

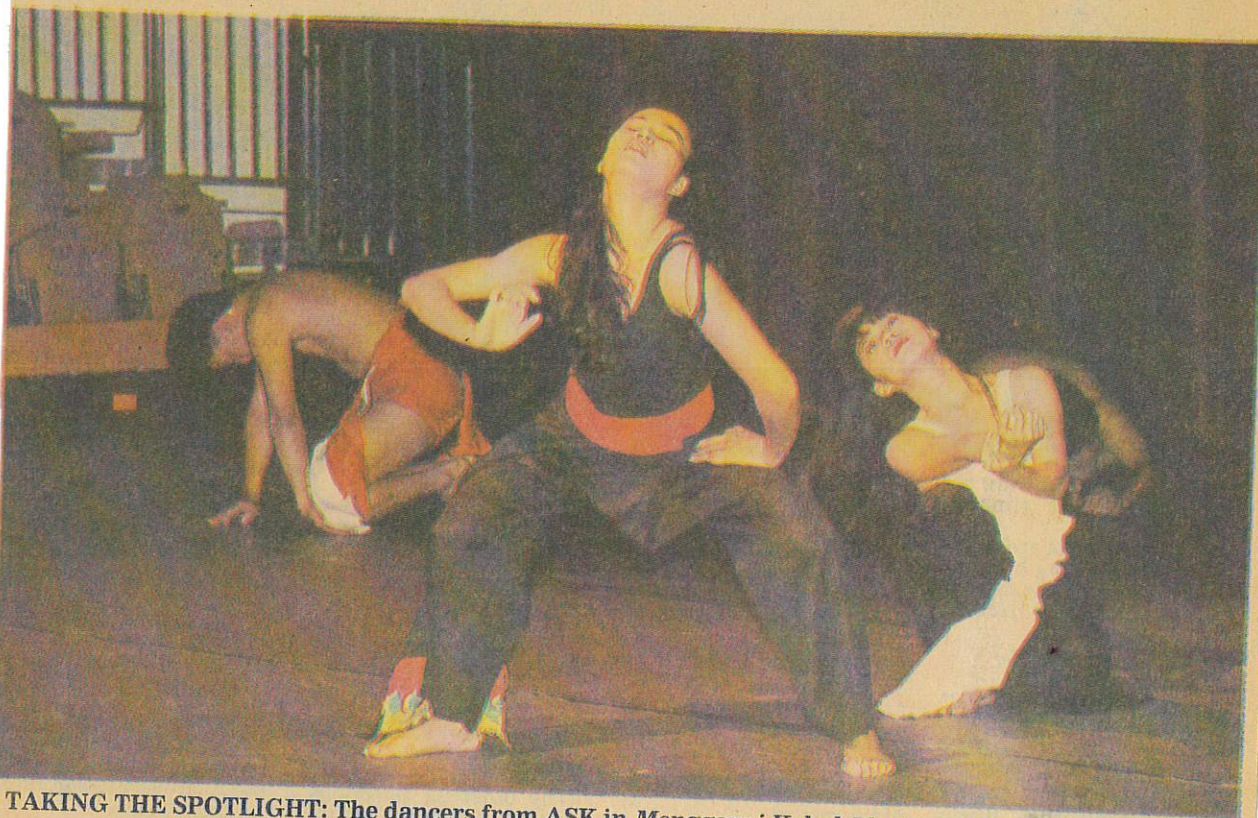
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Wowing 'em at Indon dance fest



TAKING THE SPOTLIGHT: The dancers from ASK in *Menggapai Kekal*. Photo: YIP HEE KHEONG

By Suraya Al-Attas

"WE really didn't expect to participate in any festival so soon," says Associate Professor Dr Mohd Anis Md Nor, head of the dance department of the Akademi Seni Kebangsaan (ASK). He is referring to the academy's participation in Festival Tari Indonesia '94.

Having started its classes only three months ago, the department, says Mohd Anis, was preparing itself for the International Dance Festival, which will be held in Korea next year.

"But after Tari '94, which ASK organised in July, the Indonesians invited us to take part in Festival Tari Indonesia. They were very impressed by our dancers, particularly Aida Redza who is a staff member at ASK," says Mohd Anis, who is also Universiti Malaya's Cultural Centre director, the cultural advisor to the Singapore Arts Centre as

well as the consultant to the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Incidentally, all the six dancers who are performing at the festival are staff members of ASK. They are Lena Ang, Dayang Mariana Abang Bolhassan, Suhaimi Magi, Joseph Gonzales, Joe Takahashi and Aida.

"Since the academy is very young, we couldn't get the students to participate because they are still having difficulty in grasping modern dance.

"We hope with the participation of the staff members that other established companies at the festival will see the dynamics of Malaysian contemporary dance.

"We want them to know that we have a strong academy and a young group of people from various dance techniques.

"For instance, Aida, having been trained in the United States, has a style contrasting with that of



MOHD ANIS
... Indonesians impressed

Suhaimi's, who has developed an eclectic style.

"Then there's Lena with her strong *Butoh* dance form. I think the other festival participants would find it interesting," says Mohd Anis during the Press pre-

view before the group left for Jakarta.

This year, he adds, marks the first time Malaysia is represented by an academy.

The festival, an annual event organised by Taman Ismail Marzuki in cooperation with Institut Kesenian Jakarta, started on Oct 20 and ended yesterday.

The three pieces presented by the dancers are *Bersik* (choreographed by Suhaimi), *Konfrontasi* and *Menggapai Kekal* (choreographed by Aida). They were involved in the showcase as well as gala performances.

"The showcase performance is more to provoke the people's minds. It'd be interesting to see the *Butoh* Dance Company's reaction to our showcase performance."

Besides the performances, Aida and Mohd Anis also participated in the workshop and lecture respectively.