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Kids' show wows adults

nal Alam Kadir

LET'S state the obvious again - P. Ramlee remains Malaysia's most revered and respectable artiste, even more than two decades after his death.

He is still THE inspirational figure to many and his works are classics that never fail to entertain.

This comment is not related to Umno Youth's attempts to acquire the rights to all P. Ramlee materials owned by others but is a reaction to the Golden Kids News' Hari Raya Special, Mari Lihat Siapa Yang Kena.

The one-hour show screened on TV2 at 10.05am on Hari Raya was easily one of the better children's shows I've seen in years.

It involved all the Golden Kids News presenters and two of Golden Teen Stuff personalities, Putra and Albert.

It was actually a spoof, of sorts, of many of the more memorable characters in P. Ramlee movies.

It started with two young men, C.D (Albert) and K.C (Putra) interacting via the Internet. One night, the two get involved in a debate on their favourite filmmakers. K.C. adores P. Ramlee while C.D. admires Steven Spielberg. After "arguing" for a while, the two are somehow cut off.

While waiting to get back online, the two guys fall asleep and dream the same dream. Okay, so it's a bit predictable but it worked.

In the dream (where anything can happen), the two end up in two places. CD lands in Kampung Hitam where all the "bad" P. Ramlee characters live - from Mak Dara (Ibu Mertuaku) to Sazali (Anakku Sazali) to Ketua Penyamun (Ali Baba & 40 Penyamun) to Haji Bakhil (Labu Labi).

K.C., on the other hand, befriends the people of Kampung Putih. Among them are Sabariah (Ibu Mertuaku), Ali Baba, Mardiana and Apek (Ali Baba & 40 Penyamun).

The residents of both kampungs, who are obviously rivals, are in search of Kasim Selamat (the blind saxophonist in Ibu Mertuaku), for their own reasons.

The whole scheme does sound rather ordinary, but what makes Mari Lihat Siapa Yang Kena interesting is its execution and characterisation.

First, the dream sequences involving the P. Ramlee characters were presented in a letterbox format, giving it a very classic movie mood. The sepia tone also suited the mood.

Music from P. Ramlee movies was used. All these resulted in a rather amusing production.

Best of all, the children who played the roles - perfectly made-up and costumed - are talented. Syairah Nadia Mohamed, who played Sabariah, for instance, did her job quite well.

The opening scene, which had her pining for her love, Kasim Selamat, by "molesting" a miserable transistor radio (which seemed to be the source of the "huge" sound of Jangan Tinggal Daku) is quite cute.

Of course we have the Golden Kids News presenters who gave convincing and promising performances. Among them are Kelvin Lim Fung Yuan as the Apek (who sewed up Kasim Baba's body in the original film), Andrea Chong Su Lynn (Haji Bakhil), Darshana Sivanathan (Sidek Sigaraga), Khairul Azri Sabri (Ali Baba), Khairul Amanda Sabri (Annie Jasmin) and Syamalan Subramaniam (Sazali).

After all, when we have young people playing the parts, no matter how they portray them, the result is still cute and quite funny.

Albert, who plays C.D., especially, shows the most promise as an actor

as he looked most confident in his role as the cheeky loyar buruk guy, while Putra did not disappoint either.

Its main strength is certainly the overall concept and the seamless technical work. The pacing, which relied on creative editing, is handled nicely, and that added to the shine of this simple production.

Oh yes, the flashback of interviews handled by Golden Kids News presenter Khairul Azri with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, for example, as well as many foreign "movers", made one proud that our young people are capable and are not to be underestimated.

Television Airtime Services Sdn Bhd (the same producer of Golden Teen Stuff and Golden Kids News) should be commended, while Aznil Nawawi, who wrote and directed Mari Lihat Siapa Yang Kena should be congratulated for a good job.

The only grouse is that it was aired at 10.30am (right after Raya prayers), when relatives and friends were congregating. Maybe TV2 could re-screen this show , especially at a more suitable hour so that more people can enjoy it.

Here's hoping for more such programmes for children (and adults alike), soon.

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