

Publication: Global Indonesian Voices

Date: 21 March 2015

Headline: GAYA 2015: Malabero Review – When Raffles was in Indonesia

GAYA 2015: Malabero Review – When Raffles was in Indonesia

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 21, 2015

BY TONY SUGIARTA



Stamford Raffles (played by Aditya Tanojo) and Lady Sophia Hull (played by Joanna Oey Jing Xian) at GAYA 2015: Malabero (Photo Credit: GAYA 2015)

Singapore, GIVnews.com -The spotlight was on again at the SOTA Drama Theatre, Singapore, last Sunday (15 March 2015). GAYA 2015: Malabero featured Singapore founding father, Sir Stamford Raffles, when he was posted to Indonesia.

The performance highlighted a different, and relatively unknown, story of Raffles when he was in charge in Bengkulu and his loving relationship with his wife, Lady Sophia, and their children. In parallel, the show also touched upon the struggles and conflict between the Bugis and local Bengkulu people to seek better lives which was aptly represented by the Fort Malabero, the symbol of oppression and conflict as well as British power and supremacy in Indonesia.

Despite of a rocky start, the actors quickly developed into strong and convincing characters, notably Raffles himself (played by Aditya Tanojo) and the Nameless Girl (played by Aritya Ledi Dwi Christiani Manurung). The plot was easily followed yet the underlying themes of conflict and unity, depicted by Fort Malabero, as well as the notion of “everyone has a part in nation building” represented by the Nameless Girl, were not clearly conveyed.

Publication: Global Indonesian Voices

Date: 21 March 2015

Headline: GAYA 2015: Malabero Review – When Raffles was in Indonesia

Noting minimal involvement of external professional experts, these students had executed a stage of commendable performance. Songs and dances were incorporated with modern elements like contemporary and lyrical hip hop routine. Indonesian arts scene has indeed progressed and it would be more impressive if audiences could be treated to more Indonesian dances and tunes than just a glimpse of re-interpreted Saman dance.

At the very last scene, the Nameless Girl told Raffles, “Sir, my name is...”, immediately followed by a black out. The performance literally ended with a question mark on everyone’s mind. The show strongly urged the audience to ponder, to reflect and to initiate conversation, especially about how we should embrace our differences in order to make this world a better place to live in.

GAYA 2015: Malabero, staged by 93 international casts and crews from Singapore Management University Komunitas Indonesia (Singapore Management University Indonesian Community, SMUKI), has captivated more than 800 audiences, including notable guests Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore, H E Dr. Andri Hadi, and Dr Chua Soo Pong, a noted Chinese Opera proponent.