

## Pepot Artista (Pepot Superstar)

Philippines, 2005, 103 min, Comedy/Music, 4x3 ratio, (Not Rated).

Dir: Clodualdo del Mundo Jr

IMDb score 7.0

FVFS panel vote = 3.4 (out of 5)

Nominated for 10 Awards – won 4

Pepot Artista is a comedy-musical that focuses on a ten-year-old boy whose dream is to become a movie star. Pepot, the dreamer, is surrounded by people who are equally dazzled by the movie world - from his own mother to the principal in his school to the impersonators in the neighbourhood carnival. Coming from a poor family, Pepot overcomes adversity to have a chance at fulfilling his dream. He tackles school bullies, a strict teacher, and an unwelcoming world that fail to comprehend his intense desire to become a star. The story happens in the '70s when superstars brightened the film world in Pepot's country. The film explores the penchant of Filipinos for entertainment in the midst of serious social problems.



Clodualdo del Mundo Jr, screenplay writer for major Filipino directors Lino Brocka, Mike de Leon and Gil Portes, debuts with his first as the director of Pepot Artista. The movie was chosen best film in the Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival in the Philippines.

Review by Ian Davidson

Everyone dreams of becoming a movie star and little Pepot is no exception. But for him life is a struggle. His father cannot keep a job, his older brother is a deaf-mute, and mother failed at her attempt to become a film star!

Pepot sells comics on the street for a blind musician when not at school. At school he is the target of many bullies and the butt of many jokes played against him – but he stands up to them, much to the annoyance of the teachers and his parents. His friends and his imagination keep his ambitions alive, although at times their help is a little misguided.

Several of the characters he comes across would be better described as caricatures - more so than you would expect in real life. The whip-happy short-sighted teacher, the camp stage producer and the frustrated film director are more exaggeration than realistic. But then again, this is a musical in which the cast are allowed occasional winks and comments to the camera, so it is allowed to be larger than life!

The story seemed to be getting somewhere after a slow start when it suddenly came to an end – as if the director ran out of ideas, money or time. But he did manage to wrap it all up in a satisfying conclusion.



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