



PRODUCTION NOTES

Petualangan Sherina (Sherina's Adventure) is a new film from Miles Productions, directed by Riri Riza and produced by Mira Lesmana, who have worked together on a previous film titled *Kuldesak*. Jujur Prananto wrote the screenplay based on a story written by Lesmana, while accomplished musician Elfa Secioria composed the score as well as the eight original songs that include *Lihatlah Lebih Dekat* (Look a Little Closer), *Menikmati Hari* (Enjoying the Day), *Jagoan* (Hotshot) and *Persahabatan* (Friendship).

The film stars the 10-year-old Indonesian singing sensation Sherina Munaf and the young newcomer Derby Romero, as well as award-winning actors Mathias Muchus, Didi Petet, Butet Kartaredjasa, and, making her acting debut, pop singer Ucy Nurul.

It began with two filmmakers who aspire to make a film for Indonesian children and families. Riri Riza, a young director who have made several films both for television and the big screen as well as some music videos, wanted to make a theatrical spectacle that can be enjoyed by the whole family. Mira Lesmana, a film producer, mother of two, is a big fan of musicals who have always dreamed of making her own musical one day, in addition to her longtime yearning of having suitable films for her two boys. They have previously collaborated, working on the documentary series *Anak Seribu Pulau* (Child of a Thousand Islands), the film *Kuldesak*—a compendium of four stories for which they each wrote and directed one story—and the television film *Buku Catatanku* (My Journal). Riza and Lesmana have long searched for a potential little star who would be suitable to play the lead role in their little movie.

They both discovered that potential in the multi-talented Sherina Munaf. Riza and Lesmana met with Sherina when the two were commissioned to make the music videos of the burgeoning new star, who has just released her very first album

in 1999. Both Riza and Lesmana were hugely impressed with Sherina's personality and potential.

"This kid has extraordinary talents," says Riza. "She has had a long and consistent vocal training, she can do ballet, she plays jazz on the piano, speaks fluent English and a straight-A student. And she is very energetic and expressive."

Sherina proves to be a natural, too, in front of the camera, motivating Riza and Lesmana even more to make a film with the child as the lead star. They approached Sherina and her parents and offered their idea. Fortunately, Sherina and her parents agreed to participate.

The Sherina film project began in June 1999. From the start, Riza and Lesmana decided to make a musical, not only because Sherina, the star and the muse, is a singer, but also because they aim to invite all Indonesian families to go see it together and enjoy it.

"A musical will do just that," says Lesmana. "Because anybody can enjoy music, especially Sherina's music."

For the songwriting and scoring, the filmmakers relied on Elfa Secioria, an experienced musician who have also worked on Sherina's first album, *When I Grow Up*. Secioria worked relatively fast. The eight songs in this film were done in about a week, and were immediately brought to the recording studio. He admitted he found little difficulty, although he had to reverse his usual working process.

"Usually I compose the music first, and the lyrics follow," says Secioria. "But in this case, Mira has already provided the lyrics in the script, so I only had to write the music."

The story, written by Lesmana, was brought to veteran screenwriter Jujur Prananto, who has worked with Lesmana and Riza in *Buku Catatanku*. They went through draft by draft, having constant discussions, while maintaining the story's main philosophy, which developed with the use of certain locations in the film.

The Boscha Observatorium in Lembang is the most prominent location, purposefully picked by the filmmakers because this interesting place is mostly forgotten. The film seeks to attract its audience to visit Boscha. But this location is

PETUALANGAN Sherina

also used to emphasize the “look a little closer” philosophy that serves as the film’s soul.

The screenwriting process also brought Riza, Lesmana and Prananto through some characters’ name changes and several title revisions. The original title that Lesmana proposed was *Petualangan Vera & Elmo*. But Sherina’s newfound stardom, as they were making the film, made them use Sherina as the main character’s name, with the consideration that the public, already used to Sherina’s image, may not find it easy to see Sherina playing somebody else. Thus, the film got the title *Petualangan Sherina*. Dozens of titles came and went, but *Petualangan Sherina* stayed. Meanwhile, for the name of the boy who is Sherina’s nemesis, Lesmana wanted to retain Elmo, but “my colleagues liked Sadam better,” said Lesmana submissively. Sometimes even the originator has to submit to the will of the majority.

June, 2000



MILES PRODUCTIONS presents

A Musical by RIRI RIZA

PETUALANGAN SHERINA
(Sherina's Adventure)

SHERINA MUNAF

DERBY ROMERO

UCY NURUL

MATHIAS MUCHUS

DIDI PETET

RATNA RIANTIARNO

HENIDAR AMROE BUTET KARTAREDJASA DEWI HUGHES

YADI TIMO SAS WIDJANARKO NOVA "OMES" NUGRAHA

ARRY VARIANTSYAH RAY BURHANUDDIN EPI KUSNANDAR

and DJADUK FERianto as Kertarajasa

Director of Photography YADI SUGANDHY *Art Director* EROS EFLIN

Costume NUNIEK SADEWO *Make-up* RAVINA

Sound ADI MOLANA and ADITYAWAN SUSANTO

Editor SENTOT SAHID *Choreography* RITA DEWI SALEH

Songs and Music Illustration ELFA SECIORIA

Screenplay by JUJUR PRANANTO *Story by* MIRA LESMANA

Producer MIRA LESMANA

Directed by RIRI RIZA



SYNOPSIS

Sherina (Sherina Munaf), a usually energetic little girl, is gloomy when she finds out that her family is leaving their home in the capital city Jakarta for their new residence in Bandung, West Java. The move signifies a splendid opportunity for Sherina's father, Mr. Darmawan (Mathias Muchus), a Japanese-educated agronomist who gladly leaves his position at a supermarket in the metropolitan to take the job of his dreams: supervising a big plantation in the peaceful countryside of Lembang. The plantation's owner, Mr. Ardiwilaga (Didi Petet), is being overwhelmed with problems; his crops are failing, and a businessman named Kertarajasa (Djaduk Ferianto) is doing all his might to drive Ardiwilaga out of the place so he can build a luxurious resort hotel in the land.

Sherina cannot care less about all that. She is sad for having to leave a city that has been home to her all these years and to say goodbye to all her dear friends and go to a strange, new place. Her suspicions are affirmed when, on the first day at her new school, she already becomes the latest casualty of the school bully, Sadam (Derby Romero), a mischievous brat who, with his gang of unruly boys, comes up with ways to make the lives of his schoolmates miserable.

But woe is Sadam, for Sherina is a fearless girl who will not be mistreated and stay silent. She even mobilizes her new friends to stand up against Sadam and his gang.

PETUALANGAN Sherina

Even though she had a bad start, Sherina slowly begins to adapt to her new, more natural surrounding. She listens to her mother's (Ucy Nurul) advice for her to "look at everything a little closer, and not prejudge anything." And Sherina discovers that even a bratty kid like Sadam has sides to his personality that she never imagines before. The two children learn the values of friendship and cooperation when, during their school break, they have to face-off a gang of crooks led by Mr. Raden (Butet Kartaredjasa) in a thrilling and exciting adventure....

Duration: 118 minutes

BIOGRAPHY

Mira Lesmana (Producer/Writer/Song Lyrics)

The daughter of late legendary Indonesian guitarist Jack Lesmana, and also the sister of reknown jazz pianist Indra Lesmana, Mira Lesmana is used to be known as a writer for song lyrics. But nowadays she's known more as a filmmaker, especially after she collaborated with Riri Riza, Nan T. Achnas and Rizal Mantovani in making *Kuldesak (Cul-de-Sac)*, a feature film. In the midst of Indonesia's film industry crisis, the film gives it's own mark, not only because of its success in Indonesia's theatres or its screenings at respected festivals abroad, but also because of the story of its crews and actors, who dedicated their work without being paid at all. The film was made with their idealism to make a feature film although most people had a pessimistic view towards the Indonesian Film scene.

Lesmana studied at the Jakarta Arts' Institute until 1988, with a major in directing. She then worked on several places still within the audio-visual world, four years at Lintas Advertising and three years at Katena Films before she started Miles Productions in 1995. Through her 16 years of career, she has delivered many advertisements and music videos. One of her works that is widely known is the "RCTI Oke" campaign in 1989. Her name is put to rise after she becomes the producer of *Anak Seribu Pulau (Children of Thousand Islands)*, a documentary series in 1996.

In 1997, Lesmana and her Miles Productions made a mystery series titled *Mata Ketiga (Third Eye)* that hasn't interest any TV station to air it. With Riri Riza and Jujur Prananto, she produced a TV drama titled *Buku Catatanku (My Notebook)*, which, like *Petualangan Sherina*, also tells a story of a little girl which gets involved in an adventure. On *Festival Sinetron Indonesia (Indonesian Film Television Awards)* in 1998, *Buku Catatanku* got a nomination for Best Film.

PETUALANGAN Sherina

With *Petualangan Sherina*, Lesmana didn't only continue her career as a filmmaker, but also embracing again, after some time, her other talent: writing song lyrics.

She lives in Jakarta with her husband, actor Mathias Muchus and their two sons. Lesmana's children keep on giving her ideas on many aspects while making *Petualangan Sherina*.

Riri Riza (director)

He may be small and not very noticeable, but certainly he is someone you should give a certain regard to. Born on 1970, Muhammad Rivai Riza is a veteran in audio-visual world: he has directed six documentaries, nine music videos, six Public Service Advertisements, three films made for television, and uncountable commercials. He was also involved in a multi-national production, as an assistant director in *Victory*, a film by British director Mark People, starring Willem Dafoe and Sam Neill, which took place in East Java, 1994.

His main ambition, however, is to become a feature film director, and that ambition was made true when with Mira Lesmana, Nan T. Achnas and Rizal Mantovani they co-wrote and directed *Kuldesak*, which began its production in 1996, but because of many circumstances, the film could only be completed and screened for public in 1998.

With *Petualangan Sherina*, his second feature, he establishes his name as a filmmaker, and bringing out once more the theme that constantly shows in his works, children and their world. This is the theme that he has brought in since his first film, *Sonata Kampung Bata (Brick Village Sonnets)*, a short film he made for his final project for his graduation from Jakarta Arts' Institute in 1993 with a major on directing. And in such an early stage of his career, the film was rewarded as the third prize winner in Oberhausen Film Festival in Germany, 1994.

The same theme keeps reappearing in Riza's latter works, most of them are collaboration with Lesmana and her Miles Productions, a relationship that has been built for five years.

In a documentary series *Anak Seribu Pulau*, produced by Lesmana, Riza directed 2 episodes; *Siulan Bambu Toraja (The Whistle of Toraja's Bamboo)*, which tells a story of a child musician from Sulawesi, and *Kupu-kupu di Atas Batikku (Butterflies On My Batik)*, which shows a profile of a little girl who makes batik (hand-painted fabrics) from Central Java.

Buku Catatanku, a TV Drama which was aired on RCTI in order of the International Children's Day in 1997, is Riza's next directing project which shows his concern in children. Through this film, he and Lesmana got a nomination from *Festival Sinetron Indonesia* in 1998 for Best Story.

The consistency in choosing this theme, and also Riza's experience in making video clips (which has brought him some trophies from *Video Musik Indonesia*, an Indonesian Music Video Award) brought him and Lesmana to meet Sherina Munaf, a child prodigy, which Riri directs in three music videos produced by Miles Productions based on the songs from Sherina's first album, *Andai Aku Besar Nanti (When I Get Older)*. This collaboration is the seed of *Petualangan Sherina*, and also two more music videos from Sherina based on the songs from the film.

After *Petualangan Sherina* Riza will complete his I-Sinema Project, a film movement he's involved in, also with Mira and 9 other directors. And right now he's in England with his wife of five years, Wilita Putrinda, to study film on a scholarship from the British Council, the Chevening Award.

September, 2000