

SPEECH BY THE PUBLICITY LIAISON SECRETARY  
(POLITICAL), MOHD. GHAZALI BIN ISMAIL ON  
BEHALF OF THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE ON  
21ST FEBRUARY FOR THE SRIWANA DRAMA FESTIVAL  
1964 AT VICTORIA THEATRE

Malay cultural groups in Singapore have been very active in recent years in their efforts to promote the integration of our various cultural streams into a truly Malaysian culture.

They have made a mark in various fields including the revival of traditional dances, folk music, performing arts, painting and photography.

However, the dramatic art is one of the earliest cultural traditions of the Malays to have been widely communicated to people of other races in our country. For instance Bensawan has been universally appreciated by Malaysian people of all races.

Moreover Chinese and Indian influences are clearly evident in many dramatic forms of the Malays.

I note that this Pesta Drama Sriwana 1964 has been devoted to drama in more modern forms and nine one-act plays were presented. Malay dance is easy to follow with an elementary knowledge of the national language. Its humour in particular is a feature that people of all races can understand effortlessly and, of course, enjoy immensely.

Sriwana, is to be congratulated on the presentation of this festival. It is a notable achievement that five of the nine plays staged were original works by local dramatists.

This is in keeping with recent trends in cultural activities in Singapore. More and more originality has been in evidence in all fields of expression. And this expression has been typically Malaysian because we are in the process of rediscovering Malaysia in a new identity.

This is, of course, the logical result of our struggle for independence, which has to-day been crowned with victory. I have no doubt that we are progressing towards a full scale cultural revival.

This growth will pick up even greater momentum when we advance from basic independence towards a more just and equal society.

For, democracy and social justice will give our people greater economic well being and leisure and release their creative energies through which the human personality achieves a richer development.

I regret that owing to previous commitments, I have been unable to be present at the concluding night of the festival. I have asked Inche Ghazali to represent me and to give away the awards. I thank the organisers for inviting me and I wish Sriwana every success in their future efforts to encourage and foster Malaysian drama.

FEBRUARY 21, 1964.

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