

## **Improvaganza Hawaii Festival of Improv Review of “The Parisian Gentlemen of Paris” by Improvaganza Executive Producer Garrick Paikai**

The Parisian Gentlemen for Paris, is one of those unique shows where the sublime and the farcical meet. This improvised import from Europe combines elements of improvised storytelling, strong characters, audience interactions, and theme to take American audiences on a playful journey.

I met the Gentlemen while traveling the Improv Festival Circuit. I met Ian Parizot at the 2011 Chicago Improv Festival when he traveled with the French improv team EUX- Compagnie d’Improvisation and met the Rest of the Gentlemen, Ouardane Jouannot and Florian Bartsch, later at the 2012 Seattle Festival of Improv Theatre. Collectively the “Gentlemen,” are master of their format and are true to their Euro improv roots; their use of physicality, characters work, and storytelling is a sight to behold. They graciously traveled to Honolulu in 2013 to perform at my Festival (Improvaganza: Hawaii Festival of improv) and they were amazing.

But Their show is more than what I had mention above. What really is at the heart of their show is the idea of playing with misconceptions of foreign stereotypes and culture, in particularly the French stereotypes and culture. Their entire show is based on the audience’s idea of what they think Parisian culture is, and that’s fantastic. It’s a great way to engage an audience and play with their ideas. And no misconception was spared.

In one show I watch the “Gentlemen” asked the audience “when you think of the French what come to mind.” One female audience member said “French men being great Lovers in the world”. In another show a man in the audience yelled out the bad smell. And each time the “Gentlemen” create lovely scenes based on those ideas.

In retrospect what they’re doing is that their addressing racism in a very subtle way. They’re showing people the ridiculousness of assuming stereotypes and by playing these stereotypes to the ninth degree. Like a scene from one of Molière farces the Parisian Gentlemen of Paris are cleverly showing the audience the follies of misconceptions in a lighthearted playful manner. Now I could be over thinking this, but I think this is a Fantastic.

I was tremendously please at this group, they were extremely professional and really good improvisers. They showed up to their call on time and got along with all the improvisers in the Festival. If there is any American Improv festival Producers out there looking for a great group to perform at their festival consider hosting The Parisian Gentlemen of Paris.

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