

= Terang Boelan =

Terang Boelan ([tʰɔra? bu?lan] ; Indonesian for " Full Moon " , Terang Bulan in the Perfected Spelling System) is a 1937 film from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) . Written by Saeroen , directed by Albert Balink , and starring Rd Mochtar , Roekiah and Eddie T. Effendi , Terang Boelan follows two lovers who elope after one is almost forced to marry an opium smuggler . The film was shot in the Indies and Singapore , and was partially inspired by the 1936 Hollywood film The Jungle Princess . It was aimed at native audiences and included keroncong music , which was popular at the time , and several actors from Balink 's previous work Pareh (1936) .

Terang Boelan was a commercial success in both the Indies and abroad , earning 200 @, @ 000 Straits dollars in British Malaya . This success revived the faltering domestic film industry and inspired films aimed at Malay audiences in Malaya , creating a formula of songs , beautiful scenery and romance that was followed for decades afterwards . The Indonesian film historian Misbach Yusa Biran described it as a turning point in the history of Indonesian cinema for its catalytic effect on the industry 's growth . Like many Indonesian films of the era , Terang Boelan has been lost since at least the 1970s .

= = Plot = =

Rohaya (Roekiah) must separate from her lover , Kasim (Rd Mochtar) , so that she can marry her father 's choice , the disreputable but rich Musa (Eddie T. Effendi) . The night before the wedding , Kasim plays the song " Terang Boelan " for Rohaya , and they agree to elope . The following day , Rohaya and Kasim escape from Sawoba Island to Malacca , where Kasim begins work at a drydock and Rohaya keeps busy as a housewife . They discover that Kasim 's old friend , Dullah (Kartolo) , has lived in Malacca for some time .

Their life together is interrupted when Musa , who is revealed to be an opium dealer , discovers them . While Kasim is away at work , Rohaya 's father (Muhin) comes and takes her back to Sawoba . Kasim , having discovered Musa 's deeds , also returns to Sawoba and rallies the villagers to his side by telling them of Musa 's opium dealings . He and Musa begin fighting . When it appears Kasim may lose , he is saved by Dullah , who had followed him back to Sawoba . The villagers and Rohaya 's father agree that Kasim and Rohaya should be together , as they are truly in love .

= = Background = =

During 1934 and early 1935 , all feature films released in the Dutch East Indies had been made by the American @-@ educated Chinese @-@ Indonesian director The Teng Chun . His low budget but popular films were mainly inspired by Chinese mythology or martial arts , and although aimed at ethnic Chinese proved popular among native audiences because of their action sequences . The Teng Chun 's dominance was an effect of the Great Depression and changing market trends . The Great Depression had led to the Dutch East Indies government collecting higher taxes and cinemas selling tickets at lower prices , ensuring that there was a very low profit margin for local films . As a result , cinemas in the colony mainly showed Hollywood productions , while the domestic industry decayed . The Teng Chun was able to continue his work only because his films often played to full theatres .

In an attempt to show that locally produced , well @-@ made films could be profitable , the Dutch journalist Albert Balink , who had no formal film experience , produced Pareh (Rice) in 1935 in collaboration with the ethnic Chinese Wong brothers (Othniel and Joshua) , and the Dutch documentary filmmaker Mannus Franken . The film cost 20 times as much as an average local production , in part because of Balink 's perfectionism , and was ultimately a failure . The Indonesian writer and cultural critic Armijn Pane wrote that Pareh had performed poorly with native audiences as it was seen as looking at them through European eyes . Pareh bankrupted its producers , and enabled The Teng Chun to dominate the industry ? although with less traditional stories ? for a further two years .

= = Production = =

By late 1936 Balink had obtained financial backing from several domestic and foreign companies with which he , the Wongs , and Franken opened the Dutch Indies Film Syndicate (Algemeen Nederlandsch Indisch Filmsyndicaat , or ANIF) in Batavia (now Jakarta) . Although this new establishment focused mainly on newsreels and documentaries , on 1 January 1937 ANIF announced that it would produce several feature films , one of which was Terang Boelan .

The story for Terang Boelan was written by Saeroen , a reporter with the newspaper Pemandangan who had close connections to the theatrical community , shortly after the domestic release of the American @-@ produced Dorothy Lamour vehicle The Jungle Princess (1936) , which served as an inspiration . The Indonesian film historian Misbach Yusa Biran wrote that this gave Terang Boelan stylistic and thematic similarities to the earlier film . The Indonesian film critic Salim Said also recognised such similarities , describing Terang Boelan as reflecting the " jungle princess " works popular at the time . Saeroen named the fictional island on which Terang Boelan takes place " Sawoba " after the crew : Saeroen , Wong , and Balink .

Production had begun by February 1937 , under Balink 's direction and with the Wongs as cinematographers , only to be interrupted by the relocation of ANIF 's offices . Filming had begun by May of that year . Sources conflict as to whether Franken was involved : Biran wrote that Franken had been left in charge of the studio 's documentaries , while the American film scholar Karl G. Heider recorded Franken as co @-@ directing the film . As opposed to The Teng Chun , who aimed his films at lower @-@ class audiences , Balink aimed his film at educated native Indonesians , attempting to show them not from a European perspective but as they viewed themselves . According to Said , this arose as a reaction to Pareh 's failure and resulted in a less ethnological approach . Terang Boelan was shot in black @-@ and @-@ white using highly flammable nitrate film at Cilincing in Batavia , Merak Beach in Banten , and Tanjong Katong in Singapore . The use of nitrate film may have been a factor in the film 's later loss .

The cast of Terang Boelan mainly consisted of actors who had appeared in Pareh . This included the leading actor , Rd Mochtar , and several minor players , including Eddie T. Effendi and Soekarsih . Other cast members , including the leading lady Roekiah and her husband Kartolo , were drawn from traditional toneel theatrical troupes ; this may have been part of an effort to attract theatregoers . The film , which included the songs " Terang Boelan " and " Boenga Mawar " (" Rose ") , required its cast to sing keroncong music (traditional music with Portuguese influences) ; because Mochtar 's voice was ill @-@ suited to the task , the musician Ismail Marzuki ? who also composed the film 's score ? sang while Mochtar lip synched .

= = Release and reception = =

Terang Boelan premiered on 8 December 1937 at the Rex Theatre in Batavia , the capital of the Dutch East Indies ; it played to a nearly full theatre . Also marketed under the Dutch title Het Eilan der Droomen , the film was advertised as showing that the Indies were as beautiful as Hawaii , a popular island paradise in Hollywood films . Posters also emphasised the use of Indonesian @-@ language dialogue . William van der Heide , a lecturer on film studies at the University of Newcastle in Australia , notes that the film continued a trend of " Indonesianisation " , or the application of a national (Indonesian) understanding to borrowed concepts ; for Terang Boelan this indigenisation process involved the inclusion of " exotic local settings " and keroncong music . Such adaptations of foreign films had arisen several years earlier and continued long after Terang Boelan 's release .

The film was a commercial success , both in the Indies and nearby British Malaya . Native audiences filled the cinemas , most of them working @-@ class people , including native fans of toneel and keroncong who rarely watched films . After being licensed by RKO Radio Pictures , the film was screened in British Malaya , where it was advertised as " the first and best Malay musical " and earned 200 @,@ 000 Straits dollars (then equivalent to US \$ 114 @,@ 470) in two months . Terang Boelan proved to be the most successful production in the area until Krisis (Crisis) in 1953 ,

released after the Netherlands recognised Indonesia 's independence in 1949 .

Despite the success , ANIF was displeased with the film and halted its other non @-@ documentary productions ; one of the studio 's cameramen , an Indo man named J.J.W. Steffens , suggested that ANIF 's management preferred works of non @-@ fiction as a more intellectual medium . Disappointed by the company 's reaction , Balink left the Indies and emigrated to the United States in March 1938 . Terang Boelan 's cast left ANIF not long afterwards and , after briefly touring Malaya , joined Tan 's Film . They made their first film for Tan 's , Fatima , in 1938 . Mochtar , who soon married fellow Terang Boelan actress Soekarsih , continued to be cast as Roekiah 's lover ; the two were a popular screen couple until Mochtar left Tan 's in 1940 over a wage dispute .

= = Legacy = =

The success of Terang Boelan led to an increase in film production in the colony , many of the films following the same formula , including songs , beautiful scenery and romance . Before Terang Boelan , local studios had generally been unsuccessful in finding a formula popular with audiences , but the triple successes of Terang Boelan , Fatima , and Alang @-@ Alang (Grass , 1939) revived the industry . Four new production houses were established in 1940 , and actors and actresses previously attached to theatrical troupes entered the film industry , which was reaching new audiences . Most locally produced films released in the Indies were made between 1939 and the Japanese occupation in 1942 . Meanwhile , in Malaya , the brothers Run Run and Runme Shaw , drawing inspiration from Terang Boelan and Alang @-@ Alang 's success with Malay audiences , established Malay Film Productions in Singapore , where it became one of the more successful production houses .

Heider considered Terang Boelan one of the two most important cinematic works from the Dutch East Indies during the 1930s ; Balink 's earlier film Pareh was the other . He notes that Terang Boelan " set the tone for popular Indonesian cinema " , a tone that remained dominant into the 1990s . Biran considered the film a turning point in the history of Indonesian cinema , showing the possibilities of the medium and serving as a catalyst for further development . Said concurred , describing the film as a milestone in Indonesia 's history because of the widespread formula it introduced . The repeated use of Terang Boelan 's formula has been criticised . The director Teguh Karya , for instance , denounced films that used it without building on it , leaving the formula " undeveloped and static " .

Terang Boelan is considered lost , as are most domestic productions from the era . The Filipino film historian and director Nick Deocampo noted that productions made with nitrate film ? such as Terang Boelan ? burned easily and were thus easily lost , but suggested that copies of the film may have survived until the 1970s . In a 1991 publication Said , Heider , and the American translator John H. McGlynn expressed hope that a copy of the film might be lying around in someone 's attic or closet in Indonesia or the Netherlands .

= = Explanatory notes = =