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`3R' thrives on hot topics

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FOR a local programme to have lasted six seasons of 13 episodes each says a lot - there must be something about it to have kept audiences interested.

We are talking about the youth programme 3R, and the secret lies in the issues that hosts Azah Yazmin Yusof, Low Ngai Yuen and latest addition Kartini Kamalul Arifin have highlighted in the past.

For the new season, even more controversial topics will be presented, including an episode on sexually transmitted diseases.

Following the launch of 3R's sixth season, members of the media and selected youths were treated to the screening of the aforementioned episode at MidValley Megamall in Kuala Lumpur. Those present included 3R executive producer Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir.

Always at the forefront of change, 3R now comes in a revamped format. Besides the usual content, viewers will get to watch a seven-minute drama segment on the issue to be highlighted at the start of each show. Every episode will see Azah, Yuen and Kartini role-playing to help make the issue more realistic.

The producers feel that by having this segment, the audience will be more comfortable with that particular issue and relate to it.

3R producer Lina Tan admits that one of the main challenges is to get past the censorship hurdle.

"We don't know what we cannot show. Therefore, we try to push the envelope in certain matters," said Lina.

On censorship, Marina has this to say: "For us at 3R, we feel that information is important and we know it is important. Censorship is something all of us here have to work through with the members of the Censorship Board. People feel vulnerable because of the lack of information and the television is a wonderful way of providing it."

The line-up of topics include lesbianism and dying young. Whether they get past the Censorship Board remains to be seen.

Come May 4, 3R will be on air every Sunday (7.30pm) over TV3. For Astro subscribers, Season Six premieres on May 9, every Friday at 8pm on the Ria channel.