

03/09/2001

Dr M's poem touches the hearts of audience at inaugural recital

Nelson Fernandez

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Melayu Mudah Lupa, a poem by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on how the Malays should not forget their past struggles and sufferings, was heard as a song for the first time at the Malam Deklamasi Angkasapuri poetry recital tonight.

However, it was his other meaningful poem to the Malays, Perjuangan Yang Belum Selesai, that touched the hearts of the audience at the packed Auditorium Perdana. They gave the Prime Minister a standing ovation after it was sung by artiste Nora.

Dr Mahathir himself could not contain his emotions and by the time his 1996 poem on the Malay community's painful experience of colonialism was sung midway, he was moved to tears.

The poem and Melayu Mudah Lupa, which was recited by the Prime Minister at the Umno general assembly in May and sung by the Ibrahim Bachik group, were the highlight of the inaugural event that also showcased the works of renowned poets and personalities.

These included Tan Sri A. Samad Ismail, Usman Awang, Latiff Mohidin, Ahmad Ramli, Lim Swee Tin, Associate Professor Dr Siti Zainon Ismail, Rahman Shaari, Khalid Salleh and JM Aziz.

Among the artistes who sang songs based on several popular poems were Ramli Sarip, Koprata, M. Nasir and Safura.

Jointly organised by RTM and Berita Harian Sdn Bhd, the poetry recital was accompanied by the RTM orchestra.

The poems were categorised under four segments: spiritual, love, family and patriotism.

Among those present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin, Information Ministry parliament secretary Datuk Zainuddin Maidin and Berita Harian group editor Datuk Ahmad Rejal Arbee.

Patriotism filled the air when Lim, who was born and raised in Kelantan, took to the stage with an almost flawless recital of his poem Warga Malaysia.

Samad's Bicara Dengan Teman Lama, which was first recited by the Ramon Magsaysay award winner in 1996, was also uniquely presented in a song and recital by Ibrahim's group.

Berita Harian head of literature and culture unit Wan Omar Wan Ahamed, popularly known as Sutung Umar RS, recited his poem Nur 1 while Utusan Melayu entertainment reporter Tengku Khalidah Bidin recited Aku Anak Kroni.

Rahman's poem Pesan Ibu Beribu-ribu, with its simple but catchy words, brought smiles to the people's faces when it was beautifully recited by his daughter Intan Marhayu.

Several other poems were also turned into songs, with Safura rendering another of Lim's famous poem, Sesekali, while Abu Bakar Ellah's performance for his fast-paced Orang Kita was also a favourite among the audience.

Ramli Sarip and Ahmad Ramli sang the songs Taman Rohani and Katakan Padaku respectively.