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Battling it out with humour

Gerald Chuah

IT WAS 7.30pm, an unusual time to catch a theatre performance, especially when the aroma of Chinese cuisine wafted in from the restaurant next door.

The 200-strong crowd at the Actors Studio Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, had decided to postpone their dinner for a barrel of laughs, and was rewarded with two hours of solid fun.

"Theatresports" was back, this time at the Actor's Studio Bangsar from Tuesday to Sunday, which seemed like an ideal location with its spacious stage.

Theatresports, which is in its fifth year, got the audience laughing with its irreverent humour.

Patrick Teoh introduced the participants - Harith Iskandar, Jit Murad, Afdlin Shauki and Jo Kukathas - with the Star Wars theme playing in the background.

The event, which is staged in an impromptu and informal manner, brings out the best in the actors as you get to see them in a different light. As the show progressed, you would have noticed how the actors and comedians rose to the occasion.

Gladiator was indeed an appropriate term for the participants who battled it out with one another with their wit, spontaneity, and humour.

And in gladiator spirit, there were victors and victims in each round. One had to have wit, thick skin and quick responses to survive the onslaught of "verbal" attacks and sexual innuendos.

Everything was tailored to the audience's expectations.

"If you are not happy, we will keep doing it," said Teoh, who got the audience to "draw blood" by shouting out what they wanted the actors to do.

Harith and Afdlin revelled in the occasion and scored the highest points.

Newcomers such as Rashid Salleh held their own, and were equally entertaining.

Jit, who played the gay blade in most of scenes, said the funniest jokes are the unintentional ones, just before becoming the victim of "evil hands" played by Harith in a cooking programme at the end of the show.

In What Did You Say?, the gladiators had to reply a question with a question and Afdlin's line hit home when he said: "Don't you know it is rude to answer a question with a question?"

On the first day, Harith and Jo had an interesting exchange when she asked: "Do I look like Lara Croft (from the movie Tomb Raider)?" to which Harith replied: "Didn't you see the movie?".

Na'a Murad and Zahim Albakri were guest artistes in the second day's performance of Genres, in which the participants had to act out scenes from movies, and rotate between genres such as teenflicks, Bollywood, kung-fu, Malay evening drama and Swedish porn.

Zahim, who played "God", threw the 10 commandments to Harith in the form of magazines. One of the magazines had the picture of a sultry woman, to which Harith responded: "See no evil."

Another game was called Haiku, where each of the gladiators, who were seated on cushions at the edge of the stage, had to form three sentences with five, seven and five syllables on any topic.

In Musicals, the gladiators were asked to perform their own version of popular musicals and one of the crowd's suggestions was The Sound of

Mahathir, a la The Sound of Music.

Also, Harith, Afdlin and Jit were guests at a party hosted by Jo, who was escorted out of the room and returned to guess the roles they played.

She guesses accurately when she named them as Datuk Samy Vellu with a new look, Datuk Dr. Ling Liong Sik on the defensive, and a belly dancer with diarrhoea respectively.

The success of this year's Theatresports should prompt the organisers to stage more events to whet the audience's appetite for "blood".