



Randy Raine-Reusch and a new friend – a sapeh from the Malaysian state of Sarawak

EXPLORING THE WORLD OF MUSIC

■ If you closed your eyes and heard the haunting music of the sompoton, you'd expect the person playing it to be a Sabahan musician. So when you opened your eyes, it would be a bit of a shock to see the very Canadian-looking Randy Raine-Reusch producing these entrancing melodies.

Raine-Reusch, a Vancouver-based composer, musician and concert artist, was in Malaysia in August and September to research the musical traditions of Malaysia as part of a seven-month project funded by Canada Council. Prior to that, he had spent a few weeks in north-east Thailand studying with a Thai khaen master.

From the Kayan tribe of the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, he picked up the sapeh, a four-stringed native instrument decorated with native designs, as well as a traditional nose flute. He plans to incorporate their uses into his own compositions with the basic concept of bridging the gaps between the contemporary and the traditional.

Besides the sapeh and the nose flute, Raine-Reusch has added two other musical instruments to his collection. They are the sompoton, an eight-pipe free reed mouth organ from Sabah, and the keledi from Sarawak which has six pipes. The latter closely resembles the lahu khaen played by the Lahu hill tribe of Thailand.

While in Malaysia, Raine-Reusch was interviewed on a radio show over Radio-Television Malaysia, TV3 and two local newspapers. He talked about his work and also expressed a strong desire to create an awareness in the younger generation of the potential in local traditional musical instruments and the new music to be tapped from them.

Raine-Reusch's next stop was China where he planned to continue his research, particularly among the Meo people.

In addition to his work as a composer and concert artist, Randy Raine-Reusch recently worked with the Vancouver East Cultural Centre as the Artistic Director of the successful multicultural festival "Music from the Pacific Horizon". He has also been appointed the Artistic Director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1990 Western Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg.

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