

STAR SATURDAY July 5, 1997

# On the move in dance form

By SALINA KHALID

**S**HAKTI Dances together with Akademi Seni Kebangsaan will stage a dance production titled *Pilgrimage: Akar* at Concorde Hotel in Shah Alam.

The show will be held on Friday and Saturday nights from July 11 to 26.

Under the guidance of Aida Redza as producer and choreographer, the show will feature six dancers.

"All of us have contributed towards the dance items with the dancers choreographing part of the show," said Aida.

"The show is about moving, travelling and emigrating. We try to search for the meaning of life as we go on a pilgrimage through life's endeavours in a never-ending search for an identity and acceptance," she said.

The one-hour show will feature eight scenes, divided into two parts.



- AIDA REDZA

**The show is about moving, travelling and emigrating. We try to search for the meaning of life as we go on a pilgrimage through life's endeavours in a never-ending search for an identity and acceptance.**

The first part of the show will be in the Orchid Room on the second level. The show will then move on to the poolside on the third level for the second part.

Aida said the change of location represented the constantly moving world.

"The dancers will take the audience through the stairs to the pool to continue the show.

"The audience will be able to experience the different environment - from a smaller room to a spacious and more casual one.

"They can also have drinks at the poolside," she said. Aida said the show was to raise funds.

"We have been invited to attend the Hong Kong Dance Festival next month but the students do not have enough funds for the trip. We hope to collect enough to pay for it," she said.

The show will be staged on July 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 and 26. Tickets for the show are priced at RM35++ inclusive of one drink. For reservations, call 552-2200 ext 2121.



A scene at the 'airport' where people from all walks of life converge on.



TAHNIAH... Sukarno bersalam dengan pelajar baru ASK

## ASK berjaya lahir penggiat seni

Oleh Jamudin Idris

WALAUPUN hasrat Akademi Seni Kebangsaan (ASK) untuk melahirkan lebih ramai penggiat seni belum kesampaian, tetapi akademi itu boleh berbangga kerana ramai pelajarnya sudah menunjukkan kejayaan.

Mengikut perancangan, ASK ingin melatih kira-kira 80 orang setahun dan sepatutnya mempunyai kira-kira 320 pelajar untuk tempoh empat tahun tetapi ia kini mempunyai pelajar kurang daripada 200 orang.

Pendaftar ASK, Mohd Sukarno Abdul Wahab berkata, setiap tahun ASK menerima banyak permohonan untuk memasuki ASK tetapi apabila sesi temuduga dijalankan ramai yang tidak layak kerana mereka tidak mempunyai kemahiran dalam bidang yang dipohon.

ASK tidak dapat ber-

tolak ansur dalam soal pelajar yang tidak memenuhi kriteria kerana kewujudan akademik itu bermatlamat melahirkan warga seni yang berke-trampilan.

Kejayaan pelajarnya pula bukan saja pada muzik moden tetapi teater tradisional seperti mak yung, wayang kulit dan bangsawan.

Bercakap ketika meraikan pelajar baru ASK baru-baru ini, beliau berkata, pelajar akademi itu boleh berbangga kerana pihak pengurusan akademi memilih pensyarah berkelayakkan dan mereka yang sudah mencipta nama untuk menjadi tenaga pengajar di situ.

Atas sebab itu, mereka yang berpeluang belajar di ASK perlu menumpukan sepenuh perhatian dan jangan memandang ringan kepada tugas yang diberikan selain

menjalani latihan.

Sebagai akademi seni, ASK lebih menekankan latihan praktikal, namun begitu pelajar yang tidak mempunyai komitmen kepada pelajaran, tidak mustahil akan disingkirkan.

Sukarno berkata, memandangkan kerajaan membelanjakan peruntukan besar untuk faedah pelajar, adalah menjadi hasrat kerajaan supaya mereka berbakti kepada masyarakat.

Pada masa sama, mereka sebagai insan seni diharapkan menjadi model yang memartabatkan seni bangsa dan meletakkannya di tempat sewajarnya.

ASK tidak saja berhasrat menambah bilangan penggiat seni yang aktif dalam seni budaya tetapi yang lebih penting graduannya menjadi penggiat profesional.

TUESDAY

# Akar inspired by Sarawak hill tribes



Choreographer Joseph Gonzales

THE disappearing lifestyles of the hill tribes of Sarawak has served as the inspiration for Akar, a contemporary dance presentation by the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan (ASK).

Choreographed by Suhaimi Magi and Joseph Gonzales, it will be playing at the Auditorium Besar Matic, from Friday to Sunday from 8.30pm-10pm.

Tickets priced at RM10 are available at the ASK, 139, Jalan Ampang, tel: 03-2649180.

The essence of the movements is derived from the *ngajat* — the dance of the Orang Ulu and infused with modern technique. However, the traditional spirit re-

mains the focal point.

"Akar is a result of our constant search for our identity, our quest and exploration for a truly Malaysian style," says Gonzales.

The dancers are from the National Arts Academy as well as guest performers from the National Theatre and Petronas.

Musical director is Irizal Husni Musa, and the music is performed by members of the National Arts Academy, and will feature traditional instruments like the *rebab*, *sape*, *gending*, *gong* and *kesti*.

Akar premiered at Dance On 97 held in Hong Kong earlier in August, and was well received.

# Dance and culture

Sunday Magazine October 19, 1997 22

## Akademi Seni Kebangsaan Dance Company showcases its current developments in Malaysian contemporary dance. Tekya Atwel sneaks a preview.

BACK IN AUGUST, FIVE DANCE students and a few student musicians from Akademi Seni Kebangsaan (ASK) Dance Company performed a 5-minute piece called *Akar*. The work, choreographed by ASK dance teachers Suhaimi Magi and Joseph Gonzales, was one of the showcases for the International Festival of Dance Academies, Dance on '97 held in Hongkong.

At the festival, ASK Dance Company received great reviews and people responded well to its work. The thunderous applause was deafening yet inspiring. It is for this very reason that the academy sees the necessity to present this "tour de force" to the Malaysian public.

Gonzales says: "It wouldn't be fair if we didn't share this achievement with the Malaysian audience."

From the company's performance in Hongkong, verbal invitations too, have come from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Germany and even the United States. The experience in Hongkong's Dance On '97 has served to enliven and breathe new life into the choreographers' work and creativity.

As a result, a re-choreographed, four-long *Akar* plays at the Matic (ends today). Its new choreography is based on the disappearing lifestyle of the indigenous Sarawakian

hill tribe, Orang Ulu.

Generally the works of choreographers and dancers from ASK have mainly gone towards developing an exciting fusion of traditional elements and modern techniques. In this particular choreography, for instance, *Ngajat* (a style of Orang Ulu dance) as well as *silat* are integrated as part of the company's dance vocabulary. Integrating culture, tradition and beliefs have always been pivotal to most ASK choreographers so as to impart that Malaysian uniqueness.

It can also be perceived that the reason choreographers have embraced ethnic elements in their work is due to the overwhelming Western influence in the country. Utilising local

culture in their work is then an assertion of our identity.

*Akar* does not have a story-line as such but it does depict a few things: the relationship between people and the environment; the jungle as its life-giver; examining role gender; a woman's discovery of herself, her body and working the land; men as providers and hunters; tension and disagreement between men and women due to lack of communication; and the current environmental problem Malaysia is suffering from.

The effects of the haze on the Orang Ulu is shown and it culminates with a dance

by the frantic hill tribe people.

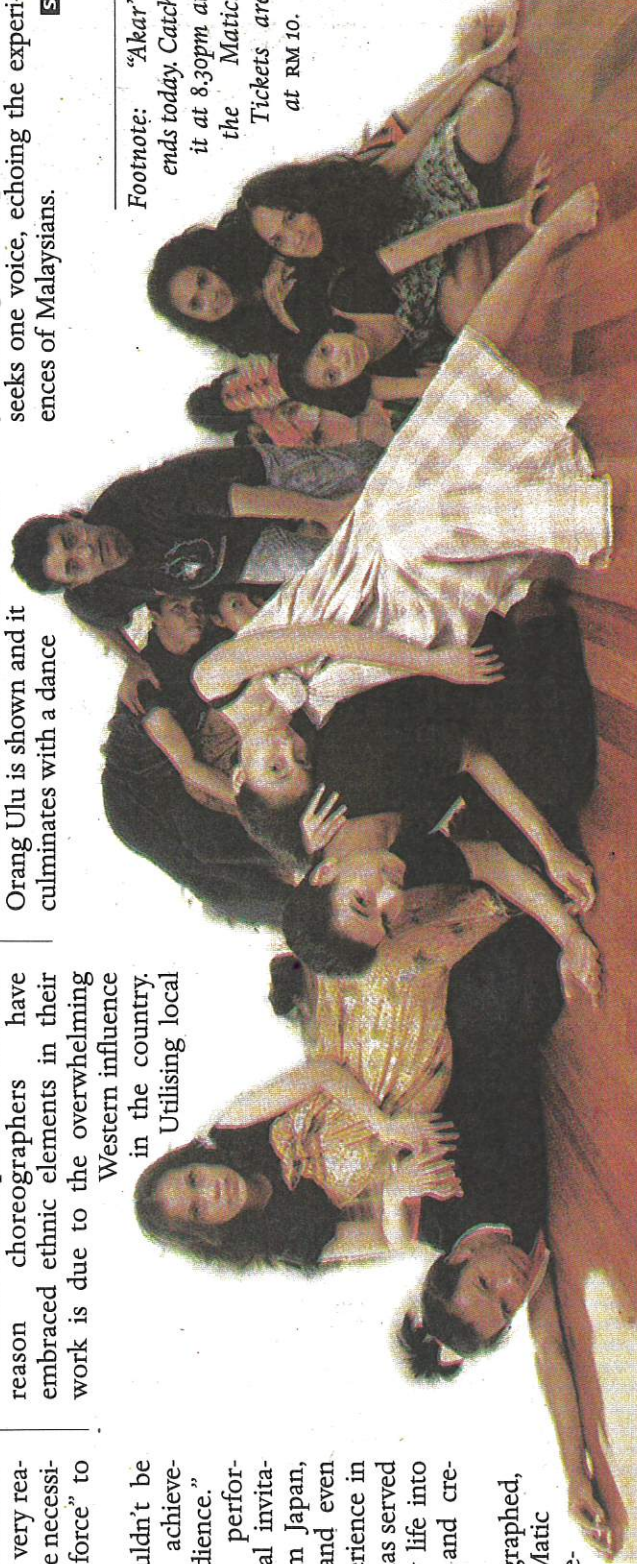
The traditional spirit which the tribe lives by, however, remains the focal point of the work.

The Matic, I am also told, will be transformed into a kampung-style setting. A few *pondoks* will take shape within the venue and the audience will have the chance to be a part of the tribe. If tribal dancing is your cup of tea, Gonzales says one is more than welcome.

ASK's works reflect a Malaysian identity - multicultural and diverse yet having one aspiration - which seeks one voice, echoing the experiences of Malaysians. **S**

Footnote: "Akar" ends today. Catch it at 8.30pm at the Matic. Tickets are at RM10.

SUNPIX BY SAIFUL HIZAM MANSUR



ASK Dance Company with choreographer Gonzales (standing). They will be performing 'Akar' at the Matic.