nice touch by Pot-Pourri, although ironically the crowd that opening night were mainly expatriates.

The ladies being the sopranos, did a number of songs together, so it was a nice change when the guys got together to sing a touching number called Lily's Eyes from as Morton said, "the little known opera, The Secret Garden" (Many of us know this story from the book of the same title).

Josh Groban's You Raise Me Up was performed by all four singers, dedicating it to the support they provide each other during the long, sometimes difficult hours that they spend together touring as performers.

Pianist Chambers was given much stage time, getting up from her seat a number of times to join in some of the jokey routines. She had some solo time, where she playing a rousing version of Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue.

Despite the fact they are trained opera singers and musicians, the group presented themselves as very down to earth and managed to loosen up the initially slightly reserved crowd.

They sang over 20 numbers and were called for an encore which was a fitting Time To Say Goodbye.

**\* You catch A Night on Broadway by Pot-Pourri today at The Actors Studio, Bangsar Shopping Centre, Jalan Maarof, KL. Tickets are from RM53. Call 03-20940400/1400.**

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#### Get a life: Mirror, mirror on the wall

I BELIEVE life is a mirror showing us images of our self.

I believe life teaches us who we are - a pretty strict teacher too, because life calls it the way life sees it... no ceremony, no sweetener, plus the camera adds five kg!

### MUSIC/DANCE



#### No plain Jane

Grammy-nominated jazz singer Jane Monheit talks to SUBHADRA DEVAN about her

new album and being a new mum

### SAVOURS



#### Time to celebrate

Whether you're planning for Chinese New Year or giving your staff a treat, chef Louie Hoi has special menus to make it more meaningful, writes TAN BEE HONG

### CINEMA/THEATRE



#### Candice Bergen's casting problem

IN the Sex And The City series a few years ago, Candice Bergen made a cameo appearance as the editor of Vogue. Glamorous and arch, she was the epitome of frosty WASP perfection.