

FROM THE EDITOR

The second issue of WACANA SENI opens with an article that engages with themes of musical change as a consequence of modernization. Shzr Ee Tan looks at the Taiwanese aboriginal jaw's harp (*datok*) which was once regarded as the Amis 'telephone' played by suitors to court women whom they wished to marry. Today, performers have to change the performance contexts and functions of the instrument as the *datok* cannot compete with the real telephone and other modern methods of courting.

The following three papers are accounts of the historical development of eclectic genres of theatre and dance which emerged in Penang in the late nineteenth century. As a cosmopolitan port, Penang attracted traders and settlers from different parts of Asia and Europe. Mohd. Anis Md Nor's paper 'Artistic Confluences and Creative Challenges' highlights the mixing of artistic ideas from the diverse cultures that contributed to the invention of dances in *boria*, *ronggeng* and *bangsawan*. Abdul Samat Salleh illustrates how *bangsawan* stories of different nationalities were improvised as written scripts were not available. Mahani Musa focuses on the *Boria Muharam* of the nineteenth century. Besides performing for the Muharam festival, *boria* troupes were aligned to the Red Flag and White Flag societies — secret societies which controlled the political scene of the Malays before the advent of political parties and associations in early twentieth century Penang.

The next set of papers explore various aspects of the media. In 'Cabaran Praktis Seni Elektronik Dalam Era Maklumat', Hasnul Jamal Saidon provides an account of the challenges and development of electronic art (e-art) in Malaysia and its importance in art education. Tan Sooi Beng's 'Musical Exotica and Nostalgia' analyzes the different types of music videos in Malaysia and questions the extent of local content in the music, lyrics and visual imagery of these videos. Shakila Manan's case study of the television drama 'Azlina' attempts a critical discourse analysis which shows how 'underlying processes of language play a vital role in reinforcing certain prevailing representations of modern femininity'.

The artworks in this issue were exhibited at "Oasis" (artists' month) by the School of Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) from 10 September to 10 October 2003. "Oasis" marks the beginning of a series of annual events which display the artworks, creative products, musical and theatrical performances and research findings of the staff and students of the School of Arts.

The reviews section has been expanded. The reviews address issues of the rainforest as a source of music for the *orang asli*, experimentation of *filem noir* on stage, the rationale behind the mentoring sessions of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra's forum for Malaysian composers and the need for an association for music education in Malaysia. This section encourages the exchange of ideas and the editorial board welcomes suggestions for material to review.

Tan Sooi Beng

Chief Editor