

= Kedok Ketawa =

Kedok Ketawa ([k??d?? k??tawa] ; Indonesian for The Laughing Mask , also known by the Dutch title Het Lachende Masker) is a 1940 action film from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) . Union Films ' first production , it was directed by Jo An Djan . Starring Basoeki Resobowo , Fatimah , and Oedjang , the film follows a young couple who fight off criminals with the help of a masked man .

Advertised as an " Indonesian cocktail of violent actions ... and sweet romance " , Kedok Ketawa received positive reviews , particularly for its cinematography . Following the success of the film , Union produced another six works before being shut down in early 1942 during the Japanese occupation . The film , screened until at least August 1944 , may be lost .

= = Plot = =

In Cibodas , Banten , a young woman named Minarsih (Fatimah) is rescued from four thugs by the painter Basuki (Basoeki Resobowo) . They fall in love and begin planning their life together . However , a rich man interested in taking Minarsih to be his wife sends a gang to kidnap her . Basuki is unable to repel them , but is soon joined by a masked vigilante known only as the " The Laughing Mask " (Oedjang) , who has almost supernatural fighting abilities . After two battles with the gang , Basuki and The Laughing Mask are victorious . Basuki and Minarsih can live together in peace .

= = Production = =

Kedok Ketawa was the first film produced by Union Films , one of four new production houses established after the success of Albert Balink 's Terang Boelan revived the ailing film industry of the Dutch East Indies . Union was headquartered in Prinsenlaan , Batavia (now Mangga Besar , Jakarta) and funded by the ethnic Chinese businessman Ang Hock Liem , although Tjoa Ma Tjoen was in charge of day @-@ to @-@ day operations . The film was shot on @-@ location in Cibodas , and featured fighting , comedy , and singing .

The film was directed by Jo An Djan and starred Oedjang , Fatimah , and Basoeki Resobowo . Other members of the cast included S Poniman and Eddy Kock . Oedjang had been a stage actor before appearing in the film , while Fatimah and Basoeki were nobles with a formal education . The Indonesian film historian Misbach Yusa Biran writes that this is evidence the film was targeted at intellectual audiences , a manifestation of Union 's stated goal of " improv [ing] the quality of Indonesian art " .

Following the success of Terang Boelan (1937 ; based on The Jungle Princess) , the domestic film industry began to model their productions after Hollywood works , as this was expected to ensure financial success . The Indonesian film scholars Ekky Imanjaya and Said Salim write that Kedok Ketawa was influenced by Bram Stoker 's 1897 novel Dracula through its Hollywood adaptations . Neither writer gives comparisons to illustrate this influence .

Kedok Ketawa was not the first contemporary film featuring a masked hero . Tan 's Film had released Gagak Item (The Black Crow) , with Rd Mochtar as the masked Black Crow , in 1939 , and later productions , including Java Industrial Film 's Srigala Item (The Black Wolf ; 1941) , continued the trend . As was common for contemporary productions , the soundtrack for Kedok Ketawa ? performed by Poniman ? consisted of kroncong songs .

= = Release and reception = =

Kedok Ketawa was released in Batavia in July 1940 , with a press screening on 20 July . By September it was being shown in Surabaya . In some newspaper advertisements , such as in Pemandangan , it was referred to as Pendekar dari Preanger (Warrior from Preanger) , while in others it was advertised with the Dutch title Het Lachende Masker . It was marketed as an "

Indonesian cocktail of violent actions ... and sweet romance " and rated for all ages .

The critic and screenwriter Saeroen , writing for *Pemandangan* , praised *Kedok Ketawa* , especially its cinematography and the beauty of its scenery ; he compared the film to imported Hollywood films . An anonymous review in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* found that the film was a mix of native and European sensibilities and lauded its cinematography . According to the review , the film surpassed expectations , but it was evident that this was a first production . Another review , in *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad* , considered the film among the best local productions , emphasising the quality of its cinematography and acting .

= = Legacy = =

Soon after the success of *Kedok Ketawa* , Saeroen joined Union Films and wrote four films for the company . These were not directed by Jo An Djan , who left Union for the competitor *Populair 's Film* , but by the newly hired R Hu and Rd Ariffien . Union Film ultimately produced a total of seven films in 1940 and 1941 before being closed following the Japanese invasion in early 1942 . Of the film 's main cast , only Fatimah and Oedjang are recorded as continuing their acting career , both appearing in several further Union productions . However , in the 1950s Resobowo continued his career behind the screen , serving as art director of such films as *Darah dan Doa* (*The Long March* ; 1950) .

Kedok Ketawa was screened as late as August 1944 , but may now be lost . Movies in the Indies were recorded on highly flammable nitrate film , and after a fire destroyed much of *Produksi Film Negara 's* warehouse in 1952 , old films shot on nitrate were deliberately destroyed . While the American visual anthropologist Karl G. Heider suggests that all Indonesian films from before 1950 are lost , J.B. Kristanto 's *Katalog Film Indonesia* records several as having survived at *Sinematek Indonesia 's* archives , and Biran writes that some Japanese propaganda films have survived at the Netherlands Government Information Service .

= = Explanatory notes = =