

Blowout concert

The amplifier almost stole the show but Larry Carlton wowed the audience with a retrospective

> concert

MOSAIC MUSIC SERIES
Larry Carlton & The Sapphire Blues Band
Esplanade Theatre
Sunday

Samuel Lee

SUNDAY'S Singapore pit-stop was the last leg of Larry Carlton's recent Asian tour and it was also likely to be one of his more memorable gigs.

For one, the Grammy-winning American smooth jazz guitar legend had never taken a horns section along on previous visits.

Secondly, and more significantly, his amplifier blew towards the end of his set.

Thankfully, it happened after he and the seven-piece Sapphire Blues Band had finished playing a slow blues jam number from his 2004 Sapphire Blue album, titled Just Another Excuse.

While guitar technician and road manager Rick Wheeler fixed the amplifier, Carlton, the inimitable showman, cracked the crowd up with his repartee.

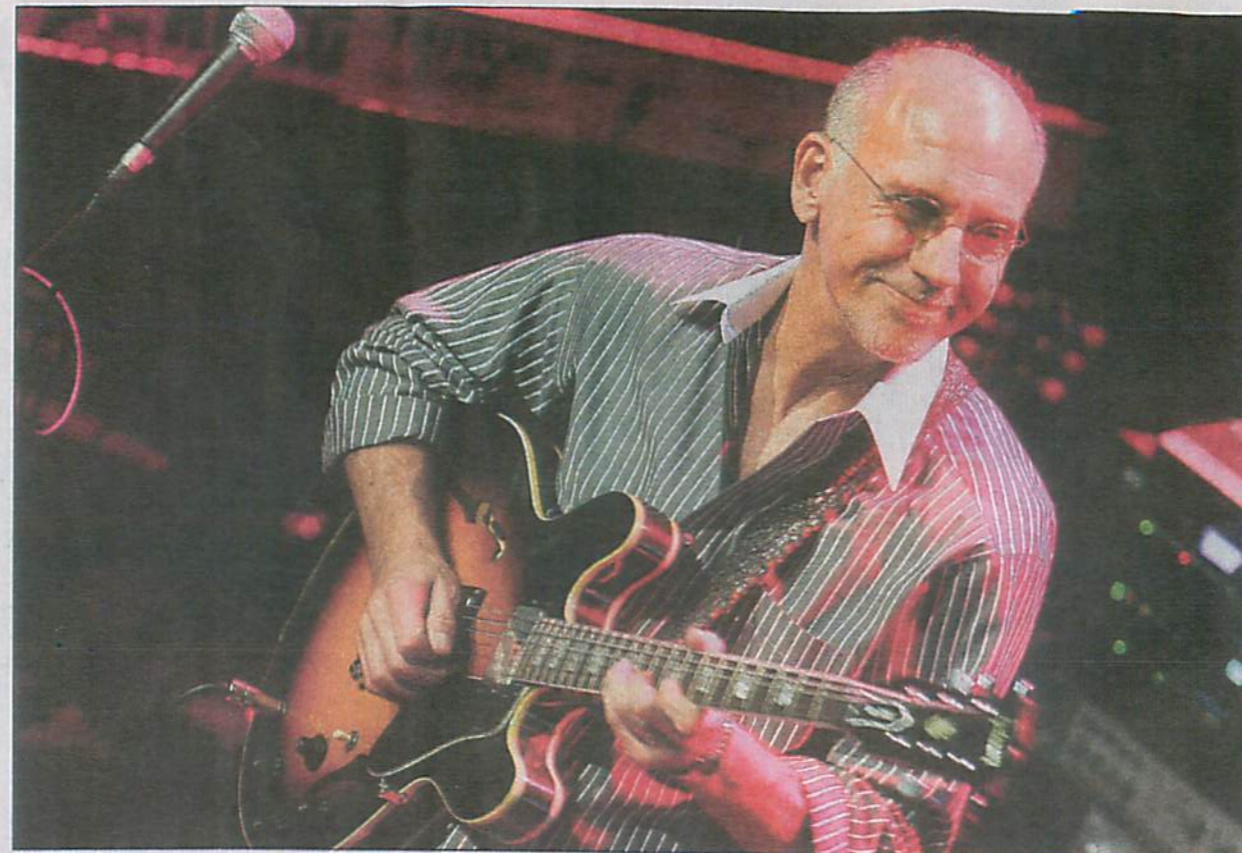
He also demonstrated, on his acoustic guitar, finger-picking techniques in what he termed a tribute to the country music guitar heroes of Nashville, Tennessee, which he now calls home.

Home was where Carlton and company were headed to after this swansong show for the tour, which had started three weeks ago in Japan.

He had said he had not planned on it being a retrospective of his past and present body of work, and although it panned out that way, the audience at the sold-out show did not seem to mind.

He is famous for his memorable melodic (some say "pop-ish"), "clean" guitar licks that you can easily whistle, hum or sing along to. In addition, he makes a conscious effort not to overwhelm with too much guitar wizardry that may be lost on non-guitar players in the audience.

This approach filters down to his democratic, "equal opportunity" musical arrangements, which allow different segments of the band to take the lead in the course of a number.



ST PHOTO: LIM WUI LIANG

DEMOCRATIC NOTE: Carlton lets different segments of the band lead during a number.

For instance, on Walk With Me, which was built on the traditional 12-bar blues progression and is one of three new numbers he wrote on this tour (and Carlton's favourite at that), the spotlight was on the walking bass line anchored by his son - burly bassist Travis.

And on the chugging 1970s sweet soul classic Put It Where You Want It by soul-funk outfit The Crusaders (which Carlton was part of from 1971 to 1976), it was Travis to the fore again, sharing

the limelight with saxophonists Douglas Moffet and Albert Wing. But there was no doubt that Carlton was king each time his fingers did the talking.

Whether he was on his signature 1968 Gibson ES-335 guitar or the acoustic guitar (which he switched to for the smooth jazz chestnut Smiles And Smiles To Go and the winsome Sunrise from his 2005 album Fire Wire), his showmanship was never so over the top that you stopped enjoying the groove and melody.

After taking the audience through his career highlights that included instrumental takes of the Steely Dan hit Josie and the Doobie Brothers' Minute By Minute (for which he bagged a Grammy in 1987), he and the band ended on a high note with two rousing cuts from Fire Wire: The Prince and Inkblot 11, before drawing the curtains with the dreamy Sleepwalk.

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Not quite paradise

> dance

JAMUAN Bisu... PARADis_e...?
Gerard Mosterd and Boi Sakti
University Cultural Centre Hall
Last Friday

June Cheong
ARTS REPORTER

CHOREOGRAPHERS Boi Sakti and Gerard Mosterd's collaboration JAMUAN Bisu... PARADis_e...? was a disjointed exercise in fusing dance and video.

Each element worked independently of the other and the lack of cohesion resulted in a disappointing work which provided only brief, random moments of beauty.

Sakti, artistic director of Indonesian martial arts and dance troupe Gumarang Sakti Dance Company, met independent choreographer Mosterd in the Netherlands many years ago. He invited the latter to work with him earlier this year.

The production drew from the Indonesian myth of Burdo Kandang, which speaks of an ancient powerful queen mother and explored matriarchal issues.

The work began on a promising enough note. Two dancers appeared on stage with a female dancer constantly sniping out of the male dancer's grasp in quick, deliberate motions.

But the rest of the production felt loose and episodic. Each scene segued into the next without much narrative.