

Excerpt from the blog 'Melissa in Paris'

<http://melissainparis.blogspot.com/2007/07/improfessionals-improvisational-theatre.html>

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[The Improfessionals Improvisational Theatre](#)



So we emerged at Ménilmontant and walked a block and saw the bar: Café de Paris, 158 rue Oberkampf. The area is really arty and funky, lots of bars and people wandering. The bar we went into was so cool. The bar itself was long and curvy. The people were really nice – and to me, it kind of felt like home. We bought our tickets in the back, bought a beer and settled down into a cozy room for the show.

The show was spectacular. There was a cast of about 12, three of which were special guests (it does a good job explaining that on the [website](#) I linked on the previous post). Out of all of the people in the cast, with the exception of a few, almost everyone was from a different country. They started the show by asking, “anyone from Guatemala?” “Anyone from Holland??” and down the line – the crowd of the audience was absolutely as mixed as the cast – it was great! Finally they asked, any countries we left off? And Claudia and a man from across the room shouted, “Austria!!” and they shared a big smile. It was so cool.

Again, the site does a good job explaining the notion of the overall performance – this night was directors – each actor took a turn directing the others and they thought of the idea on the spot (with some audience participation for ideas, or titles, or topics from time to time). At the end of their short “movie” they would ask the audience, “OK (with the director waiting in front of everyone on stage) was that movie worth a Hollywood star???” and the audience either clapped (if they felt it was) or didn’t, and then they’d ask, “was this movie a failure/flop???” and the audience clapped (if they thought it was a failure) or not. They actually got a little star to wear on their shirt if they were voted for positively. Overall people were pretty honest – they were all amazing. AMAZING!! But one did “fail” and the guy had to stay up on stage and beg for forgiveness to sappy music. It was great. Multi-lingual, creative, energetic and fantastic.

Some highlights for me: there was a “kung-fu movie” and it was spectacular – the actors were going about the movie and the “director” had them do slow motion (there was, of course, a

complicated story line going on at this point which was great) – and their slow motion was at the “final battle” and it was incredible – perfect. We were astounded. What great artists!

Another highlight: There was one “movie” that was done in Spanish on stage, and then four other actors were sitting in front and they would translate each line into French – although I couldn’t understand it fully – the concept was so brilliant and they, of course, added funny translations and elaborated the dialogue making the performance hilarious! The room was roaring (the whole time really).

There were a lot of movies (the whole thing lasted for like three hours, with one ten minute break) and everyone one of them was amazing.

The major thing I noticed was the music. It was so cool!! It was so important. Each actor did a little from time to time (and some “movies” were musicals even) but this one guy did the majority of the background music and he had to respond to the improv and move right along with them and he never missed a beat and often his music inspired the performances – and for example, the kung-fu – it was PERFECT – that guy is a genius. I loved every minute of it.

The energy in the bar was perfect. There was no pretension, it was as if everyone was friends (very warm feelings), we shared our table with three other groups of people and we were all laughing and smiling- enjoying ourselves the whole night. Claudia, who comes from a very small town in Austria (her parents have a goat farm and make goat cheese and milk) – had never been to a place like this and had never heard of improv performance theatre – we both had grins from ear to ear all night. It was a blast.