

Evening of surprises

By MUMTAJ BEGUM



Best actress award winner Sharifah Amani (*Gubra*) and best actor award winner Afdlin Shauki (*Buli Balik*) showing off their trophies.

IF IT was up to them, it seems that film directors would pick their own cast members as winners of the best actor and best actress awards at the 19th Malaysia Film Festival.

Director Shuhaimi Baba predicted that Maya Karin of *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam 2* (PHSM 2) would walk away with the best actress trophy, while Bade Azmi expected Rosyam Nor (of *Bilut*) to win the best actor award – two favourites of the event held at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, on Sunday night.

However, the best actress and best actor trophies went to Sharifah Amani for *Gubra* and Afdlin Shauki for *Buli Balik*, respectively. *Gubra* director Yasmin

Honours list

Best Film: *Gubra*
Best Director: Shuhaimi Baba (*Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam 2*)
Best Actor: Afdlin Shauki (*Buli Balik*)
Best Actress: Sharifah Amani (*Gubra*)
Best Supporting Actor: Hans Isaac (*Buli Balik*)
Best Supporting Actress: Sazzy Falak (*Gol & Gincu*)
Most Promising Actor: Que Haidar (*Castello*)
Most Promising Actress: Carmen Soo (*The 3rd Generation*)
Most Promising Director: Syed Azidi Abdul Aziz (*Persona Non Grata*)
Best Screenplay: Yasmin Ahmad (*Gubra*)
Best Original Story: Afdlin Shauki (*Baik Punya Cilok*)
Best Cinematography: Yong Choon Lin (*The 3rd Generation*)
Best Editor: Bade Hj Azmi (*Castello*)
Best Musical Score: Khoo Fok Sin (*Bilut*)
Best Art Direction: Kamarul Nizam and Aida Fitri Buyung (*Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam 2*)
Best Sound: Azman Abu Hassan (*Castello*)
Best Original Theme Song: Ku Seru performed by Misha Omar (*Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam 2*)
Best Costume: Eric Cheong for *The 3rd Generation*
Best Poster: *Gubra*
Best Short Film: *Marginal*
Best Animated Shorts: *Long Lost Love*
Best Documentary: *Profil Seni Pak Dollah Baju Merah*

***Most Popular Film:** *Gol & Gincu*
Most Popular Actor: Adam AF2 (*Main-Main Cinta*)
Most Popular Actress: Eja (*Bilut*)
Most Popular Song: *Hanya UntukMu* performed by Mawi for *Persona Non Grata*
** This category was determined via SMS votes.*

Special Jury Awards
Film that reflect patriotism: *Bilut*
Film that is most innovative: *Man, Laksa*
Film with excellent stuntwork: *Remp-IT*
Film that charted the Box-Office: *Bujang Senang*



Maya Karin was nominated for her role in *Pontianak Harum Sundal Malam 2*.



Far left: Nur Fazura, the star of *Gol & Gincu*.

The 3rd Generation's Carmen Soo in a hand-painted *ao dai* with the film's costume designer Eric Cheong.

Ahmad said that she had hoped Amani would win as the young actress was really good in her performance. "Everyone in the cast was exceptional; even if you hate the film, you've got to acknowledge the performances were very, very good," said Yasmin.

Meanwhile, Afdlin, who came to the event straight from the movie set of *Sumo*, confessed that he was surprised with his win. As he pointed out, *Buli Balik* is a comedy and he is on the large side – two no-nos for an event like the awards night. No wonder he started his acceptance speech with, "Who said fat people couldn't win?"

Buli Balik was written and directed by Afdlin. The film also gave Hans Isaac the best supporting actor award. Afdlin said: "It would seem like I am constantly starring in my own films, but the truth is there are not many roles for big people."

Amani and Afdlin's win proved that you never know who will walk away with the big prize. For an event that lasted almost three hours – and shown live over Astro Ria – there was no clear-cut winners, even minutes before the end of the evening.

Rosyam Nor was equally surprised that an anti-hero film like *Castello* would receive three awards. Carmen Soo, who won the most promising actress award for the locally-made Chinese film *The 3rd Generation*, feels the film's win is great news. This was the first time a non-Malay film was nominated.

PHSM 2 received a total of 15 nominations – the biggest number for the evening. And yet, for the longest time, it was lagging behind *Castello* and *The 3rd Generation*, two films that received three awards each despite each being nominated in six categories. But PHSM 2 caught up in the end when it won for best director, giving it a total of three awards.

When asked if Shuhaimi was disappointed PHSM 2 didn't win the best film award even when it won for best director, Shuhaimi said: "You do get stuck with the idea that if you win best director, you'd

naturally get the best film, but that's not always the case. I have seen *Gubra*, I liked it and I think Yasmin should win."

The yet-to-be-released *Bilut* received the second highest number of nominations – 14 – but won only for best original music score.

Director Bade was not too worried that *Bilut*'s poor showing at the festival would affect interest in the film, which is set in the 1960s when Felda was first initiated. The movie focuses on the first settler who, despite the help he received, faced all sorts of problems.

Gubra received 12 nominations and won four. Yasmin confessed she had hoped for the best actress and best screenplay awards. The director who was absent during the ceremony as she had to judge short films for Starlight Cinema learnt that she won for both via SMS from friends and family members. Her sister, Orked, accepted the award on her behalf. It had also won for best poster.

Yasmin said her mentors, Kamal Mustaffa and Nang Sidigu, told her that a good director needs only two things – good actors and a good script.

"My hope is always to make a good film. I never hope for anything," she said. When asked what makes her film so appealing, she said: "Because they talk to humanity; they talk to the audience as human beings, transcending race, gender and age."

Host AC Mizal who got the audience laughing throughout the awards ceremony with a good punchline from time to time did a pretty decent job for once.

Presenters should also be briefed to keep their bantering to a minimum and to keep personal opinions in check.

In one case, a veteran actor insisted on talking about himself while making crude remarks about his co-presenter and the winner.

With all things there is bound to be a bit of good and bad. But there's a consensus among these artistes that being nominated is an honour in itself, no matter who wanted whom to win.