

THURSDAY

AROUND TOWN

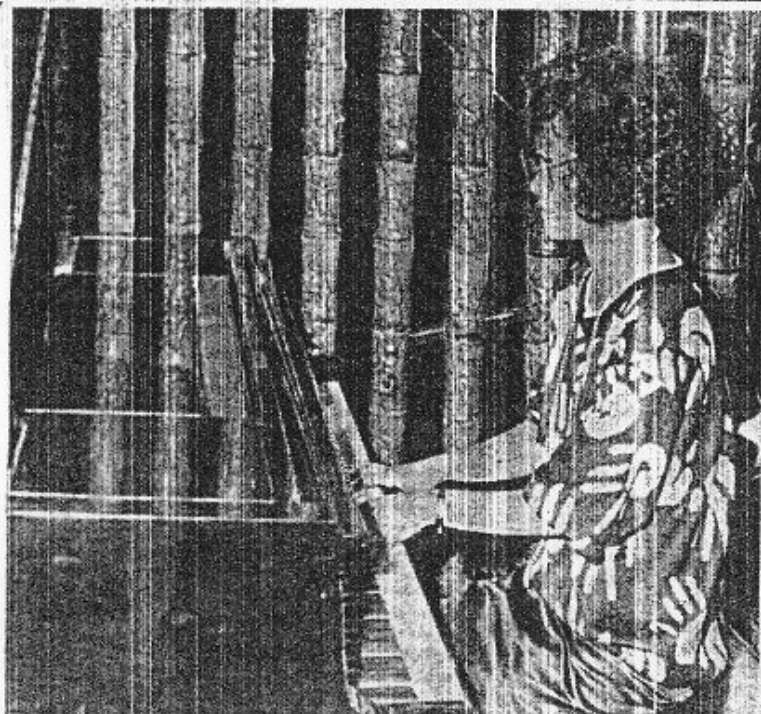
with ANGELA FERNANDEZ



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Lady

JUNE TAN PLAYS SOFTLY AND QUIETLY AT KL HILTON



June Tan: Resident pianist at the Melaka Grill of Kuala Lumpur Hilton

IN the ambience of cultured warmth of the Melaka Grill of Kuala Lumpur Hilton, soft tones from a distant piano fall subtly onto semi-attentive ears.

Diners engrossed in the culinary delights there occasionally look up at a half-remembered tune or phrase. They only seem to notice the tinkler as they walk in or leave the Grill.

The pianist with a soft touch is June Tan who has been quietly playing in the background since March this year.

Penang-born June (she took up music at the age of eight) was encouraged by a talented father who used to hold band practices in the home.

Music grew on her and, today, it gradually 'grows' on the patrons who frequent the Grill.

June's sojourn in Kuala Lumpur early this year came after a decade of teaching music in Sabah, where she also performed at several charity concerts.

She alternated between teaching in the day and playing a few nights a week; but here, she has taken a break from teaching to pursue a course of study in the daytime.

at the piano

"I find this a challenge, and I enjoy the nature of the job as well as performing in the night and studying in the daytime," she says.

June's repertoire includes old standards and evergreens which she generally plays by ear and improvises as she goes along.

Songs like *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*; *Love Is A Many Splendoured Thing*; *Some Enchanted Evening* and more recent hits like *Don't Cry For Me Argentina* spin off her fingers with a tender warmth to match the romantic mood and the requests from guests.

"Most of our patrons seem to prefer oldies and songs from the musicals," she says.

Background

"I also prefer doing numbers which one can improvise. If one plays the works of masters, one note off and the whole world knows," she quips — stressing her preference for pop rather than classics.

June also displays the electronic organ and she sings too. At the Grill, however, the soft tones of a piano is more in keeping with the mood.

The Melaka Grill is holding a promotion on creative Malaysian cuisine this month. And, if you fancy a Continental-style of serving Malaysian food — with good soft music in the background — give it a try.

The quiet, bespectacled June plays daily (Mondays to Saturdays) from 7.30pm to 11pm. Fairly experienced, she will play almost any oldie on request.