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## New action-packed movies to blast the screens soon

By mala

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THROW in some sleek, hot cars and drivers with a penchant for speed, or minimise it to two-wheeled terrors running rampant around a metropolitan city, and a movie will sell.

Action movies however, in general - are hardly top pickings when it comes to being memorable.

While local action movies have been reduced to automobile antics, straight up action flicks have never really been at the forefront of Malaysian cinema, simply due to the financial constraints in affecting the magnitude of blowing everything up around to smithereens for kicks.

Twenty-nine-year old actor-turned-director Farid Kamil Zahari (**right**), however, is so sure that the genre has its following, that he will showcase his ability to best utilise what available resources there are to make the action genre a staple.

Met at a *doa selamat* event for his latest venture, an action-comedy offering in *Pertiga* that has already begun shooting

around Penang, Farid was keen to talk about his upcoming projects.

After the success of his directorial debut in *V3: Samseng Jalanan* which grossed RM3.88 million - no mean feat by any standards - Farid is raring to introduce the genre he wants to champion to local movie-goers.

While his second directorial effort in *Kongsi* will only make the screens in May, Farid is excited over his third project *Pertiga* that will carry on his fight to make the genre an acceptable staple apart from the romantic and horror offerings which currently dominate the scene.



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The Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) graduate who holds a Bachelor's Degree in Performing Arts talked animatedly about his upcoming *Kongsi*, and *Pertiga* which is in the making.

"I'm sure that *Kongsi*, first of all, will do as well as my debut in *V3: Samseng Jalanan* and that there is a place for action movies. I want to prove that an action-packed and stunt-laden movie like *Kongsi*, made for below RM2 million, can be appreciated."

Shot in 30 days with 60 per cent action scenes, the MIG Production Sdn Bhd movie, according to Farid, is fashioned after Hollywood blow-'em-ups while keeping the identity of local productions intact.

"In terms of directing, *Kongsi* is an improvement from what I've done in *V3* and it can be taken to a bigger market as the idea is fresh and I do hope it will be able to entice the audiences to be receptive to movies of this genre. I like romantic comedies, and I look forward to taking on the genre, but my focus is on action as it's my first love - even as a movie-goer."

*Kongsi* indeed does look promising despite whatever budget limitations of our producers who can't afford to splurge like Hollywood.

Imagine a Nissan NSX 180 battered and much more damages with three stuntmen in the form of professional drifters in the fold to work out some really dramatic fast-paced, road action.

For *Kongsi*, Farid is backed by three assistant directors in Ismail Bob Hasim, Shahizan Sahip and Mohd Khairi Asyraf M Zaki, as well as his own brother Fadzil Bahri, 25, who is also responsible for the script.

While he will stay behind the camera for *Kongsi*, not choosing to act as in *V3: Samseng Jalanan* and also *Pertiga*, the movie boasts many up and coming names such as Fizo Omar, Norliana Samsudin Azad Jazmin, Putri Mardiana, Abd Basid and Fida, while also starring the most bankable actor of the past year in Shaheizy Sam.

*Kongsi* is a comedy action film that revolves around ASP Shariff dealing with several murders involving triads and gangsters around Kuala Lumpur.

The race-based organisations clash and when there's a murder, Shariff manages to detect a hired gun named Tumulak who was forced to execute the job to clear his debts.

Shariff then has to deal with more including exposing his own family to harm.

*Kongsi* has so far received extremely good response based on the showing of its preview trailers alone, that Farid is gung-ho to take on *Pertiga*, which is expected to hit the screen later in the year. The former is already targeted as MIG's bet to break the RM10 million mark at the box-office while there are high hopes for the latter.

"*Pertiga* will feature triads and organised crime, and the story is inspired by real life events revolving around the loss of a RM50 million microchip shipment. However it will be an action comedy, where there will be humourous elements injected into it, just like *Kongsi*."

Given a fairly inexperienced and fresh cast, Farid relishes the challenge.

"I have no problems working with newcomers whom I have been part of the selection in the casting process. There are no problems with them being green as they are a talented lot who just need time to grow."

For *Pertiga*, while basically it's in the same mold as *Kongsi*, Farid is looking to change things up in terms of content and approach.

"It's an attempt by me using the narrative structure to introduce something different, based on information I've received revolving real-life events. It's an approach to the genre that is not tried and tested, but I am confident based on research and response thus far with *Kongsi*, so I'm sticking with the same mold but just different elements to make *Pertiga* a step up from *Kongsi*."

Directing is still new to Farid, but taking on acting while directing in *Pertiga*, as he did in *V3: Samseng Jalanan* is not so much a task for him anymore.

"Based on what I've learnt from my acting, as well as that I got my directorial debut while simultaneously being in front of the camera in *V3* - I'm using that experience to also lead the cast for *Pertiga*."

"It's not that difficult to direct and act, in fact it makes directing easier when I'm acting."

If indeed MIG's head honcho David Teo's bet on *Kongsi* rings true, the film will be the production company's best attempt to make box-office history again and break the RM10 million mark. *Pertiga* should indeed up the ante from there.

Whatever it is, both films are definitely among the most anticipated movies of 2011.

Meanwhile, Farid spoke frankly on the uproar over the 23rd Malaysian Film Festival (FMM) that delivered controversial results, especially about being pitted against Best Director winner Syamsul Yusof.

"What's past is past and the focus should now be on the next FFM where the issue of the jury should be looked into. Members of the jury should be vetted and ascertained that the results they come up with will be more sincere."

Farid hopes expert academicians and psychologists as well as other experts in their fields should be absorbed into the jury to take Malaysian films to the next level.

"It should be balanced with industry-related parties to make it a fair representation of what's best. For me, it doesn't matter about what audiences think or feel as this is a festival and it's not about giving them a chance to rate works simply because the conflicts will definitely be based on personal bias and popularity."

And more importantly, when it comes to selection of jury members, he insists, "There should be no one with vested interests involved in the jury, or those who are directly involved in any competing organisation."

As for Syamsul grabbing the top prize and the supposed war of words that ensued, Farid affirmed that there is no animosity on his end.

"For me I have no problem with Syamsul. What happened was, people were trying to set us off against each other. It is part and parcel of the industry. And I accept that. I have no problems with him personally, and I have never criticised him but what I said was based on the ideology of what makes a best director."

He shrugged off reports that both had burned bridges saying that they were never personal friends.

"We don't have personal relations as friends - but merely as an actor and a fellow director. There is no other connection, and whatever relations people have drawn between him and I are embarrassing. I will continue doing my thing, and whatever anyone wants to say, I will just continue to listen and smile."

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