

The Rocket

Cert 12A Laos/Australia 2013 96 mins

Crew

Director/Screenplay Kim Mordaunt
 Cinematography Andrew Commi
 Film Editing Nick Meyers
 Original music Caitlin Yeo

Cast

Sitthiphon Disamoe Ahlo
 Loungnam Kaosainam Kia
 Suthep Po-Ngam Purple
 Bunsri Yindi Taitok
 Sumrit Warin Toma
 Alice Keohavong Mali

Synopsis

Laos, the recent past. Ten-year-old Ahlo is believed to bring bad luck, and is blamed for a string of disasters that befall his family and village.

When the villagers are forced from their land because of the building of a dam, Ahlo meets Kia, a spirited orphan, and her eccentric Uncle Purple. Together they trek across a country scarred by war in search of a new home.

In a last attempt to prove he's not cursed, Ahlo enters the most lucrative but most dangerous competition of the year: the Rocket Festival.



Booking Information

Distributor: Eureka Entertainment
DVD bookings: via BFFS Booking Scheme
 0114 221 0314
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Available: June 2014

BFFS BOOKING SCHEME



Reviews

When you hear a film described as an "Australian foreign language film" you imagine perhaps it's an Aboriginal slice of life. But no, writer-director Kim Mordaunt has boldly taken himself to Laos for *The Rocket*, a heartfelt humanist drama with the folkloric feel of a Laotian fable.

He has form for it, having lived and worked across Southeast Asia doing docu-verité, most recently his acclaimed Laotian documentary *Bomb Harvest*. And that knowledge of the people and culture shows, with all of the characters in his feature debut based on real people Mordaunt has met in Laos.

...Without belabouring the globally-relevant issues, Mordaunt takes us into a real world of ritual, custom and recent history, making the most of striking landscapes and getting compelling performances, not least from the enchanting children. It's beautiful, engrossing and uplifting without an artificial note.

Angie Errigo, Moviemail, March 2014

The spirit of childhood skips and giggles through *The Rocket* even though Kim Mordaunt's debut fiction feature touches on deeply disturbing humanitarian issues, including population displacement and the constant threat of undetonated bombs for those living in modern, post-war Laos.

...Mordaunt's film is robust and neither melancholy nor sentimental. He and his cinematographer Andrew Commis have an easy way with the camera, capturing the playfulness and energy of childhood in a way that recalls Hirokazu Kore-eda and, by presenting events almost exclusively from Ahlo or Kia's perspective, he brings a freshness and an easy route into the story for those with no previous knowledge of Laos.

Unashamedly crowdpleasing it may be - a fact endorsed by the slew of audience awards it has picked up on the festival circuit - but Mordaunt's film also has something to say about Laos and the aftermath of conflict more generally, and the way that he sweetens the medicine helps us to drink in a larger dose of unpalatable humanitarian truths.

Amber Wilson, Eye for Film, January 2014

Awards, commendations, accolades

Berlin Film Festival 2013: **Best Debut Film; Crystal Bear
 Amnesty International Film Prize;**
 Leeds International Film Festival 2013: **Audience Award**
 Tribeca Film Festival 2013: **Audience Award; Best Actor**

