

For all Ages

For all Ages was produced by BLA Stockholm AB, Sweden. Welcome to the hairdresser shop, “For all ages”. With a mix of puppets, actors, and animation this series focuses on age. Meet Granddad, the little girl, and the hairdresser as they discuss matters of age from their different perspectives. Customers of all kinds and ages drop in, have a chat, and get their hair done while listening to the barbershop choir (music composed especially for the series).

This episode is all about love. Can a 100-year-old fall in love? There is love in the (h)air today. Mrs Rubino wants a haircut that represents love. A mother sings a love song to her baby and the juvenile pensioners try the saying “All is fair in love and hair”.

For all Ages was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2010 finalists in the 7-11 Fiction category.



Figure 1: Talking about love in a hairdresser shop.



Figure 2: An African puppet speaking about unrequited love.

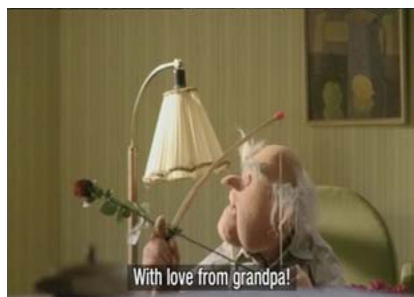


Figure 3: Grandpa using a rose bow to express his love to a neighbor but shoots the wrong guy.

International experts' opinions

Almost all the international experts expressed very positive sentiments about the program. “It was sympathetic; I liked it very much” (female expert, Slovenia). They liked the program a lot for many reasons, including its humor. “I liked the program, *For all Ages*, very much, its humor. They watched the situations where you were between the grandpa and the child. I think there were really wonderful gags in it” (female expert, Germany). Another expert said, “I loved it as well; I didn’t expect to love it, but I thought it was fantastic, very funny, and just lovely putting all the different generations together. It is just really quirky and bonkers” (female expert, Scotland). The humor in the program was appreciated by almost everyone. “I really liked that the humour is on very different levels: a five-year-old thinks something is crazy, and the others find something else funny, but you can still correspond with each other on different levels, but everybody laughs” (female expert, Sweden).

They also appreciated the program because of the treatment of the adults in it. “What I loved was the childishness of the older characters. I thought that was really nice. You don’t see that often” (female expert, Scotland). “I think it is interesting that a four-year-old girl and the old one are similar – both of them just as clever. I liked that very much. I think it is brilliantly done to have them at the same level” (female expert, Denmark).

They liked the main character of the program. “I have never seen him before – I think he is a singer or something in a hard rock cover



Figure 4: Two puppets fighting over a girl they saw through a telescope.



Figure 5: The girl getting a romantic hairstyle for her date in the evening.



Figure 6: The puppet lecturing two teens when they asked to watch a romantic movie.



Figure 7: True love never fades.

band. But, I liked it, because he is a character you never see in kids shows – this dude” (female expert, Sweden).

Some international experts however found the pace of the program to be too slow. “I found it a bit long, and a bit slow. But I suppose that it has to do with the pace of normal television, but I found it a bit slow. That is a compliment in many ways, (because often it allows you the time to think) but in this case I found it a bit heavy and slow” (female expert, Columbia). Some, on the other hand, also appreciated the slow pace of the program. “I liked the slow pace all the same, especially with the main character. It is good how he recreates the story or takes everything that is going on emotionally” (female expert, Sweden).

Some also suggested that the program could belong to the non-fiction category. “Children live in families with family members that are of different ages. They have, more or less, roles that are there: the grandparents or parents for one thing, and then siblings are for something else. Here, from a distance, they can interact more. All these are non-fiction problems, but it made me think that it may be in the wrong category? It should be in non-fiction. I felt a bit like that” (female expert, Slovenia).

There were diverse opinions about the target audience of the program. Some of the international experts were convinced that children would like the program. “I think that children liked it a lot, because I think they feel that they are talking seriously to them but in a funny way – still live with magic and all the puppets” (female expert, Sweden). But others thought that the program was not appropriate for the target audience. “I don’t know if it is something for children. I think it is probably more a family program. I don’t know how children like it” (female expert, Germany). There were also additional similar voices. They felt that the theme was not right for the target audience. “The topic might be quite hard for children to understand, they love that kind of romancing, but it was quite funny. I think we all giggled, but I am not so sure that it hit that with kids. Because they dealt with it as romantic love. They talked about loving your puppy, or baby sister; it seemed focused just on romantic love, which seemed just a little bit over the age group” (female expert, UK).

Some experts raised the issue of racism that was subtly shown in the program. “The one thing that I have already had some discussions that this is one of those diversity or cultural experiences, the one black puppet was actually kind of shocking to me, because it read straight out of a racist cartoon from the 20s or 30s, or from the last campaign election in the U.S. But, it really reads exactly as that, and it is so different from every other character in the entire program”



Figure 8: Everyone trying to calm a crying baby using music and love.

(male expert, USA). A male expert from Sweden who was one of the producers of the show elaborated. "I think the mixture of puppets is because it was quite a low budget show, so it used some of the puppets that are used in other productions for the last ten years."

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