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# The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha

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By [Kyung Oh \(author/Kyung+Oh\)](#) | [© 6th Aug 2014](#) | ★★★★★

How to put on an adaptation of the immortal Spanish classic in sixty minutes while doing it justice? Stephen Harper, MercE Ribot, and Patricia Rodriguez select some of the most famous episodes from Cervantes's novel, and deliver a hilarious rendition of the adventures of Don Quixote and his side-kick Sancho Panza in this devised comedy theatre.

This is an absolutely riveting and hilarious physical theatre show.

The physical comedy of the players is outstanding. While playing the skinny horse, Patricia Rodriguez sways her hips outlandishly, stomping her feet and neighing and flubbing her lines. A meta-theatrical gag about the three players being three actors trying to put on a show about Don Quixote becomes a central motif of the show. Stephen Harper and MercE Ribot compete for the role of Don Quixote, developing a hilarious tension as they compete for the

limelight. Frequent references to MercE Ribot revelling in her own beauty while playing Dulciana and a jealous Patricia Rodriguez needlessly hitting Ribot in the face with a pillow are among the highlights of the show.

The players constantly break the fourth-wall, inviting the audience to laugh at their deliberately feeble devices. For example, they try to play a scene where three men are riding on three separate horses and end up having to go through rapid switcheroos of who's riding on whose back to perform the dialogue. There's bawdy humour aplenty, but never in a crude or distasteful way, partially because the physical humour is so over-the-top and clownish. The use of props is very effective, and the three trap-doors on stage are called on again and again for surprising physical gags. There is a healthy dose of ad-libbing, with comical facial asides (as when Harper gives a mock-frustrated look at the audience for laughing at his ridiculous windmill costume). The players expertly work off the energy of the laughing crowd.

Using the incredible amount of chemistry between them, the three players put the audience in fits of laughter with every other line and every physical gesture. An essential part of the performance is the live music, performed and composed by Maria Camahort, who is a virtuoso guitarist. Playing gentle ballads during the more narrative moments of the show, she strums dramatically during moments of comic melodrama, and breaks out nonsense chords to enhance the bathos of Don Quixote's delusions. This is an absolutely riveting and hilarious physical theatre show. A must see.



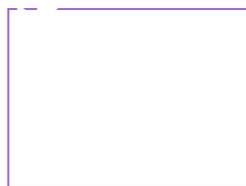
### By Kyung Oh (reviewer/Kyung Oh)

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Kyung Oh has just finished his English degree from Cambridge University. He reviewed comedy and theatre shows at the festival for the past two summers, and is co-editor of theatre for Broadway Baby this year.

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