



Sign up for our free daily newsletter:

Your email

Subscribe!



19 TUESDAY
DECEMBER 2017

18°C

THE DAILY STAR LEBANON

Search...



Subscribe Now >

Login



NEWS

BUSINESS

OPINION

SPORTS

ARTS & ENT

LIFE

Culture

Dec. 19, 2017 | 12:02 AM

Play that confronts double standards



LIVE NEWS

VIEW ALL

TDS 5 afternoon long reads

2 minutes ago

German cartel office says Facebook abusing data collection

3 minutes ago

Saudi projects budget deficit for fifth year running

9 minutes ago

Charges filed in Croatia after death of Afghan migrant girl

14 minutes ago

Tenants' committee reiterate opposition to new rent law

26 minutes ago

Scientists hope to inject robo-cat with AI to help seniors

42 minutes ago

Alpine-In-form Shiffrin triumphs in giant slalom in Courchevel

Advertisement

Summary

"The Jokers" begins with the trio sitting backstage, bickering and insulting each other in the dark, while a guitarist (Khodor Ellaik) performs for an audience of several wiggled mannequin heads arranged on a table.



More from
Maghie Ghali



Zoukak raises the curtain on new theater

Boell's 100th inspires art, activism



RSS



FOLLOW



EMAIL



PRINT



SHARE

Maghie Ghali | The Daily Star

BEIRUT: Zoukak Theater Company's latest play "The Jokers," premiered in Lebanon Saturday, the first work to be performed in Zoukak's new space, which opened last week. Directed by Zoukak's Junaid Sareddeen and Omar Abi Azar, the show addresses Arab society's attitudes to themes of gender, sexuality and morality, as animated by the interaction of three characters backstage at a theater-cum-brothel.

"The Jokers" begins with the trio sitting backstage, bickering and insulting each other in the dark, while a guitarist (Khodor Ellaik) performs for an audience of several wiggled mannequin heads arranged on a table.

The lights come up and we meet Gigi (Sareddeen), a transvestite, the macho prostitute Jamlieh (Lamia Abi Azar) and Vicky (Maya Zbib), a scarred-faced diva who is heavily pregnant out of wedlock.

"The Jokers" was co-written and devised by Zoukak and had its world premiere last October in Bordeaux within the Festival International des Arts de Bordeaux Métropole (FAB).



GALLERIES

Previous
Next

...

Entities

People

Associations & Groups

Organizations

Locations & Natural Formations

Countries

Advertisement

performance. Their work with marginalized groups and drama therapy has won them many awards, such as the 2017 Praemium Imperiale Grant for Young Artists from the Japan Art Association.

Sarieddeen's transformation into a woman is well executed, with a sparkly pink dress, prosthetic curves and a large red wig, lending well to the actor's swaying gait, dance moves and soft voice.

By contrast, Lamia's portrayal of a tomboy sex worker is achieved through slicked back short hair, crude mannerisms and black leather attire.

The characters are rejected by society, which deems them abnormal or sinful. Despite their jovial declarations of not caring what others think, self-loathing seeps through as they joke about how each will commit suicide in the end, or how their prospective children would kill or shun them if they knew the truth.

While not confirmed, it is hinted that Gigi might be the father of Vicky's baby, which creates hostility between her and Jamileh, who seems infatuated with Gigi.

As Gigi and Jamileh turn their attention to Vicky's bulging belly, there are equal amounts hope and fear for the child to come. Gigi likens illegitimate children to Frankenstein's monster – marked by society as devil spawn, expected to be born with disfigurement or the face of an animal.

The characters' dreams for a better future are voiced via a scene detailing their hypothetical wedding. Vicky asks Gigi to marry her, more out of convenience as a father for the child.

Gigi jokes that he would rather be the bride and that, should he get married, it would be a charade. Jamileh says that that would suit her just fine. Gigi could wear a dress and she could wear a suit, since she was more likely to attack a prospective groom that get married traditionally.

In the end they link arms and walk down the aisle together, having decided that they would be each other's family and would raise the child as one, with Vicky humming a wedding march.

The unborn child plays a central part to the trio's re-evaluation of their lives and also symbolizes the child of a collective society, persecuted even before birth. The characters represent stereotypes used as scapegoats for society's issues – the problems of which are blamed on those that do not conform to their conventions.

The players imagine their nonexistent children becoming successful and wealthy, distant but one day searching for them and returning to accept them as they are.

Vicky's son is born – depicted by the guitarist wearing a horse's head – and represents the offspring of all those who are judged. One by one, the characters remove their makeup and costumes (and their defenses), stripping down to their underwear.

They make their way to the theater stage and pose proudly as the table of mannequin heads is turned around by the son of judgment to reveal many are wearing animal masks. They are society's hypocrites, who judge without knowledge and hide their own wrongs by blaming others.

"The Jokers" does not have answers but rather leaves viewers to reflect upon their own lives, and whether others would judge them as harshly, based on their outward appearance or actions.



Pictures of the day

Dec. 18, 2017

EDITORIAL CARTOONS



STAY CONNECTED



MOST READ

ALL



Dec 19, 2017 | Lebanon News

British woman's alleged murderer confesses



Dec 18, 2017 | Lebanon News

Lebanese and foreigners are safe: Machnouk



Dec 19, 2017 | Lebanon News

Women refuse to be daunted by Dykes' murder



Dec 18, 2017 | Lebanon News

Suspected killer of British woman named as Tarek Hesso: judicial source



Dec 18, 2017 | Lebanon News

Aoun blasts Israel in meeting with new UN official



Dec 18, 2017 | Middle East

US vetoes UN resolution rejecting Trump's Jerusalem decision



CLASSIFIEDS

leave with their own understanding of what's transpired. There is no happy ending. Jokes aside, the performance is dark and thought provoking.

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on December 19, 2017, on page 16.

▲ Interesting

▼ Not Interesting

Recommended

[Palestinians in Lebanon mark Balfour Declaration centenary](#)

[Artists protest Jerusalem decision in south Lebanon](#)

[TDS's 5 afternoon long reads](#)

[TDS' own Kassab wins Strongest Woman title](#)

[Charges filed in Croatia after death of Afghan migrant girl](#)

[Tenants' committee reiterate opposition to new rent law](#)

Advertisement

Comments

Your feedback is important to us!

We invite all our readers to share with us their views and comments about this article.

Disclaimer: Comments submitted by third parties on this site are the sole responsibility of the individual(s) whose content is submitted. The Daily Star accepts no responsibility for the content of comment(s), including, without limitation, any error, omission or inaccuracy therein. Please note that your email address will NOT appear on the site.

Alert: If you are facing problems with posting comments, please note that you must verify your email with Disqus prior to posting a comment. follow this link to make sure your account meets the requirements. (<http://bit.ly/vDisqus>)

comments powered by Disqus



[Full list of today's paper »](#)

[View our e-paper »](#)

[Subscribe »](#)

STAR'S COLUMNISTS

[VIEW ALL](#)



David Ignatius

Trump decries Russia probe but evidence ample

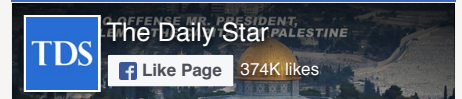


Fareed Zakaria

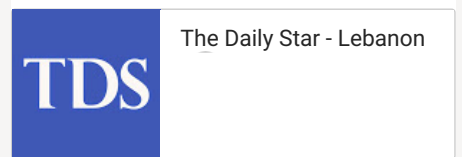
GOP tax bill would usher in a bleak future

Advertisement

BECOME A STAR FAN



246 friends like this



The Daily Star - Lebanon

ARTS & ENT

Lebanon News
World
Middle East

Local
Regional
International

Editorial
Commentary
Columnist

Football
Tennis
Basketball
Other Sports
Motor Sports

Culture
Music
Movies & TV
People

Living
Health
Lubnan
Sci&Tech
Travel & Tourism
Automotive

