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## ADOI ONLINE EDITION

## The Passing of a Legend

(12 votes, average: 4.75 out of 5)



I have just returned from Yasmin Ahmad's burial at the Muslim Burial ground in Puchong Section 13. She passed away last night around 11.30pm after a stroke and was laid to rest at 12.40pm today.

Earlier, the family held solat jenazah at Masjid Abu Bakar As-Siddiq in SS19, after which, the public was allowed to pay their last respects to Yasmin. The hearse has left the house for the mosque at 9.30am.

I last visited her at the Damansara Specialist Hospital yesterday morning and said a prayer after talking to her husband Tan Yew Leong.

My daughter who played a dance role in

Yasmin's latest movie *Talentine* was among the hundreds from around the world who posted messages on her Facebook page:

July 25, 2009 at 10:34 pm.

Dear God please save Auntie Yasmin!! All the love from your little dancer. – *Anisya Kaur*

Personally, I have yet to come to terms with her loss. Words escape me at this moment in time. All I will say is that she was the greatest there ever was in Malaysian advertising and to a large extent Malaysian cinema. A creative soul whose work touched millions of hearts across Malaysia.

Yasmin is a critically-acclaimed multi-award winning film director, writer and scriptwriter and also executive creative director at Leo Burnett Kuala Lumpur. Her television commercials and films are well-known for their humour, heart and love bridging cross-cultural barriers, in particular her ads for Petronas, the national oil and gas company. When asked once if her commercials were about nation building she replied, "I hate borders and I hate those arbitrary divisions between people. I simply want to make films about humanity. Ever since I was young, I was always concerned about humanity, not in a Mother-Theresa-kind of way, but was interested in the day-to-day-interactions between people. I find that in our pursuit to achieve success, we sometimes forget some basic human qualities, like kindness and compassion. I always try to inject those feelings that I have into any film I make, whether it is an advertising film or a movie. For me, film is the opportunity to remind human beings to be human again."

Many luminaries were present at the funeral including actress Sharifah Amani, Dato' Sri Ahmad Farid Ridzuan, AirAsia group chief executive officer Datuk Seri Tony Fernandes, singer Jaclyn Victor, fellow film director and producer Suhaimi Baba, *Talentine* actor Hon Kahoe, singer cum songwriter Peter Teo, former Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon and the President of the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents (4As) Malaysia Datuk Vincent Lee.



Her movies, *Rabun*, *Sepet*, *Gubra*, *Mukhsin*, *Muallaf* and *Talentine* have won multiple awards internationally. Unfortunately due to our local censorship board, some of them were not aired here in Malaysia. Even if they were, they were heavily cut. Her first feature film *Sepet*, a Romeo and Juliet story between a Malay middle class girl and a Chinese vendor of pirated VCDs, was only allowed to be screened in Malaysia after nine cuts were made. (The objectionable scenes included one shot that showed Orked's father tickling his wife in bed). The censors swallowed a bitter pill a year later when *Sepet* upstaged Malaysia's most expensive film ever, *Puteri Gunung Ledang*, and swept six awards including Best Picture at



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the 18th at the Malaysian Film Festival!

In 2003, she made her first feature film, *Rabun*, a TV movie produced for TV3.

In 2004, her first cinematic release *Sepet*, won her international accolades and awards such as the Grand Prix at the Creteil International Women's Film Festival in France.

Later that year, *Sepet* also picks up the Best Asian Film award at the Tokyo International Film festival.

In 2005, Yasmin receives the inaugural Hall of Fame Award at the Malaysian Creative Circle (MC2) Awards.

In 2006, *Gubra* wins the Best Screenplay award at the Malaysian Film Festival. And her films are featured in a special retrospective at the Tokyo International Film Festival.

In 2007, local clerics slammed her movie *Muallaf* because its lead actress shaved her head for the role of a runaway girl, an act they said violated Muslim tenets by making a woman look like a man. "I didn't expect this uproar," Yasmin told The Associated Press later. "But come to think of it, it's a Yasmin Ahmad film ...overseas it's always been good news. But here I get a lot of trouble."



That same year *Mukhsin*, her ode to childhood love, garnered two awards – the Grand Prix from the Kinderfilmfest International Jury and a Generation K-Plus Crystal Bear Special Mention at the 57th Berlin International Film Festival, one of the top three film festivals in the world.

In 2007, she became the first Malaysian, and the first woman, to be inducted into Campaign Brief's Advertising Hall of Fame.

Last year one of her television commercial for Petronas titled 'Tan Hong Ming' won a Gold Medal at Cannes, the first for a commercial from Malaysia, and it became the fourth-most awarded commercial of the year in the world. In November she was inducted into the Malaysian Advertising Hall of Fame by the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Malaysia.

Her latest film, *Talentine*, has been selected for this year's Tokyo International Film Festival, which will be held from Oct 17 to 25.

This year Yasmin embarked on two international films: a Japanese movie called *Wasurenagusa* (*Forget Me Not*) with a Malaysian-Japanese cast and *Go Thaddeus*, a Singapore project about the inspiring life of the late Singaporean triathlete Thaddeus Cheong.

"By bridging religious and racial differences through the unifying dimension of art, Yasmin was in a class of her own. Her films were never short of social critiques that opened the public's eyes to the importance of unity and understanding." – *Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim*

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Desmond CROWE said:



How terribly sad! Malaysia loses another humane, open, creative mind. She was a director and writer of great warmth and compassion.

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July 28, 2009

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Pius Eugene said:



I first met Yasmin while at O&M in 83-84. We were smoking buddies. Then and always there was this Sparkle in her eyes and Magick aura about her, her interest in copywriting and creativity.

I got to know Yew Leong seperately, through my freelance in Theater & design work. Together they have done awe inspiring works, there's a part of each other in their works.

I am thankful for the opportunity to have met and known such a wonderful person. She and her work have left a lasting impression n leagacy not only for the local Ad & Film industry...but for our Politicians and our Leaders to pick a cue through her works of what Malsysia can aspire to be.

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