

FOR DISPLAY ONLY

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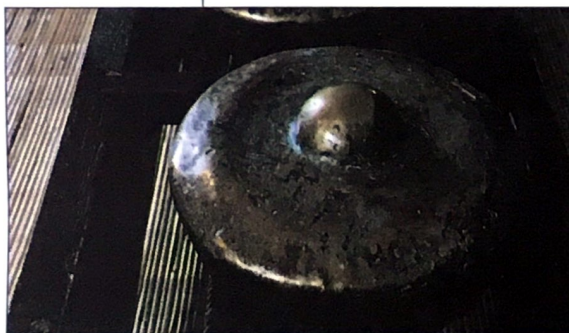
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The boat gains a definite shape.



An everyday scene in the Brunei River.



The gulintangan musical instruments.



A song and dance that depicts the fishermen's life.

Front cover

Giving the boat the finishing touch.

Inside of front cover

The great demand for wooden boats is evident in this picture, which shows residents of the Water Village at one of the jetties.

Inside of back cover

Ompong, a traditional wind instrument of Brunei Darussalam.

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When all the needed planks are ready, the sides are drilled and headless nails are inserted into them. Here the boatmaker, Mr. Abdul Mohaimin Haji Damit, is seen doing just that. Thirty-three-year old Abdul Mohaimin, who acquired his skills from his father, has been in the business for ten years. He can build an average of three boats a month, each costing between B\$1,700 and B\$2,000.



WOODEN BOATS CONTINUE TO BE IN DEMAND

**BY
ISHAK
HAJI OTHMAN**

SINCE time unrecorded man has invented various modes of water transport to enable him to navigate rivers and seas in his desire to go from one place to another.

It is possible that he first took to the water on a log before he hit upon the idea of tying several of these together into a raft.

As time passed, his knowledge and creativity progressed to dugout canoes and boats with paddles or oars as means of propulsion, and then to more advanced vessels not merely for going places but also for commercial, military, exploration and other purposes.

Techniques

A dugout canoe was made from a solid tree trunk which the maker shaped with an axe or adze. But as man began to be endowed with the know-how of creating a variety of tools and making planks out of timber, the techniques of boat or ship-building underwent a radical change. Nevertheless the dugout canoe, however simple, provided the basis for the construction of later vessels.

Like many countries, Brunei Darussalam has a long history of association with riverine and marine transport. This is not surprising because it has a large

settlement in the Brunei River known as Kampong Ayer or Water Village and is bordered to the north by the South China Sea, which has since the old days provided it with an outlet to the outside world for its navy and commerce as well as a livelihood for its fishermen.

Passengers

The Water Village, whose existence goes back to several centuries, is a grouping of small villages in the Brunei River, with houses huddled together and linked by thousands of metres of

foot-bridges. It is regarded as part of the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, and is inhabited by about 30,000 people who commute to and from the mainland by outboard motor boats. Everyday scores of these boats, most of which are known locally as *perahu tambang* or water taxis, criss-cross the Brunei River, loaded with commuters.

Another group of water taxis carry passengers to and from Brunei Darussalam's fourth district, Temburong, which at the moment can be reached only by helicopter or boat.

Boats are also needed by settlers in some remote parts of the country during bad weather when access by road is next to impossible, and last but not least by fishermen who number more than a thousand at the last count. Most of these fishermen still prefer the traditional way of going to sea in their own boats.

Demand

With a substantial section of the population still in constant need of the use of various vessels, it is not difficult to imagine how great the demand for this type of transport is in the country.

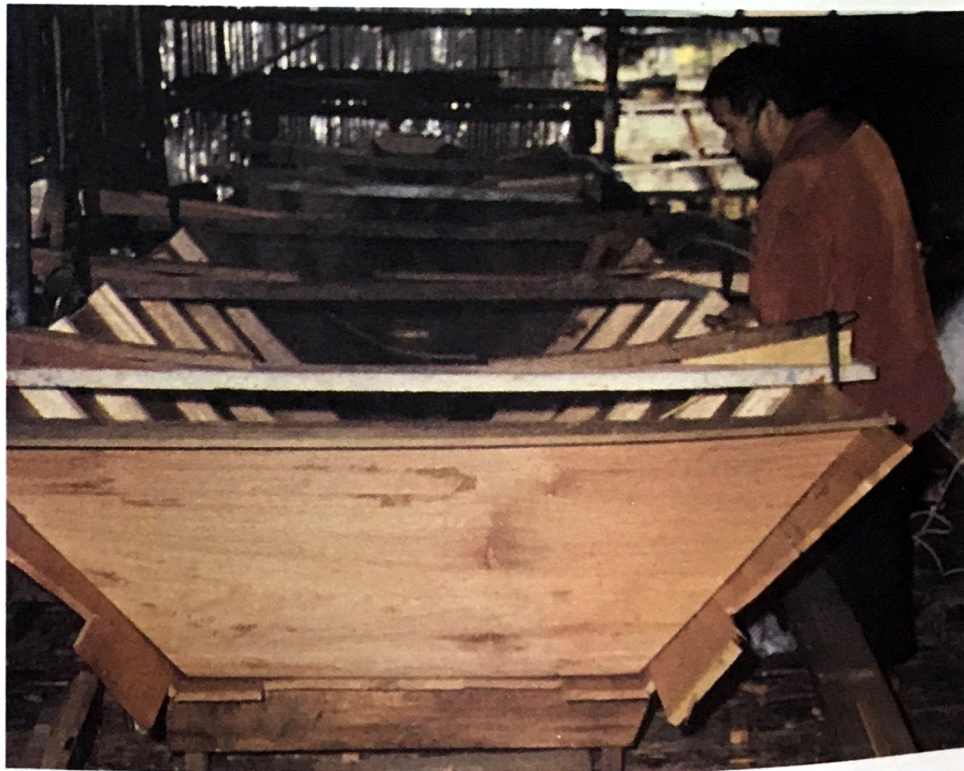


Strong strings and a spanner-like piece of timber on each side help to tighten up the planks further and at the same time give the vessel its intended shape. This continues until the required height on each side of the boat is achieved, which is five *tungkul* or planks for a water taxi and seven for a fishing boat.

Once all the nails are in place, he begins with the *lunas* or base by hammering the nails-studded planks together side to side.



When the required number planks on each side are tightly nailed together, the boatmaker installs the ribs to which the planks are to be further secured.



*After various steps, the boat gains a definite shape. The stern, known as **kondesén**, is where an outboard engine will be attached.*

It is just as well that boat-building in the country is an expertise that has for generations been passed on from father to son. To this day traditional boat-building has been a family business, with production more suited to a hobby than a means of earning a livelihood or sideline income.

However, the slow pace makes the products more exclusive because the buyer knows that a lot of work has gone into each of the boat. A Brunei boat-maker usually has his workshop or *sadaian* (pronounced *saadaayan*) next to his house and turns out an average of two to three water taxis a month, each costing upto \$2,000 or about US\$1,200.

The art of boat-making, known locally as *memburis perahu*, flourishes in the Water Village as it has been for centuries. It is here, as mentioned earlier, their daily use is still very much in evidence. To a water villager, a boat is what a car to a road-user. Moreover, the Kampong Ayer dwellers experience in their daily lives another kind of transport, namely cars. Most of them have cars which they park on the mainland. Despite the shabby appearance of the Water Village, its residents have the same high standard of living as those on land. Their choice of the Water Village as home is therefore not a necessity but one of traditional preference.



*Turning the boat upside down, the boatmaker drives headless nails from the outside into the planks and ribs to make them firmer. This process is called **mamanchee paku**. A tough water-resistant gum is employed to cover the traces made by the nails so that the boat will not spring a leak. In the old days when such gum was not available, boatmakers used resin to plug anything that could let water in.*

The boat is coated with layer after layer of paint outside as well as inside to beautify and protect the wood.

Padian

All wooden boats may be the same to a layman but to a person whose life is entwined with making them or using them, each boat is different in name as well as the purpose for which it is built.

Some of the boats still known in Brunei Darussalam today are the *perahu tambang*, *bagong*, *temuai*, *bidar*, *perahu lumba*, *jumpong* and *tongkang*. Of these only the first five are in frequent demand and use, especially *perahu tambang* and *bagong*, which are the water taxis mentioned earlier and fishing boats respectively. Both of these normally measure between five and nine metres long. *Temuai*, longer and slender, can carry more people and is particularly suitable for waters with narrow space. *Bidar* is an ordinary boat popularly used by a woman hawker, known as *Padian*, who paddles round the Water Village to sell daily necessities such as fish, prawns, vegetables and the like. This is gradually a disappearing tradition today, with only a handful of these women remaining. *Perahu lumba*, which means racing boat, is as the name implies built specially for regattas. It has hull like the *temuai*, only much longer. During a race, paddlers, who can number as many as twenty or more, sit in both sides of the boat and row in unison as hard as

they can. *Jumpong*, perhaps the smallest and lightest of the wooden vessels, has a dual purpose. On land it is called *puntal* and usually dragged by a buffalo to cart away plants and things. *Tongkang* is the largest of the lot but is rarely seen these days. Powered by sails and later a diesel engine, it was in the old days employed to transport various cargoes such as coconuts and other fruits from

the neighbouring towns.

Hardwood

The technique or method of building a boat is still very much the same as in the distant past. Naturally the availability of modern tools makes the job of today's boat-maker, who is as much a carpenter as were his forebears, somewhat easier and faster.





The inside of the boat – if it is designed to be a water taxi – is fitted with seats. The boatmaker is seen here coating the wood with varnish.



An everyday scene in the Brunei River, showing water taxis taking commuters to and from the Water Village.

Boats for long distant travel are usually covered to shelter the passengers from the elements.



*These women, known as **Padian**, are traditional hawkers who paddle their boats around the Water Village to sell an assortment of daily necessities.*



The first step is to choose the wood to be used, which is mostly from three type of local trees that are known for their hardwood. These are Kulimpapa (*Vitex pinnata*); Kapur Bukit (*Dryobalanops beccarii*); and Meraka, which is also known as Meranti Merah (*Shorea curtisii* dyr).

The wood or timber, available from saw-mills in the form of planks, is dried by the boat-maker in his yard at least a month before planing,

measuring, cutting and shaping it because everything has to fit perfectly. The actual construction of the boats is done from start to finish on the pangong, which is several pieces of solid timber as platform inside the workshop.

Kondesen

The boat-maker first works on the lunas or base before moving on to the hull with the skills acquired from years of



*These slim-bodied vessels, called **Temuai**, are particularly useful for passing through narrow rivers.*



A boat race like this one is a popular sport in the country.

apprenticeship and practice. Once this is done, the processed planks are carefully nailed to the hull. All the boats are more or less built in the same way except that the *perahu tambang*, *bagong* and *temuai* have kondesen, which is the part of the stern where a detachable engine or outboard motor is mounted and the operator sits. In addition, the *perahu tambang* and *temuai* have built-in benches on both sides for passengers to sit on. The boats are painted to protect

the wood and at the same time make them look colourful.

The use of wooden boats will live on in Brunei Darussalam given the permanent nature of the Water Village coupled with the reluctance of its inhabitants to move ashore; the great preference for traditional, small-scale fishing by most people; and the remote location of Temburong District and a few other places in the country.

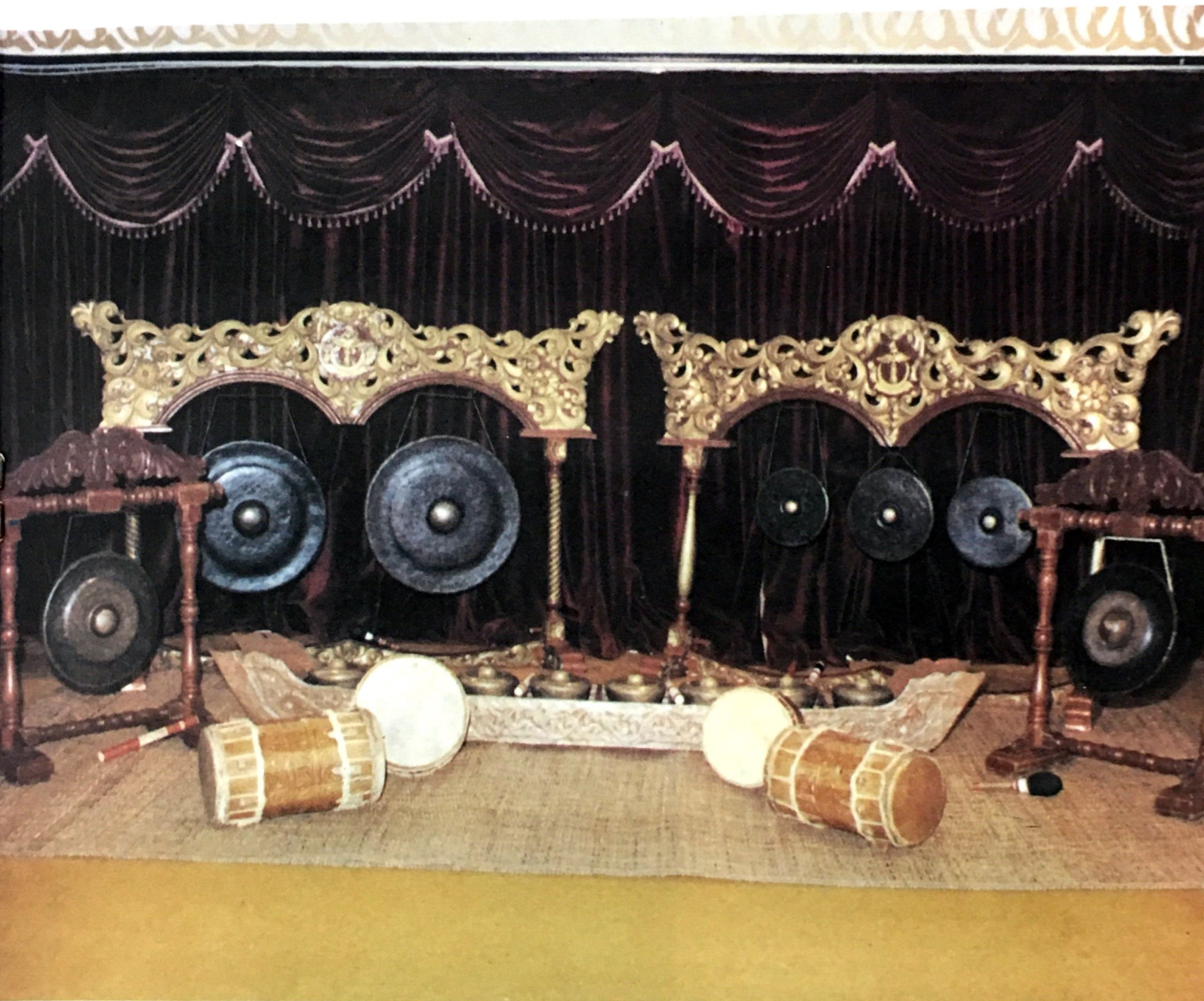


The gulintangan comprises eight brass gongs of slightly different sizes arranged symmetrically on a wooden boat-like structure.

GULINTANGAN

a centuries — old traditional music

BY BOLHASSAN HAJI ABU BAKAR



SOME describe music as an art concerned with producing combinations of pleasing sounds that are put together in an intelligible pattern or structure. Whatever the definition is, music has undeniable been part of mankind since ancient times.

Music has many uses and comes in a variety of styles, each characteristic of a people, a place or a particular era. Musicians, be they composers or performers, are creative and talented people. They make music, either using

instruments or singing, to give them or their audience pleasure or simply to accompany an event. It is an important element of a society's culture so much so that life can be dull and some activities are unthinkable without it. People, especially those in the West, are so used to it that any pleasant sound is said to be 'music to the ears'. On the other hand, one should also remember that not every music is good, which is quite evident in the phrase 'face the music' when one has done something wrong.

The original gulintangan orchestral instruments consisting of gendang labek (cylindrical drums), rabana (shallow drums), gulintangan, gongs and their smaller replicas known as canang and tawak-tawak.



Instruments

Brunei Darussalam, being one of the oldest kingdoms in the world, naturally has various kinds of music, both modern and traditional. Although modern or popular music is more prevalent and widely consumed because of its constant dissemination through radio, television, tapes, records, films, concerts and print, it is the traditional music that the country and its people are often identified with, because it relates to their cultural heritage.

There are many kinds of traditional music in Brunei Darussalam, such as *alus jua dindang*, *samalindang*, *benari*, *lela mencanai*, *jipin*, *adai-adai*, *gulintangan* but to mention a few. Most of them have been in existence since time immemorial and are so named according to their rhythms or origins.

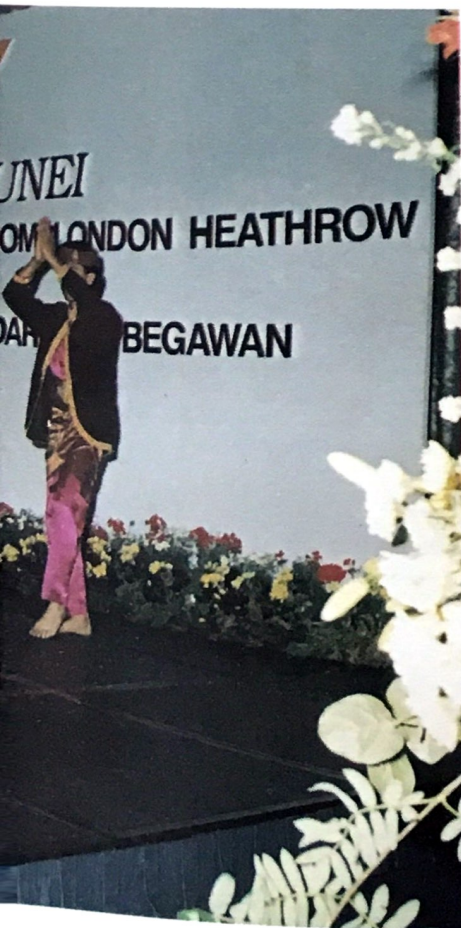


The orchestra performing with four dancers, who opened with the *Tarian Jipin Laila Sembah*, at an important function in the country.



The orchestra providing musical backing to six dancers doing the Tarian Jipin Laila Sembah, which is normally performed in the presence of VIPs, at a London hotel to mark Royal Brunei Airlines' twice weekly flights to Heathrow Airport.

The *gulintangan* orchestra with additional instruments such as violin, gambus (lute or mandolin-like instrument) and accordion (on the floor next to the gambus player). The *gulintangan* player sometimes doubles as drum beater. In fact members of the orchestra are trained to play other instruments besides the ones they have specialised on.



The music is played with various instruments called *dombak*, *gandang labek*, *gong*, *canang*, *tawak-tawak*, *biola*, *gambus*, *seruling*, *tangkong* and *geruding*, among others. Nearly everyone of the traditional music is accompanied by a song, dance or tale from the past except *gulintangan*, which is either played on its own or as accompaniment of the Malay art of self-defence, *Pencak Silat*.

However, it is not unusual to see people dancing or even singing to the music of *gulintangan* during such occasion as *makan tahun* (the annual harvest festival) of the *Kedayan*, an ethnic group of Brunei Darussalam.

Established

The *gulintangan* consists of eight small brass gongs, with the largest measuring 19.6 centimetres and the smallest 18.6

centimetres. They are put in a row of wooden boxes, which in turn are placed in a boat-like structure.

Nowadays, in order to add richness to the sound, it is played with other musical instruments to become known as the *gulintangan* orchestra. This comprises the *gulintangan*, a *gong*, a *canang* (slightly smaller than the *gong*), two *gandang labek* (cylindrical drums), a *gambus* (a lute or mandolin-like instrument) and *biola* (viola).

Gulintangan, according to folklore, was already an established music when Brunei Darussalam was still known by its ancient name, *Poli* or *Puni*. Writings of Chinese historians - Brunei Darussalam and China had relations as early as the sixth century - bear this out when they mentioned the use of brass musical instruments in Brunei in early 10th century. Stories also

had it that *gulintangan* was strictly the music of the aristocrats and was played only at their premises. No commoners were allowed to play, let alone own, *gulintangan* at that time. Although it is hard to say when *gulintangan* became everyone's music, a safe guess would be during the fifteenth century because there were stories that it was still under the control of influential people up to the fourteenth century.

National

Whatever the case may be, *gulintangan* has always been looked upon as an integral part of the country's culture. Moreover, it has for more than two decades been formally revived along with other traditional music, songs and dances by the Language and Literature Bureau, which formed

the Brunei Cultural Body (BCB). Since 1984 the BCB has been directly placed under the management of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, which has further promoted it.

Today *gulintangan* is played more often than not as an orchestra to provide accompaniment for songs and dances. Members of the Brunei Darussalam Cultural Troupe have performed not only in the State during important functions, as well as over radio and on television but also overseas including the ASEAN member countries, Japan, Korea and Europe.

The music of *gulintangan* has been in existence for many centuries and there is no doubt that, being a component of the national culture, it will live for many more.

The Tarian Samalindang is another popular dance for welcoming VIPs.





The Tarian Adai-Adai, which is accompanied by both music and song, depicts the fishermen's way of life.



The Tarian Tudung Dulang or the Dishcover Dance is inspired by the harmonious relationship between a man and his wife who carries his meal under a lovely dishcover.

Tarian Jipin Tar is a dance in which each dancer carries and beats a shallow drum or tar, which has jingling metal discs, and dance to the beat of traditional and today's musical instruments.



To take part in the Tarian Alai Sekap, which is popular during such occasion as the harvest festival, the performers require not only skills but also coordination and nimbleness.



Four dancers doing the Tarian Joget Seri Kenangan, which was once a familiar feature of joyous occasions such as weddings and harvest festivals.





Pencak Silat, the Malay art of self-defence, is considered to be lacking in the necessary spirit or atmosphere without the accompaniment of the gulintangan orchestral music. The picture shows two exponents of the art testing each other's skills.



The Joget Mukun Menyubuh was in the old days a very popular dance that anybody could participate in and was held at every wedding. As the name implies, the participants used to dance until the early hours of the morning to the tempo of the dombak (another type of goatskin drum; more or less like the rabana) beater who took turn to sing quantrains with the dancers. Today the Joget Mukun Menyubuh, like most of the other dances, is no longer performed at weddings or events for which they were created but at various functions to welcome or honour guests or celebrate certain occasions.

This one is called Joget Ngalai Brunei, which also used to be part of any celebration in villages.





To make sure that the traditional dances continue to be part of the nation's cultural heritage, the country's relevant authorities occasionally organise inter-school competitions. With graceful movements these young girls show off their skills in performing the Tarian Alus Jua Dindang in one such competition.



Geruding, a kind of mouth-organ seen being played here, and sadaman are two more of Brunei Darussalam's traditional musical instruments.



The sadaman in full view.



Tangkong is another of the traditional instrument and, like the geruding and sadaman, is originated from the rural section of the country.

