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The New Sunday Times Magazine
SUNDAY PEOPLE WINNER OF CSR MENTERI

Monday, January 12, 2009, 04.57 PM

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A witty play

SUBHADRA DEVAN

THERE'S much narration in Souvenir: A Fantasia On The Life Of Florence Foster Jenkins and good singing. One would not appeal to many Malaysians while the other would.

Nonetheless, an appreciative if small audience turned up on a Saturday night at Actors Studio Bangsar for the show and gave wild applause for the vocal talent of Gabrielle Maes and smooth narrative skill and piano expertise of Llewellyn Marsh.

Marsh, as pianist Cosme McMoon, told the story of society eccentric Jenkins, who thought that she was a great coloratura soprano.

McMoon accompanied Jenkins from the start of her career at New York's Ritz Carlton Hotel to her single concert at Carnegie Hall. He started out unwillingly but grew to admire the lady.



Marsh at piano and Maes in a scene from Souvenir

Marsh, well-known as a performer, actor and creative director, was good. He delivered his narration with as warm a style as when he played the piano or sang.

Maes' voice at times boomed, others trilled. She was quite good in singing off-key. But her final piece showed she can really sing, and well at that. It was a wow.

Jenkins' costumes for her various concerts were imaginative and drew giggles from the crowd.

Directed by Richard Harding Gardner, the play used a minimal set of a lovely grand piano, some chairs and a telephone stand.

The scene changes were done unobtrusively enough, although at one moment the light was not dim enough to hide the floor assistant handing Marsh his coat and music file.

But Marsh was working with a witty narrative which demanded more attention from the audience.

Souvenir, produced by Chae Lian, had a bitter-sweet ending which story was well wrought out.

• Souvenir ends Jan 4 with shows at 8.30pm (5pm on Sunday). Tickets are RM42-RM64 with reduced rates for OKU cardholders, schools and groups. Call 03-20940400/1400 or visit www.gardnerandwife.com.

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FEATURES



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!

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

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