

# Kompang - ing in tourists...

By Anna Vivienne

**D**iversify tourism products, introduce new tourism packages, and create tourism products. These are the calls frequently made by the tourism authorities to operators in the State.

Interesting and proper calls, which should be given serious thoughts by those involved in the tourism industry.

There are actually several cultural and traditional products that have been developed for tourists and are already being promoted to tourists, adding 'spice' to the already diverse tourism product in the state; that would be flora and fauna and culture and traditions, among many others.

But there are many more interesting things about us, the locals that can be developed and promoted as tourism products.

Hassan Wasidi, who works with the Lagud Seberang Agricultural Park, Tenom agrees with this idea and believes that more can be done in the tourism sector.

He believes that one of the lesser-promoted aspects of the people's culture is their traditional music.

"As we all know, we have very interesting and unique traditional musical instrument. We, the native of Sabah, only play our traditional instrument in our own community, much as our forefathers have performed before us."

He is especially keen to promote the kompang. The kompang is a shallow frame drum made with goat or cow skin fastened to a ring. It is usually about 14 to 18 inches in diameter and played in groups of up to ten people

"The kompang has been performed for a long time in our community. In fact, I cannot remember a time when we did not play the kompang during weddings and other festivities."

"I therefore believe that kompang should be promoted to our tourists."

But how does he hope to do this, one might ask.

"We all know that kompang is played not only during weddings but when dignitaries visit our villages, or arrive to launch an important event. This can be applied to our guests. We can use kompang to usher in our guests."

"I know that kompang is now being introduced to tourists by virtue of it being played in tourism functions. But we can do more to promote it."

I do concur with Hassan here. Those who are involved in the homestay pro-

gramme can promote Kompang. They can play kompang during weddings and festivals. They can hold kompang classes, and show how kompangs are made.

In fact they can even hold kompang competitions.

On the interest of youth in kompang and its perpetuity, Hassan says that in his community, they are still very much interested in playing the kompang.

"When we play in functions, they would come and touch the instruments and try to play it. This shows interest. I think there is no problem of kompang being forgotten," he says.

On whether he will teach youth, he says that he is keen to teach the young ones but because he is still working, he does not have much time.

"But I would like to teach them so that my group of 15 people will have a younger group; to take over when the time comes."

Touching on functions, he says that his group does perform during weddings and at official Agriculture Department functions and this keep their skills honed.

Recently, Hassan and his group performed to welcome the Agriculture Department Director MC Ismail when the latter came to launch the "Lets Go to the Park" or "Jom Pigi Taman 2007" event at the Sabah Agricultural Park Tenom.

Crowds thronged to the park at that time and I believe that most foreign visitors were fascinated with Hassan and his group's performance.

Interesting, isn't it, how we can contribute to the tourism industry in our State in our own little way.

