The performance of Panggung Bangsawan in Riau Lingga

A reconstruction of a theatrical process

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ABSTRACT
Panggung Bangsawan is a popular folk theatre in Riau Lingga. The ups and downs in its performance are attributed to changes in social, political, and cultural conditions. This article is a reconstruction of a near extinct Panggung Bangsawan group in the Teluk village in the islands of Riau Lingga. First, I have attempted to describe the staging process; second, to endeavour to understand the phenomenon of change which occurs when a folk tale is transformed from the written work into a performance; and third, to expose the transformation of a script (text) divided into scenes into a performance. This is an attempt to explain the relation between the audience’s response to a text when it is staged. This article is expected to give a more profound understanding of how the society that supports Panggung Bangsawan remembers its past and its ideal views while comprehending how the shift in life values emerges in a staged folk tale.

KEYWORDS
Panggung Bangsawan, staging process, reconstruction, transformation, Riau Lingga.

1 INTRODUCTION
In the 1990s, I had the opportunity to conduct research on folk theatre in Riau Lingga. After travelling through several islands: Singkep, Lingga and surroundings, I did not find one single folk theatre which still staged plays. However, I did encounter an old ex-stage property building with

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1 This article based on the paper that was presented at the Seminar Antar Bangsa Tradisi Lisan Melayu, Klub Danau Golf, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia, 17-18 November 2009, and also commemorated the director of folk theater, Mr Achmad Atan (Cik Atan) who had passed away.

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