

SUASANA
PRESENTS
CEMPAKA
EMAS



SUASANA'S
EXISTENCE
IS SOMETHING
OF A MIRACLE

THE STANDARD (LONDON)

JENTAYU-A performance filled with dramatic tension.
VOLK BLATT-BERLIN



CEMPAKA EMAS

As The Story Unfolds ...

Mengadap Rebab

The play opens with the traditional Mengadap Rebab that accompanies all Makyong performances. The title literally means to face or pay obeisance to the rebab. The highly ornamental melody that flows from this bowed string instrument projects a sombre spirit of ancient times. Setting the mood of Makyong theatre, the rebab player is joined by the female vocalist, her melody complementing and developing that of the rebab. It is not unusual for the whole elaborate sequence to take over half an hour. However, this is an abbreviated version which nevertheless captures the flavour of times past. It consists of four lagu (melodies) — Pakyong Terbit, Yong Gelendong, Tari Ragam and Barat. During this period of anticipation of the story to come, the dancers move through a series of dance patterns. They begin in a sitting position and buka tari (open the dance) with movements of their fingers and hands at a specific point in a melody. After this point they move to a standing position in deliberate phases. They move into a circle and process in that figure using distinctive gestures. This dance procession recurs throughout the drama as a symbol of journey and search. In this final section of Mengadap Rebab the tempo accelerates, leading us into the play.

Batang Cerita

In this short dialogue the performers give the audience a hint of the story to come. Dialogue, song, music, comedy and action are essential components of a Makyong play. The performers tell us that this will be a presentation of the story 'Cempaka Emas'.

Scene One:

MABUK KEPAYANG

Looking out across the sea from Bukit Setimbun Tulang, Puteri Boto awaits her destiny by the Cekering Tree. In utter boredom, this ugly princess performs her daily watch over the high seas taking time off to indulge her vanity. Her routine is disturbed by the arrival of the handsome prince, Raja Tangkai Hati, and his trusted men who have sailed the seas in search of their fortunes. His entrance is heralded by the serunai (oboe) playing Lagu Mengendap.

Puteri Boto falls in love at first sight with Raja Tangkai Hati. Sensing danger, Raja Tangkai Hati and his warriors prepare to defend themselves. The playing of the geduk (pegged-head barrel drum) in a vigorous and continuous pattern, accompanies the Raja's display of strength.

An overtly eager princess goes courting and is rejected by a bemused prince. Insulted and rejected, Puteri Boto is outraged. She awakens her kinsmen and to the accompaniment of the intense battle melody Angkatan Perang, they unleash their fury together on Raja Tangkai Hati. He is forced into submission and is dragged and placed at the feet of Puteri Boto. She gleefully takes her battle prize.

Several years pass before Raja Tangkai Hati secures permission to depart in search of wealth, promising to return. Puteri Boto sadly watches him leave and returns to her watch by the Cekering Tree.

Lagu-lagu (Melodies): 1. Lagu Maharisi (To' Ma'siku); 2. Dewa Panah; 3. Mengendap; 4. Dewa Panah; 5. Angkatan Perang; 6. Dewa Panah.

Scene Two:

KELOPAK CINTA MENGUNTUM

Meanwhile in the flower garden of Taman Banjar Sari at Kota Batu, elaborate preparations are made for Puteri Cempaka Emas to bathe. The scene is introduced by a short dialogue (Batang Lakun) which instructs the Inang-Inang (court maidens) to collect flowers and herbs for the bathing ceremony. They perform this task and the princess enters the garden. The act of bathing is accompanied by the melody Mengulek, the words of which describe the scene. This poetically rich song is essential to Makyong drama.

The tranquility of the garden is disturbed by the entrance of the Pengasoh of Raja Tangkai Hati who teases the Inang-Inang. His intrusion is marked by Lagu Yur Peran.

Soon after this, Raja Tangkai Hati arrives with his entourage bearing gifts of love. His first offerings are rejected. Puteri Cempaka Emas is only impressed by his second gift — a very special one. The young couple breaks into a love dance to the melody Hala.

In the meantime, threatening shadows of Raja Tangkai Hati's past lurk in the background.

Lagu-Lagu: 1. Batang Lakun; 2. Lekong; 3. Tari Ragam; 4. Mengulek (song); 5. Tari Ragam; 6. Yur Peran; 7. Rawana; 8. Hala; 9. Dewa Panah.

Scene Three:

BERCERAI KASIH

Many years pass. Raja Tangkai Hati, Puteri Cempaka Emas and their two children (Malim Besenu and Malim Bungsu) set sail for Raja Tangkai Hati's homeland. The whole journey, accompanied by the melody Barat, is danced in a circle. This dance pattern is typical of Makyong theatre.

The ship passes Bukit Setimbun Tulang, the territory of Puteri Boto. The Lagu Dewa Panah signals the danger they confront. It runs aground there. The Prince and his men disembark to try to free the ship. Meanwhile, Puteri Cempaka Emas and her children enter a garden area on the deck of the ship. An attractive flower there catches the attention of Malim Besenu and Malim Bungsu. They ask their mother to pluck the flower. Puteri Cempaka Emas senses danger and refuses. The children test their mother's love and repeat their demands. The entire episode is accompanied by Lagu Mengambor which is always associated with expressions of deep emotions in Makyong theatre.

Puteri Cempaka Emas, against her will, gives into the pleas of her children. As she reaches out for the flower, she is snatched away and dragged to the Cekering Tree by Puteri Boto who uses her vast magical powers to embed her in the tree. Puteri Boto then gleefully transforms herself into Puteri Cempaka Emas. The significance of this moment is heightened by the playing of Lagu Tukar Dalang.

Unaware of these developments, Raja Tangkai Hati enters to comfort his two distressed children. He takes them to the person he believes is their mother. In their innocence the children can see the truth about the impostor. But Raja Tangkai Hati is furious with them for denying their mother and angrily throws them overboard.

Lagu-lagu: 1. Barat; 2. Dewa Panah; 3. Mengambor (song); 4. Tukar Dalang.

Scene Four:

TOPENG TERBUKA

Throughout these many years at Kota Mengkuang, Raja Besar and his Permaisuri (consort) yearn anxiously for their son who has left in search of wealth. Lagu Seri Gunung marks this emotion as it accompanies their entry into the scene. A proud Raja Tangkai Hati arrives and in a regal ceremony presents his 'wife' to his parents.

A rapid turn of events occurs. Malim Besenu and Malim Bungsu are presented to their grandparents by Makkik Dewa-Dewa who had saved them from their cruel fate. Puteri Boto masquerading as Puteri Cempaka Emas realises that she has been discovered. Lagu Tukar Dalang recurs as she takes her real form and sets out to fight for her rightful place as wife of Raja Tangkai Hati. Her attempt fails. She dies and Raja Tangkai Hati extracts the blood from her heart to serve as an elixir to cure Puteri Cempaka Emas.

Lagu-Lagu 1. Seri Gunung (Cik Muda); 2. Kelayong; 3. Tukar Dalang.

Scene Five

KASIH IBU TIADA SEMPADAN

We return to the Cekering Tree where Puteri Cempaka Emas is imprisoned in solitude. The whole emotional scene which follows is sung in Kisah Barat.

Raja Tangkai Hati searches for her. Malim Besenu and Malim Bungsu cry longingly for their mother. She cannot free herself. Raja Tangkai Hati orders the children to be placed front of her. He threatens to have them executed in a desperate bid to extricate her. The love and protective instincts of a mother triumph. Painfully she tears herself out of the tree.

The blood of Puteri Boto is poured over her, thus healing and restoring her former grace and elegance.

Lagu-Lagu: 1. Kisah Barat (song)

Lagu Tutup Panggung



TECHNICAL TEAM

Azanin Ahmad
*Artistic Director, Choreographer
and Music Director*

Shuhaimi Baba
*Technical Manager and Lighting
Designer*

Ismail Bakti
Accessory and Jewellery

Najib Nor
Costumes

Nik Malik Zainal Abidin
Set

V. Ramalingam
Make-up

Dr. Shaharil Talib
Research and Production Manager

Zakaria Haji Basaree
Stage Manager

Mohd Yusof Mohd Idris
Graphic

CAST

Azanin Ahmad
*Puteri Cempaka Emas and
Puteri Boto*

Nik Malik Zainal Abidin
Raja Tangkai Hati

Tharuwat Ismail Bakti
Raja Besar

Norani Ismail
Permaisuri

Ahmad Shah Aris
Mohd Yusof Mohd Idris

Norani Ismail
Badariah Said

Puak Jin

Jamaluddin Mat
Pengasuh

Zaini Othman
Malim Besenu

Yusni Yusof
Malim Bungsu

Badariah Said
Makcik Dewa-Dewa

Roslan Hussin
Yusof Abdul Rahman
Ahmad Shah Aris
Zaini Othman
Panglima-panglima

Norani Ismail
Yusni Yusof
Badariah Said
Zaridah Malik
Inang-inang

MUSICIANS

Seman bin Besar
Rebab

Salleh bin Abdullah
Serunai

Abdul Rahman Jusoh
Gendang Ibu

Noruddin bin Mamat
Gendang Anak

Khairi Khamis
Canang

Abdul Wahab Abdullah
Mahmood bin Junus
Gedombak

Adam bin Awang Besar
Tawaak

Zaini Othman
Tharuwat Ismail Bakti
Rehama Ulbi

Abdul Aziz Jopri
Kesi

SINGERS

Mek Nab Awang
Ruhani Hussin

(The Tenth Festival of Asian Arts, Hong Kong, 1985)

'KALUNGAN BUDI'

Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sports, Malaysia
Selangor Pewter Co. Sdn. Bhd.
Perbadanan Kemajuan Kraftangan Malaysia
Students of Fashion and Design Dept., I.T.M.
Yusof Fadzil bin Hj. Idris
Syed Zainal Rashid and O. Don Eric Peris (Photograph)
And to all our friends.

Printed by: Penerbitan Adabi. Sdn. Bhd.