

FRIDAY
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Music for change



BY TAN HUI KEE

THE University College Sedaya International (UCSI) annual music concert was a great success, thanks to the presence of guitarist, composer and vocalist Juan Pablo de Zubiria as well as guest band Grukavenue, the guest band performed their heart out and astounded the hall of audience on March 21.

The theme of this year's concert is 'Music for Change' and the music played was meant to reflect on the current generation of young

people's struggles to assert its identity in a world hindered by misconceptions and unnecessary divisions.

The concert started with three original songs performed by Grukavenue, a well-established local jazz band. Members of the band that performed that night were pianist Tay Cher Siang, drummer Martin Ngim, bassist Vincent Ong, and Shazee Ishak, who played the saxophone and sang.

I like the way they arranged their songs and wrote them in an unconventional way. When



Shazee Ishak started rapping their new song *Elephant Vanishes*, the crowd started cheering excitedly and Ishak encouraged the audiences to dance along with the music, which they did!

After the three songs by Grukavenue, Juan Pablo de Zubiria's band, the New Contemporary Ensemble was next, presenting 11 songs, of which seven were written by Pablo.

When the band members were walking to the stage, I was stunned by the numbers of performers in the band, and also the people that were involved in this performance. There were more than 10 members in the band, but most importantly, it's a mixture of classical and contemporary players!

The band members were mostly from the faculty of UCSI contemporary music, and also a few from classical music department. There were a few students and graduated students as well.

To me, it looked like an international music festival because the performances were from many different countries including Mauritius, Columbia, and Bangladesh.

When the band started their first song, they threw the audiences off their seats, and it con-

tinues to amaze us until the end of the concert. This is mainly because the songs were uniquely written, without any stylistic restrictions by Pablo where he plays around with different styles of music including world music, rock music, jazz and classical music.

Most importantly, it is fun to listen to! The song that gave me the deepest impression is *Origen*, where Pablo claimed that he wrote this for the girl he met and fell in love with after he came to Malaysia.

Indeed, the message was clearly brought out by the sweet, smooth song written in bossa nova style. The applause and cheers were thunderous throughout the performance, right till the last song *Monkey See, Monkey Do*.

If I had three thumbs, I would say that this is no doubt, a three thumbs up performance because this is the best contemporary music concert (so far) I've been to. Although the music industry in Malaysia is relatively small, it's definitely growing rapidly. Furthermore, it is thrilling to watch it grow and involve in the process.

I'm definitely looking forward for more performances from this bunch in the future.

