



ROYAL PERFORMANCE: Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn played the *sor duang* at a concert she attended at the University Cultural Centre.

## Thai princess ends fruitful visit to S'pore

PRINCESS Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand wrapped up a three-day visit to Singapore yesterday.

She made four stops on her last day here, which started at 9.30am and included a visit to the Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS) in Buona Vista.

Touring the institute's research facilities, the princess showed a "good grasp and great interest" in genetic sciences, said GIS' deputy director, Associate Professor Lawrence Stanton.

Her three-day visit began with the launch of the Interna-

tional Convention for Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology.

The inaugural conference and exhibition, which ends today, showcases devices and technology designed to rehabilitate people with disabilities.

Known for her involvement in community and social development projects, the princess' interest in health care stems from the influence of her grandparents, who were trained medical personnel.

In addition to her visits, she also made personal donations of \$5,000 each to three centres

for the disabled – the Rainbow Centre and Margaret Drive Special School, SIA-Minds Employment Development Centre, and the Tan Tock Seng Hospital Rehabilitation Centre.

On the diplomatic front, she met Singapore's leaders, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong who hosted a lunch for her at the Istana.

The warm hospitality shown her left the princess "extremely pleased" with her visit, said the Thai Ambassador to Singapore, Mr Chalermopol Thanchitt.

It was not all work, though. She found time to attend a

concert at the University Cultural Centre in Kent Ridge on Monday.

The Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) performed two songs composed by the princess.

She gamely agreed to join the orchestra on stage, playing a tune on the *sor duang* (a two-string violin-like Thai instrument) with the National University of Singapore Thai Music Ensemble and SCO.

The rare royal performance received a standing ovation.

Said Mr Chalermopol: "It was a great show of friendship and unity."