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Truly engaging

entertainment



MATERNAL LOVE: Auntie Noni (Datuk Faridah Merican) is a model mother figure in *Adam The Musical*

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ADAM The Musical almost hits the mark in its quest to educate while entertaining the audience of the realities of HIV, but misses by a whisker.

The simple tale of HIV-afflicted Adam who battles the fatal disease as he deals with his loved ones, including his fiancée Sylvia and Auntie Noni is appealing on its own. Throw in honest thoughts out loud and discrimination faced by HIV sufferers and the society at large — one gets a huge dose of reality.

Written by Mark Beau De Silva, with Adam (Malik Taufiq) as protagonist, it cleverly depicts the modern day scenario of when life can go horribly amiss with a call from destiny. The main characters in the musical are interesting and reflect individuals one can relate to.

Although the character of Adam is a little dreary, his partner Sylvia (Maria Yasmin) is the ideal lover, as she deals with her man's life-threatening medical predicament while going through battles of her own — converting to a new religion, her tenacious and devout sis-

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ter Elsa and the uncertainty of her marriage plans.

Among the prominent characters in the musical include two transvestites affectionately called Jambu (*Mo Dee*) and Mangga (*Fairuz Tauhid*). Their colourful attire and straight talk got many laughs from the audience while Auntie Noni (*Datuk Faridah Merican*) is a model mother figure for Adam.

The script not only expressed the trials and tribulations of an HIV-sufferer and those close to him, it also reveals the complicated and sensitive subject faced by thousands of Malaysians in multi-cultural relationships — conversion. Through the eyes of Elsa (*Sandra Mannas Wolf*) the audience is reminded about the difficulties faced by the family when one is thinking about converting.

De Silva does not shy away from projecting the social stigma surrounding HIV that simmers beneath the surface of Malaysians today.

Musically, most of the songs in the production are catchy, especially where the ensemble is featured. Their dance moves complement the songs flawlessly and their passion for the songs are clearly evident. Among the standout songs by Lim Chuang Yik and Teng Ky-Gan are *Jumbo-Size* and *We Are Alive* — the first about the

importance of using contraceptives and second, celebrating life as it is.

Some songs resonated better than others during solo performances by leads. The more memorable presentations were done by Yasmin, for the song *It's Funny* and the truly entertaining Tria Aziz as the wheelchair loving spirit Mabel.

Directed by Joe Hafsham, the musical also featured an eight-piece band that accompanied the cast. They gave the theatre a 'live' feel throughout the two-hour musical.

The one unsatisfactory aspect about *Adam The Musical* is its sudden ending. All in all, the musical achieved its objective to raise awareness of the seriousness of HIV and AIDS, in a non-preachy or lecture-like method with entertaining songs and actions.

Adam The Musical follows *The Actors Studio's Life Sdn Bhd 5: I'm Positive* in March, a collaboration with the Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

The musical is now playing at The Actors Studio Lot 10 until June 20. Shows are at 8.30pm daily except Mondays and at 3pm on Sundays.

Tickets start from RM30 to RM60. Call **03-21422009** for tickets and more information.