

'Roadside Romeo' a chic animated romance

Film: 'Roadside Romeo' (animation); Director: Jugal Hansraj; Cast: Voices of Kareena Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan, Javed Jaffrey; Rating: **

'Oh Romeo Romeo, wherefore art thou?' Forget Shakespeare and all his spin-offs. 'Roadside Romeo' is the coolest wham.

What's it about? Well, it's a bout of a pout and a bit of a kick, a whacky romance between two savvy under-dogs thrown our way in a casual chic manner that makes the animation characters seem like replicas of their potboiler avatars from feature films.

Maybe the plot should've been less formula-driven to go with the innovative format and genre. Nonetheless, this has got to be the most urbane and coolest take on the rites and wrongs of that thing called love.

First things first. So far animation films in India have been mainly restricted to revisionist interpretations of the mythologicals.

In 'Roadside Romeo', director Jugal Hansraj goes for the jugular and the jocular. The story of a rich canine from the well-to-do part of the city and the slum seductress Laila is peppered with every ingredient that makes an alluring entertainer.

The main voices are used to telling advantage. Saif scores subtle points over Kareena whose dubbing tends to veer towards boredom. But then she is the blase seductress, isn't she?

But it is Javed Jaffrey's seasoned voice that brings great vigour and vivacity to the slum-lord's role.

There are the non-primary characters too, giving the central romance a catchily cute spin without taking the slim narrative to an over-the-top stratosphere.

Most important, the quality of animation and the detailing that has gone behind its execution are exemplary. We really haven't seen anything like this in Hindi. The songs, dialogues and action add up to quite a fun-filled festival of swirling colours and dancing divas and devils.

'Roadside Romeo' is a smartly-executed piece of slip-in-slip-out cinema. It makes for ideal popcorn entertainment that kids will enjoy and the grown-ups will giggle about.

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)