

**'Malaysian Gods' : revisiting Sept 20, 1998**  
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All eyes are on Sept 16 where the winds of change are expected to blow away the ruling coalition from the corridors of power... or at least this is what opposition stalwart Anwar Ibrahim and his supporters claim.

But how many of us remember Sept 20, 1998? This was the date which witnessed the birth of a massive political awakening.

darndest book launch 170907 amir lookingOn this fateful day, tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Kuala Lumpur to usher in what will later be known as the 'reformasi' movement.

Controversial film producer Amir Muhammad retraces the events in his latest offering, Malaysian Gods.

"Malaysian Gods is something I made to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Sept 20, 1998 anti-government demonstration in KL.

"The title was chosen because we in Malaysia have a bad habit of treating our politicians like gods. So this is an ironic reference to that. It is certainly not political propaganda but more of a celebration of spaces, including democratic space," he told Malaysiakini.

"What was significant (during the time) was the numbers (who attended the demonstrations). People were collectively just shocked by a lot of things at the time, and they choose to express that shock and outrage in one go," he added.

**'Experimental fictional documentary'**

The 68-minute film begins with an unnamed narrator walking along the same path that the demonstration took, from Masjid Negara to PWTC.

"It starts to rain but he continues walking. He starts to not only reminisce about the demonstration, but to ponder the buildings and people around him," explained Amir.

malaysian gods mg teaser poster 110908There are no actors or interviews in the film. Neither is the infamous archive footage of riot police battering hapless protestors used.

"It is not a conventional movie. It has elements of an experimental video, documentary and fiction. I thought it would be more interesting if the narrator was one fictional character who's impressions are made up of a lot of personalities," he added.

Though the film surrounds the tumultuous periods of rowdy street demonstrations, Amir denies that he is attempting to glorify demonstrations or mob rule.

"I think street demonstrations are a vital part of democracy, but it's different from mob rule. A government can still be one that consists of mob rule even if it bans street demonstrations," he explained.

Unlike his previous movies such as *Lelaki Komunis Terakhir* and *Apa Khabar Orang Kampung*, *Malaysian Gods* had no problems with the Censorship Board and was given the green light on Sept 5, three weeks after submission.

According to Amir, the film cost a modest RM10,000 to make and is produced by independent production house Da Huang Pictures. The film also marks the debut of prominent lawyer Malik Imtiaz Sarwar in the film industry as he is credited as an executive producer.

Screening would be on Sept 20 at GSC 1-Utama, Selangor at 5pm, 7pm and 9pm for one day only. Those who miss it would have to wait for the DVD release later this year.

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