

## From The Editor

The third volume of *Wacana Seni* continues to highlight issues which concern academics of the Asian region. Writing in the field of postcolonial studies, Jeremy Wallach's 'Of Gongs and Cannons: Music and Power in Island Southeast Asia,' calls for an interrogation of Western academic conceptions of music and culture, and the reframing of indigenous performance forms as "aesthetic objects" by colonialists. Using the example of royal gong orchestras in Island Southeast Asia, he illustrates the need for "alternative" and "culturally sensitive" understandings of musical performance. The sound of gongs in Island Southeast Asia should be "viewed in light of cultural notions of power and authenticity."

Safrizal bin Shahir's 'Modenisme, Seni Moden dan Seniman Moden: Satu Pemahaman antara Ideologi Asalnya dan Pengalaman Malaysia' looks at the history of the Modern Art movement and links it to the socio-political conditions in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Modern artists championed democracy, freedom, and novelty. Their works illustrated the problems, issues, and ironies of the times. Malaysian artists who studied in New York and England in the 1950s and 1960s were influenced by Abstract Expressionism. Did they just borrow the style without understanding the philosophy and contexts behind the Modern Art movement?

Education and transmission remain important concerns among artists in the region. In their article, 'Brain-Based Learning and Multiple Intelligences as Related to Creative Dance Activities,' Marcia Lloyd, Lauralee Zimmerly and Nicole Dean discuss Howard Gardner's Multiple

Intelligences theory and brain-based research. They present practical applications of Gardner's theory to creative dance movement education. They believe that dance/movement education provides outcomes in the physical, cognitive, and social domains.

The other two articles in the volume report on ethnographic research of specific theatre and musical forms, another area which the journal promotes. A.S. Hardy Shafii's 'Pengurusan Pementasan Teater Komersil *Mak Yong* di Kelantan' examines the style of management of commercial *mak yong* in Kelantan in the 1950s and 1960s. He emphasizes that political, economic, and social factors differentiate the management styles of *mak yong* performed for commercial and ritual purposes.

Patricia Matusky analyzes the musical characteristics of *pantun* of the Iban people of Sarawak. She identifies the musical traits of *pantun* singing through transcribed texts and music. She shows that the melodic contours, characteristic phrases, vocal embellishments, and melismatic closing cadences give the *pantun* "a lyrical quality not typically heard in the other genres of Iban oral literature."

We have included two reviews of performances staged by two premier theatre companies in Kuala Lumpur. These reviews contribute to the ongoing dialogue on what is Malaysian theatre and music, and the recreation of traditional arts for contemporary audiences.

Finally, we welcome responses to the issues raised in the articles and reviews. This volume of *Wacana Seni* sees a slightly different format which we hope will enhance creativity in art design.

**Tan Sooi Beng**  
*Chief Editor*