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What an experience (review)

MARC LOURDES

WHEN an unfunny friend had me rolling on the floor laughing at her description of Gamarjobat's last two shows in Malaysia, I knew I had to catch the duo's performance called Western at Actors Studio Bangsar.

All it took was 30 seconds for me to realise why she was so enamoured with this Japanese pair.

Manic, irreverent, bawdy and brilliant, Ketch! and Hiro-pon's brand of silent entertainment is a brilliant fusion of slapstick, pantomime, drama and sitcom.

Though the roughly 80-minute play is titled Western, it is actually a performance of two distinct halves.

The first is an insane, unstructured session where the two, aided with some very eccentric props like a stuffed penguin, artificial limbs, scuba fins, miniature electric guitars and a huge steel suitcase, proceed to go berserk on stage.

The duo held a concert, mucked around with little stuffed balls and, from time to time, took the piss out of the audience.

The second half is where the Western comes in.

The story, in a nutshell, is of two rival gunslingers who are vying for the attention of one woman.

Of course, the parody is one which is chock-full of gags poking fun at the various stereotypes that have embedded itself into the public's collective consciousness.

One of my favourite jokes (spoiler alert!) was the scene of the one-upmanship gunfight. The baddie shoots a bird, causing it to fall down dead. Not wanting to be beaten, the good guy fires six shots into the air, to get a barrel of Kentucky Fried Chicken falling at his feet!

There are many things brilliant about Ketch! and Hiro-pon's act, including their acting versatility (they play female and midget characters), their superb choice of music and special effects sounds.



Scene from Gamarjobat's Western.

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This includes a music box version of Hey Jude and a mean guitar riff every time the baddie walks onstage, among others.

But what I loved the most was their ability to engage the audience and make them part of the show, instead of merely spectators.

To me, it made the show so much more than just a show. It made it an experience.

Gamarjobat's Western ends Oct 19 at Actors Studio Bangsar, Bangsar Shopping Centre, KL. Shows at 8.30pm and 5pm (Sat & Sun). No shows on Mondays. Tickets: RM53/RM64/RM75/RM86. Call 03-20940400/1400.

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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!

MUSIC/DANCE



No plain Jane

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

new album and being a new mum

STYLE/FASHION



Dressing up men

Right now, Bala Chandran Subramaniam has designs on making men look dashing. He tells INTAN MAIZURA AHMAD KAMAL he's simply acting on

the wishes of his women customers

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.

PERSONALITY



Yellow is the new green

Carpooling has never quite taken off because of poor execution. But at DiGi, Catherine Kok is determined to make it work, writes RACHAEL PHILIP