

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 6TH SYMPOSIUM
THE ICTM STUDY GROUP
ON PERFORMING ARTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA



SYMPOSIUM THEMES:

MOVEMENTSCAPES AND SOUNDSCAPES
HERITAGE AND ENCOUNTER
NEW RESEARCH



Proceedings of the 6th Symposium

THE ICTM STUDY GROUP ON PERFORMING ARTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Symposium Themes

- (I) Movementscapes and Soundscapes
- (II) Heritage and Encounter
- (III) New Research



國立臺南藝術大學
Tainan National University of the Arts



國際傳統音樂學會東南亞表演藝術研究小組
ICTM STUDY GROUP ON PERFORMING ARTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

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With thanks,

Made Mantle Hood and Marie-Pierre Lissoir
Co-Chairs, Programme Committee

Tsung-te Tsai and Catherine Ching-Yi Chen
Chair and Deputy Chair, Local Arrangements Committee

2021 PASEA Local Arrangements Committee

Symposium Photos



Performing Ontologies and Decentering the Elite in Balinese *Kakawin* Epic Singing

by
Made Mantle Hood
Tainan National University of the Arts



Performance Groups

- ONINI Singers (Siraya)
- MAFANA Band (Amis)
- TJIMUR Dance Theatre (Palwan)
- INNAHUA Music Studio (Han)



Transculturation in Teochew opera: A case study on Teochew Opera and Puppet House's Director Goh Hooi Ling

Ching-Yi Chen
Independent Scholar

The 6th Symposium of the ICTM
PASEA Study Group
3 August 2021



MOYANG SIAMANG GIBBON SPIRIT

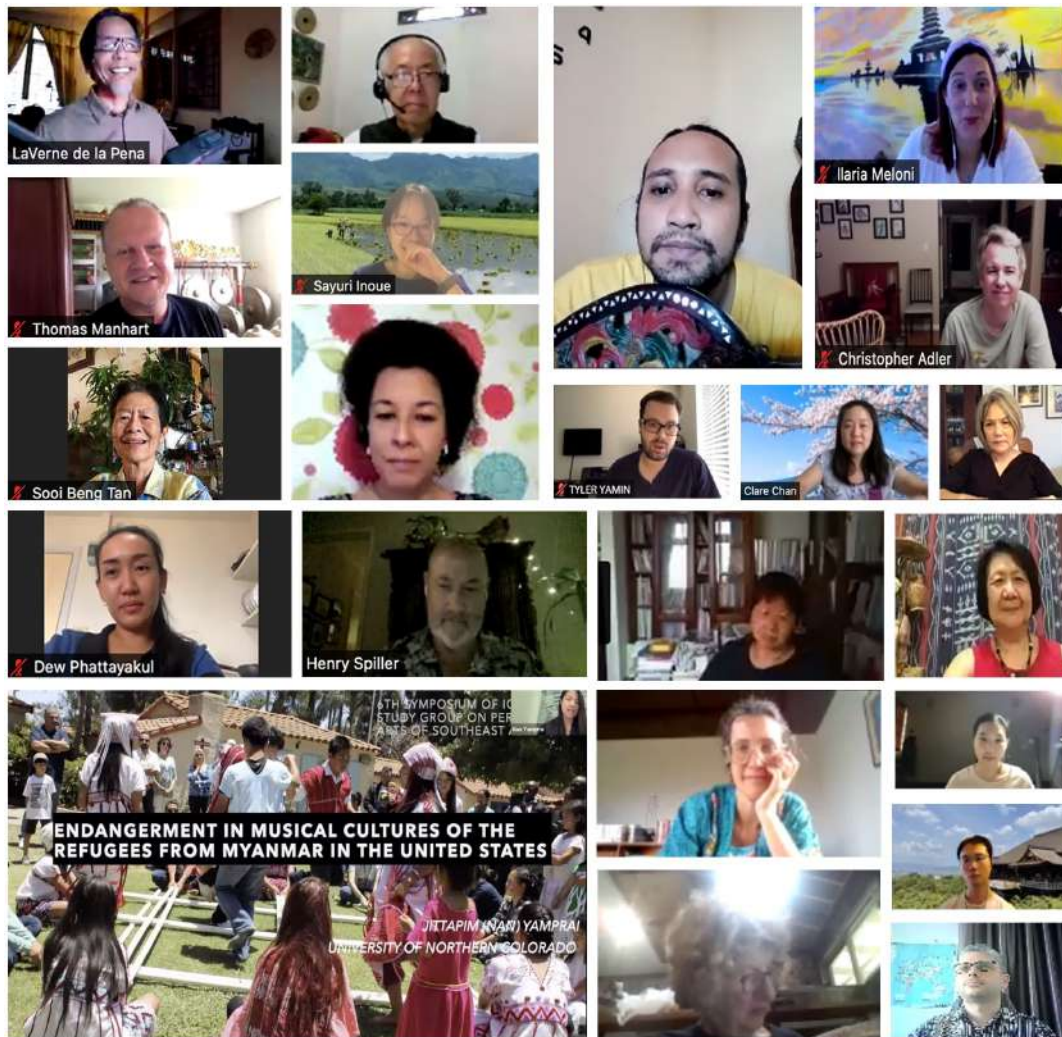


SINDHEN: THE FEMALE VOICES WITHIN THE JAVANESE PERFORMING ARTS

Wonosari district, Yogyakarta
(Java, Indonesia) – August 2019

Singers during a *gamelan* music session in a "village cleansing" annual celebration





Until we meet again in 2023.....

INTRODUCTION AND SYMPOSIUM THEMES

The 6th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on the Performing Arts of Southeast Asia was hosted and sponsored by the generous support of the Taiwan Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Tainan National University of the Arts. From 29 July to 5 August, PASEA's first virtual symposium live streamed thousands of megabytes across the world wide web to illuminate the computer screens of our members in Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific. Despite the gloom of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Symposium brought PASEA members together to hear, and be a part of each other's engaging research papers, panel sessions, roundtables and performances. The 6th Symposium began its live stream with opening remarks from Gene-Eu Jan, President of TNNUA and Tehwa Shih, Dean of TNNUA's College of Music. This was followed by heartfelt greetings from Tsung-Te Tsai, Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee, and Made Mantle Hood, Chair of PASEA and Co-Chair of the Program Committee. Opening remarks culminated with a wonderful performance by the Onini Singers, a contemporary Siraya chorus of the Pingpu plains indigenous peoples of Taiwan.

This proceedings publication models its format after the virtual symposium it represents. In addition to New Research, two main themes were featured over the six days including: Theme I, Movementscapes and Soundscapes; and Theme II, Expressing Heritage - Inviting Encounter: Intersections between Scholars and Performing Artists in Southeast Asia. Both themes challenged our members to problematize established ways of researching to consider intersecting theoretical and epistemological issues. The Table of Contents in this publication has been organized to reflect the order of asynchronous and live papers, panels, roundtable discussions, films and performances that constituted 23 Sessions. Although the Symposium was virtual, the program committee maintained the 'excursion day' that typically falls in the middle of our week-long meeting. Instead of a virtual culture tour, the program committee thought it best to simply give members a day off from their computers considering the intense screentime endured over the duration of the symposium. Equally challenging was scheduling paper presenters living in different time zones from Asia, Europe the Americas and the Pacific. Some presenters had to stay up late at night while others woke up extra early in the morning. But despite these inconveniences, PASEA's first virtual symposium was broadcast professionally and smoothly thanks to great technical support from TNNUA's Graduate Institute of Ethnomusicology graduate students.

Theme I – Movementscapes and Soundscapes

Spaces of production, acoustic properties and bodily perception in relation to place were just some of the issues addressed in the theme Movementscapes and Soundscapes. Although investigations of soundscapes has accumulated more than 50 years of academic literature, few studies have coupled research queries with movement as a principal determinant of spaces of production. Meanings and relationships between bodies in motion with articulated sounds contain diverse intersections between what is typically categorized as music and dance events. This theme provides openings for a number of questions relevant to Southeast Asia: How has the internet enabled the transmission of music and dance resulting in the acceleration of 'overlapping bodies' in Southeast Asian performing arts? How do local ontologies conceive mind and body connections with nature, the spiritual, the physical place or the social setting as relevant to soundscapes and movementscapes? What extramusical sounds and extra-choreographic motions are present and how do they influence performance

or not? And finally, how do sound- and movementscapes as topics relate to music and dance, but also environment, identity, rituals, communication, ecology, consumership, bodily perception, and audience-performer relations?

The theme and its issues argue for a methodology that is dynamic rather than fixed, one in which bodies and environment are in constant motion, continually creating meanings and connections. Southeast Asia provides a platform for such a methodology.

Theme II – Expressing Heritage - Inviting Encounter: Intersections between Scholars and Performing Artists in Southeast Asia

The second theme invited researchers to move beyond their usual circle of scholars to consider individuals or groups in their milieu who may be overlooked, voiceless or lack empowerment to express views on their performing arts heritage. This theme asked scholars to embrace a format and discourse of engagement with heritage - both performative and descriptive – that are inclusive for performers and non-scholars as they participate with metropolitan academics in navigating the difficulties traditional arts performers currently encounter in the fast-approaching mid 21st century. Expressing Heritage – Inviting Encounter asked questions such as what frameworks of transmission in an Internet age are lost or gained when encountered by new generations? What strategies can be shared that invite new audiences and present alternatives to the stereotyped trope lamenting “catastrophic loss of tradition”? This trope propagates an unchallenged collective forgetting and devaluation of heritage. It easily subdues the imagination from untangling a more complicated institutional and individual psychology of avoidance and contempt for cultural legacies in the performing arts among the rising middle class in the Southeast Asian region.

Theme III – New Research

The third theme complemented the previous two themes by providing an open platform for researchers to present papers on new research. Individual topics such as trance and spirit mediums, queerness and agency, travel and nostalgia in Southeast Asian performing arts were presented as well as panel sessions on the importance of archiving and organological research in the region.

AMBIGUITY AND INTERSECTIONS AT THE LINGSAR FESTIVAL OF LOMBOK, INDONESIA

David Harnish

University of San Diego, USA

I attended the formal opening ceremony for the “war of the rice squares” at Lingsar temple in 2017 on the second day of the festival. In my years observing the festival, this was the first time I appeared at this formal event, along with hundreds of political dignitaries, the media, leaders of various sorts, tourist industry officials, and some elite citizens of Lombok, a neighbor island of Bali. The emcee for this event spoke for two hours, narrating what was happening in the temple, presenting speakers and staged dances for the audience, and informing us about the significance of the *Perang Topat* (Rice Square War) that we were to witness. This festival is famous for uniting migrant Hindu Balinese with local Music Sasak and had been taking place for about 350 years, and *Perang Topat* featured perhaps a thousand Sasak outside one courtyard and more than that number of Balinese outside the other courtyard, engaged in the mock warfare of throwing rice squares at each other. Over two hours, however, the emcee never spoke the word “Bali” or “Balinese” but did speak at length about the event’s functions of tolerance and interreligious harmony.

Then, a procession of about 100 Sasak ritual participants carrying offerings and relics wound through the audience and across the stage in a folkloric spectacle. Many dancers, accompanied by gamelan ensembles, stopped on stage to perform briefly; then this procession continued down to the Sasak courtyard within the temple. And with that, the vice-governor of the province stood overlooking thousands of people, preened for the cameras, grabbed a *topat* rice square, and hurled it in the air, and then suddenly hundreds of *topat* were flying back and forth between the Sasak and Balinese (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Folkloric demonstration of the Sasak ritual dance, Batek Baris, 2017
(Photo by D. Harnish)

Over my 34 years of research at the festival, I had written about various changes in protocol, arts, and narratives, yet I had avoided this formal ceremony because I knew it was a lengthy display of rhetoric and politics and I preferred to stay with participants in one temple courtyard or the other. Attending the ceremony made clear one tendency: the gradual unraveling

of interreligious harmony that once seemed central to the festival. Indeed, it was one of the reasons that the festival was held and Sasak and Balinese represented complementary duality, like female and male, that merged to promote rainwater, filling the water springs on which the temple sits to irrigate the extensive rice fields, and to create both spiritual and agricultural fertility. The performing arts had been a primary force to break down ethnic borders and power imbalances to generate this unity, yet now some Sasak arts seemed reduced to folkloric presentation. What was happening? What was this emerging and more politicized narrative?

Background

One-hundred years ago, Balinese and Sasak called Wetu Telu were the participants at the festival. Wetu Telu were nominally Muslim; they believed in the powers of ancestors and the ancestralized landscape while recognizing Allah as supreme deity and Muhammad as His prophet, though they did not fast during Ramadan, did not pray five times a day, and rarely attended the mosque. The performing arts – gamelans, dances, and theatre – invited local deities, constituted rituals to connect participants to ancestors and the landscape, and safeguarded rainwater and fertility that was symbolized in a spiritual merging of Sasak and Balinese in processions and prayers together. During my first attendance in 1983, this was still largely the case but several events had marginalized the Wetu Telu and more and more of them had converted to normative Islam while fewer were participating at the festival.

Balinese from East Bali colonized Lombok for 200 years and during those years, the festival was a state ritual. Dutch forces in 1894 terminated this colonization and began another, which lasted until 1942. Independence by 1950 marked a new but fractious beginning for Indonesia. In 1965, the military executed a faux communist coup, which resulted in the massacre of over one million suspected communists and others throughout the country. On Lombok, thousands of Wetu Telu were killed as they were suspect. Many thousands then converted to Islam for protection because atheists could be accused of being communists and Wetu Telu did not appear to be Muslim. One teacher called the late 1960s-1980s a “dark period” filled with control, suspicion, and constant scrutiny. It was unwise for remaining Wetu Telu to hold rituals, though the Lingsar festival continued as it was considered part of the religious exercise of Balinese Hindus. During this period, an apparently new narrative about the temple’s founder was promulgated by local Sasak. The story was that a Javanese Muslim evangelist came to Lingsar to initiate Islam and he set up the Sasak courtyard, called *kemaliq*, and his death, in which he simply disappeared into the water spring, is symbolized in the *Perang Topat*.

The provincial government in the 1980s was tasked with developing Lombok, establishing modern education and attracting tourists. Lingsar – the uniqueness of two ethno-religious groups conjoining in one festival – appealed to government officials, who generated publications and a dramatized film. These officials prioritized the Sasak and adopted the Sasak narrative that the temple was founded by an evangelist who introduced Islam, created the *kemaliq*, and organized the rites and performing arts. This story, along with the political nuancing, allowed for the participation of Sasak at the festival as enactment of culture (but not Wetu Telu culture), rather than religion; since the festival is neither a mosque nor marked as Islamic, they could not attend as a religious obligation. Instead, they hold their own memorial rites and carry out the *Perang Topat* with the Balinese to symbolize the evangelist’s sacrifice, which also brings rainwater and fertility to the fields.

According to elder teachers in the 1980s, the performing arts had not changed over centuries, though these teachers perhaps maintained a local notion that the festival and its arts were sacred and unchangeable (see Harnish 2005). But, perhaps to parallel the emerging narrative, Sasak leaders introduced a new ensemble, *gendang beleg*, in the 1990s to perform on

site and in processions. The traditional *gendang beleq* had recently been decontextualized, secularized, and modernized for the stage by government leaders, and it was this version that was presented at Lingsar. Around the same time, the two musicians of the *preret*, double-reeds that accompanied the creation and movement of the two central festival offerings, Kebon Odeq, were no longer invited. The *preret* instrument and performance were linked to Wetu Telu and ancestral worship, and these did not fit the new image. Similarly, a dance with some erotic elements was discouraged. Then, a Sasak processional ensemble, *tawaq tawaq*, replaced a previous gamelan built on a Balinese model. This switch was made to further distinguish Sasak and Balinese arts, to prevent Sasak from performing music that could be considered “Balinese,” and to enhance the Sasak soundscape (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. The gamelan *tawaq tawaq* circumambulates the *kemaliq* interior, followed by a *gendang beleq*. At the back are Balinese officials and festival participants, 2017
(Photo by D. Harnish)

As a minority, the Balinese felt increasingly marginalized. For centuries, they dominated messaging at Lingsar – that the springs spouted to attract an entourage of noble Balinese from East Bali, led to the defeat of unjust local kings, and resulted in a temple at that spot – and it was only through noble connection to the divine that rainwater and fertility could be guaranteed. As the Sasak narrative was pushed forward by the government, some Balinese fought to announce their own version, but they had no media access. Further changes at Lingsar, and in Lombok generally, seemed to lead to a crisis of identity that resulted in local Balinese turning to Bali for larger identification. Reformist organizations on both islands invited more Balinese from Lombok to Bali and established media, vocational, and educational opportunities linking the diaspora. And, with this development, local Balinese began discarding rites and arts with any embedded Sasak elements, and replacing these with more homogeneous Balinese models (see Harnish 2021).

For instance, 'Rejang Dewa', a sacred but modern female offering dance, was institutionalized at Lingsar around 1997; at the same time, a *kidung* choir singing praise songs to deities – a form found throughout Bali but only very rarely on Lombok – was invited to perform in the *kemaliq*, to help “Hinduize” that space for Balinese participants. 'Canang Sari,' formerly a male offering dance, was opened up to women and children; one young Balinese told me this was appropriate in this new age of “democracy.” Interestingly, the *topeng* masked-dance performance that once abstractly expressed the Balinese founding myth was discontinued and ultimately replaced by 'Rejang Dewa'. I suspect this latter change was a gesture to the Sasak,

who had to reorient participation from religion to culture in order to maintain presence at Lingsar. In 2017, another Balinese women's dance promulgated by modernists in Bali, 'Rejang Renteng', appeared at Lingsar. And then this switch – from a local, somewhat isolated minority retaining some synthesized traditions to a modernist Balinese entity – was complete (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Balinese Rejang Dewa dance in the *gaduh* courtyard, 2001
(Photo by D. Harnish)

Ambiguities

These two parties have gone through what I call 'agamaization' – taking on the practices and identities of *agama* (world religion, e.g., Islam and Hindusim), as pressed by modernist religious forces and the government – and they are now spiritually more distant from each other than ever before. The narratives clash, the arts are now distinct and exclusive, sometimes representatives ignore the others, more tensions are clear, and new borders have been erected. And yet, these parties still co-exist at the festival and conduct some events together. How is this possible? It's easy to reply that their mutual cooperation is still needed for the distribution of water from the springs for agriculture, but answers go beyond that.

Studies of ambivalence often address frictions, contestations, and negotiations as processes to position oneself in a given context. The term "ambivalence" is credited to Eugen Bleuler, who in 1910 defined it as "strength from both sides" and theorized three types of ambivalence: emotional or affective (in which the same object elicits both positive and negative feelings), voluntary (making it difficult to know how to act), and intellectual (in which a person holds contradictory ideas) (see Campbell 2020).

Sasak leaders at Lingsar seem to have negotiated from ambivalence how to incorporate the residuum of their past into circumstances in the present. The "past" referred to Wetu Telu culture, pre-Islamic beliefs, and dominance by the Balinese – all things that officials and clerics wanted eradicated. Leaders appropriated the power to define relevant elements of the past and shaped those elements, taking structures of ambivalence and crafting Sasak identities both traditional and Islamic. This agency led first to counter narratives, then stopping *preret*

accompaniment, secularization and ethnicization of other performing arts, and the institution of a prefacing Sufic rite, constituting a continuum of both Islamization and the delinking of participation from *agama*.

Balinese leaders have been ambivalent about their positions on Lombok vis-à-vis their ancestors' origins on Bali and their relationships with Sasak. Originally and for centuries in a superior position, they quickly became a religious minority, then saw their advantages reduced over the past 100 years. They are both Balinese and citizens of Lombok and form their identities from this ambivalence. Like the movement to Islamize and Sasakize the festival, leaders felt that the festival had to become more Hindu and more Balinese, both to counter the forceful Sasak rhetoric about Lingsar and to craft and assert their own identities. Thus came the installation of *kidung* in the Kemaliq to Hinduize that space, the adding of 'Rejang Déwa, a badge of modern Balineseness, and the more recent 'Rejang Renténg' dance. These all represent a direct connection to modern Balinese religiosity and a rearranging of local practice to homogenize practice with temple festivals on Bali. In reaction to the long-standing personal discomfort caused by ambivalence, Balinese authorities have chosen to take on modern identities generated from Bali while continuing to modify performance programs at Lingsar and other temples.

With so much focus on the festival and rhetoric about its history and current practices, changes in the performing arts were inevitable; these needed to be nuanced to fit the emerging rhetoric. Since there were new public Sasak stories over time, there were corresponding performing arts changes. Since local Balinese needed larger identifications, the homogenization of their arts thus helped performatively re-create Bali on Lombok. Mediating between historic antecedents and growing politicization, this border seems to have become flexible, introducing another position of ambiguity.

Despite the uncomfortable ambivalence, the festival goal is still interreligious harmony, both for amicable division of irrigation waters, the maintenance of economic ties, and for the collapsing of ethnic and religious borders to unify complementary dualities and further generate fertility. Many rites unite Sasak and Balinese at Lingsar, such as *Perang Topat* and select processions; they socialize throughout the 5-day festival and absorb musics over days from both parties. As it has always been, the performing arts activate the variety of festival narratives, reminding participants why they are present. To me, the soundscape of overlapping Sasak and Balinese musics over days are inherently balanced, transcend borders, affect participants, and reference mythic time, making that time – preceding normative Sasak Islam and Balinese Hinduism – exist here and now, even while many of the arts themselves represent contemporary religious identity practices.

As Junge (2008) suggests about ambivalent structures, every new development brings forth a series of contraries related to such structures as globalization and localization or integration and fragmentation. A practice of ambiguity – though denied by those who claim exclusive narratives – allows for both diversion and cooperation to help achieve union, and a tolerance of ambiguity allows contradictory narratives to co-exist and for events and parties to move forward even while commonalities are being renewed through shared ritual actions.

A tolerance of ambiguity is also needed to execute every festival and mediate every rhetorical device about it; this ambiguity tolerance allows for the Sasak contribution to be both more Islamic and more secular, and for Sasak to be both Muslim, join processions with Hindu Balinese, and mutually engage in *Perang Topat*. And, this tolerance permits Balinese to be both Hindu, identified as thoroughly Balinese, but also integrated citizens of Lombok who unify with their Muslim counterparts. Some embedded ambiguities have probably existed within the festival for most of its 350 years, but modernist forces have brought these to the fore. I have consistently believed the festival to be a barometer of interreligious relationships and socio-political change. Considering the level of change since I first attended the festival in 1983, the

strain of today's concurrent layers of ambiguity requires deep tolerance and challenges the extensive histories of cooperation, suggesting that still more changes to narratives and performing arts are likely in the coming years.

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SOUNDSCAPE OF HOPE AND DEFIANCE: MUSIC AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE NAQSHBANDIYYA HAQQANI SUFI ORDER

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Introduction

Music and dance have always played an important role in Sufism. Although a contested issue among religious scholars for centuries, music flourished in Muslim societies and was not confined within Sufi circles. Hammarlund (2004) stresses that “Sufi music never was a marginal, sectarian phenomenon in the musical culture of the Muslim world. On the contrary, it constituted the main outlet for musical creativity in a religious context” (p. 1). It became an integral part in the practices of many *tariqas* (Sufi Orders) where *sama’* (listening) and *dhikr* (remembrance) sessions are performed, accompanied by the singing of songs in praise of the Prophet Muhammad called *maulid* or *hadrah*. The act of remembering and glorifying God (*dhikr*) brings a person closer to Allah and praising the Prophet Muhammad (*selawat*) is a show of a Muslim’s love and reverence for God’s messenger. In *dhikr* certain words or phrases are rhythmically recited and repeated such as *la illaha illallah* (there’s no god but Allah) which is part of the *shahadah*, an oath of a Muslim’s belief in Allah. Other *dhikr* may include the utterance of *subhanallah* (glory be to Allah), *alhamdulillah* (praise be to Allah) and *Allahuakhbar* (Allah is the greatest) and various names of Allah (*asma’ul husna*) such as *al-Haq* (the Truth) and *al-Ahad* (the One). However, the selection and frequency of phrases or words vary between Sufi *tariqas* and could be unique only to a particular Sheikh.

In Malaysia the *dhikr* is performed by Muslims in general, especially after daily prayers as part of the *wirid* (reciting certain verses of the Qur’an and supplications). It also covers other recitations such as *istighfar* (repentance) and *doa munajat* (specific supplications) in order to gain Allah’s blessings. *Dhikr* is a practice in which a Muslim connects to his Creator (Bahron, 2014). The practice is highly recommended and is based on the Qur’an and *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet). It is a way of cleansing the heart and is given more attention and devotion within Sufi circles around the world. The performance of *maulid* and *hadrah* on the other hand is a supererogatory ritual performed to gain blessings (*barakah*) from Allah during certain ceremonies such as weddings, circumcisions and *cukur jambul* (shaving of a baby’s hair).

In Malay societies there are similar religious vocal performances called *qasidah*, *berzanji* and *marhaban* which are the melodic recitation of the story of Prophet Muhammad based on certain traditional Arabic texts or poems. These groups are often invited or hired to perform at these events and are getting more popular in cities among affluent Muslims. One of the most active and well-known *maulid* groups is the Haqqani Maulid Ensemble based in Kuala Lumpur. This group was initially formed to serve the Naqshbandiyya Al-Aliyyah Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani Sufi *tariqa*, a branch of the well-known Naqshbandi Sufi order. Although the Naqshbandi *tariqa* has been around for centuries in the Malay world without much contestation, this particular order has been ruled as deviant by religious authorities in Malaysia. In April 2000, a *fatwa* (religious decree) was issued by the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia. It was decided that the *tariqa*’s underlying esoteric teachings contradict the creedal doctrine of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah* (Sunni Islam) practiced by Muslims in the country. However, this does not stop members of the *tariqa* to conduct their religious activities, including the performance of the Haqqani Maulid Ensemble. On the contrary, the ensemble began to perform extensively outside of the *tariqa*’s own secluded space to include public and private

events and ceremonies. This paper looks into the percussion-based Haqqani Maulid Ensemble's negotiation between religious marginality, artistic expression and spirituality.

In the late 1980's a new Sufi *tariqa* was introduced to Malaysia – the Naqshbandiyya Al-Aliyyah Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani Sufi Order. Although the Naqshbandi *tariqa* is not new to the country, the Haqqani *tariqa* was a later addition to a long history of Sufism in the region. The Naqshbandi order can be traced back to the teachings of Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband, a 14th century Central Asian Sufi scholar. The *tariqa* later spread throughout the Muslim world and was known for its silent *dhikr* as opposed to the vocal *dhikr* generally practiced by Muslims. Malay communities along the Straits of Melaka practice this silent *dhikr* in performing the *zapin* dance in coordination with musical pulse and bodily movements (Mohd Anis, 2009).

This new branch of the Naqshbandi order was led by the late Sheikh Nazim Adil al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani (1922-2014), a Turkish-Cypriot Muslim scholar and Sufi. He was made the spiritual leader after the death of Sheikh Abdullah Dagestani in 1973 and the *tariqa* was later named after him. The emergence of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi order has generated interest among scholars, looking especially at its rising influence in the western world. The *tariqa* was active in Europe and regularly held annual gatherings at Shacklewell Lane and Peckham Mosques in London. Sheikh Nazim had a global following and his *murids* (disciples) included royalties from Southeast Asia.

Sheikh Nazim was considered to be a living *wali* Allah or Islamic saint at the time. He was venerated not only for his wisdom and piety but also his *keromah* or the ability to perform miracles. It is believed that apart from Prophets, *ulamas* (religious scholars) and *wali* Allah are bestowed with special powers by God due to their devotion and piety. This Weberian 'charismatic leadership' becomes an important foundational criteria in determining whether a Sufi Sheikh is worthy of *bai'ah* (to pledge allegiance).

One of his disciples was a young prince from the royal household of Perak, the late HRH Raja Ashman Shah (1958-2012). Raja Ashman or Ku Ash to his close friends and family, was the second son of Sultan Azlan Shah (1928-2014), the 34th Sultan of Perak (r. 1984-2014) and 9th Yang Dipertuan Agong of Malaysia (1989-1994). He was the younger brother of the present Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Shah and was fourth in line to the Perak throne. Raja Ashman was also known as Sheikh Raja and given the posthumous title of *Sultan al-Qulub* or the King of Hearts.

Raja Ashman was a Malay royal believed to be bestowed with *daulat* an Arabic term meaning dynasty or state but has been locally interpreted as divine essence, based on the Hindu concept of *sekti*. Clifford Geertz describes *sekti* as "the sort of transordinary phenomenon that elsewhere is called *mana*, *baraka*, *orenda*, *kramat*, or, of course, in its original sense charisma: A divinely inspired gift of power, such as the ability to perform miracles" (p. 106). It was not surprising that many of his early followers came from the state of Perak who viewed him as a Raja and spiritual guru.

In 1986 Sheikh Nazim was invited to the Perak palace by Raja Ashman and a special *dhikr* session called the *Dhikr Khatam al-Khwajagan* was performed. This *dhikr* is performed before dusk on a Thursday or Friday night and is considered an important practice of the *tariqa*. Raja Ashman was later appointed as the caliph of Sheikh Nazim Haqqani of the Eastern Region and began gaining followers. According to Ferrer (2009) the *tariqa* "considers themselves to be the Royal *tariqa*, a virtuoso and elite religious organisation stemming from the Ottoman Empire" (p. 36). Despite being seen as 'royal' and 'elitist' the *tariqa* welcomes followers from different backgrounds, including urban youths on a 'spiritual migration' or *hijrah*. The *tariqa* was also seen as "serious, and secretive, yet porous and playful, and these combined features add to its mysterious intrigue and appeal" (Ferrer, 2009, p. 35). Some of them would even travel to

London and several European countries to attend the *tariqa*'s gatherings in the presence of Sheikh Nazim, Raja Ashman and other Sheikhs. These early gatherings involved the usual *dhikr* sessions but did not include any *maulid* (songs in praise of Prophet Muhammad) and the playing of instruments. It wasn't until the introduction of the Haqqani Maulid Ensemble from Malaysia that music began to be played at the *tariqa*'s gatherings in Europe and Malaysia.

The Haqqani Maulid Ensemble (HME) started as a loose group of young *murids* of Raja Ashman reciting the *dhikr* and *maulid* in 1990. They began using the *kitab Ad-Diba'i*, brought back by Raja Ashman from Brunei. A member of the ensemble, an *ustaz* (religious teacher) from Kedah recalls that Raja Ashman was a music lover and fascinated with Malay drums such as *kompang* and *rebana*. Both are single-faced drums usually made of *nangka* (jackfruit) wood and goat skin and traditionally played in *maulid* and *hadrah* performances in Malay communities. He further recalls that the prince wanted to include elements of music into the *tariqa*'s spiritual practices as a means for getting closer to God. Traditionally Sufi music was performed to reach a heightened mental and spiritual state, to experience a mystical union with God. Although music is not generally used in *dhikr* within the Malaysian context but it doesn't mean that it is *haram* (forbidden) in Islam. He argues that one has to look at the history of Islam and finds that music was widely used in religious contexts, even in Mecca.

The early members of the ensemble comprised of 10 to 15 male musicians and singers from different social and economic backgrounds. A leader of the current group says that "we welcome everyone regardless of colour and race" and one criteria was that one is willing to "*tahan maki*" or could stand being scolded. The inclusion of *maulid* and *hadrah* into the *zikir* gatherings attracted many young *murids* (students) into the movement. Hafidzar, another member of the group, feels that music could soften one's heart and prevents a person from making harsh decisions. He was referring to the more 'extreme' interpretation of Islam that prohibits music and is often associated with Wahabbism, which also opposes Sufism (Mohamed Nawab and Mohamed Osman, 2014).

The group was musically guided by Raja Ashman himself. They listened to CD's from Syria and learned the *kompang* in Melaka. Instruments used were the *rebana*, *kompang* and the Arab *darbuka* drums. Later, Raja Ashman brought back *djembe* drums he bought in London to add different timbres to the ensemble. Practice sessions began at different houses in Kuala Lumpur until a new Sufi lodge or *zawiyah* was established in Damansara, situated on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

The ensemble attracts urban youths and some with musical background, including playing of instruments and singing. Many of these youths were spiritually migrating or *hijrah* from their previous lives. Zafir, an architecture student was 'spiritually bankrupt' when he joined the *tariqa* in the late 1980's. As a guitar player he loves jazz and rock and the ensemble provides him with both musical and spiritual satisfaction. Another member Hafiz, from Kuala Lumpur, joined the movement in 1995 after attending a gathering with Sheikh Nazim. He used to work in a discotheque and felt 'troubled' and 'empty'.

The Haqqani Maulid Ensemble grew to become a vibrant and energetic group, and revitalized the traditional *maulid* and *qasidah*. They believe that music is the easiest way to love the Prophet, as form of spiritual expression and a means of *da'wah* or inviting people to Islam. Their music softens the heart, spreads love and is appreciated by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

The ensemble took 3 years of practice and experimentation to sound good. They also took lessons in *kompang* for 4 years in Melaka. Instruments such as guitar, violin, clarinet and flute were added later. However, these instruments were not played in the presence of Sheikh Nazim, possibly due to the generally accepted Islamic ruling prohibiting the use of string and wind music instruments. They recorded 2 albums and began to get invitations to perform by members of the *tariqa*. Performances are for religious and non-religious contexts such as

weddings, *cukur jambul* (shaving of a baby's hair), corporate shows, religious talks and appeared a few times on national television.

The Haqqani Maulid Ensemble had their first international exposure when Raja Ashman brought them to London to perform in front of Sheikh Nazim himself in 1991. Prior to this, musical instruments were not used in *dhikr* and *maulid* sessions within the Haqqani Naqshbandi *tariqa*. The ensemble gained the blessings of Sheikh Nazim and even inspired other groups from Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco and other Muslim countries to perform their musical interpretations or versions of these traditional songs praising the Prophet Muhammad (2019, personal communication). Besides *maulid*, the ensemble also accompanies the *hadrah* which involves rhythmic chanting and recitation of religious poems with bodily movements which include whirling. The Haqqani Maulid Ensemble has performed in the United States, the UK, Germany, Turkey and Cyprus.

Although the Naqshbandiyya Al-Aliyyah Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani Sufi Order may be religiously marginalised due to the existing fatwa against its teachings, its music ensemble is not. The Haqqani Maulid Ensemble, through its music serves as an interface between the beauty of Islam and the rest of the world. Members came from diverse backgrounds, on a journey of *hijrah* looking for spiritual fulfilment and enjoyment. As a Sufi sect, they accept the horizontal pluralism of cultures and religions that provides a different spiritual dimension of Islam.

They are an antithesis to the creeping Wahhabi movement, seen as a hard-line, puritanical version of Islam. The ensemble sees itself promoting love and good vibes, trust and happiness. It is on a religious mission to spread the love for the prophet, as a member of the group said "our music strikes the soul to soften it". It is a process of appropriation and modernization of an old tradition in a highly contested realm of religious space and power. Continued patronization by the Perak royal family gives them hope and security to continue with what they believe as the true path towards peace and salvation.

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**PATTONG MOVEMENTS:
CHOREOGRAPHED CONTESTATIONS OF IGOROT BECOMING**
(Lightning Paper)

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The dance broadly known as *patpong* comes in diverse forms as demonstrated through the practices of the Igorot people, an ethnic minority based in the Cordillera region of Northern Philippines.¹ Although a staple in celebratory private rituals, the *patpong* varies from village to village and has been modified for mainstream settings to channel opposing self-determinations. Rather than seek consistencies or evidence of cultural purity, I analyze these variations as constitutive of an interconnected whole that reveals the subtleties of Igorotness and acknowledges process and change as vital to its making.

This paper addresses conflicting expressions of Igorot identity through an examination of *patpong* performances in Benguet and Mountain Province, Northern Philippines from 2017 to 2018. The inventiveness of persons who engage intersecting histories, various social encounters, and inhabit shifting identities prompt these diverse renditions, which reveal that Igorotness is less a fixed category of difference than it is a field where identity is constantly contested. I present themes from a project that investigates how diverse Igorots navigate the intricate cultural politics of self-determination through musical performance in public and intimate settings. While offering a historical critique of canonical representations of Cordillera indigenous music, the project examines how audience reception, divergent ideologies, economic survival, and subjective desires mediate Igorot identity. It pieces together contradictory and emergent forms of musical expression to illuminate Igorotness in its precarious, real-life manifestations, unveiling a narrative of Igorot becoming. My work unsettles categorical perceptions of Otherness that dominate decolonizing discourses in ethnomusicology and Philippine studies. I foreground the complex human trajectories of indigenous persons as seen in their musical lives.

My research attends to an understudied topic. Because of the pervasiveness of postcolonial nationalist scholarship, studies on Philippine indigenous music mostly privilege purist, romanticized, and essentialist representation. These avoid discussions of hybridity, let alone indigenous persons' struggle for recognition beyond formalizing discourses on nationalism and ethnicity. I highlight Igorots as creative human beings who are critically aware of their misrepresentation and who reshape their identities through musical performance in contemporary contexts.

I adapt LaVerne de la Peña's (1999) observations on the flexibility of the Kankana-ey Igorot vocal genre *day-eng*. Although identifiable by distinctive melodic formulae, *day-eng* accommodate "intrusive" aesthetic and performance elements from outside its immediate stylistic boundaries due to the diverse singers who take part in its renditions (de la Peña, 1999). Similarly, the *patpong* possesses a versatility that affords stylistic modifications by various groups that, regardless of their varied subjective interests, aim to convey a sense of community, celebration, and empowerment. In addition, I build from James Clifford's (2010) ideas about indigeneity to connect the *patpong*'s flexibility with Igorot identity. Clifford argues that indigeneity is constituted by a complex emergence that stems from a variety of human experiences (Clifford, 2010). I examine *patpong* across historical and ideological arenas to portray Igorot identity as a process of becoming.

In private community settings, *patpong* are typically performed by a minimum of six to seven men who each hold one flat gong called *gangsá* forming a graduated set. Using wooden mallets, the players produce multi-pitched hocket-style rhythms while shimmying and shuffling

their feet. Directed by a lead performer, which spontaneously changes throughout a rendition, players either stay in place while they crouch down, lean from side to side on each leg, move snakelike, or form circles. Further, *patpong* are participatory. Men and women join in, executing leg and arm movements to the command of lead performers. Renditions may indicate participants' ties to place. Provinces, municipalities, and even small villages continually develop *patpong* aesthetics based on local preferences for timbre, tempo, pitch range, and choreography. Regardless of these local variations, it remains to foster rapport and cooperation, signifying collectivism at the community level.

Because of its symbolic power, Igorots have recontextualized the *patpong* for large-scale public events. Facing a mainstream audience, Igorots don traditional attire and dance in prominent thoroughfares of urban cosmopolitan centers within and outside the Cordillera region. Unlike its precursors in "American *cañao*," which US colonial officials organized to facilitate colonial control (Finin, 2005), these public stagings embody identity affirmation and a decolonial reclaiming of space. However, the frames for channeling such affirmations are not universal; public performances of Igorot identity are subject to conflicting politics that cut through broad articulations of cultural revitalization. *Patpong* in state-sponsored festivals and leftwing protests exemplify this tension in perhaps its most acute form.

The *patpong* is vital in events like the Lang-ay Festival of Mountain Province held in Bontoc, the province's administrative center. A constant presence in a grand occasion made possible by the sponsorship of government units, local businesses, corporations, and community members, the dance affords exchanges that counteract a deep-seated history of enmity among Igorot groups. It fosters intervillage unity, consolidates the interests of the province's inhabitants (Sacyaten, 2017), and facilitates representation in larger Philippine governments. The *patpong* also propels performers across spaces in elaborate dance-dramas, signature events called "cultural presentations." Judged by "cultural experts," performers aim for clarity of tone and precision in choreography as they represent their communities and educate mainstream audiences about unique local Igorot traditions. Additionally, *patpong* serve as sonic-visual elements that attract mainstream attention, nourishing tourist economies that sustain many Igorot communities.²

Patpong are equally prevalent in protest gatherings led by leftist Igorot activists.³ Unlike conservative, tradition-centered stagings, the dance forges a pan-Cordilleran identity shaped by shared struggles against development aggression. Together, performers from different areas of the Cordillera region execute *patpong*. From the diverse costumes, choreography, and *gangsa* aesthetics that indicate local identities emerges a composite rendition that signifies a pan-regional sense of Igorot collectivism. This variation is not intended to generate income, nor is it executed based on competitive standards in tone and execution. In street protests, particularly, the *patpong* creates a spectacular, disruptive soundscape of *gangsa* ostinatos coupled with leader-chorus protest chants that draw attention to political calls. These are typical in events like Cordillera Day, which tackles ongoing issues of land struggle as it commemorates the military assassination of Igorot luminaries who led territorial defense efforts in the 1980s. Further, *patpong* in protests usually feature the "war dance," where dancers execute *patpong* footwork while holding a "*kayang*" (spear) and "*kalasag*" (wooden shield) ahead of a sea of demonstrators.⁴ A dance customarily performed in times of territorial conflict, the war dance in protests channels historically anchored affects of valor and defiance that lend an especially potent, combative stance to the act (S. Dekdeken, D. Agulin, and G. Chupchupen, personal communication, July 10, 2019).

Although preliminary, this discussion readily situates Igorot musical practice within a wide-ranging trajectory of human dynamism. Simultaneously signifying merrymaking, varying aesthetic sensibilities across localities, clashing politics, and a dialogic engagement with history,

the *patpong* serves as an emblem of rootedness yet also as an expression of plurality. Recontextualizations need not be lamented as a symptom of cultural loss, but rather recognized as evidence for ever-unfinished negotiations of self.

Endnotes

¹ The *patpong* is also a polysemic term for various Cordillera musical concepts: depending on the specific community, it may refer to the sticks used for playing *gangsa*, a mock sparring dance, the fourth gong of the *gangsa* ensemble, a style of gong playing, or even a general name for *gangsa* rhythmic patterns. Further, while not all residents of the Cordillera region consider themselves as “Igorot,” the people I collaborated with for this study identify as such.

² These descriptions are based on my dissertation fieldwork at the 2018 Lang-ay Festival in Bontoc, Mountain Province. I worked closely with delegates from the municipality of Sagada, who are based at the Southern village of Balugan.

³ This is based on my dissertation research on the leftist cultural organization and ensemble Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Cordillera at the 2017 *Lakbayan ng Pambansang Minorya para sa Sariling Pagpapasiya at Makatarungang Kapayapaan* (Sojourn of National Minorities for Self-Determination and Just Peace) and the 2018 Cordillera Day protest gatherings.

⁴ Some sources say that “patpong” is the native term for the war dance, but my Igorot collaborators suggest that there is no such term. “War dance” was likely established through outsiders’ documentations as early as the colonial period.

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**MUSICKING FOR THE NEW GOD IN DIASPORA: TAMIL FOLK DRUMMING
AS A VEHICLE FOR EMPOWERING TAMIL HINDI YOUTH IN SINGAPORE**
(Lightning Paper)

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Abstract

This paper deconstructs why *urumi mēlam*, a Singaporean/Malaysian Tamil folk music drumming ensemble, is successful in empowering Singaporean Tamil Hindu youths and helping them avoid criminal behavior. *Urumi mēlam*, which originated in Tamil Nadu, became popular in the Singaporean Tamil Hindu community in the mid-1990s. The ensemble comprises Tamil Hindu males ages between mid-teens and early thirties who perform on a part-time basis. The *urumi mēlam* provides musical accompaniment to rituals for Hindu deities, particularly Muneeswaran, a Tamil folk deity. Musicians believe that accompanying such rituals will result in Muneeswaran granting their wishes and conferring his blessings. Furthermore, the sound of *urumi mēlam* possesses the power to eradicate negative energies. These make *urumi mēlam* groups appealing to young Munseewaran devotees because musicians feel empowered serving Muneeswaran and the Hindu community with their music. In Singapore, *urumi mēlam* groups usually rehearse only once or twice before their performance because of the musicians' hectic work and school schedules. Given the shortage of time and the high demand for gigs, *urumi mēlam* leaders have adapted strategies to quickly train their new musicians and keep them engaged with drumming. They inculcate discipline and solidarity among their group members, simplify Tamil folk drumming pedagogies, and incorporate participatory approaches in creating musical arrangements and compositions. This study dissects the Singaporean Tamil Hindu youth culture and Tamil folk drumming using the presenter's field research among the Singaporean *urumi mēlam* practitioners. It also adds to the growing ethnomusicological literature about Indian diasporic youth music subculture.

THE NEW *DANGDUT* WAVE FROM YOGYAKARTA: CHANGING INDONESIAN *DANGDUT* MUSIC MAINSIDE (Lightning paper)

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Introduction

Dangdut music emerged in the 1970s. There are many agents, such as Ellya Khadam, Rhoma Irama, A. Rafiq, Elvy Sukaesih, and so on that enrich the *dangdut* scene (See Frederick, 1982; Simatupang, 1996; Weintraub, 2010; Raditya, 2013). Instead of the *dangdut* losing its popularity in millennium era, *dangdut* music survived in the early 21st century. In the early millennium era, there was an “other” *dangdut* that was significantly well-known by society, that is, '*dangdut koplo*'. Researcher and author of *dangdut* stories, Andrew Weintraub, explained *dangdut koplo* as a regional *dangdut*, especially in Central and East Java (2010: 215). According to my interview in 2017, the owner of Orkes Melayu Sonata told me that *dangdut koplo* emerged in 1996 in Jarak Street, Surabaya.

This regional *dangdut* exploded in the Jakarta music industry in 2003. Inul Daratista was the agent of *dangdut koplo* that changed the *dangdut* constellation. The orientation and *dangdut* system built by Rhoma Irama changed because of Inul and *dangdut koplo*. That is the reason why Rhoma Irama didn't like Inul Daratista and *dangdut koplo*. The impact of contestation was the assumption of *dangdut koplo* only about the erotic and *joged* (sexy dance) rather than musicality and performance. In fact, people use it to celebrate the personal life cycle events and also for public events.

In this article, I will focus on regional *dangdut*. In my opinion, *dangdut koplo* or every regional *dangdut* is the power of local communities in adapting *dangdut* from Jakarta or somewhere else with local characteristics. According to the condition or style, I will show the regional *dangdut* that was created in Indonesia



Figure 1. Map of *Dangdut* music (by Michael HB Raditya)

I refer to Weintraub's statement that Deli, Jakarta and Surabaya are the basis for *dangdut* music (2010: 53). However, Weintraub noted several other cities where local *dangdut* was also created such as *Dangdut Saluang* in West Sumatera; *Dangdut Melayu* in Riau; *Pongdut* and

Tarling in West Java; *Dangdut Koplo* in East Java; and *Dangdut Banjar* in Banjarmasin (2010: 201). According to the map (Figure 1), in this article I would like to articulate *dangdut* in Yogyakarta. In my opinion, this cite is important in the *Dangdut* constellation. Yogyakarta is not only the place that “copy-pastes” from Jakarta or Surabaya, but there is also an essential change from Yogyakarta *dangdut* to world *dangdut*. To articulate the changes and the existence of *dangdut* Yogyakarta, I used ethnographic data and data from my *dangdut* book (M. Raditya, 2013; 2020) to investigate this phenomenon

Discussion: Change from *Dangdut* in Yogyakarta

Dangdut Koplo was popularized not only once in 2003, but also it continued to become famous in 2017 (Raditya, 2021: 119). In 2015/2016, there was a significant change in the Indonesian *dangdut* map, where a song called “Sayang” exploded in the Indonesian music market. This song is an adaptation of the song “Mirai e” from Japan. The song was interpreted from Javanese lyrics by Anton Obama. Via Vallen is an East Java singer who is considered to have popularized the song. The ‘watch’ time of the “Sayang” song on YouTube is 198,212,499 times (July 2021).

In my opinion, the “Sayang” song gave a substantial reason for Yogyakarta *dangdut* agents to make changes. The “Sayang” song is important for this change because the song was released in Yogyakarta in 2012 by a *dangdut* band called O.M. Wawes. The drummer of the OM Wawes was the personnel of Anton Obama’s music group (Raditya, 2020: 170). OM Wawes produced the song digitally and disseminated it on the internet platform soundcloud.com without Anton’s permission—but Anton thanked OM Wawes for their initiatives.

The *Dangdut* Hip Hop Duo, NDX Aka replaced the verse part of the song with a rap. They re-recorded the song without permission in 2015. The “Sayang” song (with a rap) exploded and was used by the Orkes Melayu in Pantura. Then Via Vallen sang the song a lot in public with the Orkes Melayu. After the “Sayang” song, other songs from Yogyakarta were also famous, such as “Tetep Neng Ati”, “Dinggo Bukti”, “Bojo Galak”, “Ditinggal Rabi”, “Kimcil Kepolen”, “Korban Janji”, “Tibo Mburi”, “Balungan Kere”, and so on.

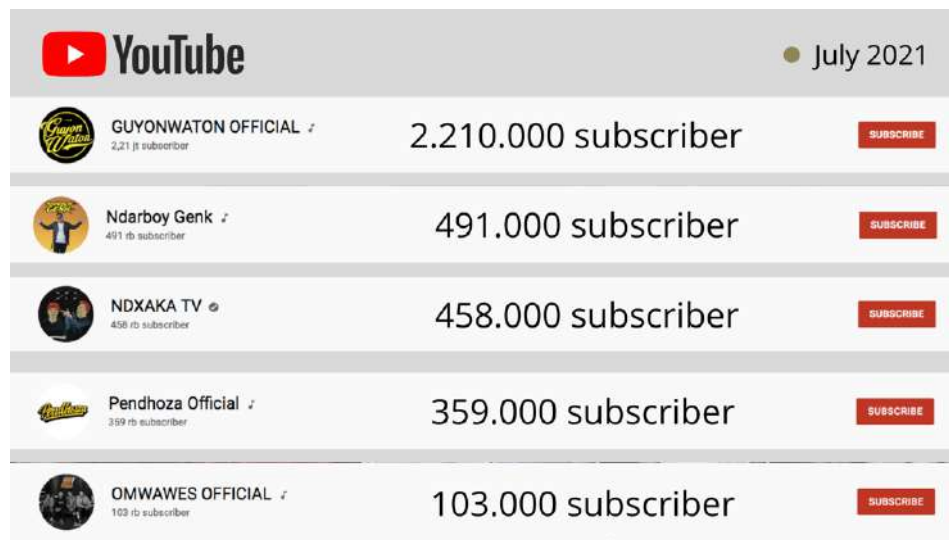
All the hit songs were first created and popularized by a *dangdut* group from Yogyakarta. Those songs impacted the songs’ orientation in Orkes Melayu in Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java, and Jakarta. The interesting point is that Yogyakarta became a supplier of *dangdut* songs. This reality never happened before the new *dangdut* wave. The past condition was that Orkes Melayu in Yogyakarta chose the *dangdut koplo* as their medium of expression. It impacts the orientation and work pattern into a mind of logic of the Orkes Melayu music in Yogyakarta.

Furthermore, the concentration of the Orkes Melayu is arranging and using songs that are currently popular and are hits in society. The singers competed to practice their vocal quality and dancing style that the audience liked the most. Meanwhile, since 2013, the young people are not from the *dangdut* scene who are making these changes. They are independent, young, male, with minimal knowledge of *dangdut*, who create their songs. They are OM Wawes, NDX Aka, Pendhoza, Guyon Waton, Ndarboy Genk.

I chose these five names as important agents of change in *Dangdut* Yogyakarta. These five have different musical backgrounds. Such as NDX Aka and Pendhoza who started their careers in Hip Hop music; Founder of OM Wawes who is a member of Reggae music; Guyon Waton who started his career as a cover band specialist—a pattern of today’s bands—; and Ndarboy Genk who likes Pop songs. They do not have the knowledge and access to the *dangdut* stage in Yogyakarta. Some of them tried the normal *dangdut* stage, but the audience watched *dangdut koplo*, and the sexy dancing of female singers mocked and threw them out.

The vital act from them was distributing the songs on the internet, such as soundcloud, reverbnation, YouTube, and other platforms. The blessing in disguise, their songs widely played

by listeners. Soundcloud and Reverbnation were their first streaming applications. They used those applications in 2012. After the successful songs (2015-2016), they also used YouTube (video or video lyric), Spotify, Joox, Deezer, Apple Music, YouTube Music, and so on.



YouTube		July 2021
	GUYONWATON OFFICIAL 2,210 subscriber	2.210.000 subscriber SUBSCRIBE
	Ndarboy Genk 491 subscriber	491.000 subscriber SUBSCRIBE
	NDXAKA TV 458 subscriber	458.000 subscriber SUBSCRIBE
	Pendhoza Official 359 subscriber	359.000 subscriber SUBSCRIBE
	OMWAWES OFFICIAL 103 subscriber	103.000 subscriber SUBSCRIBE

Figure 2: The Subscribers of Five *Dangdut* Bands in Yogyakarta
(Retrieved from youtube.com July 2021)

We can say they were just lucky. However, for me, this is an intelligent decision that reflects the context of young people. In this case, there are two important reasons, *first*, the self-composed songs; *second*, they are native to the media generation. The idea of uploading songs on streaming platforms is an awareness. There is a different logic between the young generation and the previous generations (Orkes Melayu in Yogyakarta and other places), which only believed in the stage for spreading the music. In my opinion, the streaming platform, which is their medium of expression, is a suitable dissemination feature. I interpreted the term Suitable as the large amount of public who listened to their songs.

Following these factors, the *dangdut* audience began to ask for their songs to be sung on the *dangdut* stage. Some of these groups began to perform on stage without yelling or mocking. Meanwhile, other Orkes Melayu in Yogyakarta, Central Java and East Java started playing Yogyakarta *dangdut* songs. *Dangdut* groups from Yogyakarta performed in Jakarta, Central Java, and East Java, either live or recorded.

According to these facts, I underline the implications of this music platform and youth issue. Because Yogyakarta youths are starting to like *dangdut*, many celebrations in Junior High School, Senior High School and University invite this *dangdut* group to perform on their school or campus. Furthermore, these young people are dominated by males and females—whether they are wearing *hijab* or not. They are dancing together in front of the stage without any feeling of shame. Not only in their school or campus, but also when there is a *dangdut* music stage at the *dangdut* place, these young people also come to watch the *dangdut* group perform.

In addition, the music that they present is also different. In my opinion, the differences were made by the principle of crossover of genres. Dhyen—the vocalist of OM Wawes—stated that he wanted to create something new and different from the *dangdut* references in Yogyakarta. NDX Aka and Pendhoza also took a similar step in creating songs with different nuances from *dangdut koplo*. This happening is also reflected in the steps of Ndarboy Genk, who always stares at Didi Kempot rather than Rhoma Irama or other *dangdut* singers. Then, the consciousness mixed with the varied genre crossover, such as Pendhoza and NDX Aka with Hip Hop *Dangdut*;

Guyon Waton with acoustic *dangdut*; Ndarboy Genk with Javanese pop, and OM Wawes by mixing the brass section in their *dangdut*. As a result, their music became very varied and rich.

However, what puts them in the same wave, is it a new *dangdut*? I think that the development of music, the medium of dissemination, or the audience's orientation can be intertwined because of only two things, the theme of their song and the Javanese language. First, the theme of love is proven to unite diverse audiences on one *dangdut* stage. The themes of narrated love vary from heartbreak because of a third person, heartbreak because of a gold-digger, heartbreak because of the blessing of parents, heartbreak because of different religions, and so on. Not only about the heartbreak, but there is also a motivational song of revenge for the heartbreak. It is complex. So in the theme of love, the young people feel represented. In addition, young people feel represented because of something close to them, the Javanese language. In most cases, the youth's songs use Javanese, particularly the informal speech style of *ngoko*, which brings the theme of heartbreak directly to them.

Conclusion: The Future *Dangdut*

So then, what is the condition of *dangdut* after the new wave of *dangdut*? It would be too hypocritical to say the new wave *dangdut* changed everything. Because outside of Yogyakarta *dangdut*, *dangdut koplo* by Pantura continues to run as it should. It continues to use his method, using and arranging hits from Yogyakarta. While in Yogyakarta, *dangdut koplo* in Yogyakarta is still alive, but the young *dangdut* from Yogyakarta has become the new *prima donna*. Local Orkes Melayu often play the songs, and there is a stage sharing between the Orkes Melayu and Yogyakarta *dangdut* groups on the regular *dangdut* stage.

As a result, it is essential to note that Yogyakarta's new *dangdut* wave has succeeded in changing the *dangdut* pattern. They changed the logic of Yogyakarta and Indonesian *dangdut* music both in creating new songs, elaboration of musical genres, distribution of music on the internet, the distribution of audiences—across gender and age—and the changing image of *dangdut*. In addition, Yogyakarta *dangdut* became a medium of expression and representation of the Javanese speakers who have united because of love. In general, these efforts give a new energy for the growing and developing of *dangdut* music.

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PROFILING POP ICONS IN THE HISTORY OF IBAN 45 RPM VINYL RECORDS (Lightning Paper)

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Introduction

This paper traces the development of Iban popular music created after the establishment of Radio Sarawak in the 1950s. As the largest indigenous ethnic group in Sarawak, the Iban experienced the social and cultural shifts under the condition of modernity. The Iban popular song, written and sung in the Iban language was created to cater to the needs of the Iban Radio sections filling in the entertainment segments between programs. In the 1960s, Iban popular music broadcasted through Iban radio was not only filling in the airtime, but, also gradually became a new modern form of entertainment to the urban and rural Iban audiences across Sarawak. Frequency of songs being played over radio broadcasts determined their popularity. Iban singers became household names. As pop artists, they reached multiracial listeners over various places in Sarawak through Iban language songs broadcasted on Radio Sarawak. In the 1970s, Radio Sarawak started receiving song requests which enabled the listeners to send in their song dedications with messages to their loved ones through *Lagu Peminta*, a song request program. Due to the popularity and demand received from song requests, Iban singers cum recording artists were seen as an elevated social symbol of modernity.

For my research, I interviewed Iban singers, songwriters, musicians, radio listeners and urban Iban who lived in Kuching, Sibu, Bintulu and Miri during the 1950s to 1970s. Among the questions I asked were: Who were the Iban singers and songwriters who created Iban popular music? What sort of urban environment did they belong to? How did modern technologies facilitate new music styles?

Theoretical Framework

Located at the national periphery, the Iban in Sarawak were separated from the center of popular media in Malaya geographically separated by the South China Sea. Given these positions it is important to note that Pratt (2002) raised the issue that modernity has always focused on the center and she proposed that the “center encodes the periphery in accounts of modernity” (p.23). I will also draw upon “alternative conceptions of modernity” by Barendregt's (2014) as a basis for discussing historical, cultural and social formations particularly from the vantage point of Southeast Asia. Connecting modernity with the terms center and periphery, the Iban during the 1950s to 1970s were behind and desired to be modern in order to catch up socially, to be equal and fully modern. During the 1950s to 1970s, the Iban were only able to receive and consume modern music that came from the radio and vinyl records. As a result, the experience of cultural modernity coming through modern media permeated their ears and resulted in the urge to be modern in order to be at par with the current trend of popular culture.

Iban Recording Industry

Sixteen years after the rise of Radio Sarawak marked a turning point in Iban popular music. A new space of possibilities opened up where the Chinese businessmen from Sibu saw an opportunity in producing vinyl records as a form of business. As reported by Lockard (1998), mass media dynamically expanded in Southeast Asia where most people had access to Radio in

the 1950s, and later followed by the development of the recording industry in the 1960s. Consequently, the Iban in Sarawak were not left behind in the development of mass media. From the 1970s, Iban popular music records started to become an economic boom among two Chinese entrepreneurs from Nanyang Radio Company, Sibul and South East Asia Radio and Records Company, Kuching. Iban who desired to be modern and popular found an opportunity and a new venue to become recording artists. From time to time, Chinese businessmen (*tauke*) would go looking for new Iban singing talent broadcasted on Radio Sarawak. Therefore, Iban singers who won singing competitions in the Teacher's Training College and public singing competitions organized by RTM (Radio Television Malaysia) could be persuaded by the Chinese businessmen to cut a record. Since the 1970s the manner in which Iban popular music was produced changed greatly, reshaping Iban popular song in music production and consumption.

Chinese businessmen from Sibul who first invested in the Iban music industry may have been notably conservative. However, they were agile and quick to proceed once they saw the opportunity in new markets. As there was no private recording studio in Kuching and Sibul, two Iban singers Christopher Kerry and Antonio Jawie were first taken to Singapore for recording sessions. Gradually, other Chinese businessmen from Kuching, Sibul and Bintulu saw the demand of Iban popular song in Sarawak. They also established their own label with the aim to share in the profitable market. This is where the Iban song lyrics started to "go out of control" and production of vinyl records started to become a product. The singer cum songwriter had the freedom to express their ideas, desires, feelings and opinions to the Iban community itself. Once producing Iban records had become a form of business, song lyrics were no longer being vetted by RTM. Geographically, Sibul and Bintulu are far from Kuching where Radio Sarawak is located. Therefore, Radio Sarawak was no longer able to monitor and control the songs as well as vet through the lyrics before the production of songs.

Between 1970–1977, among the local labels releasing Iban recordings were: Nanyang Radio Co., South East Asia Radio and Records, Victory Record Electronic Enterprise, Lian Sheng Music City, Wong's Drug Store, Syarikat Ragam & Bayang, Sera Kumang and Sweet Wah Enterprise. Among the prominent Iban singers who owned recording labels were: Christopher Kelly, Michael Jemat, Zamry Amera, Elison Ludan, James Samy, Nancy Kadir, Steward Tinggi, Wilfred Ragam, Penny Lily, Mary Awell, Tan Ah Joo, Pauline Linang and Philip Bawel. After the recording sessions were finished in RTM Kuching, the open reel tape was sent either to Kuala Lumpur or Singapore to press a 45 RPM vinyl record.

Conclusion

Connecting the dots to the recording industry in Singapore, we see a boom between 1965 and 1969. As observed by Barendregt (2014), more than 120 different recording labels were released locally in Malaysia and Indonesia accommodating the demand of the entertainment market in Singapore. Compared to the recording industry centers of Penang and Kuala Lumpur located in Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, Sarawak was located at the periphery but also established its own labels in producing local recordings. Coming from Europe, multinational recording companies started to venture into the Southeast Asian market through local brokers by selling musical recordings and equipment. As reported by Tan (1996/1997), the gramophone as a mass media producer had started to develop prior to World War II in Malaya and Singapore. Later these places became the center of recording sessions and dissemination of Malay popular music during British Colonial Period. In the 1950s,

P. Ramlee and other Malay singers recorded Malay film songs under EMI, HMV, Parlophone and Pathé (Ahmad Sarji, 2011, p. 290-298). None of these established international music

recording labels penetrated the Iban popular music market in Sarawak during the 1970s as all the recording sessions were done in the Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) studio.

Articulating modernity, Iban popular music produced and created from 1968 to 1978 musically referenced Malay and Western popular music. That said, the Iban singers were consciously aware of themselves being modern and Iban. They wanted their own popular Iban songs to be recorded and broadcast through Iban radio. As a conclusion, records and songs produced during 1968 to 1978 were seen as how Iban articulated an alternative form of modernity, a desire to be modern as to be on par with the center of cosmopolitan Southeast Asia.

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“I AM NOT A CINA GERK”: EXPRESSING OTHER CHINESE-NESS THROUGH CHINESE POPULAR SONGS IN THE PERSATUAN PERANAKAN CINA MELAKA (Lightning Paper)

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Introduction

This paper analyses selected popular Chinese songs from the Peranakan song repertoire to show the expression of Other Chinese-ness in Malaysia. Taking Persatuan Peranakan Cina Melaka as a case study, I explore why Chinese popular songs were adopted into the Peranakan song repertoire, despite the Peranakan's notion of 'other' or 'othering' about the Chinese community in Malaysia. This 'othering' is encapsulated in the commonly heard phrase 'I am not a cina gerk' and can be traced back to the 19th century. To put it simply, the construction of othering is a simultaneous construction of the self and the other and sets up a superior self in contrast to an inferior other (Brons, 2015). Whether real or imagined, the stigmatizing of difference is presented as a negation of identity (Staszak, 2008). Borrowing Bakhtin (1981)'s concept of 'hybridity', I discuss how these songs can be seen as 'organic' and at the same time 'intentional' hybridity, which accounts for the simultaneous coexistence of cultural assimilation and resistance in cultural groups such as the Peranakan.

Background of Study

The Peranakan¹ is a culturally syncretic minority group descended from the union of earlier southern-China Hokkien migrants with local women of Malay origin. The community can be traced back to the 17th century. The Peranakan culture flourished during the British colonial period in the port cities of Melaka, Penang, and Singapore. While the Peranakan are anglophilic due to their relations to the British Colonials, the community still observes Chinese customs and worldviews, and also Malay influences in their cuisine and outfits. There are many terms associated with the community such as 'Straits Chinese', 'Straits-born Chinese', 'Baba', 'Baba Nyonya', 'Peranakan', and 'Peranakan Chinese (cina)' over the century. Today in Melaka, 'Peranakan' is a collective representation used by the people who identify themselves with the labels of Baba, Baba Nyonya, and Peranakan Chinese/Cina.

Besides the English language, the Peranakan speaks a pidgin known as the Baba Malay, which is a Malay dialect infused with Hokkien-Chinese loanwords. It is recognized as one of the main cultural markers of the Peranakan in Melaka.

The Etymology of 'Cina gerk!'

The word 'Cina' is the Malay word for 'Chinese'. The term 'gerk' is a baba derogatory term that refers to a Chinese who do not speak any Malay, or newly-arrived Chinese migrants (Gwee, 2006). Other translations explain 'gerk' as 'Chinese bundle', evoking an image of a poor Chinese immigrant carrying a stick with a bundle of clothes' (Chia, 1983) or 'hick from the old country' (Chia, 1994, p.iix). Jurgen (1998) speculated that it is probably a mispronunciation for *kek*, meaning 'guest' in Hokkien. This is similar to another Baba term for non-baba Chinese 'singkhek' (新客), a Hokkien term, meaning 'new guest'. These terms emerged in the 19th century to distinguish the Peranakan from the influx of Chinese immigrants in Malaya. At that

time, the Peranakan were wealthy and an influential class of businessmen. Today, the term 'gerk' refers to a non-Peranakan person of Chinese heritage and is deemed less 'refined' than the Peranakan.

Expressing other Chinese-ness through Chinese Popular Songs in the Persatuan Peranakan Cina Melaka (PPCM)

Persatuan Peranakan Cina Melaka (PPCM), formerly known as the Straits Chinese British Association was established in the year 1900. It was an association to safeguard the political privileges of the Straits-born Chinese and to promote their social and educational welfare. Members were anglophilic wealthy professionals and influential businessmen. Today, PPCM is a social club for mostly elderly and retired Peranakan and acts as a public face for the Peranakan community in Melaka. Many of the members are direct descendants of the influential class of Peranakan in the past.

Singing of Chinese songs and Bakhtin's hybridity

I borrow Bakhtin's theory of hybridity as a tool for analysis of selected Peranakan songs. Hybridity according to Bakhtin is a doubled consciousness, distinguished between 'organic hybridity', which he refers to as "unintentional, unconscious hybridisation" (Bakhtin, 1981: 358), and 'intentional' which enables a "contestatory activity, a politicised setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically" (Young, 1995: 20). This doubled consciousness of hybridity accounts for the simultaneous coexistence of both changes and resistance to change (Ackermann, 2012).

The majority of PPCM members do not speak any Chinese languages. In spite of the notion of Othering, a total of 26 songs (Figure 1 below) are found in their song repertoire. I categorized them into Mandarin songs, Hokkien songs, and Cantonese songs. Some of the popular songs that are well-loved and still sung by members of PPCM are Taiwanese pop songs Yue Liang Dai Biao Wo De Xin, Tian Mi Mi, and Ai Pia Cia. The former two were made popular by Teresa Teng (邓丽君) and the latter by Yeh Qi Tian (叶启田).

The inclusion of Chinese songs is deemed as 'organic hybridity'. Given the Peranakan's eclectic cultural background, Peranakan song repertoire comprises American and British popular hits from the early 20th century, Malay folk and *keronchong* songs, top Chinese hits from the 1970s and '80s, and a few others in the languages Thai, Hindi, and Japanese. The repertoire reflects their musical taste, evokes a sense of nostalgia, and to some extent offers collective identity. These songs were included for performance at Chinese-related events, such as Melaka State Chinese New Year (CNY) events and Mooncake festivals. Some songs were only performed once. Ruby Tan highlighted in an interview (13 March 2017) that Chinese songs were chosen so that the Chinese will not mistake the Peranakan as Malays.

"...this Cina gerk will say... "aiyo diorang Melayu, know". That's why I have the Chinese song."

Translation* [The Chinese will say... "aiyo (exclamation), they are Malay, you know?". That's why I have Chinese songs].

	Language	Peranakan transliterated titles	Original Titles with Pinyin	English translation
1.	Mandarin	<i>Yeah Lai Siang</i>	夜来香 (ye lai xiang)	Fragrance in the night
2.		<i>San Nian</i>	三年 (san nian)	Three years
3.		<i>Ru Kor Mei Yol Ni (If Without You)</i>	如果没有你 (ru guo mei you ni)	If you are not there
4.		<i>Poo Liao Chin</i>	不了情 (bu liao qing)	Endless love
5.		<i>Mei Hua</i>	梅花 (mei hua)	Plum blossom
6.		<i>Chin Ren Te Yen Lei</i>	情人的眼泪 (qing ren de yan lei)	Tears of a Lover
7.		<i>Siao Chen Koo Tse</i>	小城故事 (xiao cheng gu shi)	Story of a village
8.		<i>How Koo Niang</i>	好姑娘 (hao gu niang)	Good maiden
9.		<i>Yuet Liang Tai Piow Woh Ti Sin</i>	月亮代表我的心 (yue liang dai biao wo de xin)	The moon represents my heart
10.		<i>Her Reh Chuin Chai Lai</i>	何日君再来 (he rin jun zai lai)	When will you return
11.		<i>Kau San Ching</i>	高山情 (gao shan qing)	Alpine love
12.		<i>Wang Shi Ze Neng Hui Wei</i>	往事只能回味 (wang shi zhi neng hui wei)	The past can only be reminisced
13.		<i>Tian Mi Mi</i>	甜蜜蜜 (tian mi mi)	Sweet as honey
14.		<i>Ni Cherm Mok Suk</i>	你怎么说 (ni zen me shuo)	How do you say
15.		<i>Siang Tse Her Parn</i>	相思河畔 (xiang si he pan)	Yearning of lovers
16.		<i>Chang Sou Ching Ke Kei Sei Thing</i>	唱首情歌给谁听 (chang shou qing ge gei shui ting?)	Sing a love song for who?
17.		<i>Chiew Shui Yi Ren</i>	秋水伊人 (qiu shui yi ren)	Thinking of an old friend
18.		<i>Kongsi Kongsi</i>	恭喜恭喜 (gong xi gong xi)	Congratulation (wishing Chinese new year)
19.		<i>Hek Sin Nian</i>	贺新年 (he xin nian)	Wishing you a happy new year
20.	Hokkien	<i>We Ho Di Ai Tiok Pak Lang</i>	为何你爱着别人 (wei he ni ai zhe bie ren)	Why do you have another lover?
21.		<i>Bang Choon Hong</i>	望春风 (wang chun feng)	Hoping for spring wind
22.		<i>Ai Pia Cia</i>	爱拼才会赢 (ai pin cai hui ying)	Work hard to succeed
23.		<i>Long Chu Eh Sim Chin</i>	浪子的心情 (lang zhi de xin qing)	Emotions of a loafer
24.		<i>Sen Kong E Tiau Kia</i>	成功的调剂 (cheng gong de tiao jian)	Recipe of success
25.	Cantonese	<i>Teem Kai Ngor Choong Yi Lei</i>	点解我中意你 (dian jie wo zhong yi ni)	Why do I like you?
26.		<i>Seong Hoi Tahn</i>	上海滩 (shang hai tan)	Shanghai beach

Figure 1. 26 Chinese languages songs from the PPCM song repertoire.

Due to the shared similarities in culture and language, Peranakans are often mistaken as being ‘Malay’. By singing and performing Chinese songs publicly, it becomes a way for the Peranakans to distinguish themselves from the ‘Malays’, presenting an ‘intentional hybrid’ situation of contestation against misunderstood cultural ideas about the Peranakan.

One other way of contesting Peranakan identity is through tune borrowing of popular Chinese songs and setting new song text in Baba Malay and English. This process internalizes and localizes popular songs as Peranakan songs, which offers a collective identity and brings a sense of belonging to the community. As an example, I share the song ‘Choo Sin Nian’ and ‘Happy New Year Gongsì Ni’.

The tune of Choo Sin Nian (Figure 2) is borrowed from the popular Chinese new year song *he xin nian* (贺新年). The lyrics were written by one of the musically active members in PPCM named Daniel Ang between 2011-2012. The song starts in Baba Malay and moves on to the English version. It was initially chosen for PPCM's fundraiser CNY dinner and dance and has since become a PPCM standard CNY song. The lyrics reflect on the kinship, customs, and practices of the modern Peranakan family during the celebration of the Lunar New Year. Members of the BaNya also created their CNY song. The song Happy New Year Gongsì Ni (Figure 3) is sung to the tune of an American traditional folk song 'She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain', which also became a CNY standard in PPCM.

Choo Sin Nian	English translation
<i>Choo sin nian, choo sin nian Tarian naga dan singa Masuk rumah 'Chai Kee Merah' Ucapkan Selamat Tuan rumah</i>	Welcome the Chinese New Year Dragon dance and lion dance Enter the house with auspicious red cloth Wish New Year's greetings to the host
<i>Chorus: Muda-muda tua sama gembira Bagi angpaw ketawa ha, ha, ha</i>	Chorus: The young and old are both cheerful Giving red envelopes and laughing ha-ha-ha
<i>Encek-encek sama enchim Cik kong cik kong sama cimpoh Mari dudok, kita moh sojah Makan kueh dulu-dulu Kueh bakul, kueh bolu, Mari minum, makan dan gembira</i>	Uncles and aunties, Granduncles and grandaunties, Please have a seat, we want to wish you Eat heritage cakes, Glutinous sticky cake, fluffy egg cake, Let's drink, eat and be merry
<i>Chorus: Choo sin nian, choo sin nian Sambut Tahun Baru Cina, Sama-sama kita bersuka Mintakan murah jerki, Badan sihat macam ubi, Panjang umor kita jumpa lagi</i>	Chorus: Welcome the Chinese New Year Celebrating the Chinese New Year Together we be merry Wishing for prosperity, Body as fit as a cassava tuber, Long life, so we may meet again.
English version Happy sounds, Happy song, Happy people sing along, To welcome the best day of the year Happy sounds, Happy song, Happy people sing along, Let the children gather round, Rejoice in the best day of the year May the new year bring you all the things you want And the best of health and wealth to you Happiness in the air, Happy feeling everywhere Let's welcome the best day of the year	

Figure 2. 'Choo Sin Nian' lyrics.

Happy New Year Gongsì Ni	English Translation
[V1] Happy, happy, happy new year kongsi ni (x2) Marilah kita minta, panjanglah panjang umur Murah murahlah jerki selalu	Happy, happy, happy new year we wish you (x2) Come, let us pray for longevity, Fortune come generously
Happy, happy, happy new year kongsi ni (x2) Marilah mari sayang sojah sama orang tua-tua Adat dulu kala p'ranakan Cina	Happy, happy, happy new year we wish you (x2) Come, my dear, we pay respect to the elders Following Peranakan Chinese olden traditions
Happy, happy, happy new year kongsi ni (x2) Let us always be healthy, suka lah suka hati Bersama-sama jolly di sini	Happy, happy, happy new year we wish you (x2) Come, let us be healthy, and be happy Together we enjoy it here.
[Repeat from V1]	

Figure 3. 'Happy New Year Gongsì ni' lyrics.

Conclusion

Through the notion of othering, these songs present a few examples of how the Peranakan community in Persatuan Peranakan Cina contests against the misconception of their community. At the same time, their favourite Chinese songs (even though most of them cannot speak Mandarin or Hokkien) also reveals their openness and eclectic musical taste with regards to their cultural background. It is also a way to show other Chinese-ness and heterogeneity of minority groups in Malaysia.

Endnotes

¹ The word Peranakan is derived from the Malay word root word 'anak', meaning 'child'.

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**SINGING MALAYSIAN-CHINESENESS:
POETIC SINO-SOUNDSCAPES OF THE MALAYSIAN CHINESE ART SONG**
(Lightning Paper)

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Abstract

With European origins during the 19th century, art song is a transnational art form that is constantly redefined through performance within its cultural context in different societies around the world. New formats of art songs with new cultural meanings developed out of these dynamic interactions. The Malaysian Chinese art song genre is one example that flourished under a multilingual and multiracial state. Malaysian Chinese composers have been actively domesticating and hybridising art songs. As a result, the influence of local Malaysian elements (literature and music) have dominated original European qualities (birthplace of Western art songs) and the Chinese repertoire (inspired by revolutionary songs and Chinese art songs). Through an analysis of art song competitions, performances, and vocal lessons, this presentation discusses Malaysian Chinese musical identities in locally composed art songs. The art song and its soundscape are governed by external social practices, with distinct social influences such as its characteristic musical texts from the *Mahua Wenxue* (Malaysian Chinese literature) and Malaysian Chinese tone colours and accents that ascribe a particular acoustic identity. Departing from Tan and Rao's (2016) work on Sino-soundscapes and the abundance of distinct sonic features within Chinese diasporic communities, this presentation investigates both tangible and intangible features of local art songs that construct a Malaysian-Chineseness soundscape.

**A CHINESE SAGA FOR THAI SOCIETY:
A CASE STUDY OF JUDGE PAO IN *NGIEW-THAI* DRAMA**
(Lightning Paper)

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Abstract

Chinese have been migrating to Thailand since at least the 16th century, coming from multiple regions of China and migrating during different periods. Among the Chinese groups, the Teochew, a group originating from China's northern Guangdong province, played the most important role in Thai society, contributing the largest proportion to the population of the Thai-Chinese community. Teochew Opera, which local Thai refer to as *Ngiew Teochew*, a musical drama specifically associated with the Teochew community, reached its popularity among both the Chinese community in Thailand and the local Thais during the 1920s and 1930s. Unlike the Chinese audiences, who prefer professional techniques such as martial arts, vocal virtuosity and elaborate choreography, Thai audiences find the story-telling elements more interesting. To better understand the Chinese storylines, as well as to reflect Thai society, a number of the performers have attempted to adopt Thai lyrics into the Teochew operas, which involves weaving Thai values, mannerisms and movements into the Chinese stories. This Thai-lyric Teochew opera is called *Ngiew-Thai*. Based on ongoing fieldwork in Bangkok, this paper investigates this *Ngiew-Thai* opera, by mainly focusing on one of its most popular characters, Judge Pao, whose specific make-up, mannerisms, melody and movements are derived from the Chinese opera character of the same name. However, by taking an in-depth look at the *Ngiew-Thai* version of Judge Pao, this paper will analyze the differences between the Thai version and various Chinese versions, namely the Teochew opera itself and the national Chinese opera, better known as the Peking opera. The purpose of this study is to discuss movementscapes within topics related to Teochew opera's performance in relation to its social and culture environments, as well as how this performance communicates with the Thai audience, who are less familiar with the story but much more familiar with its message.

SOUNDS, SPACE-TIME, AND COMMUNITY IN BURMESE NAT KANA PWE

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In 2013 and 2017-18, I travelled to Burma/Myanmar to conduct research on the ritual sounds and dances of *nat kana pwe* (private spirit possession ceremonies) for the Thirty-Seven Nats (Temple, 1991 [1906]). During my fieldwork in Mandalay, I drove my motorbike across the city to reach the place where a *nat kana pwe* was celebrated. As I approached the place, I started to hear the distinctive sound of a *nat hsaing*, the gongs and drums ensemble supporting the ceremonies. The *nat kana pwe* took place in a temporary ritual pavilion (*nat kana*) made of a bamboo structure which occupied part of the road and protruded from the private house of the donor (Figure 1).¹



Figure 1: The ritual pavilion in Mandalay, 2018 (Photo by L. Chiarofonte)

The sound of the ceremony was heard from long distances – *nat hsaing than kya dae*, or *nat kana than kya dae*, ‘to hear the sound of the *nat hsaing*’ or ‘of the *nat kana*’. A large conical speaker projected the revering *hsaing* sound along the road and filled the air of the entire block with distorted music. Inside the pavilion (*kana*), the sonic force of the amplified ensemble was deafening. On one side, the *hsaing* musicians played their instruments, attentively following the ritual dances. The musicians responded to the actions of the *nat kadaw* (professional spirit mediums)² who called, incarnated, and danced one after another the entire pantheon of the Thirty-Seven spirits. The main instruments of the ensemble (the drum circle *pat waing*, the gong circle *kyi waing*, the multiple-reed oboe *hne*, and the singers)³ were wired up to a mixer; their sound blasted out of towers of massive speakers (Figure 2).



Figure 2: A tower of massive speakers at a *nat kana pwe* ceremony in Taungbyone, 2018. (Photo by L. Chiarofonte)

In front of the ensemble, the images of the spirits (*nat poun daw*) were properly arranged on an altar (*nat sin*), surrounded with offerings. The smell of incense, cigarettes, fragrant flowers, and cooked food pervaded the entire ritual space. The spirit souls encapsulated in the *nat* images on the altar were brought-into-presence through the sound of the *hsaing* ensemble and embodied in the possession dances which took place in the central space (Brac de la Perrière, 1993). During a ceremony, spirit devotees crowded the ritual pavilion; they participated in the ceremony with intense clapping and shouting. At certain times, the devotees danced themselves to please the spirits (*nat chawt dae*); they offered their bodies to the *nats* while the spirits came-into-presence to dance, enjoyed the ritual offerings, and talked with/through their devoted followers.

In the Burmese *nat* cult, the full manifestation of a spirit is conceptualised as a dance (*nat ka dae*). The possession dances can be extremely controlled in the case of professional *nat kadaws*, or completely uncontrolled, as it is often the case for unexperienced devotees. The *nat kana pwe* can be considered a living organism in which spirits and humans become one community, guided by the music of the *hsaing* ensemble, and excited by the sounds produced by the other participants. To understand the role of sounds in constructing an effective ritual environment, all ritual sounds must be considered. As Yung (1996) writes:

In music in the context of ritual, any clear distinction between music and speech on the one hand and music and noise on the other is problematic; arbitrary dividing lines separating music from non-music serve only to hinder a comprehensive understanding of “music” in ritual. The study of ritual music must include all ritual sound. Whether the sonic event is closer to noise, to speech, or to music is of less significance than the particular role it plays in the context of ritual. (p. 17)

The role of sound/music in the construction of ritual space-time represents a well-explored field in ethnomusicology – among others, see Wong and Lysloff (1991) and Norton (2009). However, the sonic dimension of the ceremony is just one of the aspects that could be taken into consideration. A *nat kana pwe* represents a multi-sensory experience constituted of sonic, olfactory and visual stimuli. Brac de la Perrière (2016) writes:

The ceremonial pavilion represents a possession-enabling device, usually constructed for the occasion, marked at either end by an important anchor: at one end, a visual and olfactory one, made up of the altars holding the statuettes and offerings; at the other, a musical one, made up of a richly decorated traditional Burmese orchestra. (p. 16)

Finally, the bodily presence of the participants heavily contributes to the ritual experience. Because of these multi-layered and multi-sensory complexities, I believe that the concept of ‘-scape’ is somehow insufficient to describe how ritual media contribute to the coming-into-presence of the spirits.

Experiencing Sounds and Space

The *nat kana* is an in-between space in which different social dimensions come together. It favours the encounter between the different social dimensions of humans and spirits, transforming the everyday space into an extra-ordinary one. Built as a temporary extension of the private household, the pavilion partly invades the public street; the indoor/domestic

household is projected outdoor. However, only family and friends are welcomed ‘inside’; outsiders are not allowed, although they can be involved in the ceremony.

‘Inside’ the *nat kana*, the ensemble performs with loud volumes and heavy reverb digital effects. The combination of loudness and digital effect seems to belong to a precise aesthetic which is not limited to the *nat* cult only. Douglas (2019) pointed out that a religiously meritorious activity is marked by the strike of a bell; as the sound propagates around, the sound invites whoever was able to hear it to “join in the merit making” (p. 299). I contend that the same concept can be applied to a spirit possession ceremony and its propagating sounds. Just as any other devoted Buddhist, *nat* followers take pride in the meritorious act of donating. Embraced in the Buddhist logic, a *nat kana pwe* is a donation ceremony: the donor celebrates inviting friends, family, and the spirits to the celebration, to share with them food, drinks, flowers, bodies, and music. The sound of *hsaing* is produced to acknowledge that a donation in the form of a *nat kana* is taking place, and to call whoever is listening (human or spirit) to join the ceremony. The more people (and spirits) are reached and affected by the sound, the more the shared offerings contribute to the accruing of a donor’s Buddhist merit. Modern amplification technologies allow people to achieve this aim in a way otherwise unthinkable.

Digital effects such as reverb are not uncommon in other contexts in Burma: they are heavily used in studio recording and post-production sessions of Burmese classical/popular music, to achieve a “full, dense sound” (Douglas, 2011, p. 186). In *nat kana pwe*, the digital effects may produce two results:

- 1) It contributes to the release of significant acoustic energy: loud sounds are perceived as louder – especially the singing. In this way, the *nat kana* sounds become more powerful and immersive for the listeners.
- 2) It helps achieve a sense of larger spatiality. The physical limits of the pavilion become irrelevant; the heavy use of effects creates a virtual expanded spatiality – an acoustic marker for a grandiose hall.

Through the digital effect, the humble bamboo pavilion *kana* is transformed into the *nat kana*, a royal palace for the spirit Lords of Burma. With the due differences, this resonates with recent scholarship on Muslim religious sounds. Eisenhlor (2018) underlines how echo/reverb effect has become an integral part of the recording technique for devotional poetry among Mauritian Muslims. He explains that, as a spatial phenomenon, “the echo effect creates the sonic sensation of distance and the dilation of sound in a large space” (p. 99). Eisenberg (2013) explains that public neighbourhoods in Mombasa (Kenya) are transformed through religious sounds calling humans and spiritual beings alike. He writes that “sound thus becomes a material tendon linking sacred and profane realms, thereby transforming (sacralising) the latter” (p. 194). Similarly, sound in *nat kana pwe* ceremonies encompasses spaces, putting in contact different spatial and social dimensions. Loud volumes and reverb effect are nowadays essential to spread the sound as far as possible, to cover other urban sounds, and to create a ritual sound space.

Experiencing Sounds and Time

As the ceremony starts, the sequential progression of sounds and spirits becomes the main reference through which the ceremony is experienced by the participants; they stop measuring the passing of the day in terms of diachronic/regular time and become fully immersed in the flow of the ritual time.

The devotees’ perception of time changes when *nats* enter their bodies. Most of them are not experienced spirit dancers; they are usually overwhelmed by the presence of the spirits,

whose power cannot control. In those moments, ordinary time ceases to exist for them: for the whole duration of the spirit embodiment, their perception of the flow of time is lost; their movements are controlled by the sound of the ensemble. In discussion with several devotees, some of them recall a sensation of “power” or “floating in the air”; most of them, however, keep no memories of what happened before the coming of the spirit into their body. Similar experiences seem to be very common across different cultures where spirit possession is present (Friedson, 2009; Becker, 2004).

Finally, a devotee’s spirit possession dance is triggered, supported, and guided by the musical action of the *hsaing* ensemble. Burmese spirit songs (*nat chin*) are constructed on the alternation of vocal and instrumental sections (Chiarofonte, 2021). During the instrumental sections, the *hsaing* expresses its full energy; musicians play louder and with faster tempos; the increased energy in the music triggers a stronger response in the spirit dancers, contributing to make spirit possession more evident. During the ritual performance, music becomes the main reference through which the presence of the spirit is experienced by the dancer – and by the rest of the community.

Sounds, Movements, and Community

The flow of the ritual time, organised through the sound of the *hsaing*, becomes a shared experience, linking together musicians, spirits, dancers, devotees as one community in the same ritual space. The devotees inside the *nat kana* are considered part of the same family – *nat thathami*, ‘sons and daughters of the spirits’. Similarly, after the initial invitation, the spiritual bodies of the *nats* are considered present – *nat shi dae*, ‘the spirits exist’, or ‘the spirits are here’. A larger number of participants ensures a livelier performance – *lu si dae*, ‘crowded, full of people’ in a positive sense, a concept similar to the Indonesian ‘*ramè*’. *Nat thathami* crowd every single corner of the ritual pavilion, especially during the dances of the most important spirits. During the ceremony, the physical bodies of the devotees are pressed one to another for hours; despite the heat, this extreme body proximity is experienced as a happy occasion.

During the ceremony, humans, and spirits inside the *nat kana* become *seit myu kywa dae* – ‘happily active’. Many devotees participate in the performance, singing along with the singer, tapping their foot to the music; when friends and family are dancing for the spirits themselves, they contribute to the ‘active’ atmosphere by making noises, shouting, clapping their hands loud with exaggerated movements, pushing their bodies one on the other, and in general supporting the dancers. The devotees’ bodily and sonic presence encourage and contribute to the coming-into-presence of the spirits (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Devotees during the spirit possession dance in Yangon, 2013
(Photo by L. Chiarofonte)

In turn, spirits are affected by and contribute to the joyful atmosphere. When they enter the body of one or more people (*nat win pu dae*), they interact with the musicians, jumping to the fast rhythms of the *nat hsaing*, and speak with the human participants.

Conclusion

In *nat kana pwe* ceremonies, sound encompasses and puts in contact different spatial, temporal, and social dimensions. The *nat kana* pavilion represents an in-between ritual space-time where multiple social dimensions encounter. Although the physical boundaries of the pavilion are defined, sounds fill the space and travel beyond it. Amplification and digital effects are nowadays essential to spread the sound as far as possible, covering other urban sounds and constructing the ritual space. Sounds imbue the ritual space, making objects, bodies, and spirits resonate together; it organises the experience of ritual time, musicking the possession dances of the spirits embodiment. Through sounds and other ritual media – the smell of the offering, the colours of the drapes, the body proximity of the participants – the modest bamboo pavilion is transformed into a ritual space where humans and spirits become one community, constructing the ritual event. During the performance, dimensions such as indoor/outdoor, domestic/public, human/spirit and different time perceptions penetrate each other, fusing together into the experience of the ritual.

Endnotes

¹ *Nat kana pwe* ceremonies may take place indoor.

² The *nat kadaw* is historically a female role but is now often played by transgender individuals in urban centres (Ho, 2009).

³ The rest of the ensemble includes a suspended drum (*pat ma*); a short drum (*sahkunt*); six tuned drums (*chauk lon pat*); large barrel drums (*sito*); large cymbals (*linkwin*); bell (*si*) and wooden clapper (*wa*).

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HOW TO FIND TRANCE ONLINE (FAST): ONLINE REPRESENTATION OF JATHILAN TRANCE DANCE BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC

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The Javanese trance dance known as *kuda kepang*, *jaranan* or *jathilan*, has pre-Islamic origins but enjoys extraordinary popularity nowadays. Despite the traditional spirit and magic lore the practice is embedded into, present-day followers don't shy away from the latest social and technological trends, including extensive use of social media. The purpose of this paper is to provide some insight into how performances were advertised online during the pre-Covid era, as well as an overview of the changes and adaptive strategies that have emerged since the onset of the pandemic. Online advertisements of *jathilan* performances in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (*Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*) were chosen as a sample and the outlook on the pandemic situation is based on the analysis of the publicly available online materials as well as personal communication with enthusiasts and practitioners. Personal communication with practitioners were facilitated by the social media and online messaging platforms.

Both *kuda* and *jaran* in the typical dances' names mean "horse", as the flat horse effigies are the essential part of every performance. The horse dances are typically held for various celebratory activities (such as marriages, circumcisions and village purification ceremonies, national holidays and religious festivities) and are performed by the non-professional dancers for whom they provide only supplementary income. With the Covid-19 pandemic putting restrictions on large public gatherings, many performing groups chose not to abandon their activities in their entirety. They began to organize performances without audience members intended to be streamed online, mainly via YouTube. It should be noted that this strategy is not unique to *jathilan*; even prior to the pandemic there existed forms of live-streamed *wayang* (shadow puppet theatre) that could have been watched by *the art form's* aficionados regardless of their geographic location. Also, the Sultan's Court of Yogyakarta has introduced streamed formats for various court dance performances that otherwise could have been attended only by those from or close to the *Kraton* (palace) circles.

On a Personal Note

I have been working on a photo project documenting trance in *jathilan* performances since 2014 and choose to transform it into ethnographic fieldwork by 2017. Most of my attention was focused on the tradition in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, therefore I will be using the term *jathilan* to refer to the horse dances as it is the most common for that region. From the very first performance I ever observed, I was able to find information about the dates and places of such activities via Facebook. During the time of my active fieldwork in 2017-2018 there used to be at least one Facebook page – *Sagitaris 88 Jadwal JPA* (since mid-2019 no longer active) and one Facebook group *JPA Lover's* (which in 2021 had over 21,500 members) dedicated to the announcements of *jathilan* performances in the Yogyakarta Region, an area with a total population of about 4 million people¹.

As my research progressed and I felt the need to think of some new aspects of *jathilan* that can be presented at conferences², I realized that online announcements are worth considering not merely as a convenient tool for finding performances but themselves as a valuable source of data. First and foremost, the analysis of posters and text advertisements provided me with my own numbers independent of the official statistics about the formally registered groups and their activities collected by the local departments of culture, *Dinas*

Kebudayaan, that local officials were not always eager to share with foreign researchers. It is important to point out that *jathilan* nowadays enjoys remarkable popularity. In the month of August of 2018 there were 205 performances by 183 different groups advertised online and it is likely that there were more groups that just did not have an online presence. By my estimation, August is usually the month with the highest number of performances as it is the dry season, the period when Indonesian Independence Day is celebrated, as well as when some traditional harvest-related festivities also take place.

The other part of my pre-pandemic research of the online data was more of an open-ended question: what kind of information, besides where and when, is emphasized in the poster announcements? What kind of conclusions can be drawn from this information?

From Disenchantment to Re-enchantment

Analysis of 257 performance announcements (occasionally, a single performance can be advertised by two or three different or partially identical-looking posters) from August 2018 and February 2019³ has shown a general trend towards disenchantment of the tradition (in Weberian sense), or at least of the way it was represented online. The most commonly used images were the photographs of the dancers in their spectacular costumes or clipart-like images of horses or the horse effigies typical to *jathilan*. There were no references to spirits or trance. Even though the domain of the spirits in Javanese culture is commonly referred to as *alam gaib* – the unseen, the invisible world, popular online discussions of the Javanese spirit and monster lore usually come together with various kinds of artworks or screenshots from the horror movies to visualize the inhabitants of the *alam gaib*. This, however, was not the case with *jathilan* where the dancers or even the trance masters (*pawangs*) themselves were rather vague if asked directly about the nature or the typology of the spirits involved in *jathilan* performances.

The aforementioned trance masters and not the dancers are actually in charge of interacting with the spirits: making offerings, inviting them to join the performance and in the end making sure that they have safely left the dancers' bodies. While no complete ritual version of a *jathilan* performance (i.e. inclusive of spirit possession) is possible without a *pawang*, *pawangs* only occasionally get featured on the posters (merely 4% of the sample). Far more attention is given to the singers invited to accompany a performance (featured in 54% of all poster announcements) as they are usually guest stars and not members of the performing group. Even businesses from which the group rents its sound system or its costumes are mentioned with much greater frequency than *pawangs* (26% and 21%, respectively).

Even the most practical part of the announcements: days and times in which performances are held reveal the prevalence of purely mundane considerations. The majority (80%) of the performances in 2018 and 2019 took place on Saturdays and Sundays. Most of those (81%) started in the morning or afternoon so that they can be concluded by sundown. So, it seems, it was most convenient for *jathilan* hosts, performers and audience members to hold events over weekends when people are more likely to have free time. Night time performances may have occurred less frequently as they require extra lighting equipment. These performance times contradict to traditional Javanese beliefs which consider *malam Jumat Kliwon*, a Thursday night occurring once in 35 days to be the most spiritually and magically potent day (Kartomi, 1973, p. 180), while *azan maghrib* – call for prayer that occurs around 6 pm, when the sun sets over Yogyakarta and Central Java is considered the most typical time for spirit sightings or spontaneous spirit possession (e.g. Geertz, 1960, p. 20). Night time is also understood as a more comfortable time for the spirits. Thus, it can be inferred that the comfort of humans rather than spirits is the first consideration for when *jathilan* performances in Yogyakarta were typically organized.

One of the odd features recurring on many posters was the line specifying, in English, in variously spelled and misspelled ways, that it was a “live performance of *jathilan*”. Prior to 2020 it seemed impossible to think of the horse dances held in any other way. However, the challenge of the pandemic and restrictions placed on large public gatherings pushed performers to search for other ways to continue sharing their art.

While there were no full-scale lockdowns imposed in Indonesia during the early stages, first health protocols were released by the government on March 17 (Bramasta, 2020). At that point, most of the *jathilan* themed activity online was related to the notifications about already advertised performances being “postponed” *ditunda* or “rescheduled”. As *jathilan* posters typically mix Indonesian, Javanese and English, the actual English word “rescheduled” was used. Then followed a mostly quiet period of the fasting month of Ramadan, during which no performing activities would be expected to take place even in the previous year. In 2020 Ramadan fell between April 24 and May 23. After that, quite quickly a new format emerged: live-streamed performances of *jathilan* – shows held without an audience but streamed online, primarily via YouTube. And with those performances and their advertisements at least two new trends came to life: a certain degree of re-enchantment, with the figure of *pawang* and the state of trance being given a more prominent place, and a significant emphasis on compliance with the new health protocols, first and foremost pertaining to the use of face masks.

New streamed performances were not as numerous as the pre-pandemic ones but the fans of the art form were still given something to watch every week and such streams were watched by thousands of people. In contrast, a typical village performance, depending on the group’s prominence and the locality may have only been attended by a few hundreds of people. Online advertisements of the streamed performances now featured YouTube channels instead of geographical locations, together with the warnings to stay at home “*di rumah aja*” and not to come to the location “*dilarang datang ke lokasi!*”. Entranced dancers and textual references to the state of trance became more typical for those kinds of posters. Furthermore, references to trance and recognition of the pandemic situation did come hand in hand: “*ndadi di saat pandemi*” – literally saying “trance in the time of pandemic”.

Figure 1 is a poster announcing a live-streamed *jathilan* performance. Caption in the middle reads: “trance in the time of the pandemic”. Crossed out vial on the top left represents *minyak wangi* – a fragrant oil frequently used by the *pawang*s dealing with the entranced dancers; the bottle underneath it is a locally popular brand of hand sanitizer. Source: *JPA Lover’s* Facebook group.



Figure 1. Poster announcing a live-streamed *jathilan* performance.
Source: *JPA Lover’s* Facebook group.

Groups that were not able to organize performances simply shared videos of their previous shows, which also seemed to give more prominence to the trance state. Some videos were published showing just the trance part and many came with comments meant to emphasize the intensity of the trance state, e.g. “*harus 4 pawang*” implying that no less than four *pawang*s were needed to bring the performer back to their senses.

Subversion Versus Compliance

While there is a great variety of narratives explaining the meaning and origins of the horse dances that connect them to the ancient Javanese kingdoms of the Hindu-Buddhist era (Groenendael, 2008, p. 175; Mauricio, 2002, pp. 43-44) or, less commonly, the stories of Islamization of Java or even experiences of the Hajj pilgrimages (Nasuruddin, 1990, p. 143), it is not uncommon to see the wild entranced behaviour of the dancers dressed as *ksatria*, noble Javanese warriors of the pre-Islamic past as a covert critique, if not forthright mocking⁴ of the traditional Javanese aristocracy. The potential to channel protest against those in power, be they local or foreign (in the times when Java was part of the Dutch East Indies) was also recognized by contemporary Javanese musicians finding inspiration for their experimental music in the traditional horse dances⁵. Not to mention the overall subversive flair of the performance where involvement of the spirits, non-human agents acting through the dancers’ bodies justifies all the deviations from the usual norms of daily conduct. Yet, in the situation of the pandemic, *jathilan* was not used to critique or protest the restrictions, on the contrary, posters were showing the performers’ readiness to comply with health protocols and promote them.

Although streamed performances were a type of compromise between having a full-scale festive gathering and completely ceasing all activities, in fact, even without an audience, groups were still expected to obtain a permit from the local authorities to allow them to gather to film and/or stream the dance. So, explicit signs that they were ready to follow the new rules might have also played a practical role in helping the performers obtain the said permits. Yet, compliance with the rules has led to the decrease even in the number of streamed performances by 2021, when the pandemic situation in Indonesia had worsened and restrictions on gatherings had been tightened only further.

New imagery was developed for the posters ranging from merely featuring facemasks to visualizing the virus as a traditional Javanese demon. Even medicalized language has entered the sphere of traditional arts. Many individual posts, discussions and hashtags such as #kangenpentas – lit. “longing for [staged] performances highlighted how the spectators and performers alike missed traditional performances. In such context, motivation for holding the new streamed dances was explicitly and repeatedly stated as medicating, *mengobati*, “treating the feeling of longing”, with the root word *obat* literally meaning “medicine, cure, remedy”.

Figure 2 shows a poster announcing a love-streamed *jathilan* performance. Caption in the bottom left corner read: “just a little thing. What is important is to be able to *treat* the feeling of longing for the arts, especially the art of *janthilan*” (*Hanya kecil-kecil an saja. Yang penting bias mengobati rasa kangen terhadap kesenian terutama kesenian Jathilan*). The second line from the top: “We just miss our art” (*Kami hanya merindukan kesenianku*). Source: JPA Lover’s Facebook group.



Figure 2. The second line from the top: “We just miss our art” (*Kami hanya merindukan kesenianku*)
Source: *JPA Lover’s* Facebook group

And this truly seems to have been the main motivation. While some of the performance posters and videos included explicit requests for donations to be sent to the group’s bank account and some videos featured DIY commercials of various local businesses, many practitioners were pointing out that they were spending rather than making money from organizing online streams. Traditionally groups were paid for a show by a family or local community commissioning the performance as a part of some celebratory event. Moreover, the satisfaction from sharing the art has also decreased. As one of the dancers aptly put it: performing without an audience felt like eating vegetables without salt – vapid “*Tnpa penonton rasanya ky sayur tnpa aram....hambar*”. Yet, members of the performing communities strived to carry on to be a part of some imagined united front in the struggle of arts against the coronavirus, not against the restrictions on public performances.



Figure 3. T-shirt print design featuring depiction of the coronavirus.
Source and copyright: [instagram.com/budoyojawai](https://www.instagram.com/budoyojawai)

Conclusion

While Covid-19 threatens lives and livelihoods, for Indonesia, in the pandemic’s second year, the situation started to look only more dire, yet members of the *jathilan* performing community concerned themselves with the things beyond mere physical survival – that is also survival and continuation of their art. They found new, creative, and technologically advanced ways to keep sharing their art; and were able to do this within the parameters and protocols set by the state,

instead of using *jathilan*'s subversive potential for going against it. Meanwhile, the trance component of *jathilan* seems to be gaining more prominence during this uncertain and challenging times, despite being previously pushed aside by religious and cultural policies of the Indonesian state that prefers to view the horse dances as a purely cultural spectacle, rather than unruly and un-modern ritual with roots in pre-Islamic spirit beliefs (see Rapoport, 2020).

Endnotes

¹ 4,010,436 people by 2020 census, according to Badan Pusat Statistik (Central Statistics Agency).

² *Spirits in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Online Representation of the Traditional Javanese Trance Dance* was the first presentation on the topic that I made at the 45th ICTM World Conference, 11-17 July 2019, Bangkok, Thailand.

³ February is supposed to be the opposite of August – a short month in the middle of the rainy season during which, with the exception of the shifting period on which falls the month of Ramadan, the least amount of performing activity is to be expected.

⁴ This interpretation is even more prominent in the discussions of *reog* Ponorogo (Campbell, 2009, p. 74; Wilson, 1999, para. 2) – a dance performance from East Java, which has an obvious relation to the horse dances even though most of the present-day practitioners are rather uncertain which of the art forms came first and how it affected the other one.

⁵ This motive appears in most of the interviews and descriptions of the Raja Kirik album by Yennu Ariendra and J. Mo'ong Santosa Pribadi (e.g. Maryanto, 2020).

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TIGER TALES, LIVING MASKS AND CHARMED PERFORMANCES: EXPLORING NARRATIVES OF TRANSCENDANCE AND INTENTIONAL DISENCHANTMENT IN THE *MAK YONG* TRADITION OF THE RIAU ARCHIPELAGO OF INDONESIA

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In many Southeast Asian cultures, humans are recognized as enmeshed in a web of interdependent relationships with plants, animals, spirits, and even important features of the landscape (Roseman 1991, Arhem & Sprenger 2016). “Animals may fuse, refuse, and confuse nature–culture categories and ontologies,” particularly in cultures that acknowledge a sense of continuity and kinship between animal, human, plant, and spiritual realms (Kirksey & Helmreich 2010:553, Willerslev 2007, Nadasdy 2007).

This paper will explore a narrative of the interspecies origin of the *mak yong* tradition in Indonesia’s Riau Archipelago, now called *Kepulauan Riau* province or KEPRI. I will investigate the invocation of animals and the landscape in *mantera* used during masked performances and delve into a personal account of a *mak yong* performer who as a young woman was encouraged by elders to use magical charms to perform. I also will examine why she subsequently decided to eschew enchanting her performance practice, choosing instead to rely more on Islamic prayer and her own acting abilities when performing *mak yong*.

Mak yong dance drama was once performed for entertainment and healing ceremonies by itinerant theater troupes that traveled in northern Malaysia and southern Thailand. *Mak yong* performers in KEPRI describe an exodus of their ancestors from Patani to the Riau Islands in the late 18th century. The geographic and political isolation of KEPRI *mak yong* practitioners from performers in Malaysia and Thailand led to the development of unique regional variants of *mak yong* performance in instrumentation, acting styles, and tales.



Figure 1. Sanggar Warisan Budaya Pantai Basri performs *Puteri Siput Gondang* in Batam.
(Photo by P. Hardwick, 2018)

Tigerine Historicity

In KEPRI, *mak yong* performers on Bintan Island and on nearby Mantang Arang trace their ancestral and performance lineage to Patani, in Southern Thailand. According to Tengku Muhamad Satar, the leader of *Sanggar Seni Teater Mak Yong Warisan*, his maternal ancestors were Patani performers who passed through Kelantan and Temasek before settling on the island

of Mantang Arang. Although the date of departure of his maternal ancestors from Patani is vague, Pak Satar estimates that they may have left as early as the 1780s. According to historian Francis R. Bradley (2013: 150), the defeat and destruction of the Patani sultanate by Siam took place over the course of five wars from 1785–1838. Bradley argues that Siam employed four tactics to subdue the polity of Patani including massacres, slave-raiding, environmental warfare, and the expulsion of refugees. ‘The Patani people, who escaped death or capture in 1786, fled by the tens of thousands into the neighbouring polities of Kedah, Kelantan, Perak and Terengganu’ (Bradley, 2013: 157). Although it is impossible to ascertain if Pak Satar’s maternal ancestors were Patani refugees, the estimated time of departure from Patani, and the stories of sojourn in Kelantan before migrating to Temasek and the Riau islands, suggest that the political unrest in Patani in the late 18th and early 19th centuries could have provided a push factor for the emigration of refugees from Patani to the Riau Islands.

The late Pak Ghani, a *mak yong* performer from Mantang Arang, told a different tale of the history of *mak yong* in KEPRI at his home on March 11, 2019. His grandfather passed to him a story of a Patani trader named Solat who went on a trading mission to Sumatra. After Solat had finished trading, he was caught in a typhoon, swept the length of Sumatra, and sucked into a whirlpool. Out of the centre of the whirlpool grew a sea coconut tree, the *pokok pauh janggi*, where a garuda came to feed before flying to land. Solat devised a plan to tie himself to the legs of the garuda to escape the barren wasteland where he was stranded. The garuda landed in a large field, and Solat freed himself to wander into the forest until he reached a cave where he met a tiger king. Solat was advised to hide by the tiger king under a large cooking pot. From the safety of the cooking pot he observed tigers dancing during a festival. From his observations he learned *pencak silat*, *mak yong*, *zapin*, and *joget dangkung*. Solat then travelled to the end of Sumatra where he met a sailor from the Malay Peninsula, who helped him sail back to Southern Thailand. Once he had reached home, Solat taught the arts that he had learned from observing the dances of Sumatran tigers. Subsequently, Solat and his family sailed from Patani to Kelantan to Singapore and finally to Mantang Arang where his family settled, bringing their mystically obtained *mak yong* tradition with them.

What I know, I learned from my own grandfather. At that time, he told a story of a person named Solat who was a trader. He liked to sail here and there in a large boat. So one day he went on a trading mission to the area surrounding the island of Perca. Perca is Sumatra. Before they arrived at the island of Perca they were hit by a typhoon, a typhoon storm. The boat broke apart. So when the strong storm winds came, the boom of the sail was flattened and travelled the length of Sumatra, because Sumatra is very long, so said my grandfather. After the boat had run its course, it broke apart. He was stranded. Stranded in a place named *Pusat Tasik Puah Janggi Tempat Air Lenggong*. There he was stranded he broke away from that boat. He was under it like that, a brown cloth, under a twisted calico cloth. He took two nails and a hammer. At this place there was a *pauh* tree. Apparently at that place it appears that there are ships all around and very old, like a reef that rises up. But the largest exposed reef is covered by a *pauh* tree.

Every day to that *pauh* tree descended the largest garuda from the blue skies and it perched there. It ate that *pauh* fruit. After the garuda ate the *pauh* fruit it would fly to the fields and into the middle of the forests to search for its victims. So after he was stranded, Solat was aware and used his reason. Because that place was far away, and there were no people, there wasn’t even any water surrounding him. So he had the thought to use a cloth to cling to the garuda to save himself from that place. And when the garuda was eating of that tree he tied the cloth to carry him to each of the garuda’s legs here and

there and he entered into the middle. And after that he clung there, the garuda descended to an open field to eat. At that time he descended and began to walk wherever his feet would take him.

He came to a cave. That cave was a tiger cave. When he had arrived the king of the tigers asked him “Where are you from? To this he answered “I am a person who is lost. When I left my home, I was trader. I brought things to trade. My boat was wrecked in a storm.” He spoke like this.

“You” he said, “If it is like this then now where you plan to hide yourself? Because my people are still roaming in the forest. Later this evening they will gather. If you do not have a place to hide later, they will eat you.”

So it was forced. “What is the best way for me to be protected?” “Ok” said the king of the tigers, “it is better if you hide yourself in a large pan like this.” So that day passed like that, and there was the sound of tigers. “Guam!” “Guam!” They want to come back, right? Pak Solat went under the cooking pan.

And that night they held a big festival. With many types of dances. And from there, this Pak Solat got all the dances, *pencak silat*, *dangkung* many types of dances many types of performances. Because he spied on them, Yes because he watched them all the tigers performed. So when it was morning, he asked “Why did you hold the festival?” “Certainly it is like that, every night we hold it.”

So after that he said “May I excuse myself to find place to return to my home. I want to go to the end of Sumatra. The very end.” So he went to the very end, near to the sea. And from there he saw a sailing ship, a sailor. When he was near, he called the sailor. It seemed that the sailor was from Malaysia, Malaysia is in the east lah. There he was able to follow him back to his home.

When he returned home, he remembered the dances like *zapin*, *mak yong*, many forms of *dangkung*, *pencak silat* and many others. And when he was in Thailand, Terengganu, Kelantan he demonstrated and taught everything. And after that, that the art grew . . . From Thailand to Kelantan, Kelantan to Tumpat . . . So after that they brought it here [to *Mantang Arang*] (Ghani, interview, March 9, 2019).

Pak Ghani’s incredible tale of *mak yong* origins incorporates elements of the legend of the *Puah Janggi* tree. The *Puah Janggi* or the sea coconut, is the largest palm in the world. It is endemic to the Seychelles archipelago in the Indian Ocean. Variants of the Malay legend of the *Pauh Janggi* can be found in British anthropological texts including W.W. Skeat’s *Malay Magic*, but tales of the underwater forests of sea coconut trees guarded by garudas drifted with the Indian Ocean tides back to 16th and 17th century Europe and the Maldives where the sea-coconuts were highly valued (1972 [1900]). Sea coconuts found in the sea or on shore no longer had husks, so they resembled a woman’s voluptuous hips. Sea coconuts were prized by Europeans of the 16th and 17th century for their supposed healing and magical properties. In 1769, Jean Duchemin sailed to Praslin in the Seychelles, where he found many sea coconut trees. This discovery dampened the world market for the legendary fruit.

In Malay narratives, the navel of the sea continued to be said to drain the waters of the world, with the *Puah Janggi* tree at its centre serving as a submerged *axis mundi* linking the

underwater world to the human realm and the airy heavens. Malay variants of the legend describe a whirlpool in the middle of the sea, in which the *Puah Janggi* tree grows. At the base of the tree sits a giant crab that controls the ebb and flow of the tides. A garuda nests in its branches, and a naga is often entwined with its roots. Like many tales of the Malay world, the drift of the *Puah Janggi*, navel of the seas, is difficult to trace. Some legends place its location at the tip of Southern Sumatra, while others claim the whirlpool is in Bagan Datuk, at the mouth of the Perak River, the exact location of its waterborne cosmology perpetually afloat in waters of the Malay world.

Pak Ghani's tale links the cosmology of the navel of the seas to a KEPRI *mak yong* origin tale that claims that the art of *mak yong* originated from Solat's mimesis of the furtively observed performances of Sumatran tigers during their festivals. Solat's study of *mak yong* amongst Sumatran tigers is an interspecies exchange between human and animal worlds that gives birth to art forms that spread from Sumatra to Southern Thailand, the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula, and finally KEPRI. Pak Ghani's origin story further underscores the linkages between Patani, KEPRI and Sumatran *mak yong* traditions, and exemplifies how myth and historicity, ontology and international commerce continue to intertwine in the oral histories told about the origins of *mak yong* in maritime Southeast Asia.



Figure 2. Sanggar Warisan Budaya Pantai Basri, Batam performs *Puteri Siput Gondang*, a tale that includes a weretiger. (Photo by P. Hardwick, 2018)

KEPRI *Mak Yong* Masks and Mantera

KEPRI *mak yong* performers wear wooden or papier-mâché masks when performing. In 2018, I documented sixteen different *mak yong* masks, several of which bear a striking resemblance to the early nineteenth-century *mak yong* masks pictured in Skeat (1972 [1900], plate 21, opp. 513). Two of the most important masks, and the two that are donned on stage during performances are those of the royal servants *Awang Pengasuh* and *Inang Pengasuh*. Pak Satar's family owns many wooden masks, but the possession of these objects of spiritual power and their storied abilities to transform *mak yong* performers in performance have led to difficulties between himself and his younger brother Pak Mohktar.

Pak Mohktar currently possesses the family heritage masks, but keeps them wrapped in plastic under a bed, brought out only for an occasional performance. Pak Satar feels that as these wooden masks are invested heritage objects, they should be hung high in a place of honour

and respected with regular ritual offerings. Pak Satar is unwilling to fight his brother for control of the family's heirloom invested wooden masks, so he makes papier-mâché replicas that he moulds with newspaper and egg yolks around a clay base. Pak Satar's papier-mâché masks are not invested, yet the belief in the transcendent power of masked performance is so strong that some performers in his troupe claim to feel the spirits of the masks take their place during performances.

Mantera are an important part of the masking tradition in KEPRI *mak yong*. I include below translations for *mantera* recited by performers as they don the *Awang Pengasuh* and the *Inang Pengasuh* masks.

This the *mantera* to wear the mask of *Awang Pengasuh*:
Here the *krok*, the fires of hell, extinguished in the crater, are boiling.
The fierce mother tiger delivers when she is young
The white elephant crosses the sea,
Again you submit, again you worship my big toe
kurrr [calling] the spirit of the seven winds.

This is to wear the mask of the *Inang*
Whipping the water, a jar, it trembles
I wear *Sedulang Kace Cabaye*
I am like a mountain
I use a charm to make others submit, it is not I who unlocks Allah
Whom I *kurrr* [call] the spirit of the seven capes that I exclaim
(Satar, interview March, 17 2019).

Masks whether they be made from papier-mâché, wood, or fiberglass continue to be an important part of the KEPRI *mak yong* tradition. The language of the mask *mantera* invoke powerful spiritual animals like the fierce mother tiger and the white elephant. Both *mantera* end in calling *semangat* with a *kurrr*, imitating a bird call. The heritage wooden masks are believed to be invested with ancestral spirits or spirits of *mak yong* characters and masks are censed with *kemenyen* during the *Buka Tanah* opening ritual. Like the origin legend told by Pak Ghani, the KEPRI *mak yong* masking tradition encapsulates through performance an ontology that merges human performers, ancestral spirits, and animal attributes expressed in *mantera* when donning the masks.



Figure 3. The papier-mâché masks of Pak Satar just before they are blessed during a *buka tanah* opening ritual in Malang Rapat, Bintan. (Photo by P. Hardwick, 2018)

Transcendent Performance and International Disenchantment

While many elements of KEPRI *mak yong* performance may include mysticism, some *mak yong* performers note that they feel increasingly uneasy performing traditional rituals that enchant their performances. Ibu Elvie is a founding member of *Mak Yong Muda* of Tanjung Pinang, a performing arts company that she runs with her husband Syed Parman. Ibu Elvie is not a lineage *mak yong* performer, however she studied *mak yong* as a teenager with Pak Atan and Pak Khalid, lineage performers from Mantang Arang paid to teach *mak yong* in Tanjung Pinang in the 1980s. Ibu Elvie explains that when she was a young woman, she went with Pak Atan and Pak Khalid to perform in Pekanbaru. Pak Atan arranged her headdress, and Pak Khalid gave her a glass of water that had been blessed through *mantera*. Her lineage teachers also placed a splinter of wood between her teeth. Ibu Elvie claims that these charms had a particular effect upon her:

Then straight away I could not see behind myself, or in front. It was like that in the *panggung*, I put on the false fingernails. At first, I felt selfish, like my ego was huge. This is my country, ah this is a start.

When it was truly over, they took everything off, the finished removing everything. I asked, “Did I perform just now?” I did not remember that I was in the *panggung*.

Ibu Elvie contrasted her phenomenological experience of a charmed performance in Pekanbaru as a young woman with her experience of a government sponsored performance as a more mature performer in 2011 in Thailand. By this time, Ibu Elvie no longer desired to use enchanted water, *mantera* or charmed pieces of wood. Her husband required that she be confined to her hotel room the day before her performance in Bangkok where she recited the sunnah and other obligatory prayers.

I didn’t use prayers, the thing they put in my teeth, charmed water, nothing. I was confined for one day by Pak Syed Parman in the room of the hotel. I was ordered to study the whole book, the whole Qur’an. I was ordered to recite the sunnah, the obligatory prayers. I could not go out. . . I focused more on asking Allah because I am a Muslim right?

I did that until the night when I performed. I knew that I had performed. “Eh! I performed. All this time I never knew I performed.” It wasn’t that I didn’t feel the performance. Just that when it was finished, I forgot what had just happened in the *panggung*. As if it had been someone else in my body.

But it was different when I performed in Thailand, . . . Only I was aware “Oh, there is the audience. Oh! There is this and that”.

If I use that [the enchanted water and wooden splinter], I don’t care, I am in my own world. My own world by myself, it is strange.

When I asked Ibu Elvie if the knowledge of how to enchant a *mak yong* performance was passed down to her before her teachers Pak Khalid and Pak Atan died, she replied:

I did not ask for it. I was scared. It is a sin, *syrik* (Elvie, interview May 7, 2019).

Conclusion

Many Southeast Asian performance traditions include aural, physical and mythological references to the natural and supernatural worlds. Narratives told by *mak yong* performers in the Riau Archipelago describe ancestors that fly with garuda and learn *mak yong* from tigers. Tales are also told that emphasize the ability of *mak yong* performance to transcend space and time as well as the boundaries between the human, animal, and supernatural realms. Blessed wooden splinters, invested wooden masks, *mantera* and enchanted water continues to be part of the performance practice of KEPRI *mak yong* performers. However, for some performers these practices are becoming mere phenomenological memories and performance lore rather than embodied practice as performers make personal choices not to continue traditions designed to invite transcendence or a spiritual connection beyond a carefully prescribed religious identity.

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ROUNDTABLE: POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN DIASPORIC SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARTS

Presenters:

**Benjamin Pongtep Cefkin, I Made Lasmawan, Bernard Ellorin,
Jittapim Yamprai, Elizabeth McLean Macy**

Discussant: **Elizabeth Clendinning**

Introduction

The performing arts of Southeast Asia (SE Asia) have long been a major part of cultural expression within diasporic communities in the U.S. and as a part of transnational artistic and educational exchanges. Yet, structures of power and privilege—not only language—limit artistic-scholarly dialogue and participation. Other important factors include economic and educational inequity; privileging of certain genres over others; failure to recognize complex artistic identities, including musician-dancers and performer-scholars; systematic societal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class in both geographic locations; as well as a general mismatch between expectations of SE Asia and U.S. audiences and institutions.

This roundtable drew on the experiences of a multigenerational group of six musician-dancer-scholars working within transnational Thai, Indonesian, Filipino, and refugee communities from Myanmar to address performing arts contexts and traditions. Individually, we examined the role of applied ethnomusicology, the experience of transnational performer/scholars, how collaborative work increases visibility and can help maintain tradition, and ways that we can empower underrepresented voices by centering performer experiences. The discussant highlighted themes and issues that cross-cut the presentations and contextualized them within the U.S. academic system as one long-lived site of SE Asian-American artistic exchange and knowledge production. Altogether we aimed to question current modes of transnational scholarly-artistic exchange and to find similarities across geographical and genre boundaries in SE Asia that may help envision more equitable models. Finally, we advocated for a more inclusive paradigm based more centrally on SE Asian modes of knowledge production.

DUELING ELEPHANTS: A CASE STUDY OF CONFLICTING AGENDAS IN A THAI DIASPORA ARTS PROGRAM

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Abstract

Applied ethnomusicology often involves collaboration with non-academic or non-artist individuals within a given community. However, a wide variety of individuals collaborating together comes with an array of perspectives and ambitions in regard to arts programs and the communities which sponsor them. Potential issues regarding the function and management of arts institutions can be compounded in diaspora settings where transcultural conditions come to the forefront. How do the roles of collaborating individuals within arts institutions change in

diaspora settings, where social conflicts also include topics such as immigration statuses and the rebellion of multicultural-minded youth against traditional cultural norms?

I discuss my role as a student, a researcher, and a music instructor at Wat Buddhawararam, the cultural center of Colorado's Thai community. I address the various transcultural and inter-generational issues that have arisen during my tenure with the temple's Thai Language and Culture School and the role that academics can play as intermediators in community arts programs. I also examine how native scholars can act as advocates for arts education and development in transnational and diaspora settings.

**TRADITION IN TRANSITION:
MY LIFE AS A MUSICIAN AND SCHOLAR**

I Made Lasmawan
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Abstract

I began playing gamelan as a child when my father organized the members of the village to learn and perform many Balinese performing arts. With this knowledge, I was accepted to study at KOKAR Bali, where I expanded what I knew about the traditional performing arts of Bali. After graduating, I continued my study at university, attending ASKI Surakarta (now ISI Surakarta), where I studied Javanese Music and Culture and learned to become a lecturer in addition to a musician. I've spent over 40 years as a teacher, instructing gamelans both in Java and across the U.S. In that time I've transitioned from music director, to lecturer, to full-time faculty member at a liberal arts college in Colorado where I teach academic courses and direct the school gamelan. As a diasporic Indonesian performing artist, my teaching methods have adapted to fit American sensibilities. I've also witnessed how traditional music from Bali has changed in form, technique, mode, and social context, and I incorporate that into my teaching methods.

**CONTINUITY THROUGH EMPOWERMENT:
HONORING THE LEGACY OF MASTER PHILIPPINE KULINTANG MUSICIAN
DANONGAN SIBAY KALANDUYAN**

Bernard Ellorin
Miramar College & MiraCosta College, USA

Abstract

For over 40 years, the late Maguindanaon kulintang maestro, Danongan Sibay Kalanduyan's legacy is widely practiced by Filipino Americans living in the U.S. After his passing, his students have successfully continued the preservation of the music through different performance spaces. As a long-time student of Kalanduyan, I enrolled in a master apprenticeship program with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts to teach Kimberly

Kalanduyan (his eldest grand-child) a repertoire of pieces from her grandfather's village of Datu Piang, Cotabato.

Through the ACTA apprenticeship, I developed a holistic approach to learning about Kim's musical heritage: 1) the aural transmission of teaching kulintang melodies; 2) knowledge of cultural context; and 3) immersion with master artists living in the southern Philippines. Using the Filipino customs of *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) and *pagkapwa* (acknowledgement of individuals in their surroundings), empowering Kimberly reveals how this form of continuity — the direct descendants of the original master musician learning from their students — is a recent development for Philippine kulintang music. In sum, cultural competency may occur outside of academe in order to validate the experience of music by diasporic communities.

ENDANGERMENT IN MUSICAL CULTURES OF THE REFUGEE FROM MYANMAR IN THE UNITED STATES

Jittapim Yamprai

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Abstract

As the number of refugees from Myanmar increase in many U.S. states, their attempts to unify and strengthen their community is at stake. Family members and communities are scattered due to job availability in the U.S. as well as the challenge of obtaining refugee status. Musical practices as well as conducting ceremonies among the refugees from Myanmar have to be modified, even to the point of giving up, resulting in the extinction of the genre. My talk aimed to provide an analysis of the most critical issues that impact cultural performance that each ethnic group tries to maintain, along with their strategies to sustain their music and ceremonial practices. Fieldwork research is conducted within the refugee groups by interviewing community leaders, musicians, singers, and dancers of Burmese, Chin, Karen, Karenni, and Rohingya heritage as well as participating in their festivals and ceremonies. The result of the research, then, transforms to strategies in reviving the endangered genres through a collaborative network constructed with government organizations, educational institutions, and the elders of the communities to sustain their cultural performance.

**RE-PLACING POWER: CENTERING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE IN
TRANSNATIONAL BALINESE MUSIC COMMUNITIES**

Elizabeth McLean Macy

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Abstract

Invoking feminist models of ethnography that foreground autobiography and personal narrative, I center the life story of Ni Ketut Marni, a dancer cum musician, instructor, culture bearer, and the wife of master drummer and pedagogue I Made Lasmawan. Drawing on fieldwork and collaboration with Marni in Bali and Colorado, I show how her life illustrates multiple, co-constitutive forms of displacement in the diasporic Balinese gamelan community. The physical displacement that marks these performers' transnational existence catalyzes intangible displacements of power and validity on multiple levels. Musicians like Marni and Lasmawan come to the U.S. to work in university music programs, even as ethnomusicological narratives about Balinese music pedagogy that focus primarily on male gamelan instructors to the exclusion of their wives themselves displace women's vested cultural authority onto the male musicians they support. Re-centering women's experiences reveals the necessary and significant role women play in both creating and maintaining Balinese music communities in the U.S. while highlighting the agency they exhibit in doing so. I consider how we can empower underrepresented voices by centering performer experiences and narratives.

DISCUSSANT COMMENTS

Elizabeth Clendinning

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Abstract

Drawing on prior experience as a historian, ethnographer, and participant in transnational Southeast Asian-American performing arts communities to highlight themes that cross-cut the roundtable presentations, some points of discussion included the nature of cultural preservation and sustainability within original and diasporic context. These points included modes of musical transmission, teaching students outside of historic artistic lineages and repatriation of materials to original artistic communities; and how practitioners and scholars negotiate extant formal institutions (such as academic and non-profit groups) as well as form new institutions to better fit community needs. I also highlighted different ways in which panel participants reflected in their presentations on their unique lived experiences and positionalities that allow them to accomplish the work discussed within the panel. At the conclusion, I posed questions for cross-reflection between roundtable presenters and helped guide the subsequent question-and-answer session with audience members.

THE LOVE AND KINDESS OF TEACHERS

Film

Alex Dea

Independent Scholar, Indonesia

Abstract

This video reflects challenged sustainability of performing arts of Central Java's late masters of dance and music. Through mini-profiles of teaching, performing, casual talking and laughing, we become aware of the spirit of the kindness, unselfish energy, and strength of the older generation through their embodied archives of old and new knowledge and understanding. This video is to inspire and remind the new Javanese practitioners of their intangible cultural values – which may be imperceptibly slipping away due to modernization times. We will see gamelan master Pak Cokro speaking on the importance of musical understanding although just recovered from stroke and heart attack. We see S. Ngaliman, paramount dance master, continuing to finish a video of his work Pamungkas. Bu Tarwa, main dance teacher of the Mangkunegaran palace only walking with assistance, continues to lead while sitting on a raised seat gesturing with hands and top body movement. Prominent classical singer Sastrotugiyo in spite his lowly village environment, teaches at his humble home, singing, using jokes to impart the meaning behind the melodies and lyrics, all the while giving snacks and lunch along with lessons going hours without tire. While large changes to the transmission of performing arts are clear, it is not “some catastrophic loss of tradition”. However, it is not without some. The current teachers find their own way to attract and teach younger performers. Examples are the Selasa Legen get-together of over 60 dancers every 35-days commemorating the late Rama Sas; the “sekilur” performances in Solo at the high school of arts; and the Pakarti group of students practicing led by a master musician and leading dancer. These are announced through mobile phone social networks. This way, a new type of love and kindness is continued.

**SUBVERSIVE LISTENING IN THE SISTERHOOD:
INDONESIAN TRANSIENT WORKERS IN SINGAPORE**

Shzr Ee Tan

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Abstract

Transient domestic workers from Southeast Asia live and labour as invisibilised and marginalised communities crucial to the maintenance of social stability in urban Singapore, where they undertake lowly-paid work in family homes across the Chinese-dominant city-state. Largely unseen in public until the weekends, where their aural footprint extends far beyond their physical or visual stake in 'ethnicised' zones such as Indonesia- and Filipino-centric shopping centres, churches and mosques, they live and work in metaphorically- and semi-silenced worlds. Here, the acoustic and gendered disciplining of these female workers' activities, spaces and identities play out in subtle ways from the de facto sonic regulation of work timetables to their deliberate exclusion via spoken language in home environments. Yet, these workers also find new ways of re-negotiating presence and reclaiming space not only in Singapore but also a larger transnational migrant consciousness. This takes place via small, tactical sonic interventions which involve using voices strategically and metaphorically in physical as well as technologized and socially-mediated expressions of 'migrant sisterhood'. In so doing, the workers also develop new ways of strategised and subversive listening practices in imagined as well as real personal and community space and place: listening to vocal nuance, listening for phone vibration signals; listening for 'hidden' aural markers of encouragement and solidarity. Based on fieldwork conducted between 2017 and 2019, this paper examines the sonic environments of, specifically, female Indonesian migrant workers in Singapore, and comes to preliminary conclusions on the new agencies they claim through transforming sounded and listening practices.

**MOBILITY AND (DIS)LOCATION: MIGRANT WORKERS' DANCE
IN TAIPEI, TAIWAN
(Lightning Paper)**

Anastasia Melati

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Abstract

There is no doubt that cross-border migration in the world has experienced a rising tide. There are many reasons why people migrate to a new place and leave behind their birthplace. It may occur because of war, climate changes, or just simple economic reasons because people seek a better chance of life. Indonesia is no stranger to people's migration. People move to other places within the country's territories or across national borders. Since the 1990s, Indonesia has sent many migrant workers outside its borders. One of the destination countries is Taiwan. At present, there are around 300 thousand Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan who mostly work as domestic workers and laborers in factories. The Taiwan government made a policy that gives migrant workers one day off a week. This policy gives migrant workers free time to gather and meet. This policy has encouraged Indonesians to form various kinds of associations. One of them is a dance group. Their dances are performed both for Taiwanese audiences and for fellow Indonesians.

This paper will explore how the body functions in terms of these people's mobility and will discuss the national articulation in the bodies of the migrant worker dancers. The paper will present the depth of how the processes and representations of the migrant workers' bodies shift through the experience following changes in locations. I will emphasize on the mobility, the adaption of the body following the (dis)location and will delve into the creative expression of migration and movement that starts with the body and retains its maps, journeys and morphologies, especially those related to translation as an analytical tool. The translation is interpreted as a cultural collision that is likely to be able to create iconoclasm in dance displays.

**CROSSING 'BORDERS' OF PLACE, ETHNICITY AND CULTURE
WITHIN INDONESIA: JAVANESE MUSIC AND DANCE PERFORMANCE
IN JAVANESE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES OF LAMPUNG, SUMATRA**

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The research in this paper considers some of the musical outcomes of internal migration within Indonesia, specifically, from Java to Lampung, which is the southern-most province on the Indonesian island of Sumatra and has been the destination for a massive program of transmigration.¹ The term transmigration (*transmigrasi*) refers to the government-organised relocation of people from more densely populated regions of Indonesia, especially Java but also elsewhere. Indonesia's transmigration program began during the Dutch colonial period, with the first Javanese arriving in Lampung in 1918, but it continued strongly after Indonesian Independence, especially during the Soeharto era. In addition, there has been extensive voluntary migration from various parts of Indonesia to Lampung, including from Java. Consequently, the original, indigenous ethnic groups of the region are now a small minority in their own lands. Indigenous Lampung people today represent less than 15% of Lampung's population while Javanese constitute the province's largest ethnic group, comprising 64% or around 5 million out of a total of around 8 million.² Javanese not only comprise Indonesia's largest ethnic group but also account for the largest of Indonesia's internal diasporas as well as its transnational diasporas. Transmigration has resulted in sizable Javanese populations in Kalimantan, West Papua as well as other parts of Sumatra, but their densest presence (outside Java) is in Lampung. In the past Javanese have dispersed or been relocated to many places beyond Indonesia (Hoefte & Meel, 2018, pp.4-16) and research on their diasporic cultural adaptations includes, notably, Pam Allen's on Javanese in Suriname and New Caledonia (2011; 2013; 2018). A neglected area of research, however, has been the cultural adaptations of Indonesia's internal Javanese diasporas, in particular, their musical activities.

This paper, therefore, presents a snapshot of present-day Javanese music and performance in Lampung within the broader context of the province's uniquely multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society which—as an outcome of migration—supports traditional performance forms from many different parts of Indonesia as well as Lampung's indigenous music and performance. It considers the impact of geographical, social and cultural displacement and relocation within Lampung's multi-ethnic environment on the extent, circumstances and character of Javanese performance in Lampung.

The research shows an extremely rich traditional Javanese performance environment in Lampung with an emphasis on particular genres. The paper seeks to provide preliminary explanations for both this richness and certain features of this performance activity. Javanese music and performance in Lampung is proposed as a 'cross-border' phenomenon, not just in the sense of genres transplanted into Lampung from different regions of Java in association with Javanese migration, but also in the way that their performance engages people from other ethnic groups in Lampung or blurs the regional cultural distinctions of art forms through a breaking down of the links between ethnicity, locality and culture.

Javanese Performance Activity in Lampung

In characterising Lampung as having a 'rich Javanese performance environment', I am referring to the diversity and density of performance activity. Javanese in Lampung have come from different regions of ethnic Java and brought with them, or re-created, their region-specific

performance forms and regional or sub-regional genre styles. The following list of Javanese music, dance and theatrical genres that I encountered or was informed about while doing fieldwork in Lampung is undoubtedly incomplete.

- *Barongan*
- *Campur sari*
- ‘*dalang manten*’
- *Gandrung Banyuwangi*
- *Janger* (from Banyuwangi)
- Javanese classical dance
- *Ketoprak*
- *Kuda lumping*:
 - *Jatilan* – Central Java
 - *Jaran kepang* – East Java
- *Reyog*
- *Tayuban*
- *Wayang golek menak*
- *Wayang kulit* – Solo style
- *Wayang kulit* – Yogya style
- *Wayang kulit* – Banyumas style

This diversity of genres and genre variants represents, as it were, a microcosm of the breadth and stylistic richness of traditional performance in Java, but displaced beyond Java and compressed into a much smaller geographical area.

Of this broad span of performance genres, three are by far the most popular: *wayang kulit* shadow-puppet theatre; *campur sari*, a hybrid musical form combining gamelan and Western pop instruments with Javanese songs; and *kuda lumping* (also called *kuda kepang*, *jatilan* or *jaranan*), which is a ‘folk’ performance form involving dancers with bamboo hobby horses, music and trance dance. *Kuda lumping* is represented in Lampung by a phenomenal 1300 troupes alone, with each troupe comprising up to 40 people. Moreover, performances take place frequently: for example, Jaranan Krida Buwana in Maringgai, East Lampung, performs around ten times a month in all day or even 2-day performances. Amongst regional and related variants from across Java that are performed in Lampung is *reyog*, a distinctive form from Ponorogo in East Java that featuring a massive lion (*singa barong*) mask, of which there are 67 Lampung troupes.³ Further, there are over 300 *dalang* (puppeteers) performing *wayang kulit* as well as diverse regional and sub-genres of *wayang* puppet theatre.⁴ Another indicative statistic is from the annual Lampung festival for *dalang* (Festival Dalang Wayang Kulit Se-Provinsi Lampung), which in 2017 attracted 150 entrants and ran for seven days, morning and evening. The overall density of activity for *wayang kulit* and *kuda lumping* is possibly greater than in Java itself per head of population. Unquestionably, certain genres are not simply being maintained but are thriving in Lampung.⁵

The other highly popular genre in Lampung, *campur sari*, is invariably performed at Javanese weddings—often with *tayuban* or perhaps *dangdut*—and features *pesindhen* singers or *tandhak* singer-dancers, who also dance for money with men in the audience. Other performative elements at weddings include a *dalang manten* (wedding *dalang*), who interprets symbolic aspects of the ceremony using the *janturan*-style chanting from *wayang*; a dancer leading the bridal procession; and, frequently, a Javanese dance performance—usually Tari Panji Asmara Bangun. The use of ‘live’ gamelan music at weddings is generally restricted to the *campur sari* entertainment to reduce costs. However, there are many privately-owned gamelan in Lampung

which are hired out for *wayang* or *campur sari* performances. Gamelan-making businesses in Lampung, such as that of Pak Toyo (Ki Sutoyo Kondowibakso—also a *dalang*) in Sri Menanti, East Lampung, make Javanese gamelan instruments from either brass, stainless steel, or scrap iron. Bronze gamelan in Lampung, on the other hand, have all been made in Java.⁶

Lampung provincial government support for traditional arts is overwhelmingly directed at the unique cultural identifiers of the province, those of the indigenous Lampung ethnic groups, through school programs and festivals amongst other things. This official orientation towards Lampung's indigenous culture and performance traditions dates in particular to the introduction of regional autonomy (*otonomi daerah*) twenty years ago, when ethnic Lampung people began to assert their political and cultural rights and regional culture became part of ethnic and local identity politics (Jones, 2013, p.182ff).⁷ Javanese performances are therefore almost all tied to the traditional life-cycle ceremonial needs of Javanese migrants or their descendants, such as weddings, circumcisions and neighbourhood-wide annual village purification ceremonies (*bersih desa*) or perhaps national day celebrations, with performances sponsored by the individual host of the event or, in the case of the latter, the particular village. There are very few 'public' presentational-type performances of non-indigenous genres in Lampung. One such event is the annual *dalang* festival mentioned above, which is held on a large roundabout intersection (Bundaran Tugu Adipura) in the centre of Bandar Lampung but, notably, this is organised by the local and very active branch of Pepadi (Persatuan Pedalangan Indonesia), the National Union of Dalang.

Localisation Factors: From Economics to Cross-Ethnic Influences

A significant driver of Javanese performance activity in Lampung is the economics that underpins it. Both the number of events that host performances and the number of performers and troupes relate directly to, on the one hand, the affordability of hiring performers and mounting performances due to relatively low costs and, on the other, events being sufficiently numerous to enable performers to earn reasonable, even if partial, incomes. For example, an all-night *wayang kulit* performance with full gamelan is five or more times cheaper to host in Lampung than in Java (Sugeng Harianto & Sudadi, personal communication, 27 August, 2018), making sponsorship of a performance within reach of many more people. Conversely, from the supply side of the market equation, performers gravitate to what is '*laku*', that is, what sells best. The high demand for Javanese dances at weddings therefore attracts dancers to learn them, with some dancers performing up to fifteen times a month (Agus Gunawan, personal communication, 23 August, 2018). This has led in turn to a proliferation of dance studios that train dancers for these wedding performances.

Another feature of Javanese performance in Lampung is what could be termed its flexibility or elasticity, that is, the way particular forms are readily [adjusted or] adapted to the particular circumstances. This manifests in a variety of ways. For example, the low cost (compared to Java) of mounting *wayang* and other performances relates—at least in part—to the willingness of performers or troupe leaders to modify the performance to fit the budget of the sponsor. This might involve shortening the performance or perhaps simplifying it in some way, or else reducing the number of musicians or *pesindhen*. Coupled with this flexibility that allows adjustment of the 'product' to accommodate varying budgets is, it seems, a somewhat less rigid adherence to genre parameters than is found in the Javanese heartland: the constraints operating on particular genres seem to be looser. For example, one dance teacher broadly characterised Lampung's Javanese performance environment as freer (*lebih bebas*), in terms of not having to adhere strictly to accepted cultural practice (Toni, personal communication, 27 August, 2018). And senior arts leaders associated with Pujakesuma (Putra Jawa Kelahiran Sumatera), the

principal organisation for Javanese in Lampung, repeatedly cited (almost like a mantra) that Javanese performances should be ‘enjoyable, cheap, lively’ (*menyenangkan, murah, meriah*) (Sugeng Harianto & Sudadi, personal communication, 27 August, 2018). It was also emphasised that performers did not aim to be commercial (*‘tidak komersil’*).⁸ In fact, the invariable answer to my questions about the details of particular genres was that it depends on the sponsor’s budget.

A further dimension of the way performances and performance activity adapt to local conditions is various forms of cross-over or blending (frequently referred to in Lampung by the term *‘kumbinasi’* (combinations)), specifically, cross-ethnic participation and stylistic cross-influence. While the occasions that host the sorts of performances described above are emphatically Javanese cultural events with Javanese as both sponsors and participants, this is not exclusively the case, as they frequently also involve non-Javanese people as performers or audience. For example, members of other ethnic groups, including indigenous Lampung people, learn Javanese dances and perform them at Javanese weddings, such as a wedding I attended in Bandar Lampung in 2018: the two dancers who performed Tari Panji Asmara Bangun were, respectively, Balinese and Javanese and the dancer who escorted the bridal couple was Sundanese. The demand for Javanese dance at weddings and the financial rewards for dancers provide one explanation for ethnic Lampung or those of other ethnicities choosing to learn Javanese dance. Furthermore, ethnic Lampung men are keen participants in *campur sari* and *tayuban*, paying to dance with the *tandhak* dancers or even sing with the *pesindhen* singers (personal communication, Slamet Minarto, 28 August, 2018), and many non-Javanese enjoy watching or even take part in *kuda lumping* performances. For instance, Pak Wugu’s Krida Buwana troupe in East Lampung includes a number of Bugis fishermen as well as people from Banten and members of ethnic Lampung groups. Conversely, some Javanese learn to perform Lampung-specific genres or those of other ethnic groups, for example, Palembang dances. Javanese dance studios, such as Agus Gunawan’s Sanggar Sangishu in Bandar Lampung, also teach Lampung dance and music, while Javanese gamelan instrument-maker, Pak Toyo, makes instruments for Lampung *talo balak* and Balinese ensembles as well as Javanese gamelan. These sorts of cross-over extend to switching between sub-regional styles. For example, wedding *dalang*, Pak Surat, can accommodate the host’s preference for either Yogyakarta or Surakarta traditions simply by a change of dress and playing a different gamelan recording.

Also evident are instances of performative cross-influence in *kuda lumping* from other ethnic or Javanese regional traditions, whether in features of dress, such as Balinese-style headdresses worn by the dancers and drummer of Kuda Birawa’s Yogyakarta-style *kuda kepeng* troupe in Merbau Mataram, South Lampung, or ensembles that substituted Sundanese-type drums or, in the case of one school performance, a set of Lampung *talo balak* instruments, namely, *gung*, *kulintang*, *gujih* and *ketapak* plus a *rebana* (frame drum).⁹ *Gujih* cymbals were also added to the small ensemble of the Kuda Birawa troupe. Instances of blending between Central and East Javanese forms of *kuda lumping* also occur. While individually these examples are not substantive indicators of ethnicity or style, or indeed of incipient hybridisation, they nevertheless ‘blur’ conventions and markers that identify region-specific genres. Importantly, they should be distinguished from instances of intentional hybrid creative adaptation that are also underway in Lampung, such as a Javanese *dalang* who uses the Lampung language in *wayang kulit* clown scenes or *kuda lumping* that substitutes the hobby-horse dance with an ‘elephant dance’ (*tari gajah Lampung*) (Pujakesuma members, personal communication, 28 August, 2018).

Economic factors aside, cross-ethnic involvement in Javanese performance events and admittedly subtle style influences from non-Javanese or other regional Javanese traditions are clearly an outcome of the broader multi-ethnic social and spatial environment of Lampung which fosters, or at least permits, social and cultural interaction between people from different

ethnic groups. While some regions of Lampung are densely Javanese—visually marked by irrigated ricefields—and other areas or individual villages might be mainly populated by ethnic Lampung people or perhaps Balinese, diverse ethnicities coexist (albeit unevenly) throughout the province (Benoit, 1989, pp.120-2ff).¹⁰ Even in areas settled by high concentrations of ethnic Javanese, there are opportunities for cross-ethnic social interaction and exposure to, or sometimes participation in, the cultural forms of other ethnicities and cross-ethnic social interaction is a feature of non-rural work and educational contexts. Additionally, Javanese settlers or their descendants from, say, Yogyakarta are likely to have Javanese neighbours from Banyumas, Tegal, Madura or other far-flung regions of Java, each with their region-specific Javanese dialects and other cultural traits. Inter-marriage across ethnicities appears to be common,¹¹ and I heard many accounts of weddings of couples from different ethnic groups that combined performance and other wedding practices from both traditions, such as a wedding of a Palembang and Sundanese couple that involved a Sundanese-style procession and the Palembang dance, *tari Sriwijaya*.

Perceiving Javanese Performance as 'Out of Place'

The types of cross-ethnic cultural interaction described above and the fluidity of performance identity that results, as well as modifications related to economic factors, underline the fact that genres like *wayang*, *kuda lumping* and *campur sari* are not fixed immutable forms and, in Lampung, permit variations that are less likely to occur in Java itself. But circumstances in Lampung also point to a broader issue: a disruption of the ties between ethnicity, culture and place that have underpinned conceptions of Indonesia from colonial times to the New Order and beyond. Anthropologist Tom Boellstoeff has coined the term 'ethnolocality' to capture how Indonesia has long been understood in terms of a correspondence between ethnicity and locality as defined by administrative regions (2002). This idea of Indonesia ignores the implications of its internal diasporas, notably its Javanese diaspora, who reproduce forms of Javanese culture 'out of place', yet for whom Java remains an important imaginary as well as a place to visit and reconnect with. Javanese in Lampung see themselves as 'Japung' (*Jawa Lampung*): they are both disconnected from but also identify with Java as their place of origin, while also bonded by a shared migrant experience and identity.

Yet despite Javanese performance genres being, as it were, blurred, or diluted, around the edges, the scale of activity is testament to its importance as a part of 'being Javanese' in Lampung. Especially in a multi-ethnic and multicultural environment, Javaneseness needs to be asserted both to others but also to Lampung Javanese themselves. Moreover, because the Javanese are 'out of place', Javaneseness cannot simply be assumed; it must be displayed. Human geographer, Rebecca Elmhirst, who has researched Lampung transmigrant communities, notes that the 'spatial proximity of Javanese migrants and Lampungese people has made each more aware of their identity...' (2000, p.495). And further, 'living amidst people of other ethnicities, consciousness of difference in various realms of everyday life...means that at times Javanese identities are reinforced and elaborated' (Elmhirst, 2018, p.28).

The consequences of distance from source suggest—perhaps tenuously—a further way of understanding Javanese performance in Lampung that draws on ideas about the traditional Javanese state whereby power, and by extension cultural authority, is strongest at the centre and dissipates toward the peripheries (Anderson, 1972). Based on this model, it can be proposed that the extreme margins of the Javanese 'world' provide a freer space for Javanese and their cultural expressions beyond Java's ethno-localised boundary. The post-1998 Reformasi era has to some degree up-ended centralised Javanese preeminence in the Indonesian nation state and regional autonomy has foregrounded ethnic identity in contestations for resources and political authority.

But, as mentioned above, this has privileged local rather than migrant ethnic groups and cultural expressions and, in turn, resulted in an absence of official representations of Javanese performance culture in Lampung at the same time as a proliferation at neighborhood and village level. Removed from the heartlands of Javanese culture as well as the regional ‘homelands’ of individual performance variants, Lampung provides both the distance from ‘the source’ and a less constrained cultural space for ‘border’-crossing adaptations to its circumstances beyond Java.

This paper has attempted to demonstrate not just the breadth and vibrancy of Javanese performance in Lampung but also some of the complexities and nuances surrounding it—beyond the simple fact of a large multi-generational migrant Javanese population that has transplanted, re-created or adapted some of their performance traditions within a Sumatran locale. In particular, the paper has emphasized how economic factors and the social conditions of multi-ethnic multi-cultural Lampung have led to not only various localised modifications but also, importantly, the possibility of these. More broadly, it points to some ways for understanding traditional Javanese performance and a Javanese environment that is ‘out of place’ yet still part of Indonesia. The rich regional diversity of Javanese culture and performance is not limited to the island of Java: amongst ‘other Javas away from the kraton’ (Hatley 1984, cited in Beatty, 2012, p.176) there is also the regional Javanese culture of ‘Japung’, that is, Javanese-Lampung people and Japung ways of performing Javanese-ness.

Endnotes

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² Figures are from the 2010 Indonesian census (Na'im & Syaputra, 2011). The recent 2020 census records Lampung's total population as over 9 million (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Lampung, 2021, p.58).

³ Troupe numbers provided by officials of Pujakesuma (Putra Jawa Kelahiran Sumatera) in Lampung.

⁴ Pepadi (Persatuan Pedalangan Indonesia) Lampung officials cited the number of *wayang kulit dalang* as 325 (Sugeng Harianto & Sudadi, personal communication, 27 August, 2018). This excludes child and teenage *dalang*.

⁵ Some performance genres of other non-Lampung ethnicities are also strongly represented in Lampung, such as Sundanese Banten-style *pencak silat*, or *bandrong*. One East Lampung village alone has twenty groups.

⁶ One Javanese transmigrant community was gifted a gamelan set from the Pakubuwana X of Surakarta.

⁷ Elmhirst (2018, pp.46-7) details the transition of political leadership from Javanese to Lampung people.

⁸ Meant in the professional sense of prioritising income; more important are ‘*kepuasan batin*’ (inner or spiritual satisfaction) and ‘*membantu masyarakat*’ (supporting community) (personal communication, Slamet Riyadi & Slamet Minarto, 28 August, 2018).

⁹ The very young drummer's adaptation involved turning the single-head *ketapak* on its side and playing it with his left-hand while tapping the *rebana* frame-drum, placed flat on the ground, with his right-hand. Together the two drums functioned as the equivalent of a two-headed *kendhang*.

¹⁰ This detailed population and migration study of Lampung remains useful despite being outdated.

¹¹ Religious difference is more of a bar to intermarriage than ethnicity.

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THE COLLABORATIVE CREATION OF CONTEMPORARY THEATER BY ASIAN ARTISTS (Lightning paper)

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Background and Purpose of the Research

The article examines the current state of Asian art events in Japan that emphasize dialogue and collaborative creation and introduces the case of experimental collaboration in contemporary theater. Three factors can be indicated as the background of the current state; international activities of Asian artists, growing interest in contemporary art, and increased flexibility of performance space.

One factor behind this is the international activity of Asian artists including Southeast Asian artists. In the field of cultural expression, Asian artists have made remarkable achievements in recent years. They have become active participants in the international art scene, sharing memories of history, the challenges of contemporary society, and the search for a vision of the future. In this situation, Southeast Asian artists have become increasingly influential as people who live and face the issues of the contemporary world. Matthew Isaac Cohen, an Asian theater and arts researcher, focused on "post traditional artists" as an important driver of contemporary art in Southeast Asia (Cohen, 2016, pp. 188-206).

The growing interest in contemporary dance and theater performances is also intricately linked to the rise of contemporary Asian art events especially in the field of visual arts. As interest in the current state of contemporary Southeast Asian art grows (Kataoka, 2017; Kuroda, 2014), so too does interest in contemporary trends in the fields of dance and theater, as well as in traditional genres. The increase in such opportunities has also served as a chance for many to become aware of contemporaneity of Southeast Asian art (Suzuki, 2012).

The influence of contemporary art has also diversified artistic performance spaces. Until the 1980s, traditional art performance in a theater was a relatively mainstream form. This was because many public halls were built across Japan in the public works projects of the 1980s. In recent years, however, there are diverse options. The increased flexibility in the choice of space for artistic performance and the possibility of small-scale, experimental events are related to increasing attention being given to contemporary dance and theater.

Review of Case Study:

Dialogue and Collaborative Creation Project in Contemporary Theater

The case study is a project of joint theatrical creation between Asian and Japanese artists at the experimental theater ZA-KOENJI in Koenji, Tokyo. The theater was set up by the NPO Theater Creation Network (established in 2005). The unique facilities, which also include rehearsal rooms and a library, enable the training of artists and conducting long-term experimental creative activities in the arts.



Figure 1. Theater ZA-KOENJI. Photo taken by the author on October 27, 2018.

The theater creation projects were a three-year series that began in 2016, with the final performance held in 2018 under the general director Makoto Sato. The common theme throughout the series was "One table two chairs", which was proposed by Danny Yung, the Hong Kong director involved in the project based on a stage setting of Chinese classical theater. Actors, musicians and dancers from Japan and other Asian countries collaborated to create new works. Besides some restrictions, such as the use of a table and two chairs as a minimum setting, and that each work must be no longer than 20 minutes, other aspects of the production could be freely directed and composed. The performers were in Tokyo for about 10 days, but they already had dialogue and rehearsal sessions in various cities in Asia before coming to Tokyo. In 2018, six productions were staged, each with two to three performers and one artistic director, bringing together over 15 artists. Besides artists and directors from Japan, Taipei and Hong Kong, participants from Southeast Asia included those from the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Singapore. They interacted with each other during the 10 days through discussions and symposiums about their works and at rehearsals and performances.

What I found interesting was that each artist gave a demonstration (sometimes accompanied by a lecture) in advance to the participating artists, audience, and others who were involved. Through this, they presented their origins as artists, the characteristics of their artistic expression, and what they would like to highlight in their future creations; they had question-and-answer sessions and discussions for mutual understanding.

Participating artists demonstrated their own stance in confronting tradition through performance and discussion. During the demonstration, many were given the opportunity to ask questions and exchange opinions. It is important to note that the project provided a forum for artists to understand each other through dialogue and discussion.

One of the performances by a Vietnamese ballerina and an Indonesian pianist, "3P's The Performers Performing The Performed" (directed by a Vietnamese director), was an experimental work of time dilation. An extended performance of a pianist playing music and a ballerina dancing to it, it was presented in super slow motion over 15 minutes. The director allowed the audience to take photographs before the performance, and this was the only one of the six productions where photography was allowed. A new world of sound was created by the echoes of camera shutters in an almost soundless performance, which was also a characteristic of the piece. This work prompted a rethinking of the concept of time in Western music and dancing. If we extend the aspect of time significantly, what happens? The performance was an opportunity to revisit this awareness. The performance itself had a strong sense of indeterminacy and experimentation, and could be said to be similar to performance art in that it progressed while involving the audience.



*Figure 2. From the creative work "3P's The Performers Performing The Performed".
Photo taken by the author on October 27, 2018*

Conclusion

The event was characterized by the following: the influence and existence of a theater space that enabled experimental creative activities; an emphasis on dialogue and collaboration as a venue where ideas of artists, including the original ones of artistic directors from all over Asia, can be shared; and the focus on the potential of contemporary theater that includes diverse performance. The event brought together artists from Asia to understand characteristics of art in each region, learn about the current situation in each city, and create works together. As a point of departure, this project adopts Asian perception on theatrical plays, just as the minimum requirement of one table and two chairs is derived from traditional Chinese theater. While the individual artists were conscious of and had internalized Western modes of representation, the event emphasized the diverse values of the Asian regions surrounding art, and the importance of mutual understanding and exchange among artists. By so doing, they pursued to redefine the theatrical play form through Asian perception.

Concerning research, focusing on events that emphasize artists' dialogue and collaborative creation makes it necessary to highlight issues they confront, the artistic expression they seek, and the process of dialogue, discussion, and creation of works. It is important to examine not only the interpretation, but also the process by which the work is created and changed, by researching the process of creating work rather than limiting it to the text of the work. As for research method, in addition to emphasizing participation including practice and conducting in-depth interviews, it will be necessary to enter in dialogues, track the details of mutual artistic collaborations, and examine the process of change. What kind of changes will occur in the works created by the artists through the sharing of the organization concept, repeated dialogue with other artists, and the accumulation of practice? The portrayal of these issues from the perspectives of both practice and narrative is likely to expand research on performing arts.

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CELEBRATING CULTURES, RECONNECTING ACTORS DATA REPATRIATION IN NORTHERN LAOS

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Introduction

This paper presents the context, goals, process, and challenges of a data repatriation project conducted in minority communities of northern Laos by the research team of the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre (TAEC) museum of Luang Prabang, Laos.

After two years of field research and the opening of the exhibition “Voices of the Wind, Traditional instruments in Laos” in September 2018, TAEC’s research project highlighting the wind instruments of Laos’ minority communities was completed. However, the museum team quickly realised that the main informants would never have the opportunity to visit the museum and see the results of the project and how they contributed to it. In order to rebalance the informant-researcher relationship, TAEC decided to organise a repatriation project designed to bring back data in the communities where they were collected. This dissemination project was organized in eight villages of northern Laos in the form of one-day events that included a pop-up exhibition, video screening, and musical performances.

These repatriation events were organized to promote the agency of local musicians and involve them deeper in the safeguard of their own musical heritage. The project aimed to involve local actors in the safeguard of their own musical heritage by bringing back the data collected in the village under a form that could reach all generations. The project also intended to make informants proud, and (re)connect them with younger generations by proposing alternative mode of musical knowledge’s transmission with the use of tools such as new media.

This paper is based on an essay being published and entitled “Stories of Musicians, Curator and Bamboo Sticks, The Making of a Musical Instruments Exhibition in Laos”. It is part of the collective book *Instrumental Lives: Musical Instruments, Social Networks, and the Natural Environment in East and Southeast Asia* edited by Helen Rees.

TAEC Music Project

The Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, where I worked as a researcher and curator from 2016 to 2021, is a social enterprise based in Luang Prabang, former royal capital of Laos. The space of the museum is divided in two: the permanent exhibition, dedicated to the cultures and traditions of Laos’ minority groups, and the temporary exhibition space. It is in this second zone that the exhibition “Voices of the Wind, Traditional Instruments in Laos” is displayed, highlighting wind instruments of minority groups of the region. The three main goals of the project are: 1) to highlight and celebrate the musical diversity of Laos’ communities, 2) to witness and keep track of the state of music practices, how they are used, and how they are changing in today’s Laos, 3) to stimulate local and foreign visitors’ interest and exchanges about their own musical traditions and the way they are passed on.

Traditional wind instruments of Laos being little documented (Mareschal, 1976; Miller, 1998; Falk, 2003; Jacob-de Lavenère, 2004; Jähnichen, 2013; Lissoir, 2016), the research part of the exhibition was mostly based on first-hand data. Interviews, recordings, and musical instruments were collected by my colleague Khamchanh Souvannalith and myself in 28 villages of four provinces of northern Laos, between January 2017 and April 2018. During field research,

particular attention was paid to the ethics of collecting musical instruments so as not to deprive the involved communities of their own heritage. We were therefore careful not to acquire rare instruments or objects that were the last known specimens of the villages. We ensured that all the collected instruments could still be easily crafted within the community, and that they were accessible to its members. For these reasons, most of the objects acquired for the exhibition were ordered from local instruments makers, so that the project would financially support craftsmen while allowing the TAEC research team to document the different steps of the instrument making.

The music exhibition, opened since September 2018, included instruments displayed with labels in both Lao (the national language) and English, but also two immersive spaces recreating music-related environments. The sound of the documented instruments, their use and playing technique were available on three multi-media stations in the museum.¹



Figure 1. The “Voices of the Wind” exhibition at the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, Luang Prabang

Before the temporary closing of the museum due to the Covid19 pandemic, events were regularly organized at TAEC in order to put musicians back at the centre of the music project. Thus, the museum held “Meet the Musicians” sessions, during which local artists would share their experience and explain their practice to the visitors, answer questions, and do a short performance. This format was very popular, and was the occasion to concretely give to the musicians the opportunity to build the discourse around their own musical practice instead of having only museum researchers presenting the instruments.

Thus, some of the informants who participated into the making of the exhibition visited TAEC. However, only a minority of them (those living in Luang Prabang Province) was able to actually come and see the exhibition. Most of the interviewees live in remote areas of Laos and would need several days of travel to reach the country’s former royal capital. Independent of the financial aspect of the trip, most informants must work every day in their field and wouldn’t be able to leave for a long trip. Since we could not bring the informants to the museum, we decided to bring the museum to our informants, and concretely share the result of this project with the communities involved. This is how the dissemination project started, as a way of repatriating in the visited communities all the data collected during field research.

Giving Back the Collected Data

The repatriation project took place from January to May 2019 in the eight villages where we conducted extensive research for the music exhibition. The 20 other visited communities, in which we spent only a few hours, have been involved in the dissemination project, but to a lesser extent.

Going back in these communities was first a way to concretely explain the fieldtrips to our informants, show them why we came to their village, made interviews, recordings, and collected instruments. While our research trip was systematically explained to each person before an interview, it was not always easy for the interviewees to concretely understand what the project was about and what would be its results; in particular in the rural context where museums are extremely rare² The repatriation project was also, and above all, a way to give back the collected data (the videos, pictures, and audio recordings) to the community where they were coming from. The data were repatriated under the form of portable and duplicable media (files on DVDs and SD cards). The TAEC team hoped that the use of these popular formats would encourage the community to utilize the recordings as tools for music transmission. Finally, each repatriation event was the occasion to celebrate and promote local musicians and instrument makers.

In order to meet these objectives, the repatriation project comprised three elements: 1) Booklets, DVDs, SD cards, and printed pictures handed out to key actors of the 28 villages in which we worked; 2) a pop-up exhibition and 3) a live performance organized during one-day events that took place in the eight main communities.

The booklets have been written, edited, and printed by the TAEC museum team. They comprise 70 colour pages with pictures of local musicians and music related events accompanied by comments in Lao language summarizing the information collected during the interviews. They were handed out together with DVDs of the videos and sounds that were recorded during the fieldtrip. These elements were given to our main informants (musicians and instruments makers), but also to key actors of the community such as the head of the village, the head of the women's union, and schoolteachers. The distribution was made publicly for everyone to know where the booklets and DVDs were, and that they were accessible to the whole community. Local musicians, singers and instrument makers were featured into the booklet, as well as important musical events and the different steps of the making of instruments. The small and colourful books were a real success, in particular with youth who, after a quick look at the videos screened during the pop-up exhibition, would spend their time leafing through them. Children, who are more comfortable with reading than many of their elder, particularly enjoyed identifying members of their community features on the glossy pages. The fact that local music events and actors were features in a durable object such as a book, still uncommon in many households of the countryside, also participated in the leaflets' popularity.

One-day events were organized in the eight communities in which the TAEC team conducted more in-depth research. In an accessible and public place of the village (in general the main village's square or the communal house), my colleague Khamchanh and I would set up the pop-up exhibition that consisted of four panels (with pictures and information in the Lao language about local musical traditions, local musicians, and instruments) and displayed music instruments. Ten wind instruments, selected among the 43 objects collected during the field research, were selected and made available for children to touch, experiment, and play with. For hours, flutes and reed pipes would pass from hands to hands in a joyful cacophony.



Figure 2. Mr. Bounnam leafing through TAEC booklet in which his work as an instrument maker was featured. In the background, children play with the displayed instruments during the repatriation event at Na Kai Village, Houa Phan Province, 2019

At the beginning of the event, the ten instruments were displayed as regular museum objects, well placed on a table with a tag identifying their name and origin. This museum-like approach aimed to create the necessary distance between the displayed objects and the exhibition visitors, in order to change the communities' perspective on objects that used to be common. Thus, seeing a familiar object into the sacred space of a museum (in a case, with a label for example) sheds a different light on the object, helping the visitor to reconsider his relation to the object and possibly realize its cultural specificities and value. In the case of the repatriation project, local musicians and instrument makers were invited to participate in the pop-up exhibition setting by displaying for the day their own instruments and write the informative tags related to them.

This promotion of the village's instruments made their owner proud to display their creation and knowledge to the whole community. Involving local actors in the very setting of the repatriation event also led to unexpected discoveries, such as a rare pair of jaws harp. Mr. Thomo was the only gourd mouth organ maker and our main informant in Kalang, a small Village of Luang Namtha Province. When asked to bring his instruments and display them in our pop-up exhibition, Mr. Thomo brought the gourd mouth organ he crafted, but also a pair of bamboo jaws harps. While we conducted several hours of interview with the old instrument maker, he never mentioned the existence of these instruments that are nowadays very rare in the region (it was the first time for me to see actual examples of these bamboo jaws harps that are traditionally played simultaneously by the same musician). Other villagers were also very surprised to see the instruments, crafted by Mr. Thomo a few years back from a specific kind of bamboo from neighbouring Myanmar. These were the only specimens of jaws harps in the village, and Mr. Thomo wouldn't be able to craft additional ones as his vision is declining and the base material is scarce. In line with our collection standard (never to collect rare instruments or instruments that can't be easily replicated), we documented the instruments, photographed them, and improvised a short public interview about their use and making. Mr. Thomo was very keen and proud to share the information with members of his community, in particular the younger generations.

In addition to the displayed instruments and their handling, the pop-up exhibition was accompanied by the screening of videos filmed in the different ethnic groups visited during the research trips. At dusk, when most of the villagers would be back from the fields and available, we organized musical performances with local musicians and singers. The concerts, which brought together the whole community, concluded the repatriation event.

To Restore and Reconnect

One of the main outcomes of this repatriation project was the reconnection of generations on a musical point of view. While the event's uniqueness easily explains its success, children were genuinely interested and enthusiastic about the pop-up exhibition settled in their village. When discussing with elders, we realized that they were surprised to see the interest of the younger generation for traditional instruments. While asked if they already taught their musical practice to younger members of their family or village, the vast majority of our informants would answer in the negative, explaining: "no one ever asked me to learn, so I never taught anybody". On the other hand, several teenagers told us they never learned their grandfather's instrument because he never proposed to teach them. The informal channels commonly used to teach music progressively fades away as most youth now have the chance to go to school or work in town or cities. Traditional learning mechanisms are disturbed as the youngsters spend less time in the village and with their elders.

The music event was therefore the opportunity for the community to gather around music related topics, witness the interest of younger generations for traditional instruments, and learn more about the village's musicians and instruments makers. When trying to create sounds with the displayed instruments, the children were invited to ask local musicians about the playing technique. As they were a concrete vessel for this intergenerational reconnection around music (many elder would comment about the images in the books to their grandchildren), booklets and recordings distributed during the repatriation project could in the future support renewed mechanisms of transmission between generations. Further research will need to be conducted to measure the impact of the repatriation project on the communities involved. However, when asked about the effects of the event organized in his village in May 2019, Hmong musician and instrument maker Neng Chue Vang explained: "After the event, kids and people of my village got to know me better. Some came to me and asked how to play Hmong musical instruments, but only a few asked to learn how to craft them" (oral communication, collected by Khamchanh Souvannalith in July 2021).



Figure 3. Elder commenting on the pop-up exhibition panels to children in Nayang Tai Village, Luang Prabang Province, 2019

Limits and Improvements

While the repatriation project was positively received in the different communities, several elements could have been improved or modified. Thus, Lao language was used for the booklet and panels of the events, but also by the TAEC team members. While the language of the main ethnic group of the country (the Tai-Lao) is thought at school, many elder, in particular women, don't speak or understand it. The ideal, to fully involve this important part of the community often left aside when it comes to knowledge sharing, would have been to conduct every fieldtrip and repatriation event in the local language.

The short duration of the event (one day) didn't allow all members of each village to be part of it, as some were away or too busy with work. The ideal would have also been to organize the pop-up exhibition and concerts in the 28 communities in which we worked, and not only in the eight main ones.

Questions of copyright and prior informed consent forms regarding the music recordings should have been discussed and implemented. While all recordings were made with the authorization of the performers, the TAEC team didn't concretely discuss the possibility of a larger diffusion of the music. This is a topic with which TAEC was not familiar at the time, but in which the team dived in thoroughly since then with the "Oma vs Max Mara" project approaching the protection of cultural intellectual property rights of minority groups in Laos.³

Finally, it is only when organizing the repatriation event in the last two villages, that Khamchanh and I got the idea to order additional instruments from local makers for the schools, and suggest the instrument makers deliver the instruments to the classrooms by themselves. With this final step of the project, musicians were encouraged to nurture this renewed connection with younger generation and create their own discourse around their musical practices. Neng Chue Vang explained that "the school appreciated and celebrated the fact that I brought instruments for the kids". "The school said that by doing so, I passed on my knowledge to younger generation, which I am very happy about. I worry that this culture will be lost if no one learns, so this is why I have been doing this, and having young people learn from me" (oral communication, collected by Khamchanh Souvannalith in July 2021).

Conclusion

The main goal of this repatriation project was to reduce the historical power imbalance between the researchers and their informants. By giving back collected data and organizing these events involving and celebrating local musical actors, TAEC aimed to establish a fairer relationship between actors and researchers, an essential step in the process of decolonizing ethnomusicology. Putting back musicians at the centre of the project gives them the opportunity to carry the voice of their community, and interpret the data related to their own cultural traditions.

Now that the collected data have been brought back to the villages, it will be up to the members of each community, in particular the younger generations and the musicians, to decide whether or not they want to use these tools. Musical practices that were documented might inspire future generations, while other that have lost their relevance in today's society may continue their decline and completely disappear. Fulfilling a role in possible future transmission, our research team brought back to the communities' data that was transformed as tools; but it will be up to each community and their members to decide if and how they will make use of them.

In the continuation of its data repatriation project and in order to continue restoring the balance between researchers and local communities, the TAEC museum team recently joined

DeCoSEAS (Decolonizing Southeast Asian Sound Archives)⁴, a three-years research and community engagement project aiming to improve access to heritage (in particular sound archives) for communities of Southeast Asia.

Endnotes

¹ All the videos available in the exhibition are also accessible on TAEC website

<https://www.taeclaos.org/music-resources/>

² While every province has its own State managed museum, and that private institutions started opening in the 2000's, rural populations rarely visit these spaces. Museums of Laos are described in the following articles: Evans, 1998; Tappe, 2011; Schlemmer, 2015.

³ To learn more about this project, visit <https://www.taeclaos.org/oma/>

⁴ More information about Decolonizing Southeast Asian Sound Archives project on the website <https://www.decoseas.org/>

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TOWARDS A DATABASE OF KHMER TRADITIONAL MUSIC: HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

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This paper will present a research still in progress with the aim of creating a database of nearly 700 pieces of Khmer traditional music. This database stems from the tireless work and research by a Khmer musician, Meas SaEm, to which we also intend to pay homage with this endeavour. The project aims at ordering and systematizing, with the help of new technologies, this large corpus of music, intending to gain further insight into how Khmer traditional music repertoires are constructed, and how they are tied to multiple functions and occasions. Therefore, it has a strong component of research.

Yet, the project also deals with the issue of restitution of cultural heritage and knowledge to Khmer musicians of *pinpeat* music that have endured and are still enduring difficult times, an issue that is a significant part of contemporary ethnomusicological debate to which we intend to give our contribution in the light of an applied, or public, ethnomusicology.

Before briefly presenting the project and some first results, let me start with two quick flashbacks, that go back to the time in which I was more regularly in Cambodia to teach and to do my research.

Flashback 1

In the 1990s in Cambodia, while participating in seminars, meetings, and research projects, I always stumbled, sooner or later, upon some musician, or cultural director of the Ministry of Culture, or professor at the Royal University of Fine Arts who would proudly mention the richness and the importance of Khmer traditional music repertoires. These repertoires referred to impressive lists of pieces in the various genres of Khmer music such as *pinpeat*, *mohori*, *phleng kar*, *phleng arak*, *ayai*. The list would be, however, made up only of numbers, sometimes also of titles of pieces, but never with specific reference to the music itself. Therefore, these lists, and these numbers, handed down and referred to by all these Cambodian scholars and musicians seemed to me a mere act of faith. Of course, I was also well aware that those assumptions were true in their essence, as Khmer music accounts for a large body of pieces and an almost infinite repertoire, a repository for musicians in the several occasions in which *pinpeat* music was to be played, be it at the pagoda, at a theatrical performance, or at the Royal Palace. However, I always felt, at that time, that it would have been important to try to substantiate these lists with proper documentation, starting with associating titles to actual sounds and musical pieces, a huge work that no one had done at that point.

Flashback 2

The very first time I went to Cambodia, in September 1987, I met a master and a teacher who then worked and performed with the Troupe of the National Theatre. His name is Meas SaEm and his main instrument is the xylophone *roneat ek*. As I was studying that instrument, and was keenly interested in learning the repertoire of classical *pinpeat* music, we got along very well. I showed him my transcriptions (and musical renditions on the instrument) of the repertoire I had learned by my *roneat ek* teacher in the U.S., Chum Ngeek, and he showed me his own transcriptions of the repertoire that he also played for me. He was also teaching me new pieces,

so that I became his student, and he helped me considerably to document the traditional *pinpeat* repertoire, starting with the 35 pieces of the ceremony *sampeah kru thom*.



Figure 1. Meas SaEm teaching *roneat ek* at the Chaktomuk Theatre, Phnom Penh, October 1990.
(Photo by author)

Meas SaEm was using musical transcriptions along with his performances because he had learned how to write music and solfege before the Khmer Rouge period and, during the five years of Pol Pot he documented the repertoires he knew in this way, fearing that they could be somehow forgotten. When we met in 1987, he showed me some notebooks with musical notation, both staff notation, and a sort of tablature based on banjo strings. As you may imagine, in those times, even to find some sheets of paper to write was really difficult, and I well remember that he himself used to draw the five lines to create the staff on the blank paper. Since then, a long time has gone by, but Meas SaEm has been always keen to document Khmer traditional music, now using a computer and the software Finale. In the years from 2000 onwards, he has assembled a huge amount of Khmer tunes and song texts and a few years ago he was kind enough to trust me, and to give me a pen drive containing the list of titles, together with the musical transcription of each of them, done by him on Finale. The list included over 500 tunes. It seemed that it was finally possible to substantiate the list of titles that I heard so many times in the past, with specific musical examples. It was the starting point of the project that we are presenting on this occasion for the first time.

Look Kru Meas SaEm

Meas SaEm was born in 1942 in Svay Chrum, a small village not far from Phnom Penh, in the province of Kandal, where he still lives nowadays. Son of Pean Meas, a musician of the Royal Palace, he was trained as a musician by his father, and then studied with several masters at the Royal Palace and at the National School of Music. Meas SaEm lived and worked as a musician during Sihanouk and Lon Nol times, performing various genres of music such as *pinpeat*, *mohori*, *phleng kar* in pagodas and villages in Phnom Penh and the surrounding area.

During Pol Pot times he hid his background and told those who wanted to learn with him that he did not know much about music. He worked as the team leader at the blacksmith workshop and as a trainer at the ministry of Agriculture; when asked to perform music, he refused, stating that he did not know how to play.

Before the Khmer Rouge regime he had self-taught some basic notions of music writing. This knowledge turned to be useful during those hard times, when he started notating music in secret in order to keep memory of the repertoires he had learnt. He used two systems of notation. The first one was a tablature based on the strings of the banjo in which he would indicate the string number and the position of the finger corresponding to the different pitches. In the second instance, it was the standard staff notation. This way, he was able to fill some notebooks with musical writings of the most important pieces of Khmer traditional music.

After the fall of Pol Pot, Meas SaEm became one of the leading musicians of the reborn troupe of musicians of the National Theatre, the troupe that accompanied the performances of the reconstructed Royal Ballet. It is in that capacity that I met him for the first time in September 1987, when he first showed me his notebooks. Since then, he had continued writing down and notating music first on music sheets, and then on the computer.

លេខរៀង	ឈ្មោះបទភ្លេងសក្យ	ឈ្មោះនិយមហៅ	ជាន់	ទំព័រ
០០០	អាជ្ញាយុជីវិត	(មើលខ្លះក្រុងវត្តភ្នំប្រី)	២	
០០០	អាវ៉ាប៉ូដូនពរ ឬ ឆ្លឹងពោធិវិសាត់	កន្លង់ក្របផ្កា-ស្របចេក	១	
៤៦៨	អាវ៉ាប៉ូដូនសំឡេង	សាម្រួលសៀងអាវ៉ាប៉ូ	១	១៥៧៨
៤៦៩	អាវ៉ាប៉ូដូនព្រះចេរ	រំលឹកអាវ៉ាប៉ូ	១	១៥៧៩
៤៧០	អាវ៉ាប៉ូដូន allé	ក្នុងរំលឹកបុរាណ	៣	១៥៨០
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	អាវ៉ាប៉ូដូន allé (អាពេ)	ក្នុងរំលឹកបុរាណ	១	១៥៨២
៤៧១	កសិភោគល្ងង់	កសិភោគអ្នកដង្ហើម	១	១៥៨៥
៤៧២	អូរាត្រី (ភ្លេងវ៉ាត្រាយ)	អូរាត្រី		១៥៨៦
៤៧៣	អូរាត្រី	(អាត្មា-ពាក្យភូមា-អណ្តើក)		១៥៨៧
៤៧៤	អូរាត្រី (ថ្វាយសក្ការៈបូជន៍)	អូរាត្រី + អូរាត្រី		១៥៨៨
	គ្រួស (យំសោកសៅបោកខ្លួន)	អូរាត្រី		១៥៨៩
៤៧៥	អូរាត្រី (អូរាត្រីចិត្តទៅតាមបង)	យ៉ាត្រី (យំដើរ)		១៥៩០
៤៧៦	អូរាត្រីក្រៅ	អូរាត្រី		១៦០៣
៤៧៧	អូរាត្រីចិត្ត (ឱត)	អូរាត្រី		១៦០៤
៤៧៨	អូរាត្រីចិត្ត (ឱតស្បែក)	ឱតស្បែកស្បែករាប		១៦០៥
០០០	អូរាត្រីបង្ហាញឈ្មោះបង (រំលឹកយំ)	លាងក៏សាវ៉ា		
៤៧៩	អូរាត្រីទំនេរ	លាងក៏សាវ៉ា		១៦០៦
៤៨០	ឯកបទ (ចំរើនសំនាររបស់ភ្នំ)	ឯកបទ		១៦០៧
៤៨១	ឱរាសាត្រ	ឱរាសាត្រ	២	១៦០៨
៤៨២	អុំទូក		៣	១៦២១
	អុំទូក		២	១៦២៣
	អុំទូក		១	១៦២៤
៤៨៣	អុំទូកភ្លេង (ភ្លេងសំនារគ្រូ)	ផាយរឿយ យន្តរឿយ		១៦២៦
៤៨៤	អុំទូក ក្របខ្មៅ		១	១៦២៨
៤៨៥	អុំទូក ក្របខ្មៅ	ភ្លេងខ្លះបុរាណ		១៦២៩
០០០	អុំទូក អាវ៉ាប៉ូ	ភ្លេងខ្លះបុរាណ		
៤៨៦	អុំទូកលើសលេង	ភ្លេងខ្លះបុរាណ (ខ្លះប្រើសលេង)		១៦៣០
០០០	អុំទូកស្រស់ស្រាយ (មើលបទមន្ត្រីឡើងសក្តិ)	អុំទូកស្រស់ (ចំរើនមហោរី)	២	
៤៨៧	អំពីលំអ្នកលេងស្លូត		២	១៦៣១
៤៨៨	អុំទូកស្រស់ស្រាយ	ខែកម្រិតស្រស់	១	១៦៣២

Figure 2. First page of the list of pieces prepared by Meas SaEm

In the meantime, Meas SaEm became the Director of the musicians of the National Theatre, taught music in several public and private institutions, and retired, still living in the village of Svay Chrum. In his house, as a master (*look kru*), he still continues to teach *pinpeat* music to young generations while constantly adding information and data to his list of Khmer musical compositions.

Some Hypothesis for a First Model of the Database

It is only in recent times that I had the opportunity, through a research project financed by the Università di Roma "La Sapienza" first, and subsequently by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, to engage in this endeavour. Working together with me on this large project are Francesca Billeri, Ph.D. in ethnomusicology at SOAS (UK), and Vathanak Sok who teaches Khmer language at SOAS and at Michigan State University (USA), and who is keen to do some research on the linguistic and ritual aspects of Khmer music.

On the basis of such premises, together with Francesca and Vathanak, we began preparing a model for a database that would allow us to put some order in such a large amount of data, and be able to explore and navigate through the data. Therefore, we started with an Excel sheet that would contain several entries/columns by ordering the information and data provided by *look kru* Meas SaEm. (In her paper given at this Symposium Francesca Billeri will present the sheet in more detail.) Here, due to the lack of space, I will highlight some main criteria and aspects that we are following in this lengthy and complex work of compiling the database.

First, we are making the effort to connect each musical transcription to a sound example, so that the bias created by the Western notation (used by Meas SaEm) is mitigated by the reference to a sound recording that can render the actual musical performance without the mediation of a notation that is not traditional nor native to Khmer musical system based on improvisation. In fact, Meas SaEm can provide a sound example as a reference for each piece of his list, collected by him from various sources (personal recordings, websites, audiocassettes, Facebook, YouTube) that he values as reliable and authoritative (Figure 3).

Among other important issues we can note are also the title, which we list under the 'proper' Khmer name, according to Meas SaEm, but also with the title under which that piece is commonly called by the musicians. To be able to connect one or more title to a given tune is a significant step towards the systematization of the repertoire, as sometimes two different melodies are known under the same title, or, vice versa, a same melody bears two different titles, according to the text that is sung, or the performing context.

៣២~

ថ្វាយលាជ

យើងខ្ញុំសូមអញ្ជើញស្តេចប្រាយ ដែលស្ថិតនៅកន្លែងជិតឆ្ងាយ សូមអញ្ជើញព្រះធារិយ
 ព្រាយក្បាលឆ្នាំបី ព្រាយអាភាស ព្រាយកន្ទោងខ្សែច្រវាក់ ព្រាយសំពោងសក់ដំ
 ព្រាយបីសាចរាជតុល្យាមអញ្ជើញចូលមកទទួល ថ្វាយជូន ចានទាំង ផ្កា លាជ ធូបចំណី
 ផាចើមគ្រប់មុខគ្មានខ្វះអ្វីឡើយ ។ ក្តេងសំពះក្រុង

រោតងក

បងថ្វាយលាជ

រៀបរៀងដោយ

I ខែកប្បុយខាងត្បូង រាស សាង

II តទៅបន្តទៀត

សង្កេត

បទប្បវត្តន៍

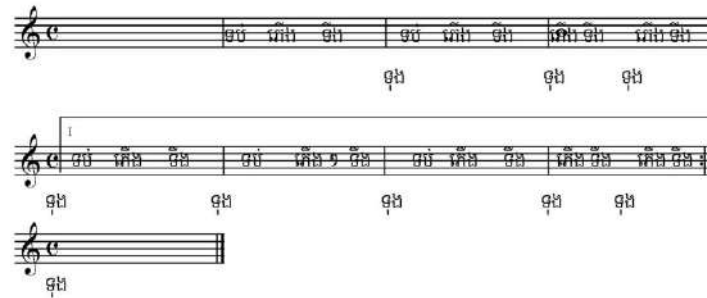


Figure 3. One of the transcriptions of Meas SaEm with his annotations.
Title of the piece: *Thvay leach* (ritual offering of rice)

Furthermore, a fundamental aspect of the research consists in extracting all the annotations that Meas SaEm writes on the transcriptions that concern the specific rhythmic pattern that is used for that given piece, some remarks on the occasion in which it is performed, indication about the formal structure, and so on. This field, included in a specific column so far termed as 'notes', is constantly increasing thanks to extended interviews we keep having with him, that allow us to deepen the understanding of specific and meaningful pieces on the list.

In her paper in this volume Francesca Billeri will relate more in detail the initial framework of the database, that is still a work in progress, and that will enable us eventually to gain a better understanding about the repertoires of Khmer musical tradition, and also to eventually make available through a website this very large corpus collected by Meas SaEm.

FIRST ANALYSIS OF A SELECTED REPERTOIRE: THE 35 PIECES OF THE *SAMPEAH KRU THOM* CEREMONY

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Introduction

This paper shows how the 700 song titles and music transcriptions written by Meas SaEm have been selected and systematized. At the start of this project, in 2019, I went to Cambodia for a couple of months to interview Meas SaEm. I started by asking him questions relating to different musical and extramusical aspects relating to the songs listed in his collection. However, after systematizing the first twenty songs, we realized that it would have been more effective to select a sub-group of songs or repertoires as it would have been easier for Meas SaEm to contextualize the song titles and their associated performing context(s) and function(s). Therefore, we started by selecting the 35 pieces of the *Sampeah Kru Thom* (“Saluting the Great Masters”) ceremony and systematizing them in an Excel list according to selected musical and extramusical parameters.

The *Sampeah Kru Thom* Ceremony: A Brief Introduction

The main form of musical offering in Cambodia is the *Sampeah Kru Thom*.¹ In this ceremony Khmer artists pay homage to their physical masters as well as the mythical ancestors and protectors of their art.² The ceremony is led by the spiritual master (*acar*) who starts the ceremony with the Buddhist prayer and invocations (*bol*) for different spirits and divinities. At the end of each of these invocations, the *acar* asks musicians to play a specific song. The *Sampeah Kru Thom* is composed of a suite of 35 pieces performed for the “Great Masters” (*Kru Thom*) by a *pin peat* ensemble. Most of the 35 pieces are also performed for theater performances and religious ceremonies. During the ceremony, the 35 pieces summarize and reunite the main ceremonial and theatrical functions of *pin peat* music.³ Artists and musicians believe that through these 35 songs different Buddhist and Hindu divinities as well as animistic spirits are called to participate in the ceremony while blessing the participants. Alternation of recited prayers, invocations, and instrumental pieces goes on throughout the ceremony.

The 35 Pieces of the *Sampeah Kru Thom*: An Analysis of the Music Transcriptions through the Excel List

Meas SaEm transcribed the *Sampeah Kru Thom* pieces by using the software, Finale. The transcriptions are for the xylophone, *roneat ek*. Some of them include rhythmic notation of the drum (*samphor*), which is the leading instrument of the *pin peat* ensemble. In this section I will provide an analysis of the musical and extramusical data included in the transcriptions of selected pieces of the *Sampeah Kru Thom* ceremony as reported in the Excel list (see Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this paper). Columns A and B show the number of each *Sampeah Kru Thom* song and its corresponding number in the general Excel list. The next six columns (C–H) show the Khmer titles and the respective common names with the corresponding transliteration and translation in English. For example, in the music transcription of the fourth song, *Bpoo-nhia dael Phnom Penh* (“A High-Ranking Royal Official Marching in Phnom Penh”), Meas SaEm wrote in a footnote: “This song ‘Pchia deun’ (Pa-ya-deun) is also called ‘Sdach Dae’ or ‘Sdach Yieng’ [The king walking].” The common Khmer name (Column F in the Excel list) refers to the

translation of the song titles from Thai to Khmer. As emphasized by Meas SaEm: “Thai names are still used in Koh Kong province, in Srae Ambel district, because before independence from the French in 1953 this province was under the Thais” (personal communication, December 22, 2019). According to Meas SaEm, these songs were translated during the Sihanouk period (1954–1970) by Nhiek Nou, a Royal official who wrote about Khmer traditions. In addition to the music transcriptions, there are audio sources that Meas SaEm uses as reference for his work and as a tool for teaching his students. He explained:

Some of the students can read the notes some cannot. I do not teach them how to read and write notes because it takes time and at university there is no schedule for that. I give them the score [the *roneat* part]. Those students who cannot read the notes need to work hard. Therefore, I give the audio recordings to them, especially to those who sing. They listen to the song and see the notes at the same time so they can learn the song. (Meas SaEm, personal communication, December 22, 2019)

In Table 2 (at the end of the paper) Columns I and M show the physical sources and their contexts. The main source for the *Sampeah Kru* songs is the performance of the National Theatre’s ensemble, recorded in the frame of UNESCO’s projects in Cambodia. Meas SaEm downloaded those recordings from YouTube. An additional audio source is the National Radio Broadcast cassettes, a collection of songs recorded by Khmer musicians from different provinces who were invited to the radio studio, which nowadays no longer exists. The recording project was funded by the Americans in 1954. The recordings survived the Khmer Rouge, thanks to Meas SaEm’s cousin, who was working for the radio at that time. Mas SaEm recounted:

He was looking for someone who knows music to record the songs from tape to cassette. He trusted me. I’ve recorded the songs with a cassette player. I’ve also transcribed the missing song titles of the cover by listening to them and by looking at documents from masters working for the Royal Palace. (personal communication, December 16, 2019)

Meas SaEm’s music transcriptions include notes on music features such as the melodic variations supported by the process of improvisation and, as shown in column J, rhythmic levels (*choan*). In fact, Khmer traditional music is based on a process of improvisation in which each instrument improvises by “taking a road” (*plav*) consisting of an individualized rendition of a melody in heterophonic texture on a given rhythmic level called *choan*. In the transcription of *Bpoo-nhia dael Phnom Penh*, for example, there are different *plav* (melodic improvisation) and melodic phrases, indicated as I, II, III and IV. In the same song, Meas SaEm uses the term *baeb* (variations) to refer to the rhythmic variations of the drum. For some pieces, he transcribed the three rhythmic levels, while for others, he transcribed some of them. For *Bpoo-nhia dael Phnom Penh*, he transcribed the first rhythmic level (*choan* 1) only.

Column K shows the musical genre of the song, which is *pin peat*. As showed in column L, many songs are performed in different performing contexts. For example, *Sdac Yieng* can be played by the *pin peat* ensemble with different titles for the classical theatre *lakhon kbach boran*, the masked theatre *lakhon kaol*, and the shadow puppets theatre *lakhon sbaek thom*, and it can be played by the *phleng kar* wedding ensemble for the wedding ritual as well.⁴ In some transcriptions, Meas SaEm also provides detailed information on the ritual context in which the song is performed, as shown in a footnote of the thirtieth song of the *Sampeah Kru Thom* suite, *Srah preah kong-kia* (“Taking a bath”), also known as *Lug-song* (*kao chuk*):⁵ “This song is also known an *Luug-song*, which is performed during the cutting-hair ritual, taking-a-bath ritual, and *kao chuk* ritual.” At the end of the piece he added more information on the *kao chuk* ritual:

“Cutting hair is banned on Wednesday, and shaving is banned on Thursday. Cutting or shaving on Sunday brings good luck, good fortune, prosperity, good health, and happiness.” Extramusical descriptions and prescriptions, such as those relating to the *kao chuk* ritual, are reported on column O. These notes include, for example, the transcription of the Buddhist texts preceding some pieces recited by the *acar*, such as the Dharma (Buddhist law) in the first piece, *Sathukar* (music for the blessing ritual). Some of the notes and comments from interviews with Meas SaEm reported in this paper are included in column N.

Final Thoughts

A first analysis of Meas SaEm’s music transcriptions of the *Sampeah Kru Thom* pieces shows that they not only provide the musical notation but also reveal different musical and extramusical data relating to each piece. Therefore, these transcriptions can be considered as a sort of worksheet which features different aspects of the song as well as the ritual in general, reflecting Meas SaEm’s deep knowledge and skills as a musician, performer, and teacher. Moreover, Meas SaEm’s work shows his aim to preserve and document endangered musical genres and practices. He emphasized:

I have written these songs because I am afraid they will disappear. By collecting these songs they can be passed to the next generations who want to study this music. I give these songs to the young such as my grandchildren. (Meas SaEm, personal communication, December 16, 2019)

The collection of these songs will be published in an online database, and it will be available to local and international institutions, to be accessed by Khmer musicians, students, scholars, and those interested in the classical Khmer musical heritage.

Endnotes

¹ For a detailed description of the *Sampeah Kru Thom* ceremony, see Giuriati (1999) and Sam (2000).

² The *Sampeah Kru Thom* ceremony has many similarities with ceremonies performed in neighboring countries such as Thailand, where it is called *way khru*. See Yupho (1961), Wong and Lysloff (1991), and Wong (2001).

³ The *pin peat* genre accompanies the Royal classical theatre and dance, and Buddhist ceremonies

⁴ For the interrelations of songs across different Khmer musical genres see Billeri (2019).

⁵ The *Kao Chuk* ritual consists of shaving a long patch of hair on the top of the head that a child wears until age seven (for boys) or twelve (for girls).

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	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Translation	Context of source	Rhythmic Level	Musical Genre	Performing Context	Physical Source	Notes and Comments (from interviews)	Notes from transcription	Music Tran-
A	B	C			D	E	F	G
N ☐ S.K.	N ☐ Excel	Khmer Title			Transliteration	Translation	Name commonly called	Transliteration
2	250	Rbk;RBMRKÚFM -mhasnñi)at'!			Brók bprom kruu tom (mo-haa son-ni-baat)	Blessing the big master	tak;sunñ)at	dtrak son-na-baat
3	457	søwkeQl las;			Slək chəə loah	Growing Leaves	pøiH	pli
4	271	BjaedlrPñMeBj			Bpoo-nhia phnom penh	A high-ranking royal official visiting Phnom Penh	RpHy:adWn	prah yaa dən (sdach yiang)
5	463	ehaH			Hah	Flying	hk;	hok

Table 1: Excerpt from the Excel document systematizing 35 pieces of the *Sampeah Kru Thom* ceremony according to selected musical and extramusical parameters. Shown here are columns A–G for four pieces.

		(<i>choan</i>)	Pleeng Pin Peat	Pithi Sampeah Kru Thom/ To pay a healer	UNESCO 2			scription N.2
National Theatre's Ensemble for UNESCO							"I would like to invite Brahma and offer...?" Dtra Kru Thom, also known as Dtrak Sa-ni-baat is performed in order to bless students or armed forces or to pay a traditional healer (e.g. for removing a curse). Note 1 – The song Kru Thom blessing does not exist in the National Radio archive, therefore I have made changes on rhythm based on the Saoy Saok-kaa song (Aot Thom). The rhythm of Saoy Saok-kaa song and Kru Thom blessing are similar.	
National Theatre's Ensemble for UNESCO			Pleeng Pin Peat	Pithi Sam- peah Kru Thom	UNESCO 3	"Robong Karpie" is played for asking blessing and protection before the start of lakhon performances and Sampeah kru ceremonies. Robong means "to protect"/"to defend" and karpie means "gate, wall". This song comes from a group called "Salapak Tihien".	"Performance context:" Pali sentence Note 1 – "This is 'Pli' known as Garuda's walking". "This song continue to 'Robong Kaarpie'"	N.3
	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

Translation	Context of source	Rhythmic Level (<i>choan</i>)	Musical Genre	Performing Context	Physical Source	Notes and Comments (from interviews)	Notes from transcription	Music Transcription
The King Walking	National Theatre's Ensemble for UNESCO	1	Pleeng Pin Piet	Pithi Sampeah Kru Thom; Lakhon Kbach Boran/ Lakhon Kaol/ Lakhon Sbaek Thom/ To accompany the King at the temple	<u>UNESCO</u> 4	Sbaek Thom is a recording by the National Radio Cassette funded by the Americans who invited Khmer musicians from Siem Reap to the VOA radio. They played pieces for the Sbaek Thom theatre.	“Performance context:” Pali sentence. The song is for the “master” (ប្រធាន), “acar” or “elders”. Note: “This song Pchia deun (Pa-ya-deun) is also called “Sdach Dae” or “Sdach Yieng” (The King Walking). Note: “The song continues to “Robong Kaarpie”. Rhythmic level 2 from Sbaeck Thom.	<u>N.4</u>
	National Theatre's Ensemble for UNESCO		Pleeng Pin Piet	Pithi Sampeah Kru Thom	<u>UNESCO</u> 5	Pithi Sampeah kru thom/ Lakhon kbach boran/ Lakhon kaol	Pali sentence “Explanation= I would like to call upon our master (Samdech Preah Kru) who reside in celestial palace high in the sky to bless us all” “Phleeng Hok is to invite masters who fly and with a monkey walking manner” Song continue with “Robong Kaarpie”	<u>N.5</u>

Table 2: Continuation of the excerpt from the Excel document displayed in Table 1. Shown here are columns H-P for the four pieces.

DEVELOPMENT INSIDE OF PRESERVATION: HERITAGE AS INSPIRATION FOR THE INNOVATION OF CAMBODIAN CULTURAL EXPRESSION

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Abstract

Forty years after the Khmer Rouge attempted to eradicate all traditional arts in Cambodia, arts preservation in the country remains a central concern to both the national and international arts community (cf. Winter, 2007). The revitalization of the arts is seen as a symbol of resilience after the war and a potential avenue for growth. There is an element of imperialist nostalgia behind contemporary preservation policies in Cambodia, along with notions of rupture, trauma and deep concern with the process of transmission (Berliner, 2013; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004 and Pelleggi, 1996). Concerns about the future led to several art forms receiving attention from UNESCO. Classical dance, the large shadow puppets, and most recently, the all-male masked dance drama *Lakhaon Khaol* have been recognized as part of the intangible heritage of humanity. This recognition shaped the trajectory of arts development in Cambodia over the past two decades (Tuchman-Rosta, 2018). This paper explores changing perspectives on dance production by artists, officials, and administrators from 2011 to the present. It uses ethnographic data collected from 2011 to 2012, and newly collected data from 2019 (supported by Fulbright and the Center for Khmer Studies) to trace how the use of heritage in Cambodian artistic creations has transformed. In 2011 and 2012, the main focus of artists and officials was on the preservation of artistic traditions. But concerns were developing about the possibility of freezing or museumifying the arts (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). Eight years later, there has been a substantial shift in discourse. Artists and others invested in the arts have become focused on development, particularly on innovation or development within arts heritage (development within preservation). This paper examines these shifting views and asks the questions: What does it mean to develop inside of tradition? How do artists use tradition to inspire innovations in the arts?

**SOUTHEAST ASIAN COLLECTIONS IN THE UCLA ETHNOMUSICOLOGY
ARCHIVE: DOCUMENTING, PUBLISHING, AND REPATRIATING
MUSICAL HISTORY**

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Abstract

UCLA's Ethnomusicology Archive is the second largest archive of traditional music in the United States. Established in 1961 to serve the university's fledgling ethnomusicology programme, it now holds approximately 150,000 items, and is consulted by scholars, musicians, and community members from around the world. Southeast Asia is a strong regional focus of the Archive, with holdings spanning from the 1930s to the present day. Particular historical highlights include Colin McPhee's recordings and documentation from Bali (1930s on), Mantle Hood's from Java (1950s–1960s), David Morton's from Thailand (1950s–1960s), Jose Maceda's from the Philippines and Malaysia (1950s–1960s), Ricardo Trimillos's from the Philippines (1960s), and I Nyoman Sumandhi's from Indonesia (1970s). The Archive also works with local communities in southern California, for example on the year-long project "Archiving Filipino American Music in Los Angeles" (AFAMILA), undertaken over 2003–2004 in partnership with local community arts non-profit Kayamanan Ng Lahi. In addition to preserving heritage and encouraging local communities to document their own arts, whenever ethically and legally feasible, the Ethnomusicology Archive makes its holdings accessible both to originating communities and to the broader public. Repatriation is an important goal, with two major recent Southeast Asian examples: in one case, we worked with Edward Herbst to provide copies of Colin McPhee's 1930s Balinese materials to Balinese musicians, while in the other we digitized David Morton's Thai recordings for return to institutions in Bangkok. Our recent publishing agreement with British archival publisher Adam Matthew Digital makes several major Southeast Asian collections available to institutions around the world, as well as to originating communities; and our ongoing partnership with the California State Library-funded project "California Revealed" has placed hundreds of field recordings online, including many of Californian Cambodian and Hmong communities. Thus, we seek to make the Archive a living, interactive cultural resource.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AT UCLA IN PEDAGOGY, RESEARCH, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

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UCLA's World Musical Instrument Collection, housed in the Department of Ethnomusicology, is the largest university-owned collection of non-Western instruments in the Americas. Founded in the late 1950s by pioneering ethnomusicologist and Java specialist Mantle Hood, it now stands at just over 1,000 separate items, with especially rich Southeast Asian holdings. Among those Southeast Asian holdings, the official inventory lists instrument sets from Central Java, Bali, Thailand, the Philippines, Sunda, Badui, and Vietnam. The largest and most frequently used of these are the first four, all acquired in the late 1950s and 1960s. Mantle Hood, founder of the famed Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, was responsible for the purchase of the Javanese and Balinese gamelans in 1958; David Morton, first his Ph.D. advisee and later his colleague, masterminded the purchase of the Thai instruments between 1958 and 1969; and renowned composer José Maceda, who completed his Ph.D. at UCLA in 1963, brought the kulintang in the early 1960s (Revitt, 1962; Maceda, 1963; Adler, forthcoming; Rees, forthcoming).

By the mid-20th century, wealthy Western individuals and museums had been systematically acquiring and displaying non-Western musical instruments for well over a century, with impressive gamelans a frequent highlight. Despite the visual magnificence of many Asian instrument sets in Western museums, however, they were, ironically, almost never heard (Sachs, 2003 [1934]; Rees, forthcoming). Mantle Hood's innovation at UCLA, as is well known, was to insist that Western students researching the music of another culture learn to perform the music of that culture, thereby acquiring a level of "bi-musicality" (Hood, 1960). For the first time, therefore, a Western university went out and bought sets of Asian instruments with the express purpose of having (mostly) Western students learn to play them, as far as possible from Asian master musicians. Pedagogy, therefore, was the initial purpose of the expensive and bureaucratically complex project of bringing these instruments to Los Angeles. Here I look at the role our major Southeast Asian instrument collections have played in pedagogy over the last sixty-plus years, but also at new roles they have undertaken over time, in particular in public performance, research, and cultural exchange and outreach.

Pedagogy and Public Performance

Hood started his first gamelan group at UCLA shortly after his arrival as a junior faculty member in 1954. He had bought a small gamelan, Udan Mas, a few months previously as he wrapped up his Ph.D. studies in Amsterdam, and shipped it back from the Netherlands to Los Angeles; this was his own personal property. He stuck a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Department of Music, which housed the ethnomusicology programme at that time, saying, "Anyone interested in learning to play Javanese gamelan, sign below." Within three weeks he had over thirty people wanting to participate (Trimillos, 2003, pp. 283–284). This was the start of a remarkable decade in which ever more Asian performance groups flourished, with many instruments and instructors paid for by funding from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, including the iconic Javanese gamelan Venerable Dark Cloud, our Balinese gamelan, and our Thai instruments. Participants included students from different majors, faculty, and community members, in addition to the ethnomusicology graduate students for whom they had originally been designed (Rees, forthcoming). By 1962, a visitor to the UCLA Institute of

Ethnomusicology reported for the *College Music Society Symposium* journal that he found Javanese gamelan, Balinese gamelan, Thai classical music, kulintang, South Indian, North Indian, Japanese, and Chinese music lessons all in progress, most taught by instructors from Asia (Revitt, 1962). Yet, unlike Western orchestra, band, and chamber groups, these Asian performance ensembles initially did not offer college credit for students. Hood liked this set-up, noting several years later that because the performance activities were all extracurricular, people participated because of genuine enthusiasm rather than a desire for a grade (Miller, 1985, p. 104). Perhaps inevitably, this could not last; at the insistence of other faculty, the world music ensembles entered the official UCLA catalogue in 1964 as for-credit "performance organizations," thereby justifying the salaries and space allocated to them. They have remained in the catalogue ever since, prosaically offering units of credit to participating students (Rees, forthcoming).

At the graduate level, the opportunity to learn or improve performance skills has certainly contributed directly to many students' careers. Either one or both of Javanese and Balinese gamelan have been on offer most years since 1954, and since the 1960s, eight Ph.D. dissertations on gamelan and other aspects of Indonesian music have been completed, along with six M.A. theses. At least six graduates are currently active teaching gamelan performance in universities or with community groups in California, Colorado, and Maine, and many more students whose own research was in other areas have reached a good level of competence in gamelan and been able to incorporate their knowledge into their teaching. The Thai ensemble was discontinued in 1973, but two M.A. theses on Thai topics, both advised by David Morton, were clearly inspired by learning performance with the Thai class (*Worlds of Music at UCLA*, 2010). Since Supeena Insee Adler restarted the group in 2016, it has attracted a new Ph.D. student currently (2019–2021) carrying out dissertation fieldwork in Bangkok. With our undergraduate ethnomusicology majors required to take several years of world music ensembles, many become quite skilled in their chosen traditions, achieving an impressive level of bi-musicality. Overall, Hood's pedagogical model has continued to thrive at UCLA for almost seventy years now and has spread to dozens of other institutions worldwide (Miller, 1985; Solís, 2004).

Quite early, a second function arose for the world music ensembles, that of public performance. From modest beginnings in 1955, with Udan Mas giving a performance-demonstration and undertaking concerts at a local Los Angeles church and the Santa Barbara Music Festival just up the California coast, performance opportunities soon proliferated. Some were very high-profile: Udan Mas featured as entertainment in Indonesian President Sukarno's state visit to the United States in 1956 and, together with UCLA's fledgling Japanese *gagaku* group, at a UNESCO conference in San Francisco in 1957 (Rees, forthcoming). Press reaction at the time was mostly favourable, though sometimes expressed in terms that make us flinch today. The UCLA campus newspaper, the *Daily Bruin*, reported in 1955 that,

If you crave the unusual in music, the next concert of the Gamelan Udan Mas will satiate you. Using authentic Javanese instruments, this ensemble, the only one of its kind in the country, has a large repertoire of Javanese classics. The music is strange and emotional. (Star, 1955)

With the organization in 1960 by the UCLA Department of Music and other campus organs of the Festival of Oriental Music and the Related Arts, a tradition of annual spring festivals of world music was begun that continues to this day (Conner, 2011). Each world music ensemble puts on a 45-minute performance showcasing their year's work, sometimes with guest artists, and for many groups it is also a celebratory social event that attracts members of the local

communities whose music is featured, together with relatives of the students participating. Public performance has also become a calling-card for UCLA's ethnomusicology programme and a useful form of publicity in an institutional setting that is not always supportive of non-Western arts.

Research

Beyond their pedagogical and performance roles, the instruments have themselves become the subjects of academic research. Venerable Dark Cloud's tuning has been minutely analysed and compared with that of comparable gamelans (Carterette and Kendall, 1994), while the Balinese gamelan became the subject of an important article by Sue Carole DeVale and I Wayan Dibia (DeVale and Dibia, 1991). This explored in depth the cultural meanings implicated in its morphology and wooden carvings.

The Thai instrument collection has been extensively researched by Supeena Insee Adler, who now also cares for it as our instrument curator and uses it to teach our revived Music of Thailand ensemble. In a forthcoming essay, she starts from the material presence of the instruments to track their connections to the family of the famous early 20th-century court musician Luang Pradit Phairoh (1881–1954) and to illuminate the connections they continue to renew between his descendants and UCLA, between Thai musicians in Bangkok and Thai musicians in America, and between UCLA and the local Thai American community. Both extensive archival documentation of the instruments' history and migration and the physical evidence some of them display, such as the signature on a *rammanaa* frame-drum by Luang Pradit Phairoh's daughter Chin Silapabanleng (1906–1988) (Figures 1a and b), provide the opportunity to write a narrative that touches upon both Thai and American musical societies and histories, and the unexpected links between them (Adler, forthcoming).



*Figures 1a and b. Rammanaa drum bearing signature of Chin Silapabanleng.
Photos by author.*

Indeed, as time has gone by, many of the Southeast Asian instruments we preserve have by default become mini individual museums of the materials and making practices current in past eras—for example, before it became illegal to use elephant ivory, which we find in two Javanese rebab and some of the Thai string instruments. Much of Venerable Dark Cloud, and several of the Thai instruments, are believed to have been made in the 19th century. Many others date from the first half of the 20th century, embodying a rich source of historical information that is in many cases supplemented by paper documentation preserved in the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive (Yamin, 2021; Adler, forthcoming; Rees, forthcoming).

Cultural Exchange and Outreach

Finally, with California's ethnic diversity having increased markedly since the mid-20th century and "equity, diversity, and inclusion" now the watchword on the state's university campuses, cultural exchange and outreach have become ever more important in our work. In Los Angeles County alone, for example, the Filipina/o population was estimated in 2019 to be over 400,000 (Asian ethnic origin, n.d.). While kulintang was seldom formally taught at UCLA after the early 1960s, the instruments have been used often for workshops by visiting artists, and by students skilled in the tradition. We often partner with the lively professional arts collective Ube Arte, three of whose founding members, Eleanor Lipat-Chesler, Mary Talusan, and Bernard Ellorin, are graduates of our department. With their mission of "advanc[ing] Philippine cultural research and education in the Pilipinx/Filipino American community" (Ube Arte, n.d.), they have also worked with our instrument collection, using UCLA's kulintang in performances and lecture-demonstrations aimed at a broad audience (Figure 2). As of autumn 2021, we are planning workshops for local young people in partnership with Ube Arte, employing newly bought instruments suitable for student use.



Figure 2. Ube Arte performing in UCLA's Gamelan Room for the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology Southern California and Hawai'i Chapter, 5 March 2016.
Photo by author.

Another form of outreach has been museum display of our instruments. Because they are not generally on display—we have no museum ourselves, and only students taking a particular ensemble have access to them—this offers a wider public the opportunity to see selected examples and learn about them. In 2021, the Fowler Museum at UCLA, the university's ethnographic arts museum, opened a major exhibition titled *The Map and the Territory: 100 Years of Collecting at UCLA*. Celebrating the university's centenary, the exhibition showcases thirteen of the campus's collections, from maps to meteorites to musical instruments (The map and the territory, 2021). Out of approximately 160 items on display, four come from the World Musical Instrument Collection; one is a magnificent ivory rebab from Venerable Dark Cloud, another a striking Mon gong circle from Thailand. Both spend most of their time inaccessible even to students because of their value and fragility, so this is an opportunity to let them represent their originating cultures in a public arena, and to educate audiences through lectures by our faculty and students (e.g., Yamin, 2021).

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THAI PERFORMING ARTS AND COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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Abstract

Thai music and dance are taught in two distinct contexts in Southern California: in multiple Thai Buddhist temples, and at UCLA as a performance course for undergraduate and graduate students. While UCLA serves its student population, the temples serve the wider community, especially non-Thai or American children of Thai heritage. Thai Buddhist temples in Southern California function not only as religious spaces for monks and lay people to practice their beliefs, but also as community centers for people to participate in non-religious cultural activities. The attendees of temple classes seek to reconnect to their Thai roots through conventional narratives of nation, religion, and king, as well as through the contemporary concept of "local wisdom," all of which are strongly present in Thai culture but otherwise not experienced by communities in the U.S. Temple communities emulate Thai cultural activities according to conventional calendars but on a smaller scale, giving participants a sense of belonging to Thai communities in the homeland—a homeland to which some parents envision returning. By taking Thai language, music and dance classes for several years at the temples, children learn to value their parents' heritage and gain respect for their parents' beliefs. The author will present her ethnographic perspective on these cultural activities as both an observer and an active participant in organizing and teaching music, dance and culture at a temple in Escondido, California, and as the director of the Music of Thailand Ensemble class at UCLA.

KINETIC SOUNDSCAPES AND SONIC MOVEMENTSCAPES IN MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract

The investigation of soundscapes has largely discussed acoustic spazialization and the recent term movementscapes analyzed kinetic spazialization and the construction of a temporal performative space. While soundscapes are sonically composed, they often encompass a kinetic experience that can be both product as well as producer, determinant, or partly influence the acoustic spazialization. Similarly, movementscapes may experience acoustic intersections as well as kinetically determine sonic production visually, tactilely, and rhythmically. Departing from Wolter's (1982) conceptualization of Southeast Asian courts as *mandalas* that allow shifts of power, fluidity within expanding circles, and overlapping spaces, this presentation investigates kinetic soundscapes and sonic movementscapes in maritime Southeast Asia. Placing the body as locus of the sound-movement continuum (Santaella, 2019) the structure of this presentation is threefold. First, it discusses the production of structured movement systems within soundscapes considering the interconnection of sound and movement determined by acoustic spazializations in forms such as the Balinese *Teruna Jaya*, Kaili *Balia*, and Bajau Laut *Igal*. Secondly, it discusses the production of structured sonic systems within movementscapes considering the interconnectivity of movement and sound determined by kinetic spazializations in forms such as the Tausug *Pangalay*, Kaili *rano*, and the Acehnese *Likok Pulo*. Thirdly, it discusses space, material culture, and the body for the production of movementscapes and soundscapes as characteristically Southeast Asian.

SOUNDSCAPE AND MOVEMENTSCAPE IN TRANSITION: TOWARD A CHOREO-MUSICOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF PROCESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS

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A procession is a form of musicking widely observed around the world. People flock to walk together in various contexts, at religious, profane, or political events, bringing floats or flags, playing instruments, shouting or dancing, boisterously emitting a vehement clamor. It almost always creates a rich amalgam of sound created by human voices, instruments, and vehicles. Indonesians would describe such soundscape as *rame* (*ramai*), referring to a multitude physically occupying a space, animated in many actions, as well as to the sound generated, and recognized as an indispensable factor for the success of rituals and festivals. The word *rame* fits well to the multisensory experience of procession in general.

Procession is also the experience of a place in transition, in which participants interact with an ever-changing environment from point to point while walking through it. The physical space and surrounding environment powerfully affect the performance created there, while the symbolic and historic significance of place are created and recreated through the performance. In previous studies, sound as a part of the environment has been generally discussed as “soundscape,” as popularized by R. Murray Schafer (1986 [1977]) and developed with different emphases and meanings by many others. Although soundscape seems a more efficient and relevant concept than music to comprehensively consider the acoustics of procession interacting with the place (*cf.* Sakakeeney, 2010), in this paper I would extend the concept to “movementscape,” including and emphasizing the body movements which create, perceive, and interact with the space and place. Movementscape has been used by several dance scholars such as Petri Hoppu (1994) and Lena Hammergen (2014), inspired by Appadurai’s five “-scape” concepts, to discuss the trans-local mobility of dance culture. I would modify the previous concept and connect the term to soundscape discussions, to explore the interaction of sound, body and environment. Applying movementscape to procession allows us to consider its visible, tactile and kinesthetic components, which closely interact with the audible and coalesce into the experience of procession. After Steven Feld (2015), who proposed acoustemology to investigate sounding and listening as knowing in action, I similarly discuss procession as knowing in action, but not only knowing within the audible, but also through visual, tactile, and kinesthetic sensing.

Here, I describe two movementscape examples of Muslim Balinese processions celebrating *Mawlid*, the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad, and describe procession as a specific way of sensing and creating a place.

Movementscape in Gelgel, Klungkung

The first example is the procession called *pawai ta’ruf* that celebrated *Mawlid* in Kampung Gelgel, Klungkung, in 2015, beginning after the evening prayer at the mosque. At the front was a small truck loaded with a portable light powered by a dynamo. Next were a group of musicians on frame drums called *kendang*, or *rebana*, and bass drum, *jidur*, and a vocalist singing Arabic songs praising Muhammad, followed by around forty male dancers in white and black costumes who marched on the street. The generator on the truck shed powerful light on the dancers, while emitting an overwhelming sound, which seemed to be accepted as part of the *rame* sound of the parade, together with drum music, song, whistles, and a babble of voices.¹

A crowd of villagers filled the street, walking along and following the dancers, while

some of them sang along with the vocalist. At the crossroads several hundred meters from the mosque, the dancers held a performance of *rudat*, a traditional dance form, and several others exhibited *pencak silat*, a traditional fighting art. They then returned to the mosque, where they again performed *rudat* to finish the parade.

The *rudat* dancers definitely played a central role in the whole procession, projecting visual and physical clamor. In Muslim Balinese communities, *rudat* is generally associated with cohesion and often represents the communal identity (see Mashino, 2019), while in Gelgel, it is specifically interpreted as a portrayal of their ancestors, who were brave soldiers of the Gelgel dynasty in the past.² *Rudat* is deeply incorporated into a procession on two levels. First, it is often performed as part of processions. Besides *Mawlid*, it is also performed in wedding processions or at regional art festivals. In typical performances, *rudat* dancers and others first walk together in a procession; then the procession stops on a spot while *rudat* is danced; and then they walk again. In a strict sense, *rudat* might refer only to the dance section, but the dancers' presence is pivotal in the movementscape throughout the procession.

Second, the dance section choreography also incorporates smaller processions. *Rudat* usually starts with stepping in place according to the beat. The dancers march back and forth in the performance space, changing their lines according to the leader's whistle. Then, they dance using *pencak silat* choreography while singing. There are various songs, each of which has its respective choreography. After one song-dance is finished, they march again in the space, changing formation to finish or transit to the next. Thus, the performance as a whole consists of a series of march-dance-march sequences, during which body movements are controlled by whistle and drumbeats. In a sense, *rudat* can be seen as a micro-procession—more stylized and coordinated with the music—within a macro-procession, in which other participants also move together but in a less-organized manner.

Rudat choreography adapts to its performance space on the street, necessarily long and narrow. In the dance section, a crowd of audience stretching out along the sidewalks surrounds the dancers, so that the bodies of both demarcate and create a theatrical space for performance. Outdoor settings also affect the sonic aspects of the performance: The vocalist needs to use a microphone and the dancers shout their vocal parts loudly to be heard even over the babble of voices and noises in the outdoors. The energetic drum ensemble and contrastingly high-pitched whistle, which might be too massive and piercing, respectively, if indoors, sounded clearly enough to control the dancers' body movements. The loudness and percussiveness of the sound are prescribed and required by the space, while such sound significantly transforms the road into a theatrical stage for celebration.

Bringing the Ships, Tracing the History: The Procession Route in Sindu, Karangasem

My next example is the *Mawlid* procession in Kampung Sindu, Karangasem, that I observed in 2016. People paraded with *perahu*, large model ships made of wood and paper.

The route of the procession is worth consideration here. Its starting point was in front of the mosque of Kampung Sindu. It passed through an alley from the *kampung* to the arterial road running through the Sideman area, where many trucks and cars busily come and go during daytime. Joining the neighboring Kampung Puniya there, the procession grew larger. Passing central Sideman, it turned down a small pathway toward Kampung Buu, Tabola, where they stopped for a while to hold a *rudat* performance in front of a small mosque, the oldest one in the area, built by their ancestors who came from the neighboring island of Lombok in the 19th century: the Sindu and Puniya communities were later established as branches of Tabola. On the way back, they stopped again to dance *rudat* in the central Sideman area, which they had passed on their way outward. The area is lined with shops, offices, the market, and the former palace,

and is familiar to Sindu people as they often go there on their daily business, but the place is also more public in nature, belonging to the larger regional community, including Hindus in the neighborhood. After the performance, the procession returned to each community, and the last *rudat* performance was held in their own *kampung* compound only for the residents. Child dancers who just started training also showed up and got warm applause from their families and friends in a more informal and intimate atmosphere. The word *kampung* refers to a physical or geographical space where people live, as well as the community established there to which they belong. Thus, the procession started from home ground, went out to a large and public space, and then returned to their own home again.



Figure 1. Rudat performance in Sidemen, 2016. Photo by Mashino Ako

According to Mahsun, the Sindu administrative chief, *rudat* is generally performed to “pay respect” (*hormati*) to others. Thus, the first performance in Tabola can be interpreted as paying respect to their Muslim ancestors, the second one in Sideman to the local community at large, and the last one was for themselves. Mahsun also explained that the *prahu* were *symbol perjalanan*, *symbol sejarah* (a symbol of their ancestors’ voyage; a symbol of history). Proceeding from one place to the next, tracing the local history, the procession seemed to have created a line bridging the past and present, the private and the public, as well as connecting a small community to the larger regional one.

Multiple Bodies in a Movementscape Experience: Bodies, Sound, and Environment

Based on these examples, I would propose a sound-body movement-environment model for describing a procession as a movementscape.

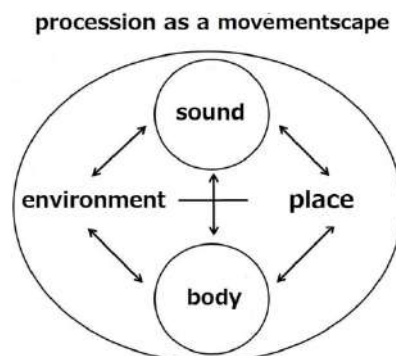


Figure 2. Procession as a movementscape

Procession consists of multiple bodies, continuously moving in one direction. Although the highlight of the event is surely the *rudat*, the most basic kinesthetic component is certainly all the participants walking together: the former somewhat mirrors the latter in a more condensed and stylized manner. While walking, the participants' bodies are exposed to and affected by the ever-changing environment. For example, the procession stretched out onto the main road, but thinned down in smaller alleys. On-the-road settings tailor the choreography of *rudat*: dancers effectively move within a constrained space, while others draw back as much as possible to make space, so that their bodies demarcate the performance area. Theoretically, wherever the crowd goes and surrounds the dancers becomes a performance site. In Gelgel and Sindu, the procession was held during the evening; people could walk comfortably, but they needed lighting devices, such as lamps and torches, which illuminated the procession more spectacularly. The aesthetic effects and the results of the circumstances on the procession as a spectacle are inseparable, as procession always absorbs the environment as a part of its performance space.

During a procession, various small events occur simultaneously. As more people participate and the lines of people become longer, it becomes harder to grasp what happens in other parts of the line. For example, the *rudat* dancers in the frontline might not have noticed that the *perahu* in the back nearly got hung up on an electric wire along the way. Different things occurred at different points of the line, and each participant perceived and responded to them differently, except during *rudat* dance when everyone stopped in one place and focused on the performance. However, even if my experience of the event could be only of a part of the whole event, walking along within a multitude, the tactile sense of others' bodies close, and moving together with them sustain a feeling of connectedness among the participants, which Barbara Ehrenreich (2006) called *collective joy*.

Many people do various things simultaneously in a procession, which create a sound amalgam, that as a whole, stimulates people's body movements in turn. The effect of sound on bodies might range widely from sonic control of the bodies, as in *rudat* dance performance, to only subtle and unconscious influence on their bodies and feelings, as during the procession when the music is not necessarily privileged to be clearly heard in the mix. In both cases, the sonic *rame* is incessantly experienced by the participants' bodies, which create the corresponding physical and visual *rame*. Sound can pervade a wider space than the procession physically occupies. The powerful drumbeats could be heard from a distance. These sounds create and enlarge the performance space to involve people nearby. Even inside their homes, the neighbors would recognize the event outside, hearing the sound passing by. Processions can be recognized by a wider community than that actively involved in the event.

The route and the performance site may be carefully chosen, taking into consideration the cultural, historical, or political meanings of the place, as well as the physical circumstances. In these cases, the *rudat* procession only parades within their neighborhood where their life and history are deeply rooted, while it can consciously evoke, update, and transform the meanings of the places the people pass. Equipped with ships and instruments, as well as portable sound and lighting systems, a procession generates visual and audible *rame*, which transforms any place into an extraordinary performance space, turning shops and buildings on the street into its backdrop, and neighbors and passersby into occasional audience. In his study of the musical procession soundscape in New Orleans, Matt Sakakeeney (2010, p. 25) writes that "making public sounds in public spaces is, quite literally, a practice of being heard." The experience of being seen and heard further enhances the excitement and thus the cultural identity and pride of the participants, while the dynamic sound and massive substance of the procession can powerfully affect the surroundings. People are empowered by the place, not only through interaction with the physical environment, but also by connecting to the people living there.

In transition

In procession, a crowd of people occupy a space for a while, emanating *rame* and insisting upon their cultural identity and their special connections to the place. In these cases, Muslim Balinese tradition and customs were momentarily highlighted and drew attention from larger communities, thereby empowering the small communities of a religious minority on the island, who are otherwise likely to be marginalized. As Eisenberg (2015, p. 200) discussed regarding the Kenyan Muslim soundscape, powerful sound sometimes can become a “territorializing force,” which triggers a social divide and conflict. Procession, in a sense, is an occupation of a space to emphasize the communal presence of the people, through the massive substance of bodies, material, and sound, although I have not heard any negative comments on them from Hindu neighbors during my research. Partly this is because Muslim Balinese as a religious minority have been extremely careful to avoid social conflicts in general. But the more important reason might be, I suppose, that the transience of procession, which never drops anchor in any one place for a long time, and the rarity of the event, which occurs only once a year, support the momentary occupation of a public space by a group of people to celebrate in public as acceptable by the regional community at large. The *rame* emitted from procession may be ephemeral, but it enables them to thereby embrace the people and place to momentarily share the affective experience.

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Endnotes

¹ R. Anderson Sutton (1996) described the music or voice—often over-amplified and even distorted by the sound system—as a part of the *rame* sound of Javanese festivals.

² The official website of Desa Kampung Gelgel describes *rudat* as soldiers going into battle to protect justice and expel intruders from Indonesia (Profil Kesenian Rudat Desa Kampung Gelgel, n.d.).

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**SENSING *BUNGA*:
CONSIDERING RESEMBLANCE IN *PANGALAY HA KULINTANGAN***

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Abstract

The discussion and teaching of *pangalay* dancing of the Tausug and Suluk communities in the Philippines and Sabah, Malaysia often extracts critical elements to sift out movement motifs as final “objects” in order to construct “the Pangalay Dance” as a nationally-endowed phenomenon. Such critical elements of *pangalay* dancing include the motific relationship to sound produced from the *kulintangan* ensemble, i.e. the performer’s *bunga lima* (flowering hands) in connection with the ensemble, and the bond created between performers and audience beholders in performances. The detailing and arranging of movement into “the Pangalay Dance” as a grand compendium voids the body of particular contexts and creative individualism that are vital in the experiential and prolific nuances of *pangalay ha kulintangan* (*pangalay* with *kulintangan*). This paper examines the sense of place that involve various elements as part of local, intimate social events and the “sensing place” as kinesthesia that brings forth *pangalay* dancing. The *kulintangan* in their playing drive individuals’ *bunga* in an “ensembling” that instigates certain awareness and responses from performers. What is suggested is that embedded in *pangalay* dancing among the Suluk in Sabah is the kinesthetic experience of dancing with *kulintangan* gong ensemble playing that is expressed by each *pangalay* performer creating their own sphere of immersive individuality within local occasions. Yet, each performer’s *bunga* are connected, inter-connected in their resemblance, curving and curling, ornamenting and defining the scape that is *pangalay ha kulintangan*.

PERFORMING ONTOLOGIES AND DECENTERING THE ELITE IN BALINESE *KAKAWIN* EPIC SINGING

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Introduction

The diachronic construction of worldviews from singing epic narratives threads through the fabric of Southeast Asian soundscapes. These worldviews are ontologies based on past traditions that predate the nation. For example, before the Ifugao were subsumed under the Philippine flag, *Hudhud* storytellers narrated ontologies about agriculture and funerary rites. Long before the archipelago was united as Indonesia, Javanese and Balinese singers voiced the views of sages, lords and priests from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. However, today epic singing constructs much more than tradition-based ontologies and includes contemporary views. Worldview constructions simultaneously negotiate modernity and even assimilate popular musical styles and influences from Southeast Asia's rapidly modernizing soundscapes (Barendregt et.al., 2017).

In the title of my paper I use the term 'performing ontologies' to describe the expression or presentation of worldviews that negotiate between inherited traditions and modern cultural practices. To illustrate this I focus on *kakawin*, the Balinese practice of singing and interpreting Old-Javanese poetry. Because poems are written in an archaic language, the practice of sounding the text and translating it to the vernacular is central to its transmission. Suffice to say if no one sings them, these epics would likely die out. But for generations, epic singing has made temporal bridges to Arjunawijaya's 10th century Hindu asceticism and brought the Buddhist teachings of the priest Sutasoma out into the soundscape for laypersons to hear and enjoy. But this is not without its challenges. The popular practice of *kakawin* also promotes superficial understandings of complex literary texts.

In the first part of my paper I will further elaborate on my concept of 'performing ontologies' by delving into the growing body of literature based on Anthropology's ontological turn. Then I will survey the performance of *kakawin* and other related genres to see how the once elite practice of epic singing has been decentralized through the inclusive genres of mixed gender vocal competitions, arts festivals and youth groups. I move away from concepts and bounded categories like music, dance and ritual singing towards the view that sounded texts are 'performed ontologies' that negotiate traditions and modern cultural practices.

Performing Ontologies

My use of the term "Performing ontologies" for epic singing is inspired by the decolonialization of theorization and Anthropology's ontological turn. One way of placing increasing value on emic knowledge without over-theorizing is the ontological turn which avoids the problematic top down application of Western European-derived theories. It prioritizes theorization as a part of everyday experience. Ontological anthropologists are hesitant to apply externally generated theories. They prefer to re-evaluate the basic approaches to theorization by prioritizing field data. As with phenomenologists who are hesitant to simply apply an etic theory to decipher cultural signs, ontologists uphold that theorization is part and parcel of everyday experience (Holbraad and Pederson, 2017, p. 284). The objective is to be mindful of totalizing theories and challenge externally derived explanatory models with locally acknowledged ways of being and knowing. The authority of the researcher and the claims made must contend with the very worldviews the

researchers' informants uphold as truths. This requires a re-examination of ontologies as a centralizing force in theorization itself.

Moving away from the top-down application of Western European theories, the ontological turn seeks to more radically prioritize fieldwork and theorize through acknowledging multiple 'ways of being' in the world. Differing world views are not simply distinctive depictions of the same world, but are "differences in worlds". Beyond Heidegger's 'Da Sein', ontological anthropologists argue that the usual task of acknowledging and describing the reality of cultural difference implies the false notion that there is some unitary world, reality or nature to begin with. Ontological anthropology disputes such a notion, instead asserting that, "worlds, as well as worldviews, may vary" (Heywood, 2017).

There are a few examples of prioritizing ontologies in research that are relevant to the current discussion of sung epic narratives in Southeast Asian soundscapes. A project in Brazilian universities called the 'Meeting of Knowledges' has expanded the very definition of knowledge where Brazilian rainforest indigenous elders are treated as equals alongside university professors (Carvalho and Florez, 2014). Michael Birenbau Quintero shows how Columbian Pacific music moves away from bounded categories such as music, dance and ritual as givens and replaces them with ontologies about 'sound as an interaction between humans, spirits and other non-human agents' (Quintero, 2019). The ontology of performance for Arnhem Land indigenous Australians sees snakes, birds and other animals as 'active participants in the creation and composition of performance' (Ross and Wild, 1984). Not only performers but audiences require us to rethink who or what is being performed. For example, a 'people-centered' ontology of 'audience' as receivers of performance does not take into account 'spirit ancestors, divine beings and other intangible third parties' for whom sound and movement is intended (Quintero, 2019).

Does John Blacking's 'humanly organized sound' still have validity when *habu*-dancers of Melanesia who act as spiritual mediators say, "we, as humans, are ghosts" (Wagner in Holbraad and Pedersen, 2017, p. 88)? *Habu* dancers remind us that categorical divisions between humans and nature are problematic as these may not be separate entities or discrete bodies. This leaves the question of who or what is organizing sound and movement to be answered by members of the relevant cultural group.

I turn now to examine some ontologies about epic singing in Bali.

Merging literary past and present worldviews

Balinese literary genres come to life through sounding text. Poetry written centuries ago becomes meaningful for today's generation of Balinese through oral performance. As Wallis, Schumacher and Herbst have noted, there are at least three different contexts for epic singing: 1. Poetry associations called *sekaa mabasan*; 2. Five types of ritual ceremonies called *panca yadnya*, and; 3. Performing arts dance dramas, shadow plays and festivals (Wallis, 1980; Schumacher, 1995; Herbst, 1997). Varying in importance, these three contexts for epic singing are most significantly oriented towards reinforcing Old Javanese text as a source for making diachronic intersections between meaning and valuation. From these historical texts from the past, modern-day worldviews may be negotiated so that a continuity of presence occurs for knowledge from the past.

In each of these contexts literary ontologies from the past can merge with modern worldviews. For example, epic singing of *kakawin* in *sekaa mabasan* poetic associations requires a chanter/reciter (*juru baos*) as well as an expert interpreter (*juru basa*). Both performers sit in front of a wooden tray holding a written text or manuscript. Chanters sing out loud from the manuscript. After the recitation of a phrase in a stanza, a break or pause in

recitation occurs. This is called *palet basa*. Here an interpreter inserts a spoken Balinese translation of the Old Javanese text into the vernacular. This ‘translation’ may be considered a bridging of ontologies because the wider audience has little practical comprehension of Old Javanese language. In this way past ontologies in archaic prose can fuse with modern worldviews through performative interpretation and individual reception/application.

Past and present ontologies are also fused in a related style of epic singing called *kidung* sung in small mixed gender groups. But *kidung* can also help construct what Philip Bohlman calls ‘My and Your’ ontology (Bohlman, 2010, pp.19-20). For example, in 2009 my six-month old daughter Mahealani had her purification ritual at our home temple. During the ceremony, my mother-in-law, Ni Nyoman Tjandri who is one of Bali’s most celebrated classical vocalists, sang *kidung* with a chorus of singers while holding my daughter. My brother-in-law Komang Sudirga also joined in the vocalization of incantations deemed appropriate for an infant’s rite of passage. Partially protective, partially superstitious, singing *kidung* was a ritual requirement as well as an ontology about sounding lifecycle moments in one’s personal life.

In my *kidung* experience, ritual and religion helped construct the ontology of *kidung* epic singing as a bridge to sacred teachings, Hindu philosophy and intellectual wisdom. Much more than performative or presentational in construction, *kidung* became a very influential sounding of my own ontology about epic singing. In his introduction to the edited volume ‘Rethinking Music’ Bohlman says, “the ontology of my music is personal, deriving from conditions that have individual meanings and are unlike the conditions for ‘your music’ (Bohlman, 2010, p.19). I take comfort in knowing my children have a loving Hindu-Balinese family. In this way I construct my own personal ontology about epic singing as a comforting sound that often cradles my worried mind as a father.

But not all constructions of epic singing ontologies are deeply personal or necessarily religious. I turn now to examples from commercial and entertainment sectors that often appropriate and essentialize epic singing.

For this research paper, I contacted Ni Made Ayu Oka Wijayanti who studied with her aunt Desak Suarti Laksmi, who studied with my mother-in-law Ibu Tjandri. Ayu is a graduate student of Balinese literary studies at Udayana University in Denpasar city. Because of her family relation with Ibu Desak, who is also a celebrated vocalist, she has been studying singing and dancing from an early age. At the age of 12 she began to focus on shorter poetic verses called *tembang macapat* and other folk songs. Shortly thereafter, Ibu Desak began teaching her the longer, more complex metres of *kidung* and *kakawin*. Ayu admits that her vocal abilities and natural range were less suited to singing and more appropriate for literary interpretation (*pengartos*). To prepare for this, she spent much of her time studying her undergraduate degree at Udayana University in linguistics and philosophy to become fluent in Old Javanese language, the poetic language of epic singing. She finished her undergraduate degree in 2018, was guest lecturer for a semester at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts, USA and is currently pursuing her Master’s degree.

In my interview, Ayu explained the dilemma facing young singers who struggle with proper vocal technique. Aside from formal competitions, popular singers tend to ignore the rules and practice-based guidelines about proper vocal quality and stylistic embellishments in epic singing and simply sing what is pleasing to their ear. Ayu’s assessment indicates that changing aesthetics in vocal quality parallel changing worldviews and are part of the negotiation between generational preferences. At first glance it appears to be the age-old issue of continuity and change. But at a deeper level, replacing epic singing’s aesthetics with Western European vibrato and diatonicism that is pleasing to the ear decentres the very identity of the voice, the speaker, the culture bearer and the ontology being performed. ‘Performing ontologies’ in epic singing is a

contestation of worlds where meanings are formed in the soundscape, and the voice is a principal determinant of these worlds.



Figure 1. Excerpt from the dramatic theatre production *Taksu Ubud* in which Saraswati is depicted in dance, music, singing and painting.

My last example of epic singing comes from sung prayers or mantra. In July 2021, Reza Rahadian and Christine Hakim starred in *Taksu Ubud*, a self-reflective theatrical production about tourism dependency and the covid-19 pandemic. Produced by Happy Selma, it was debuted in Ubud village where residents had been hit hard by the pandemic. As a theatre production, *Taksu Ubud* was intended to revive the spirit of suffering artists. Starring national Indonesian actress and model, Happy Salma and Balinese composer I Wayan Sudirana, it featured a dramatic scene of introspection and epic singing devoted to Dewi Saraswasti, the Goddess of Knowledge. Her divinity was depicted in painting, dance, a bowed-lute called *rebab* and a mantra prayer in Saraswati's honor. The sung text spoke of Saraswati as the 'giver of blessings' and the 'fulfiller of wishes', a nurturing artistic portrayal during the harsh reality of a worsening pandemic.

In my discussion with the composer Sudirana, he said that, "We intended to create this scene with the hope that we can get blessings from the God of Knowledge. In the scene, the painting is Saraswati, the dancer is Saraswati, and the vocalist are all Saraswati. Hopefully the audience are also given blessings from Saraswati through chanting the actual Saraswati mantra." (pers. comm. 11 July 2021). He went on to say the religious connotations of the singing were a beautifully "wrapped message," so that the audience can have their own interpretations.

The view that chanting a mantra can nourish the soul during a pandemic is to call upon the ontological view that blessings and wishes are often granted when we look inside ourselves. Deriving strength to persevere in the times of hardship can come from epic singing. Sounding inherited literary texts can help mend broken spirits in times of crisis. In this way, a modern production like *Taksu Ubud* endorsed by a national television star helps bridge worldviews from pre-modern times.

Performing Ontologies in Epic Singing



Figure 2: Diagram illustrating 'performed ontologies' at the intersecting levels from individual to divinity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 'performing ontologies' in epic singing involves several intersecting and overlapping reference points. As it affects Bali's soundscape with each performance, it can gesture towards the ontology of Nature, divinity and spirit. When singers chant mantras on the national stage streamed live on YouTube, the ontology can expand to encompass the nation and social formations such as cosmopolitans, diaspora, migrants. But the sounds of epic literature also become what Philip Bohlman calls, Our Music versus Their Music because the sung epic, "...exhibits a powerful capacity to contribute to social and communal cohesiveness". In many ways, sung epics in the soundscape help distinguish through the voice one community from another.

Finally performing ontologies can also involve the very personal and intimate construction of worldviews at the juncture where My Music and Your Music formulate meanings. For me, *kidung* epic singing brings up the comforting and reassuring image of my baby girl being serenaded by her grandmother during her purification ceremony. Sudirana's *Taksu Ubud* reminds listeners our *buana alit* or 'internal world' may be calmed by the blessings of the divine Saraswati during a pandemic crisis. Today's popularity of epic singing among youth consistently decentralizes what was an elitist vocal practice. This allows inheriting generations to broadcast their interpretations of sung epics to a much larger audience in Bali's changing soundscapes.

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SINDHEN VOICES: A PHONiatric INVESTIGATION OF JAVANESE FEMALE SINGERS

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Introduction

The most difficult task that I had to deal with while conducting fieldwork and performing as a singer in Java was that of investigating the vocal qualities of the female singers known as *sindhen*. In 2013 I began a 7-year period of intensively studying the *sindhen* repertoire, practicing with experienced singers and teachers daily and performing in the context of shadow puppet theatre (*wayang kulit*) and on occasions when *gamelan* orchestras played. However, even after several years of practical experience, together with the academic research I conducted with it, I had not yet gained a deep understanding of the techniques used for producing the particular timbre of the *sindhen* voice. Local teachers and, to some extent, the main Javanese conservatories teach several singing techniques, such as improvisation of melodic formulas, and the chanting of poems in Javanese with the correct articulation and pronunciation of the language. However, aspiring singers are usually told that they must acquire the appropriate vocal qualities “by ear” or “by heart”. Moreover, since theoretical studies or manuals regarding the vocal techniques do not seem to exist, in order to understand the vocal techniques of the *sindhen* (and its interesting socio-cultural aspects) in more depth, I decided to resort to disciplines such as phoniatrics and sound studies, to see whether they could throw some light on the matter.

This paper is an account of a pioneering investigation, the first of its kind within the Javanese vocal music framework. We present the initial outcomes of a research that I conducted in 2019, in team with Doctor Silvia Spinelli, a phoniatrician, laryngologist and artistic voice specialist.² We called our research “ethno-phoniatric”, meaning that it unites the disciplines of Ethnomusicology and Phoniatrics and it consists of a medical/physiological study of the Javanese female singing, starting from a practice-led fieldwork experience.

This project is the result of a collaboration between the Sapienza University of Rome and Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI - the Indonesian Institute of the Arts) of Yogyakarta. A total of 22 female singers from the Yogyakarta Special Region, Central Java, participated in this study. While they sang, they were subjected to an endoscopic examination which, together with the activity of the vocal tract, was recorded in audio-visual formats and then analysed.

***Sindhen*: The Female Voices within Javanese Performing Arts**

Before presenting the ethno-phoniatric investigation, I should briefly introduce *sindhen* activity and try to explain why the voice quality is so important.

Sindhen refers to female Javanese vocalists, or women who sing with *gamelan* orchestras or in any of the contexts in which *gamelan* music is played, exhibiting specific vocal skills and musical sensibility and knowledge. They sing with a specific vocal quality, which at a first listening appears rather “nasal” and similar to the sound of a *rebab* fiddle (Kunst, 1973, p. 122), concentrated in the upper vocal tract, with a prevalently high register, using the Javanese *slendro* and *pelog* scales. But according to my studies, *sindhen* represent the ideal of Javanese hyper-feminine or the ideal Javanese woman as it was conceived in the court society of the 19th-20th centuries. How do *sindhen* express this ideal?



Figure 1. *Sindhen* during a *gamelan* performance in Wonosari, Gunungkidul, August 28, 2019
(Photo by Iliaria Meloni).

One of the most honoured and acclaimed puppeteers in Java, Ki Manteb Soedarsono, once described *sindhen* as a combination of three elements: *rupa* (literally “face” which can be also translated as aspect or appearance, which I mean as the embodiment of the hyper-feminine), *guna* (“knowledge”, in this case musical and literary knowledge) and *swara* (“voice”). These three attributes connect with metaphysical energy or power that *sindhen* are believed to exert through their aspect and voice. Becker (1993) and Weiss (2006) mention the *shakti*, the primordial feminine power, the divine feminine manifested seen also through the arts. Other scholars address a female seduction power which is believed to enhance male potency and control on passions (Anderson, 1972; Brenner, 1991; Cooper, 2000).

Therefore, mastering the specific voice quality is one of three fundamental requisites for a *sindhen*, in addition to being knowledgeable about *gamelan* music and embodying the feminine ideal according to the canons of the Javanese court. A voice with the right resonance and timbre is not only a necessary quality for singing in the context of *gamelan* but it is also a component of the Javanese concept of what one could define as the “hyper-feminine” and a means of exerting what can be identified as *shakti* (“feminine energy”) or erotic power. Everything the *sindhen* express, through their bodies and their voices, represents the embodiment of these ideals. Posture is a key aspect of this, and they must stay kneeling throughout the whole duration of the performance (which can last as long as eight hours). They are expected to behave in a certain way in public, as codified by court ethics (*tata krama*). This entails limiting or constricting their every movement, including their facial expressions. For instance, while singing, they must not open their mouths more than the breadth of two fingers. Based on a whole range of aesthetic, spatial, linguistic and musical parameters, the public or performing identity of the *sindhen* is characterised by constant restraint and constriction. This is a fundamental principle for analysing all the features of their performances, including their vocal quality.

But, first of all, we have to ask ourselves how it is possible to achieve this quality, as I asked myself when I was first attempting to learn the techniques of the *sindhen*.

Achieving the “Good” Voice Quality

One of my vocal teachers, Sukesi Rahayu, one of the most popular singers in the shadow puppet theatres of central Java, once told me that:

The most important factor is the voice. To become a good *sindhen*, you need to have a good voice. If you have this, you can then study the *cengkok* improvisation technique, which is the second step. You can study this technique, but you can't study to acquire a good sound. You inherit a good voice from your family, or it's God-given. If you have been given a good sound, thanks to genetics, then you can start studying to be a *sindhen* (Sukesi Rahayu, May 29th, 2018).

Most of the teachers and musicians I have consulted share Sukesi's idea that the *sindhen*'s voice quality is innate or inherited (through DNA or from God). The common Javanese term for a natural or spontaneous talent or predisposition is *alami*, which means "natural", and *sindhen* who started singing at a young age, but who never studied specific breathing techniques, or the anatomy of the vocal tract and how to control it, are called *sindhen alami*. Their training consists of imitation of other singers and constant practice, singing and playing music with local groups, culminating in the moment when they are considered good enough to make their public debut on stage in the shadow puppet theatre. They may also study under a singing teacher or enroll in local music academies, where they learn how to read cypher notation and spell the Javanese language correctly, and they can further develop certain aspects of their vocal style, such as how to effect variations based on melodic patterns. Nevertheless, their teachers never provide them with a systematic body of knowledge or analysis concerning the appropriate qualities of the *sindhen* voice or the techniques for acquiring it, and no theoretical manuals about the *sindhen* vocal technique exist.

My attempt to understand the specific qualities of the *sindhen* voice proceeded in a series of steps. First, I took classes with local singers and teachers to learn the key elements of local vocal techniques. Second, I applied Western singing theories and methodologies to see if they could be useful. Third, I initiated the research project incorporating the science of phoniatrics, which this paper presents. In 2013, I started taking classes with several different teachers in Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Banyumas, and East Java. I acquired some useful skills and knowledge about Javanese music and language, female singing, repertoires and improvisation techniques, but none of my teachers taught me what I should do to attain a "good voice". They expected me either to be naturally "gifted" or to learn "by ear". They only gave me vague hints on how to sound more like a *sindhen*, using adjectives such as *merdu* ("clear"), *los* ("loose") and *halus* ("refined"), and the expression *dengan power* ("with power"), often meaning that I should avoid falsetto but should "resonate" more. In this regard, we should bear in mind that, before the introduction of the microphone and amplification, *sindhen* had to be heard above the loud noise of gongs and gamelan metallophone instruments, and so their voices had to be resonant, with a high frequency and a shrill piercing sound.

Trying to understand what the local terminology means in terms of voice physiology reveals some interesting connections. A translation of the generic guidelines imparted by Javanese teachers into the corresponding phoniatric terminology provides an approximate *sindhen* voice "recipe":

Tinggi: "high" = sounding on medium-high frequencies

Merdu: "clear" = sharp and metallic

Los: "loose" = not forced or constricted (with the vocal folds retracted)

Dengan power: "with power" = a limited airflow avoiding falsetto (with a lifted epiglottis and closed velum),

Nyari: "high and sharp" = twangy

Halus: "refined" = adhering to the aesthetic canons of the Javanese court, with an acute and crystalline sound that combines the above-mentioned qualities.

Halus refers usually to people who have a high degree of control over their instincts and passions. This quality is manifested externally through behaviour, and those who can be defined as *halus* exhibit extreme calm and serenity, with restrained bodily movements and gestures. They always exert self-control in their relations with others, never talking loudly or acting obtrusively.

Another adjective in the traditional literature that frequently refers to the female voice is *arum* (literally: “perfumed”), which generally means “sweet” or “smooth”. It can be found, for example, in the line: *sindhen estri swara arum* (“the singers with the sweet voices”) from the poem *Kinanthi Kang Titis*, which is often sung in courtly *gamelan* performances.

The “Ethno-Phoniatic” Survey: Endoscopies on Fieldwork

After exposing the theoretical background and the questions raised during the preliminary fieldwork, I will show what our research consisted of and how the phoniatics could give consistence to the preliminary hypothesis.

Equipped with our notebooks and a suitcase full of phoniatic and audio-visual apparatus, we drove with Professor Petrus Suparto (Pak Parto) – who teaches at ISI Yogyakarta and Pakualaman Palace Sindhen School - around the four districts of the Yogyakarta Special Region, as well as the central district of the *kota*, the city of Yogyakarta. We started in the Wonosari regency of Gunungkidul district, a mountainous area that Pak Parto jokingly described as: “The *sindhen* garage”, to mean that it is a sort of parking lot where most of the Yogyanese *sindhen* can be found. Wonosari is certainly a zone inhabited by most of the “artistic families” YSR. Pak Parto explained the exceptional numbers of *sindhen* in this regency by suggesting that *sindhen* born and raised in a mountainous environment can train their voice naturally and that they are less likely to suffer from voice disorders than those who live in the city. Whether this is true or not, our endoscopic examinations revealed that *sindhen* who were native to Wonosari did in fact have a generally healthier and stronger condition of the vocal folds and a clearer nasal cavity without disorders, if compared with those living in the city.



Figure 2. Dr. Silvia performing the endoscopy on *sindhen* Ibu Tukinam in Kulonprogo, August 29, 2019
(Photo by Iliaria Meloni)

As already noted, most of the singers living in Wonosari are what the Javanese call *alami* (“natural”) singers. Furthermore, many of them have been exposed to *gamelan* music throughout their lives, and are almost totally unaware of, or uninterested in, other musical genres (pop, jazz,

rock or Western art music). The interviews revealed that none of them had ever undergone an endoscopy, nor did they know of any doctors specialized in the singing voice. They told us when they experienced vocal fatigue, they relied on natural remedies (balsamic oils, herbal medicines, hot infusions and traditional massages) or medicines such as the antiseptic and disinfectant or the anti-inflammatory corticosteroid, prescribed by a general practitioner or a local physician. Even though they often sing for eight consecutive hours, overnight and in open spaces, they said they had never resorted to any kind of voice training or specific health care for the voice. Despite never undergoing endoscopy before, they didn't show any discomfort. They were asked to perform diverse traditional pieces of the *sindhen* repertoire and to recite some Javanese poems – usually used as lyrics in the singing – while recorded by the endoscope.³

Outcomes and Discussion: Is Twang *Sindhen* Voice Quality?

After conducting all the endoscopic sessions, we had therefore managed to examine a total of 22 *sindhen*, gathering audio-visual materials of the interviews, group training sessions, discussions and endoscopies. The video recordings of the larynx, pharyngeal walls, and soft palate, together with the corresponding voice recordings, were analysed by Doctor Silvia Spinelli. The endoscopic study showed that:

- During singing the pharyngeal walls were contracted to various degrees in all subjects, forming an inverted V shape, and creating a very narrow opening of the pharyngeal tube.
- The larynx rose with the production of higher frequencies, and was lowered with the production of lower frequencies
- With the higher frequencies the soft palate lifted and the velopharyngeal port narrowed considerably

The opening of the epiglottic funnel is reduced by bringing the arytenoid cartilages closer to the lower part of the epiglottis (the petiole) thereby making the sound clearer, less breathy, and giving it more Twang.

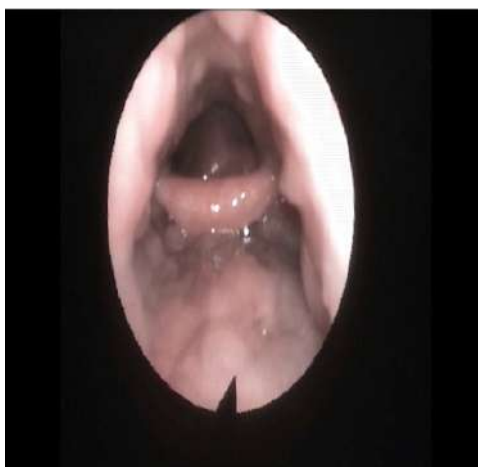


*Figure 3. “V” shape and contraction of the pharyngeal tube typical of Twang quality
(Photo by Silvia Spinelli).*

The most interesting discovery that emerged from the endoscopies and the *Spectrum* analysis is that the main common traits for defining a standard *sindhen* vocal technique are those regarding the degree of pharyngeal constriction,ⁱ the closure of the velum and the medium-high position of the larynx. These could be defined as the most common physiological features of the *sindhen*

voice. Acoustically, it can be equated with a predominance of medium-high frequencies and the lack of formant clusters. These features are also acknowledged to be the main characteristics of the Twang quality as described by Estill (1979) and Sundberg (2010), but one cannot strongly affirm that Twang is an essential *sindhen* quality. Firstly, because Twang is a specific technique and it belongs to a Western singing categorisation which cannot be strictly applied on an oral tradition, and secondly, because, although the overall analysis detected most of the Twang traits, each singer had her own peculiarities and variants, unlike the standard Twang pattern, giving each singer voice a specific timbre. The existence of these variants in the socio-cultural, historical context of the Javanese transmission of knowledge and aesthetics can't be ignored, in order to delimit the *sindhen* vocal quality into some standardised parameters.⁴

At this point, the question is: can Twang be considered the *sindhen* voice quality? Despite the shared traits, which can be said to be at the core of the “*sindhen* voice quality”, many differences between the individual singers also came to our attention. Some used a very high degree of oropharyngeal constriction, while in others, it was minimal. In some *sindhen* the sound appears to be more “projected” (in the sense typical of Western art singing) than others. The singers reported various degrees of Twang, from “necessary” Twang to “distinct” Twang, so that the sound is in some cases sharper and more penetrating, with a snarling quality.⁵ The vibrato also showed to be different in every singer showing no patterns of regularity.

Conclusion

On the basis of our research, we can conclude that the “*sindhen* voice quality” essentially consists of some main features which coincide to some extent with the main features of Twang (Estill, 1978; McDonald, 2005; Sundberg, 2010). The key element is the constriction or narrowing of the pharyngeal walls and the forming of the V-shape that concentrates the sound in the upper vocal tract. However, rather than theorizing a unique, well-defined vocal quality, we feel that it is more exact to refer to a generic quality of the voice that can be defined as a “*sindhen* sonority”, but which has many individual variants. This sound has implications concerning the female power (*shakti*) and the ideal of femininity according to Javanese court aesthetics, in which the key is the “constriction”. From a pragmatic point of view, this “sonority” is what allows vocalists to sing with a *gamelan* orchestra, resonating on medium-high frequencies, so that the voice seems to “float” (Kartomi, 1973, p. 76) above the stratified heterophony.

Endnotes

¹ Iliaria Meloni: all paragraphs, except Silvia Spinelli on 'Outcomes and discussion: is Twang *sindhen* voice quality?'

² A phoniatician is a physician specializing in diagnosis and nonsurgical treatment of voice disorders. Silvia Spinelli has specialised in the treatment of the artistic voice and collaborated with Teatro dell'Opera in Rome and local conservatories, working and researching with experienced singers and actors.

³ This feature had already been suggested by Podjosoadarmo (1988), a linguist who conducted a comparative study involving *sindhen* and *seriosa* (opera singers).

⁴ A useful tool for investigating individual variants is the spectrographic analysis (that can be performed by diverse software as Sonic Visualizer), see Meloni, 2018.

⁵ The classification of the diverse Twang types has been operated by the Complete Vocal Institute. <https://completevocal.institute/twang/>

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THE SONIC-KINETIC DIMENSION IN PHILIPPINE EPICS

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The epic is a narrative that embodies the mythological history of a cultural community. Let us first look at some of the characteristics of an epic, which are contained in the studies of Francisco Demetrio, a Jesuit researcher on Philippine culture. According to Demetrio, there are four different characteristics of an epic as a long narrative: 1) that it contains ancient traditions that feature mystery and heroism, 2) that there is a living belief on such traditions by the owners of these epics, 3) that these traditions are expressed through a long poetic discourse, and 4) that the epics must contain a sacred quality that the community believes in. Being a form of literature, there are three traits that are needed for such a narrative to be an epic; 1) it must be one long poetry, 2) that it was created in the form of verses, 3) that it must be chanted or sung. (Demetrio, 9-10).

Because one of the requirements of an epic is that it is expressed through singing, the epic is usually studied by musicologists and is considered a form of musical discourse. To the ethnologists and anthropologists, however, one needs to understand the story in an epic and so they prioritize the translation into everyday language that is known to a larger public. For anthropologists, this is a story of the origins of a society, and what it contributes to the culture of that society, including their beliefs and customs, as well as their relation to the whole of humanity. In the field of literature, this is a form of oral poetry, where the study not only centers on the verses and lines that are expressed, how many syllables there are in each line of every verse, but also that it contains the views and habits of a society.

In such explanation, the epic then is made up of all of these – narrative, poetry, story, and music, so that its identity as a human expression is quite distinct from other activities. In this presentation, we shall tackle the role of sound, the characteristics of the singers, the style of singing, the meaning of the words that define an epic, as well as other aspects which are needed in an epic presentation that are not usually studied by most scholars.

Introduction

At the beginning of this discussion, I would like to give importance to the words that define an epic and the way it is presented. One of the first things that we need to consider are the titles of the epic that do not necessarily present the content, like the hero and the events, but on the way it is presented. And at this point, I would agree with the idea of Rosario del Rosario that the title of a narrative may define the way it is presented. According to Saboy, the epic titles refer to the way it is sung and not what is contained in the story, just like *Hudhud* of the Ifugao, *Olaginor* of the Manobo and the *Guman* of the Subanen. (Saboy, p. 185) In his first example, he said that the word *Ullalim* of the Kalinga means the way the story as well as the feelings of the characters, is musically presented.

The *Ullalim* for example is a vocal exhortation that is used by the poet to sing the verses and the important gatherings on significant occasions and meetings of the elders during peace pacts and other celebrations. And even in the field of religion, some of the texts of the Christian liturgy and introductory gospel hymns from the Bible are sung to the music of the *Ullalim*.

The *Suguidanon* on the other hand is the traditional epic of Panay that came from the word “sugid” which means to relate or tell a story. The singer is called *manugsugidanon*. And

similarly, the *Ulahingan* of the Manobo, the word *ulihang* means a style of musical versification.

Similar is the role that the *Darangen* plays in the Maranaw society. The *Darangen* is an epic of the Maranaw whose usage is wide, in terms of the sound, the presentation and the creative process. First of all, it is sung for different occasions, outside of its role as the premier epic of the society. An example here is the *bayok*, which is a long oration that is also intoned, at the end of which is sung some scenes from the *Darangen*. In the artistic world, the *Darangen* prods the creation of other songs in the style of the *Darangen*, which is complex and melismatic, just like *Kandurangen*, *Kapranon*, *Kandomana* and others. In this manner, the melody of the *Darangen* becomes the root of the melodies of other songs, just like *Kaplakitan* and *Kapmamayog*.

The Singers

Although Manuel states that the tone quality is not important, the singing itself and the singers are the ones that are deemed vital to the act. In the transfer of knowledge in the performance of an epic, the voice is different from the way the words are memorized. According to Teodoro Saway who is a Talaandig, the story can be studied if a student knows how to read a text, but the voice is a totally different aspect in the entire discourse. According to him, one needs to be possessed by a spirit called Mulin-mulin who oversees the whole process, in order for one to be able to memorize to correctly enunciate the story. In order to acquire this help, one needs to make offerings consisting of one slain chicken and a meat that should be laid on a white cloth. This ritual is called *paulin* or the request for help and guidance. (Llesis, p. 19)

A good singer is not only a narrator, but a whole artist who performs. The quality and volume of his voice is what are deemed important. Because the singer acts the different characters as well as a dramatist and a narrator, one needs to embody and personify all of these personalities.

The learning process of the singing of the *Ulagin*, for example, starts from a proficiency in the Manobo language as well as the scope of its vocabulary, including the synonyms and metaphors. In order to have an effective narration, the singer has to be able to identify the places where the actions occur, and be able to emit the beauty, the wrath, and other human characteristics of the *dramatis personae*, while he expounds on the entire story in order to connect to the feelings of those listening to him. (Llesis, p. 19).

According to Esterlinda Malagar, a singer of the epic poetry also creates while telling the story with the inspirations that come to him during the performance. In that way, he does not repeat exactly what the story contains, and he enacts the different parts of the story according to his inspiration and vision. (Malagar, p. 265)

Although the *Sugidanon* can be sung at any time, performers usually wait for the sunset when it is performed on any occasion. The people congregate in order to listen to the *taga-sugidanon* who is lying on a hammock with one of his feet rocking it while the foot touches the floor. (Caballero and Caballero-Castor, xii)

Among the *Sugidanon*, the epic is sung at night, in order to provide the atmosphere conducive to the performers' thoughts. Sometimes, they cover the light with a blanket in order to dim the entire surroundings. His position is almost prostrate with eyes closed like a person dreaming. The singer first would drink *tuba* or beer before he begins.

It can be said that the delivery of an epic or narrative to the public varies greatly. It can be seen therefore that that the cultures are not only different, but also the ways of performance are highly varied, even if it entails only one person doing it. On another note, it appears that

each performer is endowed with the power from the world of the supernatural, with some of them being shamans, or spiritual persons.

The Style of Singing

The style of singing also represents the differences or similarities of the languages, just as these epics contain different characters in the stories.

The most popular epic of the Ilanon Manobo is entitled *Tulelangan*, wherein the singing is done in a modern language with some ancient elements. These are performed in seven styles or what is known as “likuen”. The melody and rhythm of delivery varies according to the movement of the story to avoid boring the listeners. Through the different speeds of delivery, the story becomes more colorful. A singer is known to be a master if he knows all seven styles in singing an epic. (Demetrio, p.23)

The *Hudhud* of the Ifugao is performed during the rice harvest, when the entire community is resting and listening to the performance of a *munhawe* who leads the singing of the epic. Every phrase is narrated melodically and to be answered by ten to twelve women to the tune of the *munhawe*. These melodies vary, but the lines are expressed in the same way. Sometimes, the women laugh when the passages are funny or sometimes they converse about the events that the *munhawe* is singing. At times, the *munhawe* herself joins in the laughter and converse on the flow of the story. This way, the *munhawe* is able to rest, even though she does not really stop the delivery.

The singing of the *munhawe* is gentle, in which there is no beat being followed except for the prosody of the lines. Her voice is also free to rise and fall according to the characters and events that are being portrayed. The answer of the chorus has some beat which emphasizes some syllables, but always ends on a rising inflection. There are formulas in singing the choral answers to the verses of the narrator, and these are always sung at the end of a statement by the *munhawe*.

According to Llesis (2003), there are two different styles of singing the *Ulagang*, the principal epic of the Bukidnon people: the *panumbungan*, where one presents the synopsis and the depiction of the different events in the story, and in which the singer is not personally involved in the presentation. The second style is called the *linagketan*, in which all the artistic ways of narration are presented. A great singer usually uses this style in his performance.

In the singing of the *Kudaman* epic, the singer is “lying down, his eyes covered by his left arm, while his right hand holds a white cloth on his breast” (Revel, p. 3). This provides concentration and reflection on the parts of the narrative that he is going to utter. His voice starts in a high register and gradually goes down to a lower level. In order to rest his voice once in a while, he has to fluctuate between the high and low registers. The singer makes sure that he has a solid technique because it is difficult to represent heroic and the strong qualities, and to make them alive for a long time (Revel, p. 3).

The sung tunes reflect the different characters of the story. “In Palawan, the meaning of *susunsunan* is to give a melody, from the word *sunuq*, or to follow, or to give a melodic line. This happens in a culture where the consideration for the music is as important as the text. Nicole Revel really marveled at this creative art, in which the singing itself is given its due importance not only by the narrator but also on the part of the listeners who understand more the content of the story because of the melody that the narrator creates (Nicole Revel-Macdonald, p. 38).

The qualities in the *Ullalim* of the Kalinga are quite similar to the singing of the *Kudaman*. “The wonderful beauty of the singing of the *Ullalim* lies in the artistic variety of the melodic lines, the quality of the voice of the singer which means the quality of the tone and

color, and the noble singing technique. The unmitigated variety of the tunes and the creative adaptation of the music to the text is the main reason they are able to perform without rest for a period of six to eight hours.

In her description of Usuy who sang the epic *Kudaman*, Nicole Revel said that “in his technique of singing, he was able to sustain the singing in a continuous and steady flow, with the gentle tone that exudes beauty and peace”. While *Kudaman*’s voice is alone, he is able to describe the theme of every character. This is done through the different variety of melodies and their register, whether high or low, or even. The melody of *Kudaman*, for example, is at the low register with the uniform enunciation of the syllables in a slow tempo. The melodies related to the Binibini are at the high register and run in a wavey manner, like the flapping of the wings of Lingisan, the pet bird of Binibini of the Western Wind (Revel-Macdonald, p. 36). In the transcription done by Jose Maceda, it can be seen that the melodies of Binibini has a much wider range and more wavy flow than that of *Kudaman*, which stays at a level register and does not travel too much.

In the epic *Silungan Baltapa* of the Sama, a very thorough study was done in French by Olivier Tourney. According to him, the melodies are made up of a few motives that are repeated. In fact, there are only four principal motives. Two do not follow any specific beat or tempo, but they are connected by melodic and melismatic structures. The other two principal motives use a formula with beats and are connected by syllabic structure and the shape of the melody. The shapes of their sound have one that is raising and the other descending, and they only vary when sung with varying tempo, sometimes getting slower. Hence, for a musician it will be difficult to determine because the whole delivery is full of freedom and latitude.

The complexity of the things that have been mentioned on the music of *Silungan Baltapa* is the exact opposite of the way Pino-Pino Cadios of the Mansaka sing the epic *Dumlan*. His voice seems to be trembling and seems to be in a hurry, sometimes, like being afraid, and then being amused. Other phrase beginnings are intoned in a rising direction with a little melisma or when trying to emphasize a point, and then afterwards he continues at the prevailing tone. He avoids looking at anyone listening to him, like he is enraptured by what he is relating, and only his voice seems to move in different motions in relating his story.

In all those sung and narrated epics, the length of the sound and the enunciation of the verses are dependent on the length of one’s breath and not on the length of the text nor the beats. But the breath is also based on the content of the story and its telling, however he/she interprets and presents the events. Therefore, the basis for the length or shortness of time in an epic are what is inside the story, and the feelings that are imbedded in one’s view of these events.

In all of these cases, the attention of the listeners is also considered so that they can follow the flow of the story through all these techniques of presentation. The creativity of the singer is required in order for him to provide the correct interpretation of the text that he is singing through the use musical elements such as timbre, tone, intensity, rhythm, breath, and melody. These elements are not the only way to fulfill the role, but more importantly, his being part of the story together with his feelings and points of view, which provide the freshness in the scenes that he is describing.

Secondary Elements of The Epic

Some of the things that will be addressed here are the elements that enhance the singing of the epic, as well as other musical aspects that are included in the narrative. Some of these may be external to the main singer, or other music that has something to do with the epic. Or for that

matter, other materials that have something to do with the music, just like the instruments, which have reference to the events in the epic.

One example is the performance of the *Ulagin* where a *sala* is inserted, a *sala* being a song that has something to do with the aspect of life that is given attention through a philosophical outlook. The singing of the *sala* is done in order to allow the singer of the *Ulagin* some rest, and this is what is called *pagsabla*.

In the epic *Guman*, there is another singer who assists the narrator. According to Emerson Brewer Christie who discovered the epic tradition among the Subanun, there is a person who starts the performance by singing some meaningless syllables leading to the performance of the principal singer. It is like giving the main singer a jump-off of energy to start on the right tone. And when he sees that the main singer is tiring, he allows him to rest by repeating the final phrases of the main piece and sometimes even singing it twice. (Demetrio, p. 27)

Although the epic singing is not accompanied by any instrument, the playing of the gongs can be heard in the parts of *hongadinudup*, a healing ritual, while the story of *Alim* is being sung. According to Nicole Revel, the gongs are played in some parts of the *Alim* as introduction to the following matters that it symbolizes, or as an accompaniment to some specific parts of its singing.

Conclusion

The present discussion is a swift glimpse at the qualities of an epic which are given little importance in the studies that have been done by scholars in the fields of literature, ethnology, and anthropology. Although those that have been mentioned here are mostly outside the performance of the epic, they are nevertheless important in the effective narration of these national stories.

I hope that this writing has given some importance to the quality of the epic other than the words and their meanings. Because the epic is a living art, its performance on the part of the listening public is a human experience of the present.

In order to give a complete perspective to an epic, one needs to consider all of its elements – the singer, the voice, the different styles of narration, and others in the entire environment of the performance; otherwise they will just remain words written on paper read aloud. An epic is supposed to be a living narrative, which sustains the life and motion of our heritage and ancient culture.

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**THE *HUDHUD* EPIC AS PRACTICED IN HINGYON, IFUGAO:
A SUMMARY OF TWO RECORDED EPISODES**

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Abstract

In the year 2014, the UP Center for Ethnomusicology (UPCE) conducted field data gathering in the municipality of Hingyon, Ifugao with the goal of documenting local traditional music and dance. The study was conducted with the assistance of the Adimayku, a local organization established to keep traditional arts alive through transmission and performance. Among these traditions is the *Hudhud* epic performed on particular occasions relating to agriculture and funerary rites. Although the *hudhud* has already been included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO back in the year 2008, the research was largely conducted in the municipality of Kiangan. In the said documentation in 2014, the UPCE was able to record four episodes of the epic performed by the women of Adimayku led by Bugan Dinamling, one of the last *munhaw-e* (*hudhud* storytellers) who was then about 80 years old. These recordings were subsequently transcribed and translated between 2015 to 2017. This paper intends to present the summary of two episodes of the *hudhud* transcribed and translated from these recordings. In doing so, I hope to provide deeper insights into the literature of *hudhud* in particular and to the practice of epic singing in the Cordilleras in general.

TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN MUSICAL BEHAVIOUR IN GIBBONS

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Abstract

Singing is one of the most ancient types of music. But what is music? How did it evolve and why? Gibbons genetically are the farthest apes from us; nevertheless, we share many similar behaviours, such as stable pair bond, sex for pleasure, paternal care, upright posture, bipedal walking, and singing. The gibbon song, mostly performed as a coordinated duet between mated pairs, has multiple forms and functions. It can serve as a territorial advertisement, strengthen the mated pair's bond, and it can also express cohesion and bonding—not just within a family group, but also in special captive situations and perhaps in the wild within a community of gibbons. In this presentation I argue that from the existence of the emotionally filled, infant-directed communication serving the same role in gibbons as in humans to soothe the infant, to their most elaborate vocal and visual territory-marking displays, we can find the possible foundation of various elements of human musical expression in gibbons. But in contrast to human music, characterized by the importance of vocal learning, gibbon song is instinctual, and is therefore largely absent in studies of the human evolution of music. Although the number of different calls they can produce is limited, the calls can be used flexibly in different situations. Drawing on years of continuous observation as the director of a gibbon research facility, I demonstrate that gibbons show a high level of coordination and timing during singing, revealing much better control over their vocalizations than previously thought.

**MONG! MONG! MONG! SOUNDS OF THE SIAMANG: SIGNALS OF SURVIVAL
AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MAH MERI CULTURAL SYSTEM**

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Abstract

“Mong, mong, mong” are the vocables used by the Mah Meri to represent the call of the *siamang* in the ‘Song of the Black Handed Gibbon’. Prior to the deforestation of the mangrove and lowland forest in Carey Island to establish oil palm plantations, the sounds of the *siamang* were the soundscape of the ecological niche where the Mah Meri paddled their *pahuk* (boat) daily across the rivers. Ironically, while extinction and conservation of the *siamang* is an urgent concern today, the *siamang* was an important source of protein consumption for the Mah Meri. The *siamang* song details the hunt, capture and consumption of the *siamang*. It also reminds the people of their egalitarian values of sharing and surviving as a community. While this generation of Mah Meri have little memory the *siamang*, I argue that the sounds of the *siamang* were once important to the survival the Mah Meri and the sustainability of their cultural system. In a time of religious assimilation and adoption of capitalistic values, perhaps, a revival of this song set to current Mah Meri tune may contribute to strengthening the sustainability of the Mah Meri cultural system.

MENTAWAI GIBBONS, COSMOLOGY AND SHAMANIC SONG IN SIBERUT

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Introduction

I have made nine research trips to the Mentawai Archipelago since 2011, about 150 kilometers west of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean. Siberut National Park comprises 47% of the central west of Siberut, the Northmost island, and is a reserve of more than 1,900 square kilometers or 735 square miles. With half a million years of isolation since it separated from Sumatra, Mentawai is second only to the Galapagos in diversity of flora and fauna. Its rainforests are composed of diverse enormous buttressed trees with canopies 24-36 meters high, dominated by the *Dipterocarpaceae* family, with abundant epiphytes and woody climbers.

Science shows that the primordial forests of our planet do not survive as individuals, but as members of enormous symbiotic communities (Wohlleben, 2016). Not only do the great forests shape themselves across the millennia, they also shape the creatures more recently evolved to feed on them. In this sense, the forest of Mentawai and the numerous endemics that have developed as their companions, are one. A clear online map of the Mentawai Archipelago, also showing the boundary of Siberut National Park outlined in red, is found in my 2017 article (p. 117).

Mentawai is famed for its endemic gibbon (locally called *bilou*) and six endemic monkeys. In the Mentawai virgin rainforest, which is difficult to find outside the Siberut National Park, the primary diurnal aural impression is the cries of primates and birds. With a deafening alarm call that can be heard far and wide, the *bilou* has earned the role of protector of the rainforest animals, and if it notices any hunting by animals or humans, its cry will ruin hunting for up to an entire day. This has led to its reputation as a powerful, wise, and caring guardian of animals. Even humans consider the *bilou* is sounding an alarm to protect them.

During my eight field trips, I have discovered that the Mentawai gibbon, *Hylobates klossii*, known as Kloss's gibbon and hereafter called *bilou*, is a powerful force that shapes Mentawai cosmology and spirituality as well as the legends and folk tales of the Mentawai people. The unique core beliefs Mentawaians hold about the *bilou* are revealed in songs in antique language passed through generations of shamans. My fieldwork reveals that these beliefs are held throughout the archipelago. The map on the following page (Figure 1) shows most of my fieldwork and collecting sites since I began my Mentawai project in 2011.

The degree of significant spiritual power that traditional Mentawaians have assigned to the endemic *bilou* gibbon ape can be compared to current and historical practice in other cultures. Two such cultures that regard specific animals as having significant spiritual powers are discussed here as comparisons.

Mentawai *Bilou* Culture Compared with Kaluli Folk Ornithology

The first culture of comparison is from Papua New Guinea. Anthropologist Stephen Feld discovered in 1976 that the Kaluli people of the Great Papuan Plateau consider their endemic birds as more than colorful avian vocalists; their cries are believed to be literally the voices of spirits of their dead. Thus bird voices are informative links between the Kaluli ancestors and themselves (Feld, 1996, 2012). Kaluli people taking spiritual direction from birds may be compared with the power Mentawaians invest in the native *bilou*, a trusted guardian spirit to all those who respect the forest and its creatures, or conversely a punitive spirit to the disrespectful.

Many Mentawai shamans also indirectly consult the *bilou* spirit in trance to heal a sick

villager; indirectly because they use a go-between, another spirit that can ask the *bilou* spirit for help, given a shaman is unable to ask directly. For this reason, shamans do not hunt or eat *bilou*. In contrast to the Kaluli people, Mentawaians receive no direct messages from birds.



Figure 1: Map of Mentawai Research Areas 2011-2019
by Juniator Tulus after Wikimedia Commons

Mentawai *Bilou* Culture Compared to the Ancient Chinese Gibbon Culture

Another culture for comparison to that of the traditional Mentawai, which considers its endemic gibbon very special and even sacred, is the gibbon culture of Ancient China, from at least 3000 years ago to around 300 years ago. The old Chinese beliefs about gibbons held strong through the 6th Century CE, but then very gradually waned and fully disappeared as the heavily forested heartlands of China along the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers became progressively deforested to gradually provide space for agriculture (van Gulik, 1967).

When most of China was still forested, wealthy literati families were accustomed to live in the company of free-range gibbons, and commonly enticed them to feel at home sleeping and singing in their magnificent fruited gardens. Like today's Mentawaians, the ancient Chinese craved to be in the company of gibbons. The earliest writing about a gibbon is the report that when the beloved pet gibbon of Prince Chuang of Chu went missing in the Yangtze River Valley — this Prince is also known to history as Chuang-wang, King of the Chou Dynasty at the turn of the 6th Century BC — he ordered an entire forest to be decimated in the frantic but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to find his pet again (van Gulik, 1976: 11). The fact that this rash and impulsive young man in fact, lived to just 22 years old (613-591 BC) suggests that perhaps life was not worth living without his gibbon.

The ancient Chinese ascribed interesting powers to their gibbons. They fantasized a mysterious hidden supernatural world beyond human experience in the tree canopy high above, the realm of gibbons privileged to preview and be ready for the weather heading toward mortals. During the Zhou dynasty (1027- 221 BC), beginning around 1000 BC, early Chinese artists and philosophers characterized gibbons as symbolizing Daoist and Buddhist origins (Geissmann, 2008). Because of their natural grace as singers and brachiators, long-armed, long-bodied gibbons were believed to effortlessly inhale the *qi* (universal power) as earthbound humans longed to do, and so were considered by the ancient Chinese Daoists to instinctively know the secret to longevity; in fact, some masters even believed gibbons lived for centuries or were

immortal. Daoists kept gibbons as well as equally thin and graceful cranes as their special pets. Both were considered perfect masters of the *qi*.

The famed Dutch orientalist-diplomat Robert van Gulik (1910-1967) recounts that to the old Chinese, a gibbon was the perfect role model, comparing very favorably with macaques, the troublesome monkey found all over China (1967). Gibbons are gentle, kind, modest. They share food and don't squabble among themselves. They pick only what they need to eat and don't waste food. Unlike monkeys, they never steal food from farmers. Monkeys, on the other hand, argue constantly and throw fruit away after only a single bite. They are loud and immodest and ruin the harvest. Be like a gibbon!

In Chinese poetry of the 4th through 8th Centuries, the calls of the now-extinct gibbons that once sang along the Yangtze River gorges and beyond were considered heartbreakingly sad and said to inspire human weeping. Thousands of poems were written, but I will share just one, by Hsiao Tung, an early 6th Century crown prince of Liang (501-531AD), who wrote:

Hearing the gibbons call, inch by inch my entrails are torn,
Listening to the cranes, pair by pair my tears flow down.
(van Gulik, 1967, p. 53)

Gibbons were still being painted by travellers and local artists in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD). I can recommend that interested readers search in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection for some marvelous visual examples. Gradually, as more of the forest became farmland after the 17th Century in China, finally the various gibbon species celebrated in the old poems and paintings went extinct, and thus are unknown to primatology due to this total habitat loss.

The Call of the Male *Bilou*

As profound as the fondness of Old China for gibbons was, Mentawai Islanders have taken their attachment to the endemic Mentawai gibbon even further.

For Mentawaians, who for at least 2000 years have depended on the pre-dawn song of the male *bilou* from their sleeping trees to implore or even compel the sun to rise, there is one additional meaning given to this characteristic male morning call: if this call is ever heard at a strange or unusual time of day or night, a time that is NOT 4:00 am or so, then it is believed that the calling male *bilou* is under the spell of the great *bilou* spirit, called the *sanitu bilou*, and is therefore busy attending a death in the clan. The song of the male *bilou*, when delivered at an unexpected time, helps to reassure a human spirit that is understandably frightened because his or her body is in the process of dying. It also reassures everyone in the *uma* (communal clan house) that the *sanitu bilou* will help with the transition.

A partial song bout of the male *bilou* can be heard on the website of The Gibbon Research Lab, recorded by Thomas Geissmann of the University of Zürich-Irchel. It is a fragment of the pre-dawn call, which can last up an hour (doi: [gibbons.de/main/index.html](https://doi.org/10.1002/gibb.1001)). Prior to loss of habitat in Mentawai, as many as six male gibbons could be heard singing in a casually overlapped chorus before sunrise. But it is believed that to escort a human spirit at an unusual time, just one male *bilou* will sing.

Shamanic Songs about the *Bilou*

Shamanic songs have their text in the old *kerei* language that is not intelligible to ordinary people. The archaic embellished texts and their meanings encode traditional values. These texts are taught to *kerei* candidates preparatory to the time they will be considered fully initiated to

shamanism. The song texts and melodies as well as the chants and rituals vary according to the lineage of the instructing *kerei*, suggesting that some of the instruction has always been received in trance.

One of my favorite *kerei* is a senior shaman in South Siberut named Aman Boroigok whom I have recorded several times across the years. He has sung several songs about the *bilou* and other Mentawai primates. One song in particular describes the feeling of the *sanitu bilou* as it sings for the worried human whose body will die as the spirit leaves the doomed body. A synopsis of the text, which includes a purification image of bathing in pure water, is:

Young gibbon of the wilderness, he grieves, calling souls and
calming those who are worried so they don't go astray . . .

Without the help of *bilou* song to lead the spirit leaving the body to the big village, the spirit, according to traditional Mentawai belief, might get lost in the forest, and might not be able to find its correct place in the world beyond. As a wandering ghost, it might never find its family and haunt the living (see Tulus and Burman-Hall, forthcoming 2022: section 7.1). It is rare for any culture to associate the cry of any primate with predicting death and dying, and with guiding a human spirit safely to the right place in the afterlife. By calling anomalously-timed male song bouts the work of a spirit-guide, Mentawai culture appears unique. A video performance of this song with full text translation using the link will be published in Tulus and Burman-Hall, 2022.



Figure 2: Aman Boroigok in mid performance, 2016
(Photo by the author)

In Mentawai, the *bilou* is considered very closely related to humanity. One legend tells that the *bilou* is a changeling human. According to the story, an angry adolescent boy climbed a tree and refused to ever come down, no matter how much his family begged him, becoming the first *bilou*. The song *Urai Kaman Kamaman* as recorded in Sipora Island is discussed in Burman-Hall, 2017 (pp. 135-136 and video example 1). A related legend tells that because a *bilou* naturally understands all manner of forest plants, the first *bilou* became a natural herbal healer, the first Mentawai shaman.

In fact, gibbon DNA of the Northern White-Cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*) from mainland Southeast Asia was initially sequenced in 2014 by Lucia Carbone and determined to be about 96% consistent with human DNA, similar with the degree of relatedness of the orangutan, by contrast with 98% consistency for chimpanzees and bonobos (note that Jane Goodall verbally claims 98.6% in her fundraising appeals).

Other songs about the *bilou* that many shamans know show the Mentawai gibbon as a friend and role model, or tell a story of a family of *bilou* enjoying a day in the rainforest, at the top of trees, changing trees to reach delicious fruit, or coming down to drink clear water. One song, performed with two dancers (one for each animal), tells of a mischievous young *bilou* who decides to annoy a *manyang* (sea-eagle) by brushing it on the wing as it circles, thereby instigating a memorable rivalry.

Jaraik, A Gibbon Guardian Carving

Reimar Schefold, a Swiss anthropologist who lived among the Mentawai people, found a stylized wood carving of a squatting gibbon that survived the forced Christianization of the Mentawai Archipelago in the mid 1950s by being stored in a dusty attic. It is presumed to have been made in the 1930s. It formerly was hung over the altar of the *uma* communal house of the Sakuddei clan who live in west Siberut as a guardian and blessing panel. All the women and children of the clan slept under it. For the people of the Mentawai Archipelago, nothing more sacred could be imagined than this *bilou* protector, which is now displayed in the Dallas Museum of Art, thanks to the Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc. It is 177.8 x 143.5 x 30.48cm in size and made of carved wood, ritually decorated with a macaque skull, mother-of-pearl shell inlay, glass beads, and rattan strips. (See this at the Dallas Museum of Art website; also see Berstein, 2013 and Schefold, 2017, Fig 21, p. 27, p. 212; and cover.) This *jaraik* is proof positive that the *bilou*, the *de facto* guardian of the daytime jungle, has long functioned as a guardian of humans as well within traditional Mentawai spirituality.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the purpose of my fieldwork is to preserve the surviving intangible culture, the old stories and songs for future generations of Mentawaians, while translating them and making them intelligible and available to all. So much damage was done to traditional culture by the mass purges of the mid-1950s, and subsequently by the overreach of the Indonesian government and the proselytizing churches under the erroneous notion that the indigenous beliefs and traditional lifeways of the Mentawai people were not appropriate to people in a developing nation. But now, with tourism as a goal, Indonesia has been forced to re-evaluate, to see that the traditional Mentawai life and its intangible culture—its *uma* communal house with carvings, paintings, and decorations such as the *jaraik*, its songs and dances, all these are indeed of significant interest to the outside world, and are something to be proud of and to retain as symbols of identity. Particularly fragile and vulnerable are the endangered and critically endangered primates, given that every tree that is harvested legally for building locally or internationally, or simply stolen from the Siberut National Reserve or harvested illegally when backs are turned removes critical habitat. When the forest is no more, the *bilou*, whose past and current role is unique in Mentawai, will no longer be able to guard current and future generations, when the *bilou* spirit can no longer help the shaman heal the sick, when its song can no longer escort human spirits to the big village when they are dying, something unique and precious will have been lost in Mentawai that at this moment still anchors traditional believers to the natural world.



Figure 3. Young Male Bilou, Siberut, 2012
(Photo by the author)

Consider modern China, lightyears beyond the old dynasties that revered gibbons until three centuries ago, and now certainly are without any remnants of a true gibbon culture as only a handful of critically endangered gibbon species struggle to exist. Two gibbons species have recently gone extinct in China (*Hylobates lar*, the white-handed gibbon and *Nomascus leucogenys*, the Northern white-cheeked crested gibbon), and the total number of extant individual gibbons is even less than the number of wild pandas. As everywhere in historic gibbon habitat, the stress factors include forest fragmentation, illegal hunting and other human disturbance. China's most numerous gibbon is *Nomascus concolor* (black crested gibbon), with a population of only about 270 social groups (ca. 1200 individuals) living generally in the Yunnan forests. Beyond this, China has a small population of less than 200 individuals of *Hoolock leuconedys* (Eastern hoolock gibbon) distributed over 17 scattered locations in south west Yunnan near Myanmar, less than 150 *Hoolock tianxing* (Gaoligong hoolock or 'Skywalker' hoolock gibbons, identified in 2017) living near the Myanmar border, only about 28 *Nomascus hainanus* (Hainan Black-crested Gibbon) living their lives out on Hainan Island in the South China Sea, and an absence of recent reports on the few *Nomascus nasutus* (Eastern Black-crested Gibbon) formerly surviving on the Chinese side of a track of karst forest between northeastern Vietnam and southeastern China. Now at the 11th hour, China may apparently be motivated to preserve gibbon habitat, and thereby the gibbons themselves.

Like China, Mentawai will perhaps eventually find itself without its *bilou*, and humanity will be the poorer for it. While time remains, we who care must protect Mentawai's forests, must protect Mentawai's endemic primates and the amazing traditional culture uniquely associated with them.

Acknowledgements

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HOW MANY MUSICALITIES? ON THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF GIBBON SONG RESEARCH IN ECOLOGICALLY MINDED ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

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Abstract

Despite a recent proliferation of attention within music studies to the sonic dimensions of the world beyond the human, the complex and coordinated vocalizations of gibbons remain largely disregarded. In this presentation, drawing upon fieldwork with an environmental conservation initiative in a forest in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia—where scientific and indigenous understandings of gibbons converge—I examine a series of epistemological frictions encountered in the ethnomusicological consideration of gibbon song: can gibbon song be a direct object of study, or must it be mediated by its representation within ethnographic practices? I begin by arguing that the scientifically proposed functions of gibbon song—its capacity to simultaneously negotiate territorial boundaries and facilitate social relationships—resonate with recent theoretical approaches to the relationship between sound and space made audible in human sonic practice (e.g., Daughtry 2015; Abe 2018). But this apparent cohesion sits uneasily with the deep divide out of which ethnomusicology’s understanding of music developed, as Mundy (2018) argues, valued for its very distinction from non-human sonic phenomena. Critically reading the few treatments of gibbon song within ecomusicology, zoomusicology, and acoustic ecology—in which gibbon song becomes an epistemological resource for appropriation within human systems of meaning, the foil by which other non-human acoustic phenomena are valued according to the degree to which they reflect the aesthetic values of Western European classical music, or the means to proselytize the spatial segregation of natural sound and human “noise”—I argue that these approaches potentially reproduce very ethnocentrism and/or anthropocentrism they purport to overcome. Taking gibbon song seriously, I argue, requires nothing less than the critical re-appraisal of one of the discipline’s foundational concepts, “musicality.”

**AN ARTISTIC SPACE FOR THE BALINESE *BANCI* (TRANSVESTITE):
COMEDIC CROSSDRESSERS IN CONTEMPORARY *CALONARANG***

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Abstract

While the practice of crossdressing in Bali's myriad of dance traditions is not new, attitudes toward homosexuality and transgendered individuals have been stigmatizing and marginalizing. This is especially so in a society where the worship of ancestors is at the forefront of the culture, as those on the sexual outskirts of tradition who may not continue the family line, and face immense pressure from family and society. Even so, Balinese Hindu philosophies justify a third sex other than male or female and allow for a "middle space," where transgendered individuals, or *banci*, are recognized and symbolized in ritual ceremonies. These attitudes of both acceptance and stigma, have recently become an artistic undercurrent in the Balinese *Calonarang* dance, where certain transgender individuals have become wildly popular for their ability to entertain through lewd jokes and sexual social commentary.

This paper draws on this recent development in the *Calonarang* to comment on contemporary cross-gender performance in Bali. Drawing on interviews with a select number of transgender performers, we seek to capture their subjectivities as performers who negotiate the tensions existing between Balinese social ideologies and their personal lives. Through an examination of the comedic dialogue performed by these individuals, this paper comments on how lewd jokes and sexual social commentary play upon social stigmas for entertainment, but also act as a vehicle for social change and acceptance. In particular, we have observed the role that these performers are playing in the *Calonarang* dance, to assert how these comedic crossdressers are functioning to reify, challenge, and destigmatize sexual ideologies, while, at the same time, creating an artistic space for transgender performers to economically thrive.

**WOMEN DANCING MEN: GENDER AND CONTRAST
IN THE MANGKUNEGARAN'S *LANGENDRIYA***

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Abstract

The Mangkunegaran's *langendriya*, a form of dance drama developed in Solo, Central Java in the late 1800's, is distinct in that it is traditionally performed only by women. *Langendriya* is characterized by its use of sung instead of spoken dialogue, a feature of the genre since its inception, with dance movements included as a later addition to the form. Because of its all-female cast, *langendriya* performances incorporate women who perform as men, including male *gagah*, or unrefined, characters, a cross-gender performance that is rarely seen in other traditional Central Javanese performance forms.

Focusing on a recent *langendriya* performance, organized by the Mangkunegaran and performed on the grounds of Yogyakarta's *kraton*, I ask how female bodies change the presentation of *gagah* characters and interrogate the perception that contemporary *langendriya* subverts established gender norms. Instead, contemporary *langendriya* performances, drawing on established conventions, reinforce traditional gender roles and are not inherently empowering for women. Though women dance male characters, the ways in which these characters are portrayed are changed from standard Javanese performance norms, making the characters' presentation no longer strictly masculine. Instead, the performance of these *gagah* characters incorporates feminine qualities, allowing the genre to fit neatly into established gender norms in the wider world of Javanese performing arts but stifling any possibility for flexibility in terms of gender expression.

QUEERNESS AS THE MISSING NOTE: THE AGENCY OF *GAY* MEN *KHRUEANG SAI* MUSICIANS THROUGH THE AESTHETICS OF *NAAPHAAT* MUSIC
(Lighting paper)

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Phleeng Naaphaat is the most highly valued repertory in Thai classical music. Its pieces signify an action and are used in various contexts, with theatrical accompaniment, Buddhist ceremonies, and *waikhruu* or teacher-honoring rituals being the most common ones. Because of its association with Thai cosmology, *phleeng naaphaat* operates within rigid conditions including strict ritual permissions and players' identity. It is ideally performed by *piiphaat* ensembles, preferably with male musicians. Despite the implied inflexibility, some minor exceptions are known to have been made regarding the customs surrounding the repertory. In the past few years, however, the norms of *naaphaat* face an unprecedented change. The repertory is increasingly played by an ensemble of string instruments that only performs secular entertainment music, and by *gay* musicians. This phenomenon challenges not only the strict instrumental demarcation of *naaphaat* performance but also the binarily gendered practices behind Thai classical music.

What does it mean for *gay* musicians to play such a highly regarded musical category on unconventional – or even wrong – instruments? What are they trying to do? How might the sexuality of these musicians tell us about the underlying heteromascularity in Thai culture? With these questions, I examine the aesthetics behind the performance, taking into consideration my experience as a straight male Thai classical music practitioner. Drawing on semiotics as filtered through Thomas Turino and Gender and Sexuality studies in Southeast Asia, I argue that *phleeng naaphaat* becomes an agentive tool for the *gay* musicians to negotiate with the gendered roles in the string ensemble, thereby legitimizing the performance. This paper is aimed to contribute a fresh but not new ethnomusicological perspective on identity politics to nuance the study of Thai classical music and to resituate the subject within contemporary discourse both in Thai and Southeast Asian Studies.

What Does it Mean to Play a Wrong Music?

Thai classical music shares deep ties with the Thai elites and Hindu-Buddhist belief, its practices are laden with conventions, rules, and norms. Within this tradition, *phleeng naaphaat* is one obvious example where such esoteric knowledge is strictly observed. These revered pieces are most notably used in *waikhruu*, a teacher-honoring ritual. The repertory is ideally performed by *piiphaat* ensembles and usually by men musicians.

However, the norms of *phleeng naaphaat* are sometimes transgressed. The repertory is also played on *khrueng sai*, or string ensemble, and by *gay* musicians. Because this ensemble is traditionally effeminate and performs secular music, the performance challenges the rules of *phleeng naaphaat* and the gendered practices of Thai classical music. What does it mean for these musicians to play this highly regarded repertory on unconventional – or incorrect – instruments? If their performance is deemed wrong, what, then, are they trying to do? What does their sexuality tell us about the masculinities in Thai culture?

In this paper, I will examine the aesthetics behind *phleeng naaphaat* on the string ensemble. I argue that the performance is a site of non-heteronormative erotics and suggest that the string ensemble can provide agency for *gay* musicians to express their sexuality.

Theoretical Frameworks: Sacredness, Semiotics, and Gendered Sexualities

Deborah Wong (2001) states that *phleeng naaphaat* are musically and contextually distinct. It is played to represent movements, actions, or emotions. Wong attributes the veneration towards the repertory to its performative nature. As an “ephemeral doorway through which these deities can come and go (p. 108),” playing these pieces means an invitation of the sacred entities to the performance venue.

I frame my analysis on the social meanings of music put forward by Thomas Turino (2008), who argues that musical performances tie people to actual experiences through iconicity or resemblances and indexicality or co-occurrences. I suggest that the meaning of *phleeng naaphaat* on the string ensemble is iconic to the *piiphaat* version and is indexical to the sacred sentiments (*khleng* or *saksit*). With these semiotic properties, Turino suggests that playing and hearing music can lead to the *flow*, a state of mind characterized by heightened concentration and the feeling of timelessness.

To augment Turino’s model beyond the heteronormative constraints, I draw on queer perspectives to examine the cultural production-marked non-conforming musicians (Barz, 2020) to question the gendered norms and practices within Thai classical music. I focus on Audre Lorde’s (1984) idea of the power of erotics that bridges physical, emotional, and psychological expressions, and Judith Butler’s (1999, p. 30) note that erotics is often expressed heterosexually due to the naturalization of heteronormativity and regulation of gender binary. This compulsion in the realm of music is underscored and challenged by Deborah Wong (2006, 2015), Suzanne Cusick (2006), and Fred Maus (2019), to name a few.

Several Southeast Asian studies scholars have shown how gender and sexuality in Southeast Asia are a highly intertwined, contested, and negotiated terrain.¹ I am using the term “gay” with a caution that it has only recently emerged in the last few decades as a Western construct. In Thailand, the term’s localized meaning goes beyond sexuality to include gender performance. For the purpose of clarity, I follow Dredge Kang’s working definition of *gay* as “a male, masculine or feminine, who engages in or desires same-sex relationships with other males” (2014, p. 414).

Baatsakunii and Those Who Perform It.

I will focus on the performance of *Baatsakunii*, the second highest level *phleeng naaphaat*, on the string ensemble in an exclusively presentational context.² I investigate this phenomenon as a straight male practitioner of Thai classical music. My interpretation was made from interviews with classically trained *gay* musicians. Some of them performed *Baatsakunii* on the string ensemble, while others were the audience. In comparison with the traditional *piiphaat* format, no instrument carries out the main melody in the string ensemble. With *sau* (fiddles), *jakhe* (zither) and *khlui* (flute), the piece sounds much softer with more florid melodic ornamentations.³

None of my interlocutors considered playing *phleeng naaphaat* on the string ensemble an act of resistance. Nor did they see that their sexuality affected the music. Rather, they thought that the performance demonstrated that the string ensemble could also play *phleeng naaphaat*. A, the *jakhee* player asserted that playing *Baatsakunii* on the string ensemble was not wrong for two main reasons. The first is about its history. He said that *Baatsakunii* was not as old as many musicians understood. It was composed only several decades ago for a military band. His reasoning was that if the piece was not originally meant for *piiphaat* ensemble in the first place, the string ensemble should be able to play it without violating the conventional code.

The second reason concerns its aesthetics. A argued that the string ensemble had a better chance to reach *aarom* or the emotional flow of *phleeng naaphaat* because it could tap into what he calls “the missing notes.” In *piiphaat* ensemble, such conveyance was limited by the fixed pitched instruments, making the piece sound “hard” and “stiff.” On the contrary, the presence of *sau duang* and *sau uu*, two non-fixed pitched instruments, allows for the total experience of the *aarom* in the piece. Similarly, Poy, the *sau duang* player, explained that with his instruments he could slightly alter certain pitches as he played to make it blend better with the overall tone cluster at a specific point in the piece. He believed that the performance did not lose any of its spiritual potency but felt even more sacred. It made him “full.” For Poy, the sacredness of a piece, can also be expressed through the dynamics of sound and florid melodies in ways not obtainable through the loud and percussive quality of the *piiphaat* ensemble.

As well put together as it is, there are musicians who variously pushed back against the performance. Some musicians to whom I talked admitted that *phleeng naaphaat* felt less sacred on the string ensemble than on *piiphaat*. Others even thought that the string ensemble destroyed *phleeng naaphaat* essence. Also, this performance took place at a university concert hall because the musicians were advised against performing in the National Theater – their first option – to avoid any controversies regarding the norms of *phleeng naaphaat*.

In any case, it is quite premature to ascertain that all *gay* musicians are drawn to the string ensemble and vice versa. The curved seated bodily posture in the string ensemble may attract *gay* musicians, but this statement merits some nuancing. Hanoi, a trained Thai classical singer, observed that musicians with this sexuality possess a unique *charit* or temperament. The instruments in the string ensemble, particularly the *sau* and *jakhee*, speak to their *charit*, allowing them to feel the flow of *phleeng naaphaat* in ways that *piiphaat* cannot deliver. These musicians, knowingly or not, find their musical pleasures and desires best fulfilled by these instruments. As such, *gay* musicians, the string ensemble, and *phleeng naaphaat* together constitute a space where non-normative musical pleasures are created without disrupting the repertory’s iconicity and indexicality.

Conclusion

This presentation only scratches the surface, and more research is needed regarding non-conforming musicking in Thai classical music. After all, the iconic and indexical powers of *phleeng naaphaat* are still strongly rooted in heterosexuality. Those who cross gender boundaries were once crucial figures in many rituals in Southeast Asia and queerness was closely related to the sacred realm before being delegitimized by the modern construct of heteronormative gender binary. This places gender-crossers in the societal margin and subdues their presence. In this light, what this musical performance might illustrate is *re-queering* the sacred.

By way of conclusion, I hope that my attempt to re/interpret the non-conforming performance of Thai classical music will cause further discussion on the social stigma associated with the string ensemble. Instead of simply submitting to a preconceived notion that certain string instruments strip away one’s masculinity, we should instead question its underlying ethos and eventually move away from the idea of monolithic and homogenous Thai classical music. This, I hope, will generate more interesting discussion leading to much-needed critical works on this centralized, nationalized, and heteropatriarchal music of Thailand.

Endnotes

¹ See, for example, Michael Peletz (2009), Magen Sinnott (2004), and Tamara Ho (2009)

² The performance is accessible via https://youtu.be/mTBu_2KyojM.

³ I should mention that *ta-phon* and *klong that*, the two drums present in the ensemble are originally from *piiphaat* ensemble. They are added to the performance in question to maintain the rhythmic aspect of *phleeng naaphaat*.

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LULLABY, TRAVEL, NOSTALGIA: INTERSECTIONAL SOUNDSCAPES OF MIGRANT PROSTITUTES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Introduction

This paper explores the collective emotions and memories of women who have migrated overseas and experienced difficulties in their lives. In particular, it investigates historically shared sentiments of prostitutes who strive to survive in a foreign land. While the focus of this paper remains in “migrant prostitutes in Southeast Asia,” as it appears in the title, it yet extensively includes related stories of marginalized women who work away from home. Rather than focusing on sex work or the industry, I am concerned with how marginalized migrant women share their stories and how song lyrics encapsulate collective sentiments and memories. Passages of migrant prostitutes intersect with other women working overseas under adverse conditions and constitute a wider web of information and knowledge for this study. Relevant case studies of neglected women contribute to inform the collective narratives of migrant prostitutes who travel across Southeast Asia. By tracing intersectional soundscapes of marginalized migrant women, this paper attempts to unveil neglected stories, sentiments, and memories that contest the politics of memory.

I began this music research with a historical ethnography of *karayuki-san*, or Japanese overseas prostitutes in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. The destinations of *karayuki-san* were worldwide including East Asia, South Asia, Australia, Africa, and North America; Southeast Asia is no exception. Many Japanese cemeteries or ossuaries exist in major cities of Southeast Asia such as Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Sandakan, Medan, Jakarta, and Yangon that were often established for *karayuki-san* who died in a foreign land.

In tracing musical passages of *karayuki-san*, I faced difficulties due to a lack of first-hand information. Because of the shame imposed on them, stories of *karayuki-san* have been stifled and were often considered not to be mentioned. It is the politics of memory that are implicated in the arbitrary process of selection and screening of past events.¹ Therefore, I devised an expanded approach to research collective narratives of marginalized migrant women. I posited that sentiments of *karayuki-san* are inscribed in lullabies of Shimabara/Amakusa region, Japan, the origins of many *karayuki-san*. Now I expand my scope of research to migrant women and prostitutes around Southeast Asia today.

For this research, I apply the concept of collective memory and emotions. While the term “collective memory” is widely accepted, the term “collective emotions” is not as prevalent in academic discourse. Yet, some scholars acknowledge it by referring to the “collective consciousness” of Émile Durkheim (1893, 1895, 1897, 1912) or the “collective memory” of Maurice Halbwachs (1925) (cf. Salmela, Matias and Nagatsu, 2016; Sullivan, 2015; Scheve and Salmela, 2014; Lambert et al., 2009). Although I also refer to Durkheim and Halbwachs, my scope of research is more extensive than “collective consciousness” and “collective memory,” both geographically and chronologically. Most studies about “collectivities” deal with a specific group of people in a limited period of time. The book *Les Lieux de mémoire* by Pierre Nora (1984) is a good example that examines memorial sites of the French Republic from the view of the present. Yet, I recognize that collective emotions and memories can be shared among different peoples who live in different places and periods of time, as human beings share some aspects of humanity both historically as well as cross-culturally.

This study draws on current research on this topic to demonstrate that collective sentiments and memories of migrant women lie beyond temporal and geopolitical boundaries.

Just like the *karayuki-san* of the past, female migrants around Southeast Asia today often occupy an ambivalent state in the way they are valued; their financial contributions to the home are welcomed but often their morality is open to question (see such as Constable, 2015a). Therefore, the life stories of those migrant women are not widely known and often neglected. This study conflates miscellaneous stories of migrant women, explores their sorrows, wishes, and nostalgia, and tries to retrieve hidden or neglected voices.

Of course, each woman has her own life story, so everyone experiences migration and prostitution differently. Yet, I find that “nostalgia” is one of the collective emotions that widely permeate marginalized migrant women, as my case studies reveal. Here, I find intersectional soundscapes among women who work away from home; their songs often tell about the sorrows of working under poor conditions, thinking about their families, and hoping to return someday as a success. These intersectional soundscapes delineate sentiments and memories shared among migrant prostitutes who strive to survive in a foreign land. Musical voices of migrant women unfold hidden and neglected stories and collectively give a voice to the voiceless.

History should not always be segmented into linear periods of time but rather should make diachronic connections to present-day issues. Historical studies of *karayuki-san* should be beneficial and meaningful to current problems of migrant women in Southeast Asia, and vice versa. In the following section, I refer to several song lyrics about lullabies, travel, and nostalgia that exemplify intersectional soundscapes of migrant women. Ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay (2012) suggests that music, especially song, can be an expressive medium through which the experiences of love from a distance can be given full emotional expression (p. 682). The song lyrics I examine reflect the memories and emotions of women from a distance that embody collective narratives of neglected voices and contest the politics of remembering, erasing, and forgetting.

Case Studies

Recently I read a newspaper article that described the death of Pham Thi Tra My, a 26-year-old Vietnamese woman who died in a container truck on the way to the United Kingdom. Tra My first migrated to Japan yet could not earn money as expected, so she decided to travel as a stowaway to the U.K. in order to support her family and herself. Tra My was informed that Vietnamese women could easily find a job at a nail salon, even though illegal immigration. Her last message was: “Mom, so sorry. My stowaway is failed. Father, mother, I love you sincerely. I cannot breathe, I am dying” (So, 2021).

This story instantly reminded me of *karayuki-san*, or Japanese overseas prostitutes who also migrated for work during the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Many of them were born in a poor village of Shimabara/Amakusa region. Most owed a lot of debt and were sold into the sex industry, and then migrated to Southeast Asia. Like Tra My, some of them died enroute to their overseas destination in the hull of a ship. The lyrics of the song entitled “Lullaby of Shimabara,” tell how *karayui-san* were trafficked from Shimabara to a foreign land. The lyrics are:

There is a fire on the hill. Yoron people (migrant workers from Okinawa) are waiting on a small boat. My big sister just held rice balls, and is placed on the bottom of the ship. It cannot be helped. Sleep early, don’t cry.

While someone started a fire on the mountain to distract the police, the girls were placed in a ship container. In many cases, they had no information about where to go and what to do in a foreign land.



Figure 1. Karayuki-san in Singapore

(<https://mothership.sg/2016/05/thousands-of-japanese-women-worked-as-prostitutes-in-singapore-in-late-1800s-early-1900s/>)

Another local song of Shimabara/Amakusa region, “Lullaby of Fukuregi” tells the sentiments of a girl who migrated to work in a foreign land. The lyrics are:

My contract will end at *obon*,² then I can return home. Come, come *obon* soon. Even if I die, no one will cry... No, no probably, my little sister will cry for me. Ah, I miss her.

Although these songs were titled as “lullabies,” they only have a loose connection to the innocent act of babysitting or rocking an infant to sleep. Rather, they tell about the collective drama and hardships migrant girls experienced. During the Edo period of Japan (1603-1868), many girls from poor villages in Shimabara/Amakusa were sold as babysitters. Later some of them became a *geisha*, or musician-prostitutes in the nearby city of Nagasaki. Selling a girl to be a nanny and then to the sex industry was customary in the poor Shimabara/Amakusa region and because they often initially cared for babies, their songs were designated as “lullaby.”

Another song, “Song of Vladivostok,” tells a story after the aforementioned two lullabies. Many girls of Shimabara/Amakusa were sold to the sex industry and trafficked to, if not Nagasaki, overseas to places like Vladivostok and Manchuria. This song was very popular among *karayuki-san* who migrated to Vladivostok and Manchuria. The lyrics are:

Someday, wearing a nice *kimono* garment, I would like to disembark at the port of Nagasaki. It would be my return with glory. My parents would welcome me back. When they say, “welcome back,” my tears will fall down...

Since the late 19th century, many girls of Shimabara/Amakusa had migrated to a foreign land and became prostitutes. Their hope was to return home someday, yet it was often not realized. Some of them died due to sexual or other diseases and some decided to remain in a foreign land because of the shame imposed on them.

Moving on to my case in Southeast Asia, I note a song that created conflict and resolve between a former Japanese prostitute and a Japanese migrant. In 2020, I met Ms. Gan, who migrated from her native Shimabara to Singapore after marrying her Chinese-Singaporean husband. During her interview with me, she confessed that she missed Japan a lot when she first migrated to Singapore. She often took a walk to the beach where she would often occupy her idle time by singing nostalgic songs such as the famous children’s song called “Furusato,” which means “hometown.” The lyrics are:

I chased after rabbits on that mountain. I fished for minnow in that river. I still dream of those days even now. Oh, how I miss my old country home.

Ms. Gan told me in our interview that once when she was singing this song at the beach, an elderly woman suddenly rushed up to her and screamed in Japanese: “Don’t sing such a song! Go back to Japan!” This elderly woman turned out to be a former *karayuki-san* who had migrated probably around the late 1910s and remained in Singapore even after leaving the sex industry. Here, the song generated longing and nostalgia but also resentment and contention. However, the song also united the two migrant women, and their soundscapes intersected. After this brief awkward moment, they gradually became friends over time and shared many memories of their trails, tribulations and experiences as Japanese migrants in Singapore. It is interesting to note that today, Ms. Gan volunteers as a tour guide of the Japanese cemetery in Singapore, informing visitors about the resting place where many *karayuki-san* are buried.

There are several songs that also represent sentiments of marginalized migrant women in Southeast Asia. An Indonesian popular song, “Kupu-Kupu Malam,” or “The Butterfly of the Night,” is one such example that reflects the sentiments of prostitutes. The lyrics are:

This is the life of the lady butterfly of the night, who works to take a chance on her whole body and soul... What sins had she committed? Sometimes she smiles while she cries... Oh what has happened, what has happened? All that she knows is to continue living.

Anthropologist Nicole Constable (2014b) suggests that the lyrics of “Kupu-Kupu Malam” express the collective sentiments of migrant women who do not fit the local conception of a good wife or daughter. This parallels the experiences of many *karayuki-san*, who were trafficked to overseas, send much money to their families, returned home after many years, but were not welcomed, because their profession was considered as shameful and impure. Constable states that the migrant women today in Southeast Asia often face serious social stigma at home and thus often re-migrate overseas.

Another good example that tells about migrant prostitutes is the film “Karaoke Girl” (2014) by the Thai director Visra Vichit Vadakan. “Part fiction, part reality, Karaoke Girl follows Sa [Sittijun], a young country girl, working at a bar in Bangkok as an escort to support her family back home.” The first song in the trailer is impressive: “I’ve come far from home, to work as a girl of the night,” and then Sa continues her statement:

I started working in a factory, but I did not make enough money to send home. Eventually, I decided to work as a “girl of the night.” I decided to do this because my family was very poor and my parents had a lot of debt. I didn’t think that there was any other way to make enough money to take care of them.

The Director Vadakan says: “Her story is so universal. It’s less about sex worker and more about a girl from the country making it in the city.” Sa’s situation, experiences, and emotion also remind me of *karayuki-san*. The songs of *karayuki-san*, lullabies, the butterfly of the night, and karaoke girl represent intersecting soundscapes that collectively express sentiments of the women, who have little choice in their lives and work in poor conditions away from home.

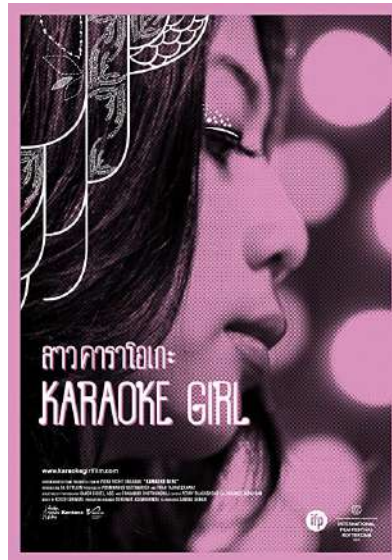


Figure 2. Karaoke Girl (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2428872/>)

Conclusion

In this paper, I have traced collective memories and emotions of migrant women expressed through several song lyric excerpts. I started with the recent story of Pham Thi Tra My who died in a truck container on a way to the U.K., and then explored experiences of migrant girls of Shimabara/Amakusa region through “Lullaby of Shimabara,” “Lullaby of Fukuregi,” and “The Song of Vladivostok.” The Japanese children song “Furusato (Hometown)” demonstrated the intersecting soundscapes of two migrant women from Japan who were living in Singapore. The Indonesian popular song “Kupu-Kupu Malam” represents intersectional soundscapes of migrant women who face serious social stigma at home. The movie “Karaoke Girl” describes a migrant prostitute, Sa Sittijun, yet it is not just a story of Sa herself. The “Karaoke Girl” narrative relates to the stories of thousands of migrant women beyond temporal and geopolitical boundaries.

These songs and stories are from different places and different periods of time yet can be combined to form collective narratives of marginalized female migrants. Stories of migrant women, especially prostitutes, are often hidden and concealed due to the shame they may carry. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is required to overcome the politics of memory. *Lullaby, travel, nostalgia*: interlacing routes and memories through music collectively disclose thousands of stories of voiceless women who migrate to a foreign land and strive to survive their life from little choice. Song lyrics reflect the memories and emotions of women from a distance and conjure up the collective narratives of neglected voices that contest the politics of remembering, erasing, and forgetting.

Endnotes

¹ The Japanese government once commended sending girls overseas to advance Japanese colonialism. Later, however, the government realized that the Japanese overseas sex-workers can also ruin the reputation of Japan, so they tried to hide their existence by imposing shame on them.

² A Japanese ritual for ancestors, usually held in August.

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**SOUNDING THE PURIFICATION: *SADHUKARN* THE SACRED MUSIC
IN THAILAND, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA**
(Lightning paper)

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Abstract

This paper will examine the importance of the composition *Sadhukarn* for the purification of performances in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia by using soundscapes. For opening a feast or ceremony, *Sadhukarn* is the prelude played to salute and invite the holy items, i.e. deities and the three gems of Buddhism that give blessing and prevent misfortune. To perform *Sadhukarn*, the place, the occasion, and the ensemble must be selected considerably, musicians must have participated in the *wai-khru/ sampeah-kru* (to honor the teacher) ceremony and been initiated by a master. Upon playing, the audience will, normatively, put the palms together (*wai, sampeah*) for salutation. This remarkable motion saluting with the *wai/sampeah* gesture in different directions is the most important choreographic part for *Sadhukarn*. Originally, it was only played by the traditional percussion ensemble (*piphat, pinpeat, phinphat*). Nowadays, it also can be performed by other ensembles. However, up to now, a double-headed barrel drum (*taphon, sampho*) is compulsory.

Significantly, *Sadhukarn* in Thai, Laotian, and Cambodian traditional music is used as a symbolic medium to sanctify the unfavourable conditions, and process time-space, as the central concept of ritualization, to become pure, holy, and an auspicious moment – place. Due to the close relationship in geography, history, and culture, *Sadhukarn* in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia are similar in terms of using ensembles, instruments, and customs. However, *Sadhukarn* within the three countries can be distinguished through particular soundmark accents, which are caused by playing technique, melodic outline, rhythmic patterns, pitch, drum patterns, and different materials of musical instruments that depend on environmental, economic, political, as well as the social status and ethical values of musicians and audiences in each community.

MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE "LANNA DREAM"
THE TOURIST GAZE IN NORTHERN THAILAND
(Lightning paper)

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Abstract

Multimedia performance "Lanna Dream" is a dance theater performance that reflects the choreographer's perspective on the recent historical progression of arts and culture in the Lanna region. Within the context of Central Thai/Siamese culture dominating the nation's socio-political identity from the late 19th Century to the present, Northern Thai/Lanna people have had an archetypal and stereotypical image imposed on them from outside and inscribed into their everyday surroundings and lives. This has also led to Lanna people inventing strategies for preserving and re-imagining their own regional identity in the face of intra-national hegemony. This has in turn resulted in an ambivalent practice by Lanna cultural producers and practitioners of self-commodification and exotification for the tourist gaze, especially since the 1980s, when the "Lanna Renaissance," a critical and commercial movement towards "Neo-Lanna" cultural identity, began.

Through a series of dance and monologue sequences that gradually deconstruct the commodified image of the exotic and passive Lanna female, "Lanna Dream" directly addresses and critiques this cultural movement while also acting as a metaphor for larger issues around oppression, resistance, and self-knowledge. Writer, director, choreographer, and lead performer Wewdao Sirisook has been one of the leading artists of the Neo-Lanna movement for the last 15 years and fully embodies the show's themes. She has created this performance not specifically as an ethical statement but rather to speak from direct experience as a Lanna cultural representative, who ambivalently desires the future of the Lanna people living their own "Lanna Dream".

**RESOUNDING MON:
A PIPHAT PRACTICE AND SOUND OF ORIGINAL MON EXPRESSION**
(Lightning Paper)

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Abstract

Mon people are a minority group in Thailand but they are well known as influential people in Thai traditions. Especially music, *Pleng Sumniang Mon* refers to Thai songs with remarkable Mon musical style. In the musical tradition of Thai music, Mon's character plays a major role whether in the image of musical instruments or Thai music composition. The authenticity of Mon is deeply central to *Piphat* ensembles such as playing *Pleng Mon*. Resounding Mon in music is based on the perception and acceptance of Mon by the Thai people. This paper intends to understand musical process in *Piphat* tradition which are connected to Mon culture. Mon expressions in musical tradition are principally demonstrated in various elements such as through *Pleng Mon*, *Pleng Sumniang Mon*, and Mon language in lyrics. A focus on resounding Mon is to point out how Mon is prioritized in the Thai musical context. In addition, Mon-ness is raised in music in order to claim an authenticity as well as approach the supreme level among the musical stratification of musicians.

**UNDER THE FLAG OF KAWTHOOLEI: COMPETITIONS, PERFORMANCE,
AND TEACHING OF THE KAREN *DON* DANCE**
(Lightning paper)

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Abstract

This paper will look at performance of the *Don* dance in Karen state, Myanmar as an expression of competing ideas of Karen heritage and identities. First I will contextualise the history of the Karen identity which encompasses a diverse range of cultures, languages and ways of life, and then talk about my research at competitions, festivals, schools, and ceremonies around the area of Hpa An looking at the *Don* dance as an important tool for disseminating and performing a pan-Karen identity.

The Karen literature and culture festival is an annual festival celebrating traditional Karen cultures, and centre stage at this festival is the *Don* dance competition in which over sixty different youth dance troupes compete over three days. Preceding the festival is a fifteen-day intensive course that teaches Karen youth across the eastern Karen area in Myanmar, Karen languages and literature, traditional songs, and primarily, the *Don* dance. The festival and the classes act as a way to teach Karen youth from urban centres the cultural traditions they might not otherwise be exposed to. The origin of the *Don* dance and the accompanying songs, however is claimed by the Pwo Karen, one of the many different Karen ethnic groups, showing how a pan-Karen identity is brought together from an amalgamation of different traditions from specific Karen groups. The symbolism, choreography, education, and performance contexts of this dance, its songs and loud percussive accompaniment, reflect the complex history of competing Karen identities in Myanmar.

INTERPRETING THE CONTENT OF OLD MANUSCRIPTS ON JAVANESE GAMELAN

Sumarsam

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Abstract

Since the beginning of Java's recorded history at around the 9th century, Javanese civilization is known for having prolific literary activity, which had produced numerous literary works written in prose and especially in poetic meters. These literary works cover several general topics, including Religion, History, Mythology, Science, and Arts. Although references to performing arts is frequent, texts dealing specifically with music can only be found in the 19th and early 20th century. This was the period of the mixture of oral and written tradition that has led to certain ways of shaping, retrieving, storing, and transmitting knowledge.

My presentation examines manuscripts on performing arts written in the 19th century, focusing on *Serat Kyai Gulang Rarya*, composed in 1870 by a dancer/musician R.M.H. Tondhacusuma from the minor court of Mangkunegaran in Surakarta. Written in *macapat* poetic meters, *Serat Kyai Gulang Rarya* is 367-stanza descriptive and historical treatise of Javanese music (gamelan and repertoire, vocal music), dance, and *wayang* shadow puppet play. I will discuss certain characteristics of and challenges in interpreting the content of this treatise. References on music from other manuscripts written in the 19th century and before will be taken into consideration.

THE MOVEMENTSCAPE OF A HINDU TEMPLE IN JAKARTA¹

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Introduction: Place and Space for the Performing Arts

In recent years, Balinese-performing artists have increasingly turned to the Internet as a space for their activities. With the spread of the novel corona virus, this trend has accelerated, and not only are performances being broadcast on YouTube and other media, but contests and lessons are also held online. At the same time, travel restrictions due to the pandemic often limit people's activities to local places. In this context, the question of how the performing arts and performing bodies relate to the people, things, and environment around them seems to be of special importance.

Anthony Giddens (1991) distinguishes between place and space in his writing. “Place” is a sphere where face-to-face and concrete interactions take place, and “space” is where people and things are connected not only by a location but also through various institutional and social relationships (Giddens, 1991, p. 18–19). According to him, the separation of space and place is a characteristic of modernity. In a pre-modern society, space and place were usually one because, for many people, their social lives were limited to localized areas and face-to-face relationships. In the course of modernization, people develop relationships with a great variety of others who are separated by distance. However, the importance of places for humans as physical beings cannot be lost. Since the performing arts are physical activities, even in the contemporary world, they must also reflect the place in which they are embedded.

This presentation will focus on performing arts practices in Hindu temples in the greater Jakarta region (known locally as Jabodetabek). It is a region that includes the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (DKI Jakarta) as well as parts of West Java and Tangerang provinces. Balinese performing practices in greater Jakarta have received many influences from Bali. For example, a ritual dance called Rejang Renteng, which has become very popular in Bali since 2017, also became popular in Jakarta soon thereafter. Dance instructors in that metropolitan area the choreography from YouTube and taught it to other dancers. This can be seen as an example of the transmission of dance through the Internet. As this example shows, the activities of Jakarta's performers are not limited to their local “places,” but have expanded into “spaces” that include cyberspace. On the other hand, the Balinese performing arts in greater Jakarta have some characteristics that are not often seen in those in Bali. They are greatly influenced by the unique situation of Jakarta, an urbanized area where diverse cultures and religions coexist.

Based on data from research conducted before COVID-19, I will analyze performing arts activities in a temple and discuss the relationship between those performances and places. I will argue that the various performing arts practiced by Balinese residents and their neighbors have developed in a unique way in connection with Hindu temples. In other words, this presentation examines the “movementscape” of Hindu temples in greater Jakarta and discusses how Balinese performing arts are adopted in these multireligious and multiethnic urban spaces.

The case I take as an example in this study is that of Amerta Jati Cinere temple, which is located in the Depok area, bordering Jakarta to the south. This temple is relatively active in terms of the performing arts. As of 2019, there were three *gamelan* clubs of male worshipers who practiced regularly at the temple. Approximately 2,000 households (*kepala keluarga*, or KK) are registered as followers (Tachikawa, 2019, p. 60).

A Balinese Temple in Greater Jakarta

The overwhelming majority of the population in greater Jakarta are Muslims. According to the 2010 census, Hindus in the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta) and in West Java province, which includes the Depok area, make up only about 0.21% and 0.05% of those populations, respectively (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2011). Some came from Bali to seek employment or educational opportunities, while others were born and raised in greater Jakarta.

As of 2018, there were 28 public Hindu temples in the greater Jakarta area. In addition, military and police personnel use three temples exclusively (Tachikawa, 2019, p. 13). These temples are not well-known to non-Hindus. The local cab drivers used in my research were often unaware of the location. Unlike a mosque, from where the *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer, is issued every day, a Hindu temple appears quiet from the outside. Except on festival days, the activities that take place inside the walls of a temple are not very visible from the outside. In some cases, a temple is perceived as a threat by non-Hindu communities. There are reports of Muslim protests against the proposed Hindu temple in the Bekasi area (e.g. Utara 2019). In a sense, a Hindu temple is a marginalized place in Jakarta.

On the other hand, for the Balinese, a temple is an extremely important center of activity. A temple in Jakarta is more multifunctional than that in Bali. It is not only a place of public prayer, but also sometimes serves as a substitute for the family temple (*sanggah/merajan*). It also functions as a meeting hall for a community (*bale banjar*), a Sunday School (*pasraman*), a place to practice dance and other performing arts, and a place to buy Balinese products. Even when there is no planned activity, people gather to watch TV or chat there. For the Hindus in Jakarta, who usually live as a minority, the temple is a place where they can interact with their peers and relax.

In addition, non-Hindus also frequent the temple. Interactions between Hindus and non-Hindus take place, especially through the performing arts. By analyzing three activities that take place at this temple (dance lessons, a *ngerupuk* ritual, and a wedding reception), I discuss how these interactions take place and affect the rituals and religious life of the Balinese worshipers at this temple.²

1) Dance Lessons: The Importance of Physical Proximity

At the Amerta Jati Cinere temple, dance lessons were held five times a week. Instructor A offers a class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He also teaches at Sunday Hindu School, which is located inside the temple compound. Instructor B holds a lesson on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Both instructors were members of the temple. These lessons are open to the public, except for one on Sunday. The discussion in this section is based on my observations in those open to public lessons. In the lessons held from Tuesday to Saturday, the learners are mostly school-age girls, who pay a small monthly fee. Although the learners include some Balinese whose parents belong to this temple, most are actually non-Balinese, and mostly Muslim.

When I asked these non-Balinese learners and their parents why they learned Balinese dance, I sometimes heard the answer, “Because there was a place nearby where I could learn it.” At the time, I thought this was a rather uninteresting motive. However, when I think again about the relationship between the performing arts and place, I see that such an answer is something that cannot be overlooked. This suggests that living in close physical proximity to a studio and a teacher is of great importance for those learning the performing arts, especially for children. This is especially true in greater Jakarta, where traffic congestion is severe and public transportation is not well developed.

During these lessons, people seemed to be in a relaxed state. Both learners and their

parents know each other. The parents watched the practice while chatting and sharing snacks. Some even join in dancing behind the children. As for weekday lessons, the children come and go, but the lessons last for three or four hours in the afternoon and evening. The dances, the recorded gamelan sounds being played, and the chatter of the people surrounding them bring a lively atmosphere to the temple.

Due to the large number of Muslim participants, the atmosphere in the temple is inevitably influenced by the Islamic calendar. For example, during the fasting month, the number of learners who appear for the lesson decreases, and the temple loses some of its liveliness.



Figure 1. A dance lesson at the temple. August 8, 2017.

2) *Ngerupuk* Parade—Representing Harmony and Creating Gaiety with Non-Balinese Performing Objects

Ngerupuk is an event that takes place before the Balinese New Year (*Nyepi*). People parade through local villages carrying giant dolls called *ogoh-ogoh*.³ This is accompanied by the *beleganjur*, a popular and rousing style of gamelan music, which is usually played while the musicians are walking. The parade is held to drive away the bad spirits (*buta kala*) with the terrifying shape of the *ogoh-ogoh* and the aggressive sounds of the accompanying music.

I visited Amerta Jati Cinere temple on the day of *ngerupuk* in 2018 and found that the parade was held in a unique way. In addition to the *ogoh-ogoh* made by young members of the temple, four other performing objects that originated in different cultures were involved in the parade: the *ondel-ondel* from Betawi, the *sisingaan* from the Subang region of West Java, the Chinese Lion Dance, and the *reyog* from Ponorogo in East Java. All of them were carried or performed by dance troupes that were based in greater Jakarta. After each group performed briefly inside the temple, they moved to the street outside the temple and began their parade. The streets were crowded with spectators, and the parade was richly diverse and quite lively.

The theme of the parade was “*Toleransi, Keanekaragaman Dalam Satu Wadah NKRI*” (“Tolerance, Diversity in Oneness in a Unified Republic of Indonesia”) (Poskota, 2018). It is almost identical to the Indonesian national motto, “*Bineka Tunggal Ika*” (“Unity in Diversity”). The performing objects of various ethnic groups parading in a line through the streets seem to represent the ideal image of a multicultural nation-state. Displaying this harmonious and multiethnic image may be a strategy for the Hindu as a minority to make their religious activities

more acceptable to their neighbors.

On the other hand, non-Balinese arts complemented the Balinese event. Due to a shortage of participants, the Balinese worshippers of this temple could only make one *ogoh-ogoh*. Without the presence of these non-Balinese cultural objects and music, the parade would have been very small, and would have lacked the liveliness and bravery necessary for *ngerupuk*'s original function, which was to expel evil spirits. This act of combining available materials to somehow achieve a goal can be seen as a form of what Lévi-Strauss called *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss, 1968).



Figure 2. Chinese Lion Dance taking part in a *ngerupuk* parade. You can also see Balinese *ogoh-ogoh* behind. March 15, 2018.

3) Wedding Receptions Influenced by Javanese Culture

Although in Bali, wedding receptions are seldom held in temples, Amerta Jati Cinere temple's meeting hall is sometimes used for the wedding reception. The reception that I visited in 2019 included a procession called "*cucuk lampah*." The bride and groom, in highly formal Balinese clothing, are led by dancers. Gamelan *beleganjur* accompanies the procession. At the head of the procession stood the priest, followed by a dancer with a costume and mask of a *topeng tua* (a masked dance portraying an old man).⁴ Behind him were four young dancers, two male and two female, dancing while adding some glamor to the procession. As the couple entered the hall, the masked dancer invited them to take their seats set at the center of the stage.

Cucuk lampah was originally a part of the Javanese custom. However, in Jakarta, regardless of whether the wedding couple are Javanese or not, the inclusion of *cucuk lampah* in reception is quite popular, and Balinese dancers are often invited to lead the *cucuk lampah*. According to Anak Agung Rai Susila Panji, who teaches Balinese dance at the Jakarta Institution of Arts (Institut Kesenian Jakarta), wedding receptions have been an important revenue streams for Balinese dancers working in Jakarta (personal communication, March 5, 2016). Balinese people living in Jakarta themselves now borrow this Javanese cultural element for their own wedding programs.



Figure 3. *Topeng tua* dancer leading *cucuk lampah* procession at a wedding reception held in the temple. August 31, 2019.

Conclusion

In greater Jakarta, a temple is not only a center for performing arts transmission for the Balinese worshippers, but also a place where people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds gather to enjoy the performing arts. The enthusiasm of non-Hindu neighbors for the Balinese performing arts energizes the temples. The Balinese hold annual events, borrowing performances and performers from neighboring cultures. Balinese performing arts are also taken out of context and used to add color to events held by non-Balinese, but their new uses are learned by the Balinese and re-introduced to Balinese ceremonies. Balinese and non-Balinese work together to create unique movementscapes in and around the Hindu temple.

Endnotes

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² Another important opportunity for performing arts in this temple is the annual temple festival (*odalan*). During the daytime, ritual dances performed are usually carried out by Hindu worshippers of the temple, but in the evening, many dances are staged as entertainment, and such shows include a variety of performers—not only the students at the temple’s Sunday School, but also Japanese, Balinese, and non-Hindu Indonesians, such as Muslim and Chinese, take part in the performances. Sometimes, famous entertainers from Bali are invited. Due to the time limitation, I omitted a discussion on that, but it is a significant event that is worth investigating.

³ *Ngerupuk* is a ritual to exorcise evil spirits and purify the community for the New Year. Strictly speaking, the *ogoh-ogoh* parade is not an essential part of the *ngerupuk* ritual, and its history is relatively young. However, in contemporary Bali, the *ogoh-ogoh* parade is very popular and is often the most vibrant moment of the *ngerupuk* day.

⁴ *Topeng tua* is originally a part of masked ritual drama called *topeng babad* or *topeng wali*. The drama features *babad*, historical legends of Hindu kingdoms in Bali and Java. *Topeng tua* is a figure who is an old man with wisdom and experience who works as an advisor for the king. In the *cucuk lampah*, this figure is decontextualized, and his identity becomes ambiguous. His appearance, however, seems to add a touch of dignity and pomp to the entrance of the bride and groom.

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KUROSAWA TAKATOMO'S 1939 FIELDWORK IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND HIS STUDY OF TAIWANESE INDIGENOUS MUSIC

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Introduction

In 1939, Kurosawa Takatomo (1895-1987) was the first Japanese musicologist to conduct fieldwork in Southeast Asia. He was also a key member of the Formosan Music Investigation Team, which carried out the first comprehensive survey of Taiwanese music in 1943. His 1939 fieldwork in Southeast Asia has been long neglected except for the publication of his field diary edited by Umeda (Kurosawa, 1997). Although his publications on Taiwanese indigenous music (Kurosawa, 1973, 1974) have been considered canonical on the subject, no study has examined how his fieldwork in Southeast Asia informed and influenced his study of Taiwanese indigenous music.

After completing the annotated translation of Kurosawa's book on Taiwanese indigenous music (Kurosawa, 2019), I found that the book made many references to Southeast Asian music based on his 1939 fieldwork. Most notably I found that one of Kurosawa's main points is to suggest that Taiwanese indigenous musical instruments originated in Southeast Asia but underwent changes afterwards.

How did Kurosawa's 1939 fieldwork inform and impact his study of Taiwanese indigenous music? In this paper, I answer this question by using Kurosawa's book and his archival materials preserved at the National Taiwan University Library as my primary data. By doing so, I hope to fill the gaps mentioned above by drawing attention to the connection between his research of Southeast Asian music and that of Taiwanese music.

In the following, I briefly introduce Kurosawa's fieldwork in Southeast Asia in 1939 and his wartime survey of Taiwanese music in 1943. Then I focus on his book *The Music of the Takasago Tribes in Taiwan* (Kurosawa, 1973) and summarize his comparison of the musical instruments of the Taiwanese Indigenous peoples with those in Southeast Asia.

Kurosawa Takatomo's 1939 Fieldwork in Southeast Asia

Kurosawa's fieldwork in Southeast Asia took place from February 12 to June 10, 1939. During those four months, he conducted research in Bangkok, British Malaya, Java, and Bali. His purpose was to investigate the musical instruments there in preparation for the founding of a music museum in Japan, which in fact had much to do with Japan's wartime objective of building "the new order in the Greater East Asia" (Umeda, 1997, p. 10). Kurosawa's fieldwork method mainly consisted of photographing and sketching the collection of musical instruments in museums. The National Museum in Bangkok, where he spent the most time, was followed by museums in Taiping, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Batavia, and Denpasar. He also visited the Buddhist temples in Angkor Wat and Borobudur to document the musical instruments in their stone carvings and sculptures. In addition, he attended live performances in Bangkok, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Bali, and during his trip to Angkor Wat.

After returning to Japan, Kurosawa actively published articles, books, and a record album on Southeast Asian music. In 1942, he and Masu Genjiro, an Indian music specialist, co-founded Victor Records' Research Institute of the Music of the South. Later that year, the Governor-General's Office of Taiwan commissioned the institute to conduct a comprehensive survey of Taiwanese music in order to provide a model of music policy for Japan's colonies, many of

which were newly acquired during World War II. To carry out the survey, Masu, Kurosawa, and Victor's recording engineer Yamagata Takayasu formed the Formosan Folk Music Investigation Team.

Kurosawa's 1943 Survey of Taiwanese Music

The team's survey took place from the end of January to early May of 1943. During those three months, they not only received the full support of the Governor-General's office and the help of local governments, police officers, and local experts, but they were also joined by local and Japanese film crews to make documentary films. The survey was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the team conducted fieldwork around the island, first starting from the south to the east and then from the north down to the mid-West. In the second stage, the team conducted recording and filming. They started with Tainan. Then the team was split into two groups. Kurosawa and Yamagata made recordings in make-shift studios and radio stations in Pingtung, Taichung, and Taipei, while Masu led the crews to film the Indigenous rituals in Taitung and Hualien *in situ*. In addition, the team did a survey of the Indigenous people's musical instruments through questionnaires filled out by police officers stationed in Indigenous villages. The Governor-General's Office distributed 500 questionnaires to the police officers, of which 150 were returned. I was fortunate to find two samples of the questionnaires, one empty and one filled out. They give us a good idea of how the questionnaire was designed and what information was collected. I should emphasize that this was Taiwan's first and only survey of its kind.¹

The team risked their life to return to Japan in early May. They compiled their Taiwanese audio-visual recordings into a set of 26 78-rpm records that included both Indigenous and Han Chinese music and a 10-reel documentary film. Unfortunately, most of the materials they collected in Taiwan were destroyed during the March 1945 Tokyo Air Raid. Luckily, an editing copy of the 26 78-rpm records survived and became the only remaining sound recordings from the team's survey.

In 1951, at the request of UNESCO, Masu and Kurosawa edited the 26 78-rpm records into a set of 12 78-rpm records and sent two copies to Europe, one to UNESCO and the other to International Folk Music Council (IFMC). In 1953, Kurosawa presented his theory of "the origin of pentatonic scale as suggested by Bunun people's musical bow" at the IFMC conference in Biarritz, France. Both the 12 78-rpm records and Kurosawa's presentation were well received by the leading comparative musicologists in Europe and introduced Taiwanese Indigenous music and Kurosawa's theory to the West (for details, see Wang, 2018).

In the 1970s, Kurosawa first published the book *The Music of Southeast Asia* (1970), using his 1939 fieldwork as the basis, with emphasis on Thailand and Indonesia. Then he published a book and a set of record albums on the music of the Taiwanese indigenous peoples (1973, 1974), based on his 1943 survey of Taiwanese music. Both the book and the record albums on Taiwanese indigenous music became the canon on the subject. However, previous studies paid focused on his characterization of the singing styles of the respective Indigenous groups, while his work on their musical instruments remains largely neglected. Similarly, it appears that his works on Southeast Asian music also did not garner much notice.

Let us now examine his 1973 book in details.

The Music of the Takasago Tribe in Taiwan

Kurosawa's 1973 book consists of two parts, with Part 1 on songs and dances, and Part 2 on instrumental music and musical instruments. This paper focuses on the latter because that is where Kurosawa's references to Southeast Asian music mainly appeared.

Part 2 begins with an overview, followed by 9 sections, each devoted to one or one type instrument. Although the main purpose of Part 2 is to document the state of Indigenous instruments in Taiwan using data gathered from the team's fieldwork and questionnaires filled out by police officers, Kurosawa frequently compares each instrument and its counterparts in Southeast Asia, which constitutes a subtext of Part 2. Kurosawa also shows each instrument's global distribution by compiling the names of its counterparts in various parts of the world, mainly based on Curt Sachs' *Real-Lexikon der Musikinstrumente* (1913) and Kurosawa's own research.

Before we go further, a few words about nomenclature. In this paper, I use the Takasago tribe to refer to the Taiwanese indigenous peoples, as Kurosawa did. I also follow his usage of the term "Indonesia" to refer to the Malay Archipelago, where the Takasago tribe originated, which was the dominant theory during Taiwan's Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). For convenience's sake, I use instruments to stand for musical instruments.

Kurosawa begins the overview by highlighting two peculiar features of the music of the Takasago tribe. One is the paucity of their instrumental music in contrast to their highly developed singing. The other is that, despite belonging to proto-Malay people, the Takasago tribe lacks most of the instruments commonly found there, implying that the changes brought to Indonesia by adjacent cultures did not extend to the Takasago tribe (Kurosawa, 1973, p. 277).

Kurosawa then summarizes what they lack or share with Indonesian instruments, as well as what instruments they have adopted from the Chinese. They do not have any gongs and scarcely any xylophones and wooden drums. They also lack lute and harp-type instruments, bowed string instruments, mouth organs, or panpipes. What they do have are jew's harps, musical bows, vertical flutes, and nose flutes, as well as some rare instances of bamboo drums, stamping tubes, psaltery-type instruments, and xylophone-like agricultural tools. The instruments they adopted from the Chinese include horizontal flutes, bells for decorating clothes, *taulin* for transmitting messages, and some drums and gongs found only among peoples living on the east coast's plain areas (*ibid.*, p. 277).

Kurosawa further emphasizes the Takasago tribe's lack of percussion instruments and considers it as against the common believes that "the earliest musical instruments were percussion instruments derived from tools for making signals" and that "all peoples are said to have a remarkable affection for percussion instruments." Then, Kurosawa asks: What was the cause for their lack of percussion instruments? Was it because of their nature or for some other reasons? (*ibid.*, p. 278).

Kurosawa proposes the following hypothesis to answer these questions: Takasago tribe fled to the mountains after being invaded by the plain tribes and later by the Chinese, which was the view accepted by most scholars. They lacked the ability to fight back due to their passive nature and weak weapons, and could only continue to hide in the mountains in secret to escape from the new enemies. They gave up things that made loud sound, and as a result, their percussion instruments fell into oblivion. He further adds that if such an inference is feasible, then they should have had percussion instruments before in the distant past, and the one or two examples of bamboo drums, stamping tubes, and xylophone-like tools can be considered as their residual traces (*ibid.*, p. 278).

Let us now examine Kurosawa's comparison of each instrument with its counterparts in Indonesia. He begins with the jew's harp because it was the most popular and developed instrument. He then moves on to chordophone, aerophone, and idiophones. His main points are summarized as follows.

1. The Takasago tribe inherited the use of jew's harps and musical bows for entertainment from Indonesia. They developed the jew's harp to considerable complexity in terms of

- the number of tongues and the variety of names, which reflect its popularity. Similar developments and names can be found in the Philippines (ibid., pp. 291-293).
2. Their musical bow also has its counterparts in Indonesia, such as gourd zither at Angkor Wat, *pin nan baw* in Thailand, stick zither in Timor, and so on (ibid., pp. 348, 352).
 3. The *toro-toro* of the Bunun people is the only example of psaltery-type instruments among the Takasago tribe. Its structure is similar to that of the *celempung* in Indonesia,¹ while its four-tone scale is similar to that of Balinese *angklung* and can also be found in the stone relief of Chandi Panataran Temple in Java (ibid., pp. 382-383).³
 4. The Takasago tribe's vertical flute can only be used in head-hunting ceremonies, a restriction rarely found elsewhere, hence it remains simple in its construction. In contrast, Indigenous peoples in the Philippines used flutes for entertainment and have developed complicated mouthpieces. As a result, the distinction between ceremonial and entertainment use also functions as an index of time difference (ibid., p. 385).
 5. Nose flutes among the Takasago tribe are similar to those found in Melanesia, Polynesia, and the Malay Peninsula (ibid., p. 410).
 6. Horizontal flutes do not exist in Indonesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia, hence it is only natural that they are not found among the Takasago tribe. This supports the view that the latter's horizontal flutes were brought by Chinese merchants (ibid., p. 425).
 7. Gong is a key instrument in Indonesia, but the Takasago tribe lacks gongs. They also lack bamboo tubes, which were the precursor for metal gongs, which first appeared in Cambodia and Java in the 7th or 8th century. Therefore, it can be inferred that the Takasago tribe must have left Indonesia before the emergence of the bamboo tube culture. The usage of hand-held metal gongs by the Igorot people of the Philippines shows that the gong-chime culture did spread to the Philippines. But it stopped there without continuing further to Taiwan (ibid., p. 454).
 8. *Gambang*, the name for xylophone in Indonesia, very likely originated there. It began with striking two or three wooden sticks placed on the feet. This still exists on Rabaul Island and a few small islands west of Sumatra. There are numerous examples of the development of xylophone in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula.⁴ The Takasago tribe does not have xylophones for music-making. Although the Amis have a similar device called *kokan*, which consisted of three wooden and bamboo sticks hung together, it is mainly used to scare away birds or wild boars (ibid., pp. 454-455).
 9. Slit drums are prevalent in Indonesia and the Pacific Islands. But it is very rare among the Takasago tribe (ibid., pp. 455-456).
 10. The Thao people have musical pestles that are tuned to pentatonic scale. They are accompanied by stamping tubes called *takan*, which are dropped on the ground to make sounds. This instrument could be tuned to a fifth. It is only in *takan* that we can see Takasago tribe's nostalgia for Indonesia culture (ibid., p. 456).
 11. The Takasago tribe's bird scarers can also be found in the Philippines and Celebes (now Sulawesi). This further proves that the Takasago tribe originated in Indonesia (ibid., p. 468).

Concluding Remarks

From the above, I hope it is clear by now that Kurosawa's 1939 fieldwork in Southeast Asia provided an important reference point for his study of the Takasago tribe's musical instruments. It enabled him to examine the similarities and differences between the two locations and to hypothesize on the relationship between the migration history of the Takasago tribe and that of musical instruments from Indonesia to Taiwan. To what extent can musical instruments be used

to study the migration history of Takasago tribe and that of the Austronesian peoples in general? How effect does the current “out of Taiwan” theory, which holds that Taiwan is the origin of Austronesian peoples, have on the validity of Kurosawa’s claims? These are all questions worthy of further investigation.

Endnotes

¹ For details of the team’s survey of Taiwanese music in 1943, see Wang, 2008.

² Here the term “Indonesia” refers to the new nation-state founded in 1945 instead of the Malay Peninsula.

³ See Plate 47 of Kunst (1973, p. 421). Also see Kurosawa (1970, p. 423).

⁴ Again, the term “Indonesia” here refers to the nation-state.

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PIANOS AND ORGANS IN THE PHILIPPINES: TOOLS OF COLONIZATION AND PROCESSES OF INDIGENIZATION

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Abstract

Among Western instruments which have been globally disseminated, keyboard instruments perhaps are the most well-known in the non-Western world. They are invariably regarded as status symbols, given their price, size and great visibility, and the high status they confer allied with the image they give their owners, and those who play them of a high degree of Westernization. Colonialism was the major force behind the migration and adaptation of keyboard instruments outside Europe. In the Philippines, pianos came alongside organs with the Spanish colonization of the archipelago beginning in the late 16th century, thereupon assuming the role of providing secular entertainment in the home, while the latter took on the sacred role of providing the music and accompanying the singing during Catholic mass in church. This paper will look at these twin keyboard instruments and the seemingly opposite niches they occupied yet, at the same time, the actually complementary functions they served in Spanish colonial Philippines toward the acculturation of Filipinos as the colonial subjects of Spain. On the flip side, it will also examine how these instruments were indigenized -- in the case of the pianos, through the music that were composed and performed on it by Filipino composers and musicians; in the case of the organ, through the use of native bamboo in the construction of the world-famous Philippine bamboo organ of Las Piñas.

**CALUNG, THE BAMBOO GAMELAN ENSEMBLES
OF BANYUMAS, CENTRAL JAVA**
Film

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Abstract

The present paper is aimed at presenting some extracts from an ethnomusicological documentary film entitled “Calung Banyumasan: Shaping Bamboo, Sounding Identities”, which deals with the ensembles of bamboo xylophones typical of the Banyumas Regency, Central Java. The documentary – whose shootings have been realized during a semester of field research (March - August 2019) – is currently being edited, and shall be regarded as a collective product built on a principle of inclusiveness, since it results from the close cooperation with local artists and technicians, who actively participated in the whole film-making process.

The documentary explores both socio-anthropological and musicological issues concerning this musical practice: the life stories and the daily activities of the protagonists (a teacher, a *calung* maker and a professional performer) serve as a starting point to discuss the importance of this musical tradition in shaping the local cultural identity, the nature of its performative contexts, as well as the processes of transformation undergone by this practice in the contemporaneity. From a properly musicological point of view, the film provides insights about the organology of these bamboo ensembles (construction and tuning techniques), their musical repertoire and their playing techniques, also focusing on the processes of learning and transfer of musical knowledge. Although few international scholars have dealt – mostly marginally – with the *calung* ensembles of Banyumas (see Lysloff 1992; Sutton 1986a, 1986b), to date no extensive audiovisual documentation has been collected by ethnomusicologists. The growing number of short contributions recently produced by local researchers and filmmaker, however, testifies to the continuing interest in this unique tradition, which has to be further investigated. The author, therefore, aims to disclose a little known form of bamboo music by means of a an original, widely accessible multimedia product, in order to provide new insights on the variety of regional performing arts coexisting in contemporary Java and to receive feedback and advices from its public presentation.

SOUTHERN SOUNDS OF ERFU TEMPLE: THE SHIFTING IDENTITIES OF THE HOKKIEN COMMUNITY IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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Abstract

The Erfu Temple of the Hokkien (Fujian) community in the Chinatown district of Ho Chi Minh City is not only a nationally-protected religious site today but it is one of the central congregation places for the Hokkien community. It is also a space where the music of *Nanyin* is learned and performed. *Nanyin* (lit. Southern Sounds), an instrumental and vocal ensemble genre originating in the Minnan region of Fujian province has a long history dating back to 14th century. With its unique instrumental make-up, repertoire, notation system and numerous ballads sung in the Minnanese dialect, it is a musical tradition that epitomises the ethnic identity of the diasporic Minnan community in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

There has been a long history of Chinese migration to Vietnam. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a new wave of immigrants from southern China formed the majority of the Chinese community in Cholon today. Each of the dialectal groups prospered from and thrived on business networks and transnational connections with their homeland. In the 20th century, the plights of the ethnic Chinese in its host nation have been one plagued by war and socio-political and economic changes. This presentation will examine the survival of *Nanyin* music of the Hokkien community and how the physical space of the Erfu Temple serve to articulate the aspirations and identity of the Hokkien community in the face of the threats of losing their dominant position as the largest ethnic group in Ho Chi Minh City. I will also look at the participation of the Erfu Nanyin Ensemble in public community events to examine the socio-political meanings in their performance and to posit how such engagements provide a space for the ethnic Chinese's negotiation of an ideal of social relations within the greater modern Vietnamese society.

MUSICAL CREATIVITY IN *WAYANG POTEHI* (Lightning Paper)

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The glove puppet theatre of southern Fujian province in China, originally known as 布袋戲 (pronounced *bu-dai-xi* in Mandarin), is believed to have been introduced to Southeast Asia and the Indonesian archipelago by the substantial influx of Chinese Fujian immigrants around the late sixteenth century to early seventeenth century (Kartomi, 2000; Stenberg, 2015). The genre is recognized as *wayang potehi*¹ in what is now Indonesia. It is primarily performed inside Chinese temples as a crucial means for worship gods and ancestors, and an expression of gratitude for success in business. It used to be common in Chinese-Indonesian communities throughout Indonesia prior to President Suharto's New Order regime (1967-1998). In the current Reform political era (since 1998), the genre is generally regarded as a waning Chinese tradition that only appears in the region of Java.

Drawing upon my fieldwork in Java since July 2018, this paper examines the recent development of *wayang potehi* practice with a particular emphasis on the musical creativity brought on by the existing troupe players, which is contained within my on-going doctoral research. Knowing that the knowledge of the classical *wayang potehi* musical repertoire has not been transmitted comprehensively during the New Order era, I argue that the gap in knowledge and the current intention to restore its popularity thus allows for more creative flexibility in contemporary *wayang potehi* music by troupe musicians.



Figure 1. *Wayang potehi* is performed through the cooperation of puppeteers and musicians.
Gudo, Jombang. Photo by author, 10 July, 2018.

The performance of *wayang potehi* is through the cooperation of puppeteers and musicians. Music generally described as *beiguan*, or as *ba-yin* or *pa tim* (Kartomi, 2000; Tsai, 2015), plays a pivotal role in the show by enlivening scenes and introducing the characters. Musicians are required to have a comprehensive familiarity with the story plot, which enables them to deliver melody and tempo precisely corresponding to the storyline. The instruments used to accompany the show are traditionally Chinese, usually consisting of: *suona* (double reed woodwind), *dizi* (flute), *huqin* (two-stringed fiddle), *ban* (wooden clappers), *tonggu* (small drum), *cha* (cymbal) and *da luo*, *xiao luo* (big and small gong).

In recent years, more and more sonic creativity has been adopted to adorn *wayang potehi* performances. Contemporary *wayang potehi* music reveals varying degrees of innovation and improvisation, and these musical creativities can be roughly categorized into four types: (1) Chinese folk songs or popular songs imported from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan²; (2) Indonesian traditional music or popular songs³, such as Javanese shadow puppetry gamelan music and *dangdut*, (3) new compositions⁴, as well as (4) the application of Indonesian musical instruments, such as Javanese gamelan and Sundanese *Kecapi*.



Figure 2. Javanese gamelan is used as instrumental accompaniment for *wayang potehi*.

Photo by Witjak Widhi Cahya, May 4, 2020.

South China Morning Post. <https://today.line.me/id/v2/article/Wj3LpR>

The recent explosion of creativity in *wayang potehi* music could be attributed to two main factors: the non-comprehensive preservation of the classical *potehi* repertoire and the contemporary musician's attempts to gain the attention of the general Indonesian public. *Wayang potehi* was prohibited from being performed at public venues⁵ during the New Order era. The suppression discouraged ethnic Chinese practitioners from preserving and transmitting classical *potehi* repertoire. As a result, a large number of Javanese and a handful of *peranakan*⁶ (Javanese and Chinese mixed blood) practitioners became the overwhelming majority of performers, and many repertoires were not carefully preserved. Though the practice was resumed early the 21st century after Suharto's Regime ended, the popularity of *wayang potehi* established over the past centuries was not easy to restore when competing with modern entertainment. In order to make *wayang potehi* more appealing, members of the contemporary troupes discovered that incorporating sounds familiar to the crowd seemed to be an effective means to pique the audiences' interest. Edy Sutrisno, a musician of the Lima Merpati troupe in Surabaya, confirmed the impact of innovative music style on the audiences:

“When we play pop music to accompany the show, the audience usually reacts enthusiastically...and some of them came to troupe asking to learn the music after appreciating the show.” (Edy Sutrisno, personal communication, July 13, 2018)

In this paper, I argue that the continuous innovation in music makes *wayang potehi* no longer just a cultural symbol of the ethnic Chinese minority, but a national entertainment for all Indonesian citizens. Dwi Woro Rento Mustuti, the founder of Rumah Cinwa troupe, called their locally innovated performing style *wayang potehi nusantara* (Indonesian archipelago's *wayang potehi*) in a

way to encourage the audience to perceive *wayang potehi* as part of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika⁷, which means “unity in diversity” in Indonesian. Nevertheless, musicians of contemporary troupes realized that the innovation cannot be arbitrary but must derive from the improvisation principle of *wayang potehi* music. The recent efforts to the reconstruction of *wayang potehi* musical tradition are therefore considered urgently needed and a significant step for creative innovation. They are attempting to fill the gaps in the knowledge of *potehi* transmission by contacting overseas troupes from Taiwan and Malaysia and collaborating with academics internationally. Through these inexhaustible efforts to stimulate creativity in performance and to preserve the tradition of *wayang potehi*, practitioners believe that the genre will regain national recognition of Indonesia without losing its rich conventions acting as a representative of Indonesia’s multiculturalism to promote the values of cultural diversity.

Endnotes

¹ According to Stenberg (2015), *wayang* is the Javanese word for “shadow,” and refers to a group of human and puppet theatres. The word *potehi* is derived from three words in Fujian Chinese dialect: ‘po’ meaning fabric, ‘te’ meaning bag, and ‘hi’ meaning theatre; therefore, *potehi* literally means a piece of fabric made into a glove used for theatre.

² During my fieldwork trip at Tulungagung, East Java, in June 2019, I found that the theme song of the Chinese movie “草原上的人们” (“People on the Grassland”, 1952) was applied in *wayang potehi* performance taken place in a Chinese temple Tjoe Tik Kiong.

³ Through the recording provided by the head of Fu He An troupe, Toni Harsono, in November 2019, the Indonesian pop song “Cicilalang” was used in the show of *wayang potehi* for a cultural event Sholawatan Air Hujan 2019 held in Mojoagung, Jombang.

⁴ An example is demonstrated by a Depot-based troupe Rumah Cinwa. The troupe performers composed new music and adopted Javanese gamelan instruments to accompany their *wayang potehi* show performed at Salihara Theatre in Jakarta, 2020.

⁵ During Suharto’s New Order Regime, Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967 on Chinese religion, beliefs and customs, which prohibited all form of Chinese cultural expression. *Wayang potehi* was among those affected by this policy.

⁶ The ethnic Chinese in Indonesia are very diverse and can be identified differently in different periods and regions. Conventionally, scholars have divided them into two main groups: the *totok* refers to China-oriented, China-born newcomers, pure-blood Chinese, and Chinese dialect speaker, while the *peranakan* are the acculturated, local-born, typically mixed-blood Chinese, and Indonesian dialect speakers (Hoon, 2006).

⁷ The national motto of independent Indonesia, which means “unity in diversity.”

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**TRANSCULTURAL TEOCHEW OPERA: A CASE STUDY ON TEOCHEW OPERA
AND PUPPET HOUSE'S DIRECTOR GOH HOOI LING**

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Abstract

Chinese traditional Teochew opera is a mixture of performance art that originated from Chaoshan of China combining literature, drama, singing, music, costumes, poetics, acrobatics, folk art, life and habits. From the 19th century onwards, it was brought to the northern states of Penang and Perak, Malaysia. The Teochew opera was the source of entertainment for the overseas Chinese and is still being performed for the deities during the period of the Chinese prayer celebrations and festivals. However, the traditional Teochew opera is slowly losing ground in Malaysia due to the declining support from audiences and the influx of modern forms of entertainment.

To ensure that the Chinese Teochew opera continues its survival, Teochew Puppet and Opera House's director, Goh Hooi Ling has made efforts to preserve and promote this intangible cultural heritage. She relied on adoption in the changing political, social and multicultural environment by hybridization of Teochew opera through mixing different local cultures to create the cross-cultural performances in recent years. Teochew opera today reveals substantial creativity by drawing on expressions of Chinese cultural heritage and Malaysia's multiculturalism. Over time it started to evolve and include styles from traditional, modern and crossover genres through the impacts of modernization and globalization. This paper will seek to understand the ways in which Teochew Puppet and Opera House continues to participate in reviving Teochew opera, and how Goh Hooi Ling experiences intercultural contact on its cultural heritage performance.

DANCE AS MAGIC WITHIN THE *PULIAJAT* CEREMONY OF THE MENTAWAI ISLANDS

Tarian dalam upacara Puliajat di Mentawai Sebagai Bentuk Estetika Magis

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Introduction

The largest and most important ritual of the people Mentawai people from West Sumatra, Indonesia, is the ceremony called *puliajat*, which is a religious celebration of an *uma* (extended family house) group (Schefold, Reimar, 1991; Roza Jhonri, 1993; Emayanti, 1998; Hanefi, 1998; Tarida Herawati, 2004; Saparuddin, 2013). In this paper I will examine salient features of this ceremony, which contains dance and music. For my research on *puliajat* I used a qualitative methodology, specifically an ethnochoreological approach, concentrating here on Mentawai cultural and spiritual expression through dance. As a researcher and choreographer I have travelled to Mentawai many times and in collaboration with Mentawai practitioners, I have created new choreographies inspired by Mentawai dance.¹

I begin here with a brief geographical summary of the area along with the framings of local mythology and the place of artistic expression in the community. I then examine the *puliajat* ceremony, referencing the *туру' uliat bilou* (gibbon dance) within it, and look at the special clothing used along with aspects of the dance itself.

Geography, Myths and Practitioners

The Mentawai Islands are part of the province of West Sumatra. Siberut is the largest island, followed by Sipora island, then North Pagai, and South Pagai islands. The total area of the four islands, including the sea, is about 7,000 square kilometers. Apart from these islands, there are also a large number of small islands which are partly planted with coconut trees, but are not inhabited, functioning as forest land. Although the distance from Padang beach to Mentawai is about 100 kilometers, the culture on the islands is very different, from that of Minangkabau, which is my culture. According to Schefold (1991), the distinctive culture of Mentawai has attracted the attention of people who have visited the islands ever since the 18th century. Visitors were astonished to see that the Mentawai people bear more resemblance to the inhabitants of the Hawaiian islands, Tahiti and other Polynesian islands which are far to the east, compared with people from the Sumatran mainland which neighbours Mentawai (p.13).

Mentawai people have a rich mythology (see Schefold, 1991; Hanefi, 1998). It is perhaps tempting to see these as merely a collection of stories but they are rather understood locally as events that have really occurred. These narratives tell about the creation of the universe, about the origin of various natural phenomena in Mentawai and about human history, sometimes as the main theme and sometimes in passing. It appears that the myths cannot be explained completely by locals because some are important, some are more trivial and some are obscure to the general populace. However, for Mentawai people this does not create a concern, rather it depicts the ebbs and flows of life that they see and experience in the natural world on the islands.

In Mentawai the idea of *seniman* (Bahasa Indonesian, artist) is unknown. This is because all forms of art are always associated with the world of religious rituals and everyone should be

able to participate. For example, wooden carvings that are displayed in an *uma*, are mostly made by the owners of the carvings themselves. In the process the person is said in the Mentawai language to be a *sibakkat* which means a creator or maker (close to the Indonesian *pencipta*). Of course people will help one another to create art sometimes but it is a work relationship that is paid for in the form of eating a shared meal together. The *pulijajat* ceremony is no exception to this.

Pulijajat and Sikerei

Pulijajat is held because of the occurrence of an extraordinary event, such as the appearance of a bad omen, the purchase of a gong or the death of a relative. Because the preparations for the *pulijajat* take a long time, a number of rituals are often gathered into one extensive ceremony. A truly complete *pulijajat* celebration lasts for several weeks. During this time, the *uma* community concerned will not carry out their day-to-day agricultural activities, which evolves around sago production, the main food source on the islands.

The *pulijajat* practitioners are the *sikerei* (ritual specialist/healer, shaman, Bahasa Indonesian, *dukun*) of the *uma* and others who are invited from nearby *uma*. The event is led by a senior *sikerei* who is given the title of *rimata* (ceremonial leader of the *uma* group). The *rimata* leads the *pulijajat* celebration and is usually an older man who knows the required mantras the best. His role is to perform certain ritual acts, representing and on behalf of the entire audience of the *uma*, who watch. *Pulijajat* is always held in an absolutely closed environment. Once the celebration has started, outsiders are no longer allowed to set foot in the *uma*. It is only during the initial stages of the ceremony that the invited *sikerei* from other *uma* groups arrive. They then leave, after sharing a meal, with a gift of pork, as a thank you.

The highlight of the *pulijajat* is the summoning of spirits through dance, music and singing. A sign that the appropriate spirit has arrived is the presence of a number of people in the *uma* who are watching, going into trance. The *sikerei* then invite the spirits to perform dances. The dances are accompanied by drums, which are beaten with a distinctive sound along with a bell which is played by the *rimata* or the other *sikerei*. The process is aimed at harmonizing the relationship between humans and humans, the relationship between humans and nature, and the relationship between humans and the creator.

Dance and Music in *Pulijajat* – the *туру’ uliat bilou* (Gibbon Dance)

Within the *pulijajat* ceremony, dances with a magical nuance are performed, which are: *turuk uliat bilou* (the gibbon dance), *turuk pokpok* (the clapping dance) *turuk uliat manyang* (the eagle dance), *turuk uliat gaou-gaou* (the *ruak-ruak* bird dance), *turuk uliat lagoon-lagoon* (the butterfly dance) *turuk uliat pik-pik* (the *pipit* bird dance), *turuk uliat si palalu* (a romantic dance), *turuk sipuepa* (the dance for a lost child). These dances are performed with the aim of summoning the power of benevolent spirits so that they present themselves at the place of worship, inside the *uma* longhouse. It is through the specific medium of dance and mantra that the spirits are communicated with.

The religious ceremony system contains specific aspects that are of particular interest here, these are: the place where the ceremony is carried out, ceremonial objects and tools, and who performs and leads the ceremony. These aspects are in the ritual performance of every customary *pulijajat* ceremony, wherever it is held. First, the dance in the *pulijajat* customary ceremony is performed on the *putturukat* (flat, wooden floor stage area) inside the *uma* longhouse and the wooden floor of the *uma* becomes a percussion instrument, through the dance movements of the *sikerei*, which I will explain further below. Specialist equipment required includes an oval-shaped wooden bowl which is usually the place where offerings to the spirits are put to ensure that the rituals run smoothly, and finally, the ritual is run by the *sikerei* in a group of three, led by the *rimata*.

Before a performance of dance in the *pulijat*, every member of the *sikerei*'s family and in fact all the members of the *uma* longhouse gather together inside. To make the dances complete, the *sikerei* use a distinctive head decoration which is called a *louad* which is made of beads strung together into a headband. This *louad* is only allowed to be worn by a *sikerei*. It cannot be used by just anyone because *louad* indicates that that person is a *sikerei*. During *pulijat*, the wives of the *sikerei* wear customary clothing, which is a cloth skirt and a sleeveless blouse, along with headbands decorated with beads and flowers. A neckless of beads is also worn.

When the *sikerei* perform the first ritual, they sing alternating with each other, while holding leaves and then those leaves are touched to each *sikerei*'s body in turn. After that, the three *sikerei* walk towards the kitchen of the *uma* longhouse, continuing their activities by touching the leaves to *uma*'s walls. Then the *sikerei* return to their original place and sit in a crouched position, while singing, with the intention of summoning spirits.

In performances of *туру' uliat bilou* (gibbon dance) that I have observed, the necks of the *sikerei* are decorated with a necklace called *lapuk*, which is made of beads and a *gobbiad* made of metal, and on the back of the neck they wear an ornament called *gilik gouo' - gouo'* made of chicken feathers. On the wrist the *sikerei* wear *legcu* which is made of beads and decorated with wool thread, then the elbow is decorated by *legkuak* which is a kind of bracelet made of beads and on that bracelet a eucalyptus leaf is inserted called *surak*. On the body the *sikerei* wear a cloth which they call *kabid*. The *kabid* is a triangular-shaped cloth that is used to cover the lower body and it can also be called *aurat*.

Choreographically, the motion of the *sikerei* is predominantly circular with swaying hands, sometimes suddenly stopping, sometimes starting again, in movements inspired by the gibbon. While moving, the *sikerei* create the iconic pounding, percussive foot movements, for which Mentawai dance is well known. This transformative sound, created through dance on the wooden floor of the *uma*, provides an intense and powerful atmosphere, almost overloading the senses, when combined with the darkened room and the unbroken patterns of the drums, which I will describe next.

As researchers Sisi Adira Veronica, Irdawati & Maizarti (2021) note, musically it is helpful to see the *pulijat* ceremony as that which has internal music created by the *sikerei* and that which is external. A type of intense internal music can be observed in the forementioned stamping, percussive footsteps and vocals which are expressed by the *sikerei*. The vocals contain mantras addressing the spirits. This internal music is all produced by the body of the *sikerei*. External music can be seen from the percussion music used by musicians (not the *sikerei*) in the gibbon dance, such as *gajeumak* (long drum), which is a Mentawai drum made from a hollowed palm tree trunk. The drum head is made of snake skin or lizard skin. The drum skins are tightened by being held next to the fire in a heath, a process which occurs several times during the full ceremony to maintain the tuning of the drums. The *gajeumak* drums come in different sizes. The large one is called *katalaga* and the small one is called *kateitei*. These are played together with small metal hitter called *sinay* which is hit with a constant beat to produce a metallic sound, around which the drums weave. So there are usually three musicians, who accompany the *sikerei* as they dance. The drummers are often young men, who enjoy participating in the ceremony at a musical level.

Conclusion

The *pulijat* ceremony can be understood as a celebration of life in the Mentawai Islands, undertaken by practitioners to ensure a balance in life's complex processes through ritual dances. Judging from the current state of Mentawai society, belief in the supernatural is maintained as are rules to balance the needs of the supernatural with those of humans. This means that prescribed

rituals must be carried out and rules must be obeyed by the community, to keep the spirits appeased. If this does not occur, people believe that disaster will follow.

In every *puliajat*, the dances are paramount. If there is no dance performed, such as *turuk uliat bilou* (gibbon dance) or the *turuk pok-pok* (clapping dance) and all the others listed earlier, local community knowledge assumes that the ritual aspects will be disturbed by evil spirits and the full ceremony will not run as smoothly as desired. Every ceremony must be held in a prescribed manner, elements of which I have briefly described here, as I have observed them. These include the initial food sharing between *sikerei*, the leaf touching to the walls of the *uma*, the particular clothing and jewellery worn, the specific drums used and the dances presented. This is to ensure the *uma*'s protection from good spirits. As such these dances in the *puliajat* ceremony thrive in the Mentawai islands because they are constantly enacted by the community, as ritual dance.

Endnotes

¹ This November 2021, along with colleagues from the West Sumatran Association of Oral Tradition, in collaboration with the Mentawai Office of Tourism and Culture, I will host the *Turuk Laggai* Festival and International Conference in Mentawai.

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THE MARTIAL ART *SILEK TUO BARINGIN MARAPI*: PRIMARY MOVEMENTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi Sungai Pua: *Gerak Dasar dan Deskripsinya*

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Introduction

Silek (Indonesian *silat*), is the martial art of Minangkabau (West Sumatra, Indonesia) and this includes *silek* developed in Sungei Pua, where I come from (Indra Utama, 2017; Amran, 2010; Mulyono, 2012). Each area in Minangkabau has its own *silek* style with differences in holds and movement. For example, *Silek Kumango* is different from *Silek Piaman* which in turn is different from *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* from Sungei Pua, which is the *silek* that I will focus on here.¹ In this paper I will introduce the *nagari* (village confederation) of Sungei Pua by outlining a brief history then look at spiritual aspects of *silek* along with my experience of learning *silek*. Finally, I will explain the main movement sets for *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi*.²

Locations and Histories

Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi in Sungai Pua originated from the (*dusun*) hamlet of Tuo Pariangan Limo Kaum, located on Mount Merapi, which, according to oral tradition, has been occupied since the 6th century BC. From there, people migrated to Nagari Sungai Pua. As described to us by our elders, the migrants journey followed around the slopes of Mount Marapi, the habitable but active volcano on which we live and which is included in our *silek* name. The travellers gave every place that they passed a name, according to the natural elements of the landscape. When they encountered a large *rimbo* (jungle), they named the area Rimbo Panjang. Likewise with the area called Rimbo Takuruang (confined jungle), Rimbo Data (flat jungle), and Rimbo Ketek (small jungle). From Rimbo Ketek, they descended and arrived in the middle of the field of the Koto clans people. In this area they rested for a few days.

From the central area of Padang Rang Koto (open fields of the Koto people), our migrants could envisage the areas to be further inhabited and they divided into four settlement groups. The first group settled in Taratak, the second, in Koto Tuo Balai Gurah, the third group went to Jilatang (now known as Tilatang Kamang), and the fourth settled in Koto Tuo IV Koto. These four areas are known as *Agam Tuo* (old Agam).

Regarding the historical development of *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* itself, before this martial art appeared, there were already others in existence, such as the *kucing* (cat), the *harimau* (tiger), the *gambiang* (goat) and the *anjing* (dog) martial art. After these styles came *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi*, which embodies our important Minangkabau nature-based philosophy of *alam takambang jadi guru* (the unfolding growth of nature is our teacher). This is illustrated, for example, by the naming of our *tangkok* (*silek* holds) with animal names, influenced from those earlier styles.

Learning *Silek* and Spiritual Values

I will now discuss spiritual aspects of *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* which are initially encountered when entering a *perguruan* (*silek* school), drawn from my own experience and observations. On entry there are several conditions that are required of prospective students including bringing the

following items to their teacher: a chicken, knife, white cloth, uncooked rice, and limes. These required items are understood by *silek* proponents to have spiritual value.

First, the teacher slaughters the chicken and then its blood is sprinkled around the compacted earth of the *sasaran* (martial arts outdoors training space).³ The chicken is then cooked into a *gulai* (curry) and is served in a *mandoa* (prayer event) that is attended by *silek* teachers and relatives. In this event, *guru agama* (religious teachers) are also called on to pray for the student so that their training goes smoothly. Usually in this ‘ritual of accepting a pupil’, the student takes an oath to obey the teacher and to not use the knowledge they will receive for any wickedness. As is the case with any *silek* school, after this process, all the pupils learning from the same teacher become *saudara sepeguruan* (like brothers and sisters). In Minangkabau terms, it is said that *saudara sepeguruan* are considered *saasok sakumayan* (of the same smoke from the same incense) meaning that we are one and the same and mutual protection applies.

***Sewah* and New Choreographies**

Regarding myself as a choreographer, I have studied *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* since my third year of primary school, with the senior teacher or *tuo silek* (the *silek* elder) namely Syafni Rangyo Mudo, commonly known by the nickname Pini. Consequently, *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* is the source of my inspiration when I create new dance works. I have developed the aesthetics contained in *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi*, through a process we call *sewah*, namely the creation of *bungo-bungo silek* (*silek* flowers). *Sewah* denotes a development of the steps and holds that exist in *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi*, through the idea of *tangkok bagamak* (between being caught and not being caught). *Tangkok bagamak* means then that the new movement or hold is not the same as in real *silek*, because in *sewah* the beauty of the movement is prioritized.

Sewah began with people creatively developing the steps and holds of *silek*. Some of these then developed into performance, for example, as in the dance to welcome and pay tribute to important guests of the past. Today this is often referred to as a *tari galombang* (ocean wave dance). More recently, *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* has developed into *randai*, which is a form of Minangkabau traditional theatre that includes several other elements; dance specifically *galombang*, music specifically *gurindam* singing and acting. When *randai* is presented, these three elements are combined into a unified performance. *Sewah* has also developed into dances such as the *tari piring* (plate dance) and the *tari payung* (the umbrella dance). Furthermore, *sewah* developed into contemporary dance choreography of today and it all began with *silek*, which is the basis for Minangkabau dance.

Now I will turn to look at the movements in *silek* as a martial art and describe each. *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* is concerned with movement patterns that lead to either an attacking position or a defence position. The main steps consists of four movement sets or categories. Before each set, I will share an associated reflection. The sets are: 1) *Ampang Suok*; 2) *Ampang Kida*; 3) *Bujua Suok*; and 4) *Bujua Kida*. Each of these categories, in turn, consist of four specific holds or movements.

1. The main movements for *Ampang Suok* (*Gerak Utama Ampang Suok*).

This is the initial position when fending off a *tangkok* (Ind. *tangkup*, hold, capture), which consists of the movements called *Saparo Patah*, *Palituak*, *Saluik Ula Patah Siku Lua*, and *Saluik Ula Kuduak*.

Reflection: *Silek* not only pertains to physical strength but also prioritizes moves which follow the flexibility and rhythm of a moving body. In addition, every movement is adapted from the philosophy of *alam takambang jadi guru* (the unfolding growth of nature is our teacher), mentioned above. In *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi*, inspiration from the snake is particularly dominant.

For example we see the Minangkabau word *ula* (snake), in the third and fourth movements of the *Ampang Suok* movement set described below.

- With the *Saparo Patah* move, your right hand holds the attacker's upper right wrist, the left hand holds the attacker's elbow, while your elbow is touching the inside of the attacker's shoulder. Your feet are in the *pitunggua tanah* (two feet on the ground) position. The person being attacked is thus able to successfully lockdown the opponent, showing that it is better to defend than to attack.
- Regarding the *Palituak* movement, your right hand holds the opponent's right hand from the little finger in a bent position, while your left hand holds the attacker's right arm from the elbow. The position of your feet remains as *pitunggua tanah*. In this move the defender catches the attacker's finger and twists it. The meaning conveyed by this gesture is that attackers must be careful not to expose their open hand and fingers, as fingers are easy to grab. If the opponent's finger has been caught it is difficult to escape and may perhaps be broken.
- With the *Saluik Ula Patah Siku Lua* movement, your right hand holds the opponents right hand at the palm and bends it, then your left hand crosses at the elbow of the attacker's right hand and places your right palm on top of the left hand. This position also shows that the attacker's position is not good when compared with the defensive position. The attacker is caught by the defender who twists like a snake, while the attacker's elbow can be broken if forced back.
- For the *Saluik Ula Kuduak*, their right hand and arm is flexed back by your right hand from behind. Your left hand passes under the right arm until your hand grips the back of the attacker's shoulder at the top of the neck This move is also related to a snake wrapping around its prey. The nature of a snake is slippery and if it is wrapped around a person it is difficult to free oneself. Even if it is partially resisted, the coil may tighten and perhaps crush the opponent's bones.



Figure 1. *Saparo Patah* movement demonstrated by Syafni Rangyo Mudo and opponent.

2. The main moves for *Ampang Kida* (*Gerak Utama Ampang Kida*).

Ampang Kida consists of four moves; *Saparo Patah Dalam*, the *Palituak Ateh*, the *Saluik Ula Patah Siku Dalam*, and the *Saluik Ula Lihia* move.

Reflection: The essence of this *silek* movement is teaching or education in self-defence. Values that are instilled through *silek* are moral values, for example, for every *silek* practitioner it is

a priority to act with *baik budi* (correct protocol, manners). This is revealed in the statement *musuh indak dicari, basuo pantang dielakkan* (enemies are not sought, acquaintances are not denied). The phrase "enemies are not to be sought" states that a fighter, no matter how high their knowledge, will never look for enemies. They prefer to socialise with friends and family. However, if an opponent arrives, they will not retreat, but will serve to the best of their ability.

- Regarding *Saparo Patah Dalam*, the right hand is flexed open by your left hand, while your right hand is on their elbow, with your elbow positioned on the attacker's right chest.
- The *Palituak Ateh* move positions your right hand on the inside of their elbow, left hand on their right wrist and you bend it inward, while your right foot is in the lower right rib position. This movement teaches that *silek* fighters, also known as *pandeka*, are always required to defend the truth. They promise to uphold the truth, to fight misinformation and use the knowledge received from a *silek* teacher for good. Every *perguruan* (*silek* school) has a promise, pledge, or oath. People who break the oath will be expelled from the school and it is said sometimes misfortune follows them because of breaking that oath.
- During the *Saluik Ula Patah Siku Dalam* motion, the attacker's hand is twisted by the defender. This movement can break the opponent's hand. This move demonstrates that Tuo Sungai Pua *silek* is very serious, all of its movements work and can result in injury.
- For the *Saluik Ula Lihia* movement, your right hand crosses under the armpit of their right hand and grips the bottom of their neck or around the adam's apple, while your left hand holds their right wrist and flexes it backwards. This movement again uses the word *ula* (snake), and the 'snake coil' leads to a very deadly place, for which extreme caution is required, namely the *lihia* (neck). In this position the attacking opponent will not be able to do anything, because if he moves his neck will break, resulting in death.

3. The main movements for *Bujua Suok* (*Gerak Utama Bujua Suok*).

The *Bujua Suok* moves consist of *Tangkok Harimau*, *Saluik Ula Harimau*, *Tangkok Daguak*, and *Kapik Lihia*.

Reflection: For Minangkabau children, *silek* plays an important role in identity creation, especially for the young men. For example, in the past, it was expected that young men would temporarily leave their village, in a cultural practice known as *merantau* (fortune seeking elsewhere). In preparation, teenagers studied *silek* until young adulthood. This was so they could defend themselves against possible attacks from criminals while travelling, or protect their relatives against trouble, when they returned.

- For the *Tangkok Harimau* hold, your right hand grips the left side of the face from behind and your left hand also grips their face on the forehead, then this position is slightly pulled downwards. This move is a defensive move, because it catches the opponent's attack and is a test of the *silek* proponents patience.
- Regarding the *Saluik Ula Harimau* move, your two hands are placed in the same position as the *Tangkok Harimau*, the only difference is that your right hand crosses from under the armpit and flanks their right hand towards the right side of their body. The animal used as inspiration for these two moves is a *harimau* (tiger) which is an animal with extreme alertness. Minangkabau martial arts steps are simple, but these simple steps require alertness and high intelligence, like a tiger, as created by *silek* masters hundreds of years ago. They made the moves efficient and easy to develop further. For example, as little as possible movement is required and the actions are quick and precise with the aim of stopping the opponent. This exacting simplicity also means that *silek* is easy to further develop creatively.

- With the *Tangkok Daguak* movement, their arm at the right wrist is flexed back, while your left hand grips the chin while pulling towards the left of your body.
Every move in the Tuo Sungai Pua *silek* leads to physical and mental completion. In the Minangkabau *silek* tradition, proponents are not only taught to defend themselves physically but are also taught philosophical aspects that are symbolized in the application of the *silek* moves. We can see an example in the following movement.
- For the *Kapik Lihia's* movement, your right hand is wrapped around their neck from under your armpit, while the left hand is holding the knee of their right leg.
This position demonstrates that in *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* knowledge is taught through practical methods and we are never taught how to begin an attack. However, lessons always start from the “avoidance” perspective, that is, try to avoid fights as much as you can. It is only after you are attacked and the enemy's attack is repelled (in defence) that you may then begin to open up a step to attack.



Figure 2. *Tangkok Harimau*, hold demonstrated by Syafni Rangyo Mudo and opponent.

4. The main movements for *Bujua Kidah* (*Gerak Utama Bujua Kidah*).

The *Bujua Kidah* set of movements consist of the *Pandayung* move, the *Sandang Hantak*, the *Salempang*, and *Salempang Kuduak*.

Reflection: *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* is not only a martial art, it is also combined with Islamic teachings. It remains popular as a perfect martial art, based on spirituality and used for individual safety, community welfare and protection from disaster. Furthermore, today, we recognize that the term *silek* contains elements of sports, arts, martial art and mysticism. Regarding the time of practice, there is a difference in philosophy between practicing in the light of day and at night which is dark, full of shadows and dim light. During the day, one's eyes can easily remain alert, while at night greater concentration and attention to movement is required.

- The *Pandayuang* move positions the right hand on the shoulder while being pressed, the left hand on their wrist is flexed inward. This movement is like a rowing movement where the opponent's hand is the oar, up in the air. This movement warns the opponent to be careful when attacking, because it can be fatal.
- The *Sandang Hantak Siku* move positions the right hand on their right wrist in an outwardly flexed position, the elbow of the right hand above the shoulder, while the left hand is flexed beside the body as if the elbow is to move towards the chest.

- For *Salempang*, the right arm is flexed outward by your left hand, with your right shoulder lifting from below underneath their arm. In this position, the opponent who attacks is forced to move away.
- With the *Salempang Kuduak* movement their right hand is pressed in by your left hand, and your right hand embraces the neck while pressing downwards. This move must be done with great care to prevent the possibility of a neck fracture.



Figure 3. *Salempang* movement demonstrated by Syafni Rangyo Mudo and opponent.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed the physical, spiritual and philosophical aspects of *silek*. I have discussed the settlement history of my home *nagari* of Sungei Pua, which is where *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* comes from. I have shown that *silek* is learned from a highly respected and experienced teacher, and is accompanied by close spiritual guidance. The teacher coaches pupils on the four movement categories in practical session of *silek*, which I have outlined here.

In closing I note that, the *perguruan* (*silek* school) of *Silek Tuo Baringin Marapi* meets every Saturday night at our teacher's house. In recent years, Mr. Syafni (Pini) is no longer able to fully train everyone, because he is approximately 76 years old, so he is assisted by his son Syailendra, with several other coaches. This *Silek Tuo Barinian Marapi* school frequently also participates in events hosted by the wider *silek* community but unfortunately since the Covid-19 pandemic, many *silek* festival programs have not been able to be held.

Endnotes

¹ In Minangkabau there are many types of *silek*, for example, *harimau*, *kuciang*, *taralak*, *lintau*, and *kumango*, to name just a few. Each *nagari* has its own style, with different types of holds, movements and accompanying life-lessons.

² In the presentation I demonstrated all the holds as I discussed them. Here I can only include three photographs as visual aids to understanding the movements.

³ The *sasaran* is a traditional *silek* training place, consisting of flattened dirt, without any concrete. *Sasaran* are usually hidden places, away from populated areas. In the past few years some schools have opened their training to more public areas, so that the general public can more easily watch.

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Informants

- Syafni Rangkayo Mudo (75 Tahun), farmer from Limo Patalangan, jorong Kapalo Koto, Kanagarian Sungai Pua, Kecamatan Sungai Pua, Agam.
- Wesno Malik Koto (63 Tahun), entrepreneur, Padang Banyak Limo Suku, kanagarian Sungai Pua, Kecamatan Sungai Pua, Agam.
- Beni. S. Malik (32 Tahun), jorong Babuai, kanagarian Balai Gurah, kecamatan Ampek Angkek, Agam.

**SALUANG KLASIK: A FLUTE ENSEMBLE FROM THE DAREK (HIGHLANDS)
OF MINANGKABAU IN WEST SUMATRA, INDONESIA**

*Saluang Klasik: Salah Satu Jenus Ensemble tiup di Dareah Darek (Pendalam)
Minangkabai, West Sumatra, Indonesia*

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Introduction

Saluang klasik is a genre of flute music from the Minangkabau homeland of West Sumatra in Indonesia. Its form is a combination of an end blown bamboo flute called a *saluang* and songs known as *dendang*, so it is also known as *saluang jo dendang* (flute and song) (Amran 1995; Hajizar 1996). The growth and development of *saluang klasik* has occurred in the *darek* (interior/highland) Minangkabau community, which consists of the *luhak nan tigo* (the three areas) namely, *luhak Tanah Datar*, *luhak Agam*, and *luhak Limapuluh Kota*. Today, these *luhak* are districts, with boundaries similar to the originals, in the province of West Sumatra. *Saluang klasik* is performed at weddings and circumcisions, to celebrate the opening and closings of a *buru babi* (pig hunt) or a *lomba permainan batu domba* (domino competition). The music is also performed in the houses of Minangkabau migrants living away from West Sumatra in cities such as Jakarta or Medan.

In this paper I will look at the background to the name of this genre, then explain salient features of a typical performance, from my viewpoint as a professional *saluang* player. I will then discuss the categorisation of the songs that are performed, followed by current developments of *saluang klasik*, as contemporary artistic expression.

As a player I started learning *saluang* flute at the age of 13, and began by performing first in my village in Agam district, West Sumatra, with friends. We would play at night for free, at the *pos ronda* (neighbourhood patrol post) watched by locals from each *orong* (neighbourhood). My professional career began at age 24 and continues today. Our audiences consist of die-hard *saluang* fans who range in age from teenagers to very elderly people. Many come from a farming background as agriculturalists and horticulturalist. There are also traders, urban office workers, *datuak* (traditional leaders) and other community leaders, students, teachers and lecturers. In short our fans come from a cross-section of Minangkabau society, men and women.

Saluang klasik is so called because the genre is strongly conservative and persists in its original form, where the performance ensemble rarely combines the *saluang* instrument with other accompanying instruments, neither percussion, bowed instruments nor plucked. An exception to this is the occasional use of the *rabab darek* (spiked fiddle with two strings, from the *darek* area) (Hajizar 1995). The *saluang klasik* ensemble flourishes in the midst of its home community, supported by people who are huge fans. They enjoy watching *saluang* performance in its original format. In my experience, this format allows the audience to feel the beauty of both the melodies and the rhythms of the music in an intensely focused way and can be compared perhaps with the intensity of classical shakuhachi flute in Japan. In addition, in this format the audience can listen clearly to the *pantun* (sung poetry lyrics with the rhyme abab), sung in the vocal melodies of the two *padandang* (singers). The colour of the voice and the style of each singer also adds to the beauty of the music that the audience so enjoys.



Figure 1. *Saluang Klasik* ensemble with left to right, singers Yanti Singkarak and Wirda and M. Halim playing *saluang* flute.



Figure 2. Performer's view. M. Halim playing *saluang* flute with an audience in the *darek*.

A *Saluang Klasik* performance

A performance begins with opening remarks from the *tukang oyak* or *janang* (master of ceremonies/song payment mediator) who settles the audience down and takes song orders, after which an *imbau* (*saluang* instrumental introduction) begins. Following this, three *dendang* are played in order. This process is standardised according to tradition, so that you must play a song from one of the following categories. First comes a song from the *Singgalang* repertoire, second, a song from the *Arau Lamo* group and third, a song from the *Lintau Basiang* group of songs. These three songs may not be replaced, swapped around or interspersed with other songs based on requests from the audience or from the performing artists. After finishing the three songs in a row, the audience is allowed to request all the following songs, which will be played into the night and early morning, according to their wishes.

Typically lasting for six to seven hours, a *saluang klasik* show begins around 9:00pm, ending around 3:30am or 4:00am, with music playing through the night. Performances are at night because, in my experience *darek* people generally work during the day in agriculture and urban employment, so it is impossible to find an audience during the day. Furthermore, people believe that the quiet, intense atmosphere of night time is more suitable for a *saluang* performance than during the day. Within a full performance there are three sessions of around two hours each. The first is from 21:00pm to 23:00pm, with a thirty minute rest, a second session from around 23:30pm to 1:30am with another thirty minute rest, and the third session from 2:00am to 3:00am or 4:00am. We stop before morning prayers. I will now turn to the categories of *dendang*, which correspond loosely to the three sessions.

Categories of *Dendang* Songs to be Memorised by a *Saluang* Flute Player

The order of the songs, which is fixed by tradition, is based on the changing atmosphere of a night time performance, as understood by Minangkabau audiences. This is the idea of moving from feeling happy, early in the evening to more reflective or sad as the night progresses.

Dendang Gembira - Uplifting Songs

These melodies contain rhythmic elements and fast tempos, which create a happy atmosphere. They are played early in the performance. There are many types of rhythmic patterns used. When translated into concepts from western art music, the most dominant is a 2/4 meter, such as the songs, “Cancang Kambiang”, “Riak Pandan” and “Indang Bareh Maha”. Several songs approximate a 3/4, meter such as the song “Sijobang”, “Tigo Sapilin” and “Lenggang nan Gondo”. Furthermore, there are also those who use a 16 feel for example in the third section within the song “Tigo Sapilin”. This category also includes new works that adopt songs from other regions or countries, such as “Cicak Rowo” from Java or “Butet” from North Sumatra, along with songs with a Hindustani nuance, for example, “Dikijoknyo Den”, “Gali-gali” and songs in the *sanggam* style.

Dendang Satangah Tiang songs - Halfway songs

These *dendang* along with the accompanying *saluang* melody are played as if in between joy and sadness, such as the songs of “Lintau Barotan”, “Raimah Tanjuang”, “Situjuah”, “Muaro Peti”, “Pincuran Lima”. At the beginning of the melody there tends to be a rhythmic element, which the audience equates with a happy mood, however, as the songs progress they tend to move into free rhythm, an indication of intensity and melancholy. These *dendang* mostly come from the areas of Limapuluh Kota and Tanah Datar as well as from other areas, such as Pariaman and Solok.

Dendang Ratok - Lament songs

These are the *dendang* songs that are characterized by sadness and are usually played from midnight until 3.30am, of which there are many. For example, in Agam each area has its own *ratok*. Some are named after their place of origin, for example “Ratok Lawang” is from Lawang, “Ratok Batagak” is from Batagak (Amran 1995). Others are named after a figure in the first *pantun* for which the lament is known, for example “Ratok Sidawiah”, a lament from Tanjung Raya (Amran, 1995). It is during the performance of *ratok* lament songs, that one may assess the skill of the *saluang* player and the skill of the singer. Usually, professional singers who master the *ratok* songs love to demonstrate their talent with every ounce of their soul at this point in the performance. It is an intense time for the singers, the flute player and the audience.

As a *saluang* player, my focus is on performing from memory the requested songs. The *saluang* sound is created by the blowing of the *saluang* flute with a circular breathing technique, which allows the instrument to sound continuously. The *saluang* accompaniment is structured thus:

the initial *imbau* (*saluang* instrumental introduction), the main accompaniment of the singer, the *antaran kalorok* (interlude melody between the sung *pantun* stanzas) and the *penutup*, (*saluang* instrumental closing melody). When accompanying the singer, a flute player plays the *dendang* sung melody in parallel with the singer or we can also play an interlocking melody.

Dendang Jalu-Jalu Jalu-jalu songs – the final songs that signal the end of a show

Jalu-jalu is the category for the closing songs that are performed about 15 minutes before the end of a performance. *Jalu-jalu* songs also have a specific order which begins with three consecutive songs; “Bacarai Kasiah”, “Manjalang Sabuah” and then a *Jalu-Jalu* song itself, for example, “Songsong”, and “Siti Jauhari”. Once this set of songs begins, the audience realises that they will not be able to request any more songs, even though previous songs that they have ordered might be waiting to be announced by the master of ceremonies.

Innovations in the *Saluang* Scene

Although *saluang klasik*, as described above, remains popular in the highland areas of West Sumatra, the genre has also long been appreciated in places outside the *darek* highlands in the areas that we call the *rantau* (outside our historical settlements in *luhak nan tigo*). These performances generally contain progressive elements, where the *saluang* flute is combined with other instruments, such as percussion. Such styles are heard in the coastal city of Padang, or provincial capital and neighbouring Pariaman district and in inland Sijunjung, Darmasraya, Pasaman and Solok districts.

In these locations, through new innovations, the people from outside the *darek* region, have given *saluang* performance new names, such as *saluang dangdut* (the ensemble includes drums, whose patterns are influenced by *dangdut* rhythms) and *saluang orgen* (the ensemble includes a keyboard). In these cases the interval or pitch distance used, tends to approach diatonic tones (with notes raised or lowered by the flute player changing their embouchure slightly) because it is combined with keyboard, guitar, bass guitar and other instruments. What stands out here is the entertainment value of such performances, because the style is perhaps more energetic than *saluang klasik* and thus more attractive to some people.



Figure 3. *Saluang orgen* ensemble, M. Halim playing *saluang* flute with singer on microphone Eka Sutai.

Saluang klasik is the inspiration for the creation of new musical compositions in West Sumatra and I turn now to discuss *saluang klasik* as ‘art music’ within the realm of musical composition. I am a composer and lecturer of composition, who often creates new works based on *saluang klasik* aesthetics (see also Hajizar 1996). These include: *Masters of Minangkabau* (1995), a

CD recording, with singer Piterman Slayan recorded in Wellington, New Zealand (1995) and produced by Jack Body, *Craying Smaill* (2007) performed at TBS Surakarta and the Teater Hutan Kayu, Jakarta. I also used *saluang* in my undergraduate degree in “Bagurau Fanatic Darek Minang Community” (2008), which was performed at the Surakarta Grand Theater and Graha Bakti Small Theater, Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta. This work subsequently toured to Melbourne in 2009 and Malaysia in 2012. *Senandung Malam* (2000) was performed at the 10th Composers Week in Bandung. *Bakutiko*, has been performed in Rudolstadt, Germany in 1999. I have recorded and performed new works with the Minangkabau performance group Talago Buni at the Berlin Philharmonie concert hall in 2016 and Hamburg Philharmonie concert hall in 2019.

Regarding *saluang* use for dance accompaniment, West Sumatra has a vibrant dance scene and *saluang klasik* songs also play a role in enriching new dance works, both in the form of new art choreography or as entertainment. West Sumatran choreographers with whom I often collaborate as a performer/composer include Gusmiati Suid, Boy Sati, Susasrita Lora Vianti, Beny Krisna Wardi and Syahril Alex.

Potential development further for compositions, music for dance or film music

I have long considered the *saluang* to be a versatile instrument which is able to be incorporated into many different genres. With regard to further *saluang* use in new artistic areas, it is important to especially consider, the pulse in the song being played and the *pantun* poetry or lyrics used. I offer the following thoughts regarding my compositional processes.

1. Drone.

The *saluang*'s ability to perform a long, deep sound, maintained on one note, has the potential to strengthen and underlie diatonic music, as a bass line or line around which other instruments can weave.

2. Beats and Song Tempo

The meters commonly used in songs in a *saluang klasik* show are generally 4/4 and 2/4 and sometimes a meter of 3/4. Many, such as *ratok*, are in free rhythm. Perhaps more experimental works can be created by using divisions of 7/8, or a 9 meter technique, so that the songs and rhythms heard may expand.

3 Poems and Song Lyrics

The sung *pantun* poetry used in *saluang klasik* are generally in the Minangkabau language with the very local dialect of the *luhak nan tigo* areas. It is not impossible to imagine that the *pantun* lyrics could also use other Minangkabau dialects or even Bahasa Indonesian, our national language. I note that our *randai* theatre, which also uses *pantun* for sung sections of the drama, has been performed in English before, so this language is another possibility.

4. Song Mode

The songs played in *saluang klasik* performances generally have a ‘minor’ feel when translated to concepts in western art music. For us in Minangkabau, this emphasizes the power of the lyrics, which as noted, are often sad. For innovation, additions from other modal systems within Minangkabau could be made, for example, from the *Sampelong* flute repertoire which include songs such as, “Labuah Langkok”, “Padogangan” and “Anta Den Mudiak” which have a feel approaching a pentatonic palette.

5. Other instruments

As mentioned above, *saluang klasik* normally contains the flute itself and occasionally the *rabab darek*. During the compositional process, it is very likely that other regional instruments or songs can be combined with *saluang*, depending on their tonal compatibility. This is useful to enrich the tonal palette of the new work, strengthen transitions between sections of the piece, as well as to push compositional boundaries of the final musical work.

Conclusion

In this paper I have explained the name of the genre *saluang klasik*, discussed a typical performance from my perspective onstage and the repertoire of songs that a professional player must memorise. Musical innovations from my own work as a composer and composition lecturer have also been highlighted.

Saluang klasik is a unique and beloved genre of musical performance for Minangkabau people, especially those living in the highland region of the province. Fans are also found in the highland areas of neighbouring provinces Riau and Jambi, who identify as of Minangkabau descent. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic many performances have been cancelled. However, we hope to be able to continue to perform with the *ramai-ramai* (crowded) atmosphere that our audiences enjoy, in the near future.

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**IN THE *TIME BEFORE THE COVID*: A JOURNEY OF PERFORMANCE FROM
INDONESIA TO NEW ZEALAND AND BACK AGAIN 1940-2020**

***Sebelum Masa Carona: Berjalan-jalan seni pertunjukan dari Indonesia
ke Selandia Baru dan kembalinya 1940-2020.***

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Introduction

In this paper I explore historical trajectories and influences of Indonesian performing arts as presented in Aotearoa New Zealand. In a journey of performance, I will discuss a colonial era dancer, a pop song, Sumatran performers on tour and the *gamelan* gong ensemble scene in Wellington. As the Covid-19 pandemic is such a strong presence in our lives in 2021, I will frame the first three examples historically as, 'In the time before the Covid', and the final example, is presented as 'In the time of Covid', as we are currently situated. The first half of my presentation will be in poetry, the second in prose.¹

In the time before the Covid
There are four examples that
I will tell you all about today
To prove in point of fact

*Sabalun maso Carona
Ado ampek contohkan
Ambo kan babicar
Kok ikonyo memang*

That Indonesian music
And Indonesian dance
Flourishes in Aotearoa
Given half the chance

*Musik Indonesia
Jo tarian juo
Takambang di Aotearoa
Dalam sajarah*

Background: Gamelan to Aotearoa New Zealand

In the time before the Covid
Gamelan from Cirebon
Came to New Zealand
It was the first one to come

Then in 2003 came
'Taniwha Jaya', Gong Kebyar
From Bali artist Pak Rantes
In *kota* Denpasar

Then 'Padhang Moncar' from Solo
Travelled across the sea
Victoria University
Gave *gamelan* classes for free

The Bali set belongs to
Composer Gareth Farr
WayanYudane showed him how
Two composers *luar biasa*

First taught by Pak Midyanto
And then Pak Joko Sutrisno
And for the last 25 years
Pak Budi Putra from Solo

1. Theo Schoon: Visual Artist and Dancer

But before the *gamelan* came here
Before Bali Gong Kebyar
Migrants from The Dutch East Indies
Sensed the growing *merdeka* ²

One man who stands out from the rest
Is called Theo Schoon
He arrived in 1939
And very, very soon

He was dancing dances that he painted
With lectures, where he demonstrated
How as a boy in Kebumen
Dance moves had been facilitated

Talking about Kuda Kepang
The horse dance he said
“I can do that dance myself very well
Because as a kid

I spent hours and days practicing...
The whole walk perfectly” (Skinner, 2018, p.23)
It seems he also learned dances
From Cirebon and Bali

Performing dance with batik cloth
A dancer with such passion
You can see his visual artistry
Is Java, re-imagined ³

2. *Mimpi Sedih* [A Miserable Dream] becomes *E Ipo* [My darling]

In the time before the Covid
A song about a dream
Was loved in Southeast Asia
On the radio and the screen

“A Miserable Dream” of a boy ⁴
Who’d lost his girl
She left him then and there
The sadness crushed his world

Bapak A. Ryanto was the man
Who wrote this song
With Empat Nada and Favourite’s Group
His career was very long

His cousin Tetty Kadi
Was the one to sing it first
You can see inside the lyrics
How the singer’s heart will burst

The song was in a feature film
Called, “The End of a Dream” ⁶
And the dream moved to Singapore
So popular it seems

Apparently heard by Prince Tui Teka
(Archer 2015)
Ngoi Pēwhairangi came onboard

Prince Tui Teka is legendary
In New Zealand, Selandia Baru
He brought the song across the waves
So, we could share it too

I knew this song when growing up
As a child of eleven
The hit song in te reo Māori ⁵
With a melody made in heaven

In the Time before the Covid
The Dream was sung indoors
At a concert in the capital
With Indonesians, here on tour

Sung first in Bahasa
And then in te reo Māori
The fans inside the Opera House
Sang gei’in it laudy

Now a local song, beloved by all
A party song to strum
Writer Ngoi Pēwhairangi made it
Romantic and good fun

A melody as strong as that
With its interesting history

They created a version
And called it “E Ipo”

Can bring people close together
Dissolving all the mystery

3. West Sumatran performers on tour

Sabalun Maso Carona
Anak Minang batigo
Pai marantau di suberang
Ke Selandia Baru sajo

Before the Time of Covid
Three Minangkabau people came
They travelled to the far shore
To New Zealand

Ciek banamo Piter Slayan
Nan baduo Boi Sakti
Nan batigo M. Halim
Kawan konferens PASEA kita kini

One was called Piter Slayan
The second was Boi Sakti
The third was M. Halim
Our friend in this panel at PASEA

Bajalan-jalan di Wellington
Bagurau tampilan taruih
Ramai-ramai urang nan banyak
Tadanga music Minang sakali

Touring around Wellington
Performing all the time
So many people watched them
And heard Minangkabau music

Rakamanyo nan buek sewakatu inyo
Ado Masters of Minang bajudul
Ikonyo CD nan balamo
Dari Victoria Universitas Musik School

A new recording was made at that time
Called *Masters of Minang*
It is now an old CD
From Victoria University Music School

Sabalun Maso Carona
Urang awak ciek lai
Marantau ke Selandia
Manjadi pegawai

Before the Time of Covid
Another West Sumatran came
Seeking his fortune in New Zealand
And became an artist in residence

Diuji Musik kontemporer
Jo komposisi nan baru
Banamo Pak Rafiloza
Iko CD nyo nan dulu

He taught new music
And composition too
His name is Rafiloza
This is his CD ⁷

Sabalun Maso Carona
Sumatran Sounds sudah tibo
Kelompok dari Padangpanjang
Sumatra Barat juo

Before the Time of Covid
Sumatran Sounds came here too
A group from Padangpanjang
In Sumatra Barat [West Sumatra province]

Gandang tambuah dari Piaman
Jo randai theatre datang
Panari basilek-silek
Sadonyo bakuliliang

Gandang tambuah (drums) of Pariaman
And *randai* theatre came along
The dancers performed *silat* martial arts
As they turned circles around

3b. Nan Gombang group at Wellington’s Southeast Asian Night Market, April 2017

Sabalun Maso Carona

In the Time before the Covid

*Ado pesto di luar
Dakek lauik Te Whanganui a Tara
Ramainyo luar biasa*

There were festivals outside
On the shore of Tara's great harbour⁸
So crowded! Amazing.

*Urang banyak makan banyak
Jo bagoyang-bagoyang
Asiknyo tampilan ado
Dari Sanggar Seni Nan Gombang*

The crowds happily dined on food
And danced the night away
The stars of the show were
From the group Sanggar Seni Nan
Gombang

*Painan koto asanyo
Jo Kambang nagari*

Coming here from Painan town
And Kambang *nagari* (village
confederation)
They danced the *Sentak Ilau* dance
Which respects the tiger

*Tari Sentak Ilau tampilnyo
Nan Harimau di hormat sekali*

*Tukang rabab Rahmsil Fahri
Bajalan-jalan iya
Sampai ke pailiang timur
Ke koto Ruatorea*

The *rabab* singer/player Rahmsil Fahri
Toured around so far
To the East Coast [of NZ's North Island]
To the town of Ruatorea

*Tau-tau kini tukang rabab
Masa Carona ko
Masukan pesan-pesasn kesehatan
Ke dalam kabanyo*

And now that we are In the Time of Covid
Rabab professionals
Have inserted public health messages
Into their sung *kaba* (narratives)

Caliek lah ko

Have a look at this.⁹

4. Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival #YGF22 online

So now we are 'In the Time of Covid'
We can use the *gamelan* room
Only if it's 'Level 1'¹⁰
Other times it is *gamelan* zoom

The modes of *kolaborasi*
Have changed so much this year
With Facebook, Whats App, and all that
There was even a live-to-air

We pivoted between the levels
In September I recall
We prepared the Javanese ensemble
For Yogya Gamelan Festival

From downtown Yogyakarta
To Budi Putra's home
We came together, no flying needed
To prove we're not alone

A pre-record created
In three rehearsals it was done
The players were so happy
Finally, to play as one!

We had played at Yogya Festival
Four times before
But now we sat in Wellington
Helping the good cause

In her studio in Solo, Java
The famous singer Ibu Peni
Over dubbed her vocals
For "Ketawang Ibu Pertiwi"

To keep the music playing
To let the gongs ring clear
To play the music together
In a very difficult year

Discussion

I will now reflect on each of the four examples. How useful is it to think through performance, historically? Can we reflect on an entire scene? Perhaps I am too close to comment? By ‘thinking through’ performance I am referencing the book by Henare, Holbraad and Wastell (2006) *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artifacts Ethnographically*. From museum studies, Henare asserts that museum artifacts, evidence different ontologies and curators need to pay attention to that.

In the examples I have given, I see no evidence of what I call, ‘presentational ontological difference’¹¹ because in my experience, de-contextualised performances from Indonesia, and especially the pop music, do not tend to express that. Rather, here I want to ‘think through performance’, at the level of cross-cultural engagement, for which these examples are very important. The levels of engagement between Indonesians and New Zealanders vary across the different examples. Audience engagement and subsequent perceptions about identities is a research focus that I intend to develop further.

In the Time Before the Covid - The Dance of a Visual Artist

Born in 1915, in The Dutch East Indies, we know that Theo Schoon grew up in Java, learning to perform classical dance. A feature film about his life and work called *Signed, Theo Schoon* from filmmakers Jan and Luit Bieringa, will be released in New Zealand in October 2021. I was involved in the film’s early development. Schoon, the visual artist sought refuge in New Zealand at a time when Indonesia was de-colonising. He was an influential figure in the contemporary visual art scene in New Zealand. His ‘side passion’ as a dancer, is little known about today and brings to mind the Indonesian concept of a *seniman*. In contrast to the Western-derived artistic divisions, with which Schoon is typically categorised as a visual artist, this term references a beloved performance mode of Southeast Asia, whereby a person is not just a visual artist, not just a musician, nor a dancer but someone who works across multiple arts and modes of expression.

Although segregated by ethnicity and class in the strict hierarchy of the Dutch East Indies colonial system, we know that the privileged Schoon learned dance as a child, with elite Javanese students (Skinner, 2018). Auckland Art Gallery curator Ron Brownson notes,

During the 1940s and 1950s, Theo Schoon demonstrated Javanese dance to appreciative audiences in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland... Theo also gave personal tuition of traditional Javanese dance and he was the first person to do this in New Zealand (2014)

The visual nuance of dance costuming, especially batik cloth are evident in his visual art which was created in New Zealand, from 1940-1980s and for which he is well known here. I suggest that Schoon looked for and saw Indonesia in the New Zealand landscape, which he photographed extensively. The particular Indonesia that he saw, was that of performance.

In the Time Before the Covid - The Story of a Song

The story of the song “Mimpi Sedih” (A Miserable Dream) is an intriguing example of popular music flows. As a child in the 1980s, I grew up with the hit song “E Ipo”, (My Darling)¹² sung by our legendary singer Prince Tui Teka with lyrics in te reo Māori by renown lyricist Ngoingoi Pēwhairangi. The song appeared on the album *Prince Tui Teka. The Man The Music The Legend* (1982). It is only recently that most New Zealanders have learnt about the origin of the melody. This knowledge has circulated due to the efforts of Indonesian commercial music expert, singer and former television host, His Excellency Tantowi Yahya, Indonesia’s current ambassador to New Zealand. The song’s composer, A. Ryanto, was an enormous talent in the Indonesian music industry

in the 1970s. He is unknown in New Zealand. As Ambassador Tantowi Yahya explained to me, “He created Band Empat Nada, which was the home band for the biggest record company in Indonesia, Remaco and then he established another band, Favourite’s Group”. The ambassador continued, “So, the 70s and 80s are the eras that belong to A. Ryanto. He was a big hit maker and a star-maker”. Regarding the song “Mimpi Sedih” he explained, “So, the popularity of the song made by A. Ryanto, the writer of the song, became very prominent, not only in Indonesia but also in ASEAN countries (Tantowi Yahya, personal communication, 7 July 2021).

On November 9, 2018, a concert called The Symphony of Friendship was held in Wellington and featured Orchestra Wellington, conducted by Indonesian conductor Erwin Gutawa. In a cross-cultural arrangement, singer Tama Waipara sang verses of “E Ipo” in te reo Māori and singer Andmesh Kamaleng, sang verses of “Mimpi Sedih” in Bahasa Indonesia. The audience loved it.

In the Time Before the Covid - West Sumatran Performers on Tour

Since my co-panelist, M. Halim’s first performances of *saluang* flute in Wellington, 1995, New Zealand audiences have enthusiastically engaged with music and dance from the Indonesian province of West Sumatra. The most recent performance was by *Sanggar Seni nan Gombang* (Nan Gombang performance group) at the Southeast Asian Night Market in Wellington, 2017. The dancers performed a new choreography by Ibu Dessy Armansia. This was developed from *silek* (Indonesian *silat*, martial art) and sung healing music that is accompanied by the *rabab Pasisia Selatan* (South Coast fiddle).

Ibu Dessy’s choreography, called *Tari Sentak Ilau*, is inspired by the process of interaction with Sumatran tigers, which is undertaken by highly trained *dukun* healers.¹³ The vocal melodies used were from the *Anak Balam* (turtle dove, also a human couple) repertoire which also originates with healers but has recently become part of the repertoire for night-long *rabab Pasisia* performances. The singers/composers, Ibu Armida and Bapak Rahmsil sang descriptive not potent lyrics, to accompany the dance choreography.

In the Time of Covid - Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival #YGF22

The *gamelan* ensembles of Gamelan Wellington were very happy to receive an invitation in 2020, to perform at the 25th anniversary of the Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival. The family of the late Sapto Raharjo who founded the festival, continue his work today. Gamelan Wellington have performed there in person, four times before, in 1995, 2002, 2007 and 2013.¹⁴ In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the festival took place online. Our Javanese *gamelan* group, Gamelan Padhang Moncar, responded to the invitation, via Budi Putra our musical director.

We rehearsed late September, then sound and video recorded our performance in the first week of October.¹⁵ We were honoured to collaborate with *psinden* (singer) Peni Candra Rini from Surakarta, Indonesia. She recorded her vocal tracks for “Ketawang Ibu Pertiwi” and then sent them to us. I recorded and mixed the rest of the *gamelan* ensemble in Wellington and Budi Putra, filmed, and edited the video. Like many musicians around the world at that time, we were making it up, as we went along. I sound recorded the main ensemble live, with extra tracks for one *gender* metallophone, the wooden *gambang* xylophone and suling *bamboo* flute added later by Budi.

The time difference between Indonesia and New Zealand, meant that our performance was aired at 2.30am in the morning. We stayed up to watch and were delighted to be in such fine company, with groups from all over the island of Java, many of whom had not been able to perform face to face, at all, that year.

Conclusion

By thinking through these performances, I conclude that the cross-cultural engagement and influence of Indonesian performing arts in New Zealand has been varied and, in some cases, totally unexpected. A visual artist from the Dutch East Indies becomes the first person to demonstrate Indonesian dance to New Zealanders. Although Theo Schoon appears to have creatively mixed and matched some of his costuming, he was clearly performing Indonesia in 1940s Wellington.

The melody of “E Ipo”, was written by the Indonesian songwriter A. Ryanto. With Pēwhairangi’s lyrics in te reo Māori, the song was a huge success in New Zealand and made space for cross-cultural engagement between Maori and Pākehā (of European descent) teenagers through the lyrics, without most of us knowing the Indonesian origins of the melody.¹⁶ The engagement of New Zealanders with music and dance from Sumatra, particularly West Sumatra province has developed since M. Halim’s first tour here in 1995. This engagement is ongoing, as demonstrated by the tour of the Nan Gombang performance group in 2017, among others.

The *gamelan* scene in Wellington is almost fifty years old and has introduced thousands of people to *gamelan* from Cirebon and Central Java, along with Gong Kebyar from Bali.¹⁷ Music researcher Killin suggests that our eminent composer Douglas Lilburn, who knew Theo Schoon, was the first New Zealander to write music influenced by *gamelan*. His piece “Gamelan for Six Hands” was written in 1965 (Killin 2021). Although our two countries are separated by over 7,000 kilometers, Indonesian performing artists have been influential in New Zealand and, in my experience, have always found enthusiastic audiences. I am sure that this very important cross-cultural engagement will continue in the ‘Time after the Covid’ once we can gather again.

Endnotes

¹ This choice was inspired by Minangkabau sung *pantun* found in *rabab Pasisia Selatan* which I have performed for many years. Unlike *pantun* (abab) I use a rhyming scheme abcb.

² ‘Freedom’, from the Indonesian independence movement.

³ Compare the cloud patterns of *batik* from Cirebon called *mega-mendung*, with Schoon’s photography, for example, *Chemical separations in dried volcanic mud* c. 1968 in Dunn, M. (1984) and the painting, *Bird in the Bush*. 1957, also known as Basic Arawa Pattern and Bird motif in Skinner, 2018.

⁴ Translation of the title *Mimpi Sedih* a song by A. Ryanto.

⁵ See Ka’ai (2008:97).

⁶ Translation of the title *Akhir Sebuah Impian*, a film directed by Turino Junaidy

⁷ *Rafiloza and Friends* Portal Music.

⁸ Wellington harbour

⁹ *Pantun* lyrics shown with health advice for Covid-19 from *rabab Pasisia* performers Yasman, and Siril Asmara (see also Collins 2020).

¹⁰ ‘Prepare’, the disease is contained in New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2021).

¹¹ For example, when performers go into trance.

¹² *E Ipo* was number 1 for two weeks in 1982, in the NZ Top 40 charts. (Charts-NZ, retrieved 18 September 2021).

¹³ From the programme note, “This powerful choreography from Dessy Armanisa was developed from the mystical tradition of calling a tiger to become entrapped, through *ilau* (mantra) and song”.

¹⁴ Lead by Joko Sutrisno and Budi Putra.

¹⁵ A period through which New Zealand was at Level 1, with no community transmission of Covid-19.

¹⁶ The 1980s saw a renaissance of the Maori language. *E Ipo* contributed to this.

¹⁷ Other groups in New Zealand; Joko Susilo’s Puspawarna Gamelan in Dunedin, the University of Canterbury Gong Kebyar *gamelan* is directed by Made Kartawan and Robyn Bennitt managers Ramah Tamah *gamelan* at Auckland Institute of Technology.

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**SONIC “TRANSMEDIATIZATIONS” IN THE TRANSMISSION, PEDAGOGY,
AND PRACTICE OF PANAY BUKIDNON *SUBING* MUSIC**

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Abstract

The establishment of various Balay Turun-an, or Schools of Living Tradition, in many Panay Bukidnon communities in Central Panay Island, Philippines had been crucial in the revitalization of traditional music. In these learning spaces, the Panay Bukidnon youth engage with cultural brokers who orally transmit cultural knowledge on vocal music styles and the performance of bamboo, drum, and gong instruments. Among the bamboo instruments, the *subing* (jaw’s harp) is important as it possesses a repertory of sounds and speech patterns vital in traditional courtship practice and some oral literature narratives. However, compared to other instruments, *subing* knowledge is infrequently transmitted. This is primarily due to a dearth of adept musicians, a lack of material technology, and a declining knowledge of musical patterns and techniques. In turn, some Panay Bukidnon youth relied on the presence of sound archives – those produced by ethnomusicologists and those made available in the public domain – as new sources of cultural knowledge.

In this paper, I look into the impact of transmediated musical materials, in particular, Maria Christine Muyco’s CD titled *Tayuyon* (2009), on the transmission and pedagogy of *subing* musical practice among the Panay Bukidnon youth. Making the experience of one young musician as a case study, I argue that the sonic “transmediatization” or the entanglement of sounds in globalizing technology media enabled the repatriation and translation of archived traditional music into new oral and written musical practices. *Tayuyon* has provided the youth with better access and creative musical choices particularly on how they signify meaning and envision performance from the technology-mediated sounds they consume. In turn, these sound materials generate new understandings on musical practice and the production of written musical solutions, thus, renewing the interest and enabling the transmission of *subing* music to the youth among Panay Bukidnon and lowland communities.

TRANSMISSION AND MEMORIZATION OF MYANMAR CLASSICAL SONGS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *AKWEK* OR THE SMALLEST UNITS OF MUSIC

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Introduction

The transmission of Myanmar classical songs is primarily an oral tradition. Why is it that a seemingly unstable oral tradition has been able to maintain a stable tradition?

Myanmar classical songs have frequently used melodic patterns, which may be used numerous times in one song or shared among several songs. The melody is embellished using instrumental music. The instrumental part is called *akwek*. For *akwek*, specific patterns are often repeatedly used. The lyrics, the melodies of the songs, and the instrumental parts are the three parts passed down in the classical song tradition. It can be said that each of these elements complements each other in memorization, making oral transmission possible.

Of the three points mentioned above, the *akwek* forms the core of the transmission and memorization of instrumental music. The oral tradition of memorizing by seeing and hearing is performed in *akwek* units. To clarify the system of transmission and memorization in Myanmar classical songs, this study focuses on *akwek*, namely, how *akwek* is used to compose songs and how they are transmitted.

The notations used in this paper were handwritten by the late U Myint Maung (1937–2001), one of Myanmar's leading harpists.

Alaik: A Repeatedly Used Melody

When learning to play instruments in Myanmar classical songs, learners simultaneously learn the song's melody and then how the melody is accompanied by the instrumental parts. The melody of a song is called *alaik*, and the instrumental part is called *akwek*. *Akwek* can refer to a small unit or a few bars, but not the entire instrumental part of a song. The Burmese meaning of “*akwek*” is “a compartment.” When used in music, it refers to a small “part” of a group of notes. Myanmar classical songs can be said to comprise a combination of *akweks*.

Many parts of Myanmar classical songs share melodies—*alaiks*—with other pieces. When a song is learned for the first time, it must be learned anew. However, it becomes easier to learn the next song because some *alaiks* are already committed to memory. There will always be new *alaiks* in a new song for learners, but they will be used in other songs. As learners memorize an increasing number of these *alaiks*, it becomes easier for them to memorize other pieces. The pieces are learned in order of difficulty; thus, every subsequent piece will naturally be more difficult to learn, but the difficulty is also lowered because some parts can already be played.

When learning to sing, learners are often told that a particular part of a song is the same as the *alaik* in a part of another song. For example, “This is the same as the *alaik* of ‘dhi mo dhi mo (clouds in the sky),’” means that it is the same as the melody in the part of the song that begins with the lyrics, “dhi mo dhi mo.” Suppose learners have already memorized the song. In that case, they can immediately recognize the melody of the part when lyrics are given to them. For their teacher, there is no need to teach the melody—*alaik*—of the song once again and how to play the instrument—*akwek*. Thus, learning a new piece of a song becomes easier to some extent because it is presented in relation to other pieces.

Figure 1 shows the lyrics of three *kyo* genre songs. The highlighted lyrics indicate the same *alaiks*. (1) in Figure 1 shows the song “htan tya tei shin,” which is the first song that beginners learn.

They learn by watching and listening to samples shown to them by their teacher, after which they imitate them. Once the learner has learned the first one, they will be taught the next one, and so on. Instead of teaching one note at a time, they are often taught in units of several notes. This unit is called an *akwek*.

(1) ပုစဉ်းတောင်သံကြီး
(ဝန်ကြီးမေးသရာ)
(ထံကျာတေတေ၊ ထံကျာတေတေ၊ ချန်ချန် ထံကျာတေတေ)။ (ခလု ခလု ထံချန်ချန်)။ တောပင် တောလုံး ပါလို့လေး။ (ထက်ငယ်ကောင်းကင်မိုး တည့် မိုးတိမ်ပြင်)။ (ခံ့ခံ့ခံ့ခံ့လျှပ်၊ ရွှေရေတံတရား ငယ်နှစ်လေး)။ (သည့်မိုးသည့်မိုး ဒေဝါ၊ မိုးတည့် မိုးဒေဝါ)။ (မိုးကလေး တည့်၊ ရွာလေး တသံ)။ (ထံကျာတေတေ၊ ထံကျာတေတေ၊ ချန်ချန် ထံကျာတေတေ)။ (ခလု ခလု ထံချန်ချန်)။ တောတေထံကျာတေတေ၊ တောတေတေ။

(2) ကလပ်ကြီးကြီး
(ဝန်ကြီးမေးသရာ)
(သီတာ သီတာ မြသား၊ ကြာ ကြာ ကြာ ငါးပါး)။ (ကမ်းနား ကမ်းနား ဝန်းကျင်၊ ငွေသံပြင် လေတည့်၊ ဖျော်တည့် ဖျော်ချင်တယ်)။ (မြစ်တေး မြစ်တေးဝင်ရေ၊ မြီးတည့် မြီးဝဲပျော်)။ (ရက်တေးလေ ကြီးကြား၊ ကျူး ခုန်ရင်သာ)။ (လိပ်ပြာလေ ဖျံကားသား၊ ဖျံမှာသည့်မှာနား)။ (ရေပေါ်မှာ လွှားပါလို့၊ ကြာထဲကိုစားပါလို့၊ ဝဲကားပျံလေတည့်မှ ဝဲကားပျံ)။

(3) ကလပ်ငယ်ကြီး
(ဝန်ကြီးမေးသရာ)
(သားယာသာယာ၊ မြည်လာကြေး၊ သာလိကာငယ်လေးကျေး)။ (ချည်ခင် စပ်ကယ်က၊ ကျူးတယ်ကျူးတယ်ကို၊ သင်တိုင်းဝတ်ကယ်က၊ မြီးတယ် မြီးတယ် ကို)။ (သံချိုတည့်တေးတေး၊ ပဲတည့်ပဲတေးတေး)။ (ဝေးဝေးမြို့၊ ချစ်ချစ် ခင်ရေ မှုပါလို့လေး)။ (မတူခုံတု၊ ခံတည့်ခံပျော်ရာ)။ (ချစ်ခင်လေ ချစ်ခင် လေး ချစ်ပါလှတယ်ရှင်)။ (ချစ်ခင်လေလွန်မြတ်မိုး၊ ခံတည့်ခံဝရိုး)။ (ငှက်၊ တွန်း၊ သာပင်သာသည့်လေး၊ မကို မကို ခေါ်ခေါ် ခေါ် ကြလေး)။ (မိသိမြို့ပြာ ခိုတည့်ခိုရွှေဝါ)။ (လိပ်ပြာလေ ဖျံကားသား၊ ပိတုန်း ပိတုန်း ဖျား)။ (ရေပေါ်မှာလွှားပါလို့၊ ကြာထဲကိုစားပါလို့၊ ဝဲကားပျံလေတည့်မှ ဝဲကားပျံ)။

Figure 1. Shared *alaiks* in the three *kyo* songs
(Highlighted by the author based on [Ministry of Culture, 1969, pp. 1-2])

Once the learner has mastered the first song “htan tya tei shin,” they will learn the second song “thida thida.” The *alaiks* of the second song’s first and second stanzas are new to the learner, but the *alaik* of the third stanza of the second song is the same as the *alaik* of the fifth stanza of the first song; therefore, it is not necessary for them to learn it. The teacher’s only task is to quote the beginning of the lyrics of the corresponding *alaik* in the first song and tell the learner that “It is the same as the *alaik* of ‘dhi mo dhi mo’.” In the second song, the *alaik*’s lyrics are “myittwe myittwe (river tern).” The lyrics are different, but the song’s *alaik* is the same; thus, this part is easy to learn. The *akwek* played on the harp is also the same; therefore, it is only played in the same way that the learner learned it in the first song.

In addition, the beginning of the fourth stanza’s *alaik* of the second song is the same as the beginning of the sixth stanza’s *alaik* of the first song. This means that if the learner is instructed to do the same here, they can play it immediately. The following part differs between the first and second songs and must be learned anew. Remembering the different parts can be a challenge, but these differences also help the learner remember the songs.

As mentioned above, when learning classical songs, from the second song onward, *alaiks* and *akweks* of the previously learned songs are frequently included, meaning that the transmission and memorization of that part of the song become easier.

I will show another example of shared *alaiks* between different songs. The second and third songs share several *alaiks*, as shown in Figure 1. The beginning of the first and the fourth stanzas, the fifth stanza, and the last stanza’s *alaiks* in the second song are also used in the third song. If the *alaik* is the same, the instrumental parts are essentially the same; however, learners will also learn variations. The *alaik* of the last stanza of the second and third songs is the same; however, the *akweks* are slightly different. If they know the basic *akwek*, it is relatively easy to learn the variations. Thus, learners can play the same *alaik* with many different *akweks*. As learners continue to practice and memorize, they can play the same *alaik* with many different *akweks*. This will eventually lead to improvisational playing.

Akwek: A Unit of Memorization

In this section, we will see how *akweks* appear in songs and units. Figure 2 shows the notation for the introductory song, “htan tya tei shin,” as mentioned earlier. Repeatedly used *akweks* are indicated by squares.



Figure 2. *Akweks* in “htan tya tei shin” *kyo* song
(Graphic created by the author based on U Myint Maung’s notation: June 5, 1985)

As shown in Figure 2, many *akweks* are repeatedly used within a single song. For example, (1), (2) and (3) in Figure 2 are the same *akweks*, but each has a different pitch. The pitches of (1) and (2) are C-C-B/E-B-E-B and D-C-C/F-C-F-C, respectively. The first two notes of each are played alternately with the right index finger and right thumb. The *akwek* (3) is a variation of (1) and (2). The first two notes of the *akwek* in (3) are played with the right index finger. The difference in fingering is based on the position of the strings.

The *akwek* (1) is used four times in this song, (2) is used six times, and (3) is used four times. The first half of (3) appears again in the sixth and fifth bars from the end in Figure 2.

These *akweks* appear again ten times in the second song, “thida thida.” By practicing the same *akwek* that is repeatedly used in the song, it will get established in the learner’s memory, and their fingers will move smoothly without thinking. When learning a new song, the learner can play this *akwek* simply by hearing it. This is only one example of an *akwek*, but there are many such *akweks* in songs. The more complex the songs, the more *akweks* learners have to know, but they do not have to learn everything from scratch.

The same *akwek* is not always used for the same *alaik*. For example, the following are the notations for the same *alaik* in the “webagiri” and “htwe talala” *kyo* songs.

“webagiri”



“htwe talala”



Figure 3. *Akweks* in “webagiri” and “htwe talala” *kyo* songs
(Graphic created by the author based on U Myint Maung’s notation: July 3, 1985, November 19, 1985)

The parts shown in the first and second squares of each song in Figure 3 are the same *alaik* in “webagiri” and “htwe talala,” respectively. However, the *akweks* of the second squares in each song are different. After learning “webagiri,” “htwe talala” is played with more complex *akweks*. Therefore, as a learner learns songs that are easy to memorize and gradually become more complicated, the *akwek* changes from simple to complex. Thus, when a learner hears an *alaik*, they will be able to play several variations of it.

A musician may play an *akwek* of a song with a simple or complex *akwek*.¹ In some cases, an *akwek* may be played with a simple *akwek*, even if the musician can play a complex *akwek* at will to convey the song’s taste. This depends on the characteristics of the song and the capabilities and preferences of the musician.

Bazat-hsaing to Convey Akwek

Bazat-hsaing (mouth-music) is a means of oral transmission of Myanmar classical songs, in which sounds are transmitted verbally. *Bazat-hsaing* can be used to indicate single notes, chords, and ornaments. However, *bazat-hsaing* does not indicate one note at a time nor is it handed down as such. Instead, smaller units of *akwek* for beginners and longer units of *akwek* for quick learners are handed down using *bazat-hsaing* by their teacher.

For example, the *bazat-hsaing* that indicates the beginning of the *bwe* song genre is “byo-bu ta-ne ta-ne ta-ne.” However, even if we take out only one of these “byo,” it will not tell us which sound it refers to. This is because *bazat-hsaing* is handed down by being “sung.” Therefore, it is

only possible to understand a particular *bazat-hsaing* in relation to the preceding and following sounds. In transmission, the smallest unit that can be sung and transmitted by *bazat-hsaing* is *akwek*. Here, “byo-bu ta-ne ta-ne ta-ne” is an *akwek*.

The following *akwek* will be taught by the teacher only after the learner has fully memorized that *akwek*, and their fingers can move smoothly. Thus, by learning *bazat-hsaing* and *akwek* as a set, the learner can play the *akwek* immediately upon receiving instruction from the *bazat-hsaing*.

From my experience, if I hear the *bazat-hsaing* of my teacher, Daw Khin May, I can play it on the harp. This is because I have already learned and mastered the *akwek* that the *bazat-hsaing* instructs me to play, rather than having to understand the *bazat-hsaing* word-for-word to find the sound. Learners need to be taught by hand when learning an *akwek* for the first time. However, after some training, they can play an *akwek* by simply listening to other musicians’ performances, and do not need to be instructed by the *bazat-hsaing*. The more learners learn, the faster they can learn new songs.

The *bazat-hsaing* itself may vary somewhat from musician to musician. Some musicians use their own *bazat-hsaing* to convey the sounds of the instrument in words. However, a musician who has already mastered many *akweks* will have no problem reproducing the performance when they hear a personal *bazat-hsaing*, as long as they know the *akwek* that is indicated by it.

Conclusion

This study discussed the instrumental part of a song, called *akwek*, to clarify the transmission and memorization system in Myanmar classical songs. The study showed that a song comprises many *akweks* and these *akweks* are used repeatedly in their original form, in different pitches, and sometimes with complex variations. Thus, it was found that in Myanmar classical songs, transmission and memorization are conducted in units of *akwek*. *Akwek* is a clue toward maintaining a stable tradition.

The song genres discussed in this study are relatively old in Myanmar classical songs, such as *kyo* and *bwe*. Comparatively newer genres, such as *patpyo* and *yodaya*, also use *alaiks* and *akweks* that are used in the *kyo* and *bwe* genres. Newer genres also have new *alaiks* and *akweks* that are used repeatedly to create new works. In the future, I would like to expand my study to include more genres of classical songs to conduct further detailed research on how existing *alaiks* and *akweks* are used in the creation of works, as well as to analyze the structure of new *alaiks* and *akweks*.

Endnote

¹ A passage with few notes is said to have “less *akwek*,” and one with many notes is said to have “more *akwek*.”

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**COMMUNICATING TEXT AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH TRANSLATION:
A CRITIQUE ON TANGHALANG ATENEO'S *SINTANG DALISAY***
(Lightning paper)

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Abstract

Romeo and Juliet seek comfortable shelter in the realms of the stage, and the University of the Philippines Asian Center has opened its doors to be the couple's temporary abode through its offering of *Sintang Dalisay*, in cooperation with Bunga Artist Link, UP Office of Initiatives for Culture and the Arts, Tanghalang Ateneo, and Ateneo Fine Arts.

Sintang Dalisay is an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, performed through the combination of *igal* dance of the Sama peoples in Southern Philippines and *awit* lyrical form. Directed by Ricardo Abad and Matthew Santamaria, Abad and Guelan Varela-Luarca based the libretto and concept on G.D.Roke's *awit* entitled *Ang Sintang Dalisay ni Julieta at Romeo* and Rolando Tinio's translation of William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. The play has already been performed in various venues, including Belarus, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The play, which is a conglomeration of song and live music, dance, and drama based on a written literary text, is in itself a hybrid of forms and meanings. In this paper, the work is analyzed based mainly on Even-Zohar (1978) and his discussion on the role of translated literature in the literary polysystem, as well as Guillen's (1993) discussion on entropy. Furthermore, the paper employs perspectives in dance, communication, and literary translation in order to make sense of how this kind of translated literature deserves a space in the polysystem.

THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP SKILLS AMONG TRADITIONAL *MEK MULUNG* PERFORMERS TO ENHANCE ITS RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

(Lightning paper)

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Abstract

Within the last five years, the community of Wang Tepus has witnessed the decline of *Mek Mulung* theatrical where it has been traditionally performed as a form of entertainment and practised to ensure successful farm yield. Along with modernization, availability of affordable gadgets, internet access, and modern farming methods, *Mek Mulung* performances are now mainly staged as commissioned activities for the production of documentaries. In spite of it being declared as a Kedah state performing arts heritage in 2015, there has been very little activity to help revitalize the performance within the community. After the death of the troupe leader in March 2019, consistent with *Mek Mulung* as a family lineage tradition, the responsibility to lead the troupe is now taken over by his son. In comparison to other troupe members who are mostly his father's contemporaries, the son lacks the knowledge and experience.

This paper will discuss best practices which will enable the identification of and to cultivate possible "Burning Souls" (Ronström, 2014) in relation to ensuring the relevance and sustainability of the *Mek Mulung* tradition within the community, as well as to inspire the next generation of *Mek Mulung* performers. This paper will also provide the rationale for building the foundation for discussions between state authorities and *Mek Mulung* performers for the appropriate portrayal of the heritage on the national and international stage that would be acceptable to both the *Mek Mulung* community and state agencies in promoting *Mek Mulung* outside of its traditional base in the village of Wang Tepus in the Malaysian state of Kedah.

WHO TOLD YOU THAT? MUSICAL KNOWING AS MEDIATED EPISTEMOLOGY

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Disparities in musical understanding creates the possibility for the musical concepts and terms of dominant institutions to marginalise indigenous explanatory models. This article deals with historical and philosophical issues associated with the way Thai music (*dontri Thai*) is understood and explained in English. At the broad disciplinary level, this work intersects with the resurgent post-colonial consciousness within ethnomusicology. At a more specific level, I address the circulation of information about Thai music that does not accord with local understandings due to the use of analytic and descriptive models developed to explain other music.

The relatively scarcity of English texts addressing theoretical aspects of Thai music is a symptom of the paucity of relevant scholarly debate. What little information circulates is delivered through narrow channels and tends to seep uncritically into the scholarly consciousness. While it is essential that information in the scholarly domain is correct, the accuracy of reported information is not the sole story here. I am also concerned with the enabling epistemologies that are smuggled in with flawed information. In diagnosing this, I attribute the character of English language descriptions of music in part to analytical and descriptive processes that are routinely underpinned by assumptions about music developed for European music. These come bundled with deeply buried values traceable to German idealism, scientific rationalism and the romantic aesthetic. Despite the expansion of musicology's disciplinary footprint, new formulations are primed by ideas developed within the Western academy. Analysis based on categories and assumptions derived from these values are primed to overlook what Thais see as important about their music.

The entrenchment of incorrect ideas, a conflict of epistemologies and the problematic use of power came together in an experience I had with an academic journal. I will describe this incident as an entry point into this discussion and as a symptom of the problem I am diagnosing.

It has long been accepted that Thai music is based on an equidistant tuning system with an interval of 171.429 cents. I submitted a paper to an international journal with extensive empirical evidence refuting that theory (Garzoli 2015). The article also included ethnographic data from interviews with musicians and tuners which further refuted the theory by showing that tuners do not aim for 'equidistance' and the specified interval thought to define Thai tuning is irrelevant to them. In the review process it was argued that empirical data and the epistemology which validates it, was of superior standing to anything Thai musicians have to say about their music. Disregard for expertise was weaponized to invalidate the views of performers. So during the review process, which should include a process of discovery if the reviewer lacks specific expertise, the voices of master musicians were systematically dismissed as an 'argument from authority'. This understanding of how tuning must be discussed was primed by some key historical events which generated normative assumptions.

It is well-known that Western music employs the tuning system known as 'Equal-temperament' (also called 12-tet). This tuning system and is the result of a complex mathematic formula. The singularity of this tuning concept has ingrained the assumption that the model of a single tuning system for a musical tradition is generalizable. So even if other musical traditions don't use equal temperament, they are assumed to share two other the commonalities: 1) the practice of having a single tuning system, and 2) that their tuning 'system' is explainable through mathematical processes. From this perspective, tuning systems are systematic and uniform. Armed with these assumptions, a proposed theory of tuning need not consider specific melodic practice

which may involve an alternative way of understanding pitch relations because those practices lie outside of what is considered salient when thinking about tuning.

The imposition of European originating positivist thinking in explanations of Thai music dates back to the late nineteenth century. The theory of Thai 7-tone-equidistance, which became widely and uncritically accepted, was developed in Paris by Alexander Ellis at a time when the intellectual climate favoured positivism and scientific solutions were sought to address humanistic problems (Garzoli 2015). As with twelve-tone equal temperament, Ellis theory applies a complex mathematical formula to divide the octave into seven geometrically equidistant intervals. This idea had made its way to Thailand by about 1910. Although circulating among English language speakers in Thailand in the early part of the twentieth century, the idea was not embraced as part of orthodox Thai musical thought at that time. Local understandings of Thai music changed on 22nd Aug 1947 when Phra Chen Duriyang gave a presentation on Thai music at the Siam Society in Bangkok. Phra Chen was a celebrated musician of elevated social standing within Thai society. But despite considerable knowledge of Western music, he freely admitted that he was not an expert in Thai music and he knew ‘scarcely little’ its technique (Phra Chen 1948: 1). At the presentation and in subsequent publications, he presented a graphic illustration which portrayed Thai and Western tuning ‘systems’ (Figure 1).

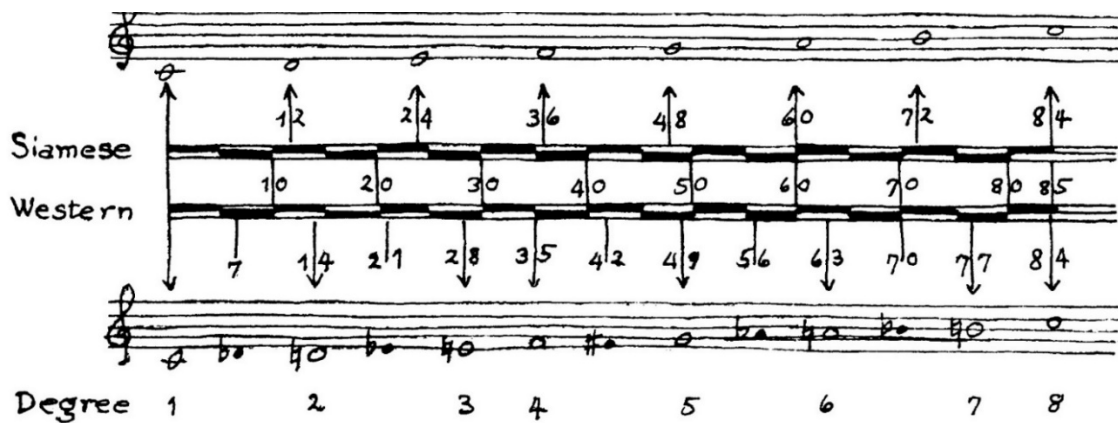


Figure 1. Illustration presented by Phra Chen Duriyanga at Siam Society in 1947 (Phra Chen 1948:22).

This graphic carries considerable epistemological freight and is not as innocent as it looks. Thai and Western tunings are placed in a single frame and arranged in this way for the sole purpose of enabling comparison of the numerical values assigned to each interval. This methodological step is wholly predicated on the presupposition that mathematical processes which were used to develop and explain Western tuning apply equally to Thai tuning. By representing Thai tuning this way, it is placed into a theoretical space developed for explaining European tuning where it is overseen by an epistemology which looks to measure displacement numerically. But *dontri Thai* is not based on a tuning ‘system’ and mathematic calculation played no historical role in determining its pitches.

A cause of this mischaracterisation of Thai music is traceable to complexities of translation. In English language tuning theory, the term ‘equidistance’ has a mathematical correlate and thus tuning concepts are expressible in numerical terms, but the Thai term for tuning is ‘*jet siang thao*’ which means ‘seven sounds about the same’, a term that does not imply numerical precision. The conceptualization of Thai tuning as systematic provided the theoretical pretext to dismiss the expertise of those who make music.

Following the presentation and its subsequent publication in 1948, this English version of Thai equidistance was accepted by authorities within Thai traditional music who embraced it as orthodoxy. The idea spread like wildfire as the illustration began appearing in almost all Thai and

English language publications that discussed tuning. These were conducted without references to the fundamental difference between the ‘equidistance’ and ‘*jet siang thao*’. It is important to point out that aside from accepting the correctness of the mathematical formula developed to explain tuning, the theory was accepted as an article of faith as no evidence has ever been produced to corroborate the theory in the terms of numerical accuracy specified by the theory itself (Garzoli 2020, Garzoli 2015, Somchai 1973). The theory developed a double life within Thailand as Thai musicians, especially string players, developed alternative theories based on their practice that contradicted the official narrative. For some musicians, the contest between the officially endorsed theory of Thai tuning and other concepts became a matter of ideological dispute. This is avoidable because disputes largely stem from a misunderstanding resulting from the failure to observe the fundamental disparity between the cardinal terms of the debate; ‘equidistance’ and *Jet siang Thao*’.

Is it possible to discuss the particular details of a musical tradition from a culturally neutral perspective? Music is both heavily theorised, and open to interpretation. It is too vast and complex for analysis to capture all its properties so analysis involves the disaggregation of music into categories. Through categories, music is separated into elements, traits and concepts, such as texture, rhythm, pitch, timbre, form, genre etc. Specialised analytical processes are applied to these categories but each deals only with select aspects of the music itself (or its experience). Music is, at least to some extent autonomous, in that it involves rules or principles that apply only to music, but there is no objective one-to-one correspondence between what analysis focuses on and the experience of listening to it. The categories and their contents that make up the fields of analysis are evaluated according to certain presuppositions. But the criteria for determining which characteristics are important enough to register as fields or units of analysis is seldom made explicit and the criteria for the formation of categories plays no part in normal discussion about music.

The suppositions that determine analytical categories are uncritically accepted and are classic form of ‘received knowledge’. When the cultural dependencies of categories are not acknowledged, music theory, to invoke Roland Barthes, does the work of ‘myth’ in that it attempts to turn the historical and cultural into the ‘natural’.

Musical knowledge is a form of ‘perspectival knowledge’ as it emerges out of a particular culturally dependent perspective. Far from objective, perspectives give interpretations and subjective nature of interpretation leaves open the possibility of multiple interpretations (Samson 1999:45). What counts as worthy of analytical attention within one musical tradition may not register as important within another. The primary categories of musical knowledge in European originating music are, in their chronological ordering. Theory- rules of composition, Aesthetics, this is perhaps the most loosely used concept in English musicology as no one agrees on what it is. Analysis, is the search for characteristics within a piece of music that confirm the relationship between theoretic and aesthetic ideals. The object of analysis in European music is the score which does important work including: Specifying what happens in performance, objectifying music and transforming it into a noun and making music an abstract concept which can be separated from its sound thus enabling text-based analysis. Despite their widespread application, these categories reflect European ideals and is it dangerous to assume that the form and content of these categories match the theory and practice of Thai music. In the Thai context, European categories such as harmony, for example, have no place. Thai musical knowledge involves concepts that are only loosely connected to the European categories. To elaborate this point, the following provides a thumbnail contrast between Thai and Western ways of knowing music.

‘Theory’ in Thai music is called *tisadee*, ‘analysis’ is called *wikro* and ‘aesthetics’ is called *Suntriyasart*. These have a presence within Thai music, but Thai musical thought is not delineated as it is in European music so they are not directly corresponding counterparts. The institutionalization of Thai music in universities has increased reliance on abstract theory. But notation plays no comparable part in *dontri Thai* composition or theorising so abstraction has not

resulted in Thai analysis taking the score as its primary object. Within the orbit of what is thought theoretical, is a synthesis of knowledge about how to perform, compose, interpret and analyse music as well as historical knowledge of its origins and what is typically thought of as ‘extra-musical knowledge’ about its cultural uses. The ultimate aim of musical training is to develop skills of *phra wong*; a master of all aspects of performance. The primary concern of all musician/scholars is to learn the stylistic characteristics of past masters which are transmitted through successive generations.

A basic analytical objective is to aurally extract separate melodies from the dense heterophonic texture of a performance. This enables insights into the relationships between the various melodic lines (*thang*) created by different performers. From here, listeners look for the logic or reason behind the performers’ melodic choices as they create their individual *thang*. Thai analysis also considers forms of modal transformation, structural architecture and form, as well as social aesthetic concepts such as *riap roi*, which combines notions of skill with ideas about deportment and etiquette. Western music (and others) presupposes a relatively stable concept of musical time. This is essential to coordinate syncopation and reinforced in the pedagogy by routine use of the metronome. This concept of time is irrelevant in Thai music. The notion of a tightly coordinated pulse which directs uniformly precise rhythmic activity among all performers contradicts Thai musical values. The *glong tat* drum in *piphat* is in the flow of time, but its job is not to mark the docile ticking of a stable reference. The concept of timbral beauty in European music is determined by the primacy of instrumental blend within the harmonic texture. This is not how *dontri Thai* is organised as its heterophonic texture is the result of the simultaneous unfolding of numerous melodic strands. The principle for determining the ideal timbre is not consonance or blend but the distinctiveness of each instrument within that texture. This basic utilitarian feature of Thai timbre is overlooked in English language writing, leading to its characterization as harsh.

Globalization need not be reduced to economic explanations which characterize it as conditions favourable to international capital on the prowl for cheap labour and resources. Globalization can also be seen as the absorption or imposition of the values of liberalism, pluralism, individualism, and especially scientific and instrumental rationalism which are common to functionally differentiated societies on stratified societies where they do not circulate (Baraldi 2006). Academic disciplines are the source that drive ideas developed in the West. Following the turn in anthropology, there is awareness of the problems of the Western scholars (like me) speaking on behalf of indigenous scholars and practitioners. Yet relatively few Thai music scholars publish. They face obstacles that can be framed in terms of the two basic requirements of academic journals. First, scholars must present their work in an elite level of English writing, and second, research should be new and presented in the latest theoretical register. This places Thai scholars at a disadvantage because English is not spoken in Thai music departments and ideas from anthropology, sociology, critical studies, cultural studies etc. that underpin ethnomusicology, do not circulate among Thai musicians. It is important to point out that when a Western scholar studies Thai music, they are typically doing ‘ethnomusicology’. But when *dontri Thai* is studied in Thailand, its students practice a form of musicology that focuses on performance. When taught in Thailand, ethnomusicology is taught separately to *dontri Thai* because Thai musicology and ethnomusicology approach the music they study from fundamentally different angles. Enlisting ideas from outside *dontri Thai* is problematic because it can result in descriptions of Thai music that render it unrecognizable to its practitioners, and in *dontri Thai*, the practitioners are the scholars.

Without the academic attributes valued in Western universities, Thai scholars are prevented from participating in the scholarly debates they are expected to contribute to. There is irony in observing that despite concern about silencing the local, the absence of specialist Thai voices in English language publications occurs largely because of rules about research and writing that are enforced by a discipline with a self-avowed commitment to the prosperity of traditional musics.

There is currently push-back within a range of disciplines against the normative application of European intellectual models in the explanation and description of societies and cultures elsewhere. Scholars of English language philosophy, are reflecting on the exclusion of Indian, Chinese, African, North American and Southeast Asian knowledge from the philosophical canon since Emmanuel Kant (Van Norden 2017, Park 2013). As modes of thought developed in the Europe were thought to be the only legitimate means of explaining the world, indigenous knowledge was demoted to ‘ancient wisdom’, ‘esoteric knowledge’ or ‘religious thought’. At stake in pointing out disparities in musical worldviews, is the sovereignty of Thai intellectual and cultural tradition. In the Thai world, texture does not imply harmony, rhythm does not imply stability, timbre does not imply blend, and pitch does not imply standardisation so to clarify details of this music, Thai musicians should lead discussion about it. If current self-reflection within ethnomusicology produces another ‘new turn’, it may involve powerful steering institutions reflecting on their perceived right to define the theoretical and rhetorical terms by which non-European music is explained and expanding their epistemological scope to fully embrace other ways of knowing and explaining music.

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CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF COMPOSITION IN THAI TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract

The art of composing traditional music in Thailand has been dated to at least the Ayutthaya period (AD1350-1781). Although traditional Thai musical composition is a compulsory course that all students must complete in order to fulfill the requirement of undergraduate degree in both Thai music and Thai music education, there is uncertainty over when and where the process of transmission of the methods and ideas used in Thai composition began. Given its importance in Thai music education, tracing this process is important to contemporary Thai scholarship.

This presentation will trace the role of Thai institutions and the education system in promoting and furthering the art of composition and its transmission. It will focus primarily on the case of Chulalongkorn University where courses on Thai music composition have been offered since the opening of the music program in 1983. I will also explore the compositional processes and the theoretical and aesthetic concepts of four composers in Bangkok spanning three generations. These composers provide insight into four important traditional repertoires: *phleng raung*, *phleng thao*, *phleng rabam*, and *homrong*. Their views illuminate shifting interpretations of traditional compositional practices in the twenty-first century. Some of the composers have positioned themselves dialectically between tradition and modernity. Their works represent a new approach to composition by engaging directly with the ideal of recontextualising the musical tradition to enable it to assimilate into modern life. Their contemporary practice foregrounds the interdisciplinary nature of their work as it acknowledges the influence of concepts drawn in from history, literature, poetry and architecture. The views of these important composers and their compositional practice will help recalibrate Thai compositional theory, aesthetic ideals and the analytical process that explain them, thereby reshaping the thinking that informs a new generation of pedagogical and academic musical thought.

**THÆ LĪ TŌW: DANCE AND MUSIC TRANSMISSION
OF PWO KAREN IN WESTERN THAILAND**

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Abstract

Thæ lī tōw is a dance of the Pwo Karen people, an ethnic minority who live in the historically forested areas of Laivo sub-district in Kanchanaburi province along Thailand's western border with Myanmar. *Thæ lī* is a Mon language-derived Pwo Karen word for dance. *Tōw* is an onomatopoeic term derived from the sound *wā le kō* percussion instrument. *Thæ lī tōw* is a genre of dance which includes *Tōw abla*, *Tōw aimi*, *Tōw mongyō*, *Tōw mūla*. The dance and its musical accompaniment, which are transmitted orally/aurally between generations, are performed in many Pwo Karen villages where it is an important symbol of cultural identity. Local variations of the dance are considered expressions of local identity within the broader Pwo Karen community.

The research for this presentation is part of an ongoing anthropological project in which the researcher, over a number of years, attempts to gain the insider's perspective of the community's cultural values and social practices and the role of music within them. This presentation describes the processes of transmission of *Thæ lī tōw* and explains how the dance is understood and valued in the contexts where it is practiced. I explore indigenous understandings of the dance and the values and attitudes that have helped sustain traditional practice and ensure its survival. I draw attention to the unchanged ontological status of the dance which has preserved its Buddhist associations. The Buddhist association is explicit in the narrative texts performed during the dance. This raises questions of permeability of the ontological status of such performance practices as their social contexts change. At stake is the survival and traditional practice and an understanding of the capacity of the Pwo Karen community to absorb, withstand or mediate these changes.

**FROM “MADAME BUTTERFLY” TO *SAO KHRUA FAH*: THE PLAY SCRIPT
ADAPTATION AND THE CULTURAL REFLECTION IN THAI SOCIETY**

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Abstract

The adaptation of play scripts from Western to Eastern cultures is a creative literary practice within the changing cultural domains; the act exclusively aims to remain faithful to core ideals, content, and literary values of the original source. Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly” is one of the most well-known operas in the European genre and is recognized as an exemplar of the tradition. The story revolves around Butterfly, a young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval officer and explores cultural differences between the main actors and how these intervene in their tragic love story. The “Madame Butterfly” story was adapted as a Thai musical drama (*Lakhon rong*) in a production called *Sao Khrua Fah*. This Thai version was written and produced by Prince Narathip Prapanphong and became a hugely popular *lakhon rong*. The popularity of *Sao Khrua Fah* led to its further adaptation into other media in Thailand.

Focusing on *Sao Khrua Fah*, this presentation describes the process by which the script and music of a classic *lakhon rong* made its way to commercial recordings, films and television dramas, as well as, contemporary pop and folk music genres. These adaptations into new media are based on the original story, but each offers a new interpretation that aligns with the stylistic conventions of the genre into which it is transformed (such as *luk thung*). A common theme in the various adaptations is the stereotypical characterization of northern Thai women which reflects a caricature widely accepted in central and other regions of Thailand where northern Thai culture is exotified.

SULING DEWA AND TANDAQ MENDEWA IN THE METU TELU ISLAMIC SECT RITE AS THE SYMBOLIC IDENTITY OF THE KARANG BAJO SOCIETY IN BAYAN BELEQ NORTH LOMBOK

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Introduction

Wet is a customary territory for the North Sasak people which consists of *Wet Bayan Beleq*, *Wet Semokan*, *Wet Sukadana*, *Wet Akar-akar*, *Wet Sembageq* and *Wet Gumantar*. They are famous for embracing the Islamic belief system with the *Metu Telu* ideology which has a very strong syncretistic pattern. *Wet* is traditionally a community group living area labeled with the existence of a *Mesigit Lokaq* (ancient mosque), *kampu* (kampung) and indigenous peoples. A *Wet* mostly has one *kampu* and one indigenous group with its own customary system. However, *Wet Bayan* comprises four villages, namely *kampu* Karang Bajo, *kampu* Timuq Orong, *kampu* Bat Orong and *kampu* Loloan. Each of these *kampu* is artificially correlated to build an integrated structure and system in *Wet Bayan*, so *Wet Bayan* is also known as Bayan Beleq. However, in several *Metu Telu* Islamic rites that use Sound and Movement media, they show their respective styles.



Figure 1. Kampu

(Photo:Amaq Nyakrana, Bayan Beleq 22 July 2019)

In the *Gawe Urip* rite, *Kampu* Karang Bajo and Timuq Orong chose the media of *Suling Dewa* and the accompaniment of the *Tandaq Mendewa*, while *kampu* Loloan and *kampu* Bat Orong used *Gegeroq Tandaq*, which is a unit of sound and motion that cannot be separated. However, the practitioners of the sound behavior and movement behavior came from *kampu* Karang Bajo and *kampu* Loloan, while *kampu* Bat Orong and *kampu* Timuq Orong were the users.

The Relationship Between the Form of the *Suling Dewa* and the *Tandaq Mendewa*, *Kampu* Society and Islam *Metu Telu*

Based on the form of presentation relationship, there is a synergy of action and reaction between *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa* which is divided into two types, namely presentation based on Emotional Response and Concepted Actions. The relationship of emotional response will be seen when *Suling Dewa* is played during a ritual procession, so as a soundscape, its vibrations will be responded to in order to process, maintain, and improve the emotional quality for the performers of the ritual. The *Suling Dewa* vibration reacts to the emotional response of the performers of the ritual,

so that some of them move spontaneously to the strains of the *Suling Dewa* vibration (sonic movement) consciously or in a trance state. The emotional response of the performer of the ritual plays a major role in connecting behavioral aspects ranging from perception, memory, learning, making decisions to acting (Slaboda, 2001), while the movement practitioners are important in building Movement Behavior (*Tandaq Mendewa*). Ritual performers with a strong sense of cultural intensity, a sense of the sacredness of the ritual, and a strong sense of the *Suling Dewa* will tend to be more responsive in responding to sound vibrations due to different times or places, which can cause different emotional responses. Listeners with different cultural backgrounds and musical experiences will respond differently (Hargreaves, 2003).



Figure 2. The Ritual Performer's Emotional Response
(Photo: Nyakrana, Bayan Beleq 22 July 2019)

This is in line with the opinion of Merriam (1964) which states that perhaps there is no human cultural activity that is so pervasive, reaches deep into, shapes, and sometimes controls human behavior such as music (sound scape). It is also emphasized by Collier (2002) that spontaneous movement (sonic movement) by the performers of the ritual of vibrations and emotions require knowledge of the sources of causality. So that in *Tandaq Mendewa* the movements are carried out in an expressionist manner, which is expressed from all emotional experiences through an irrational medium, namely body movements (Hadi, 2002).

Concepted Actions are a unified form of presentation of *Tandaq Mendewa* and *Suling Dewa* in the Islamic ritual of *Metu Telu* such as *Ngaponin* and *Mendewa* with inseparable roles. This is a phenomenon of Movement Scape and Sound Scape which is part of the complex structure of a symbolism of the identity of the Karang Bajo community. Their artificial movements have been given an expressive form (Soedarsono, 1978), as well as sound offerings. Both are used as a medium of communication to the natural dimensions and supernatural dimensions. The *kampu* Karang Bajo community (traditional society), as stated by Geertz (2003), also communicates by using signs and symbols in painting, dance, music, architecture, facial expressions, gestures, body postures, jewelry, clothing, rituals, religion, kinship, nationality, layout, ownership of goods, and many others. Concepted Actions have patent rules and systems that cannot be changed, such as during *Ngaponin*. *Suling Dewa* must be presented at the four corners of the cardinal directions which creates a supernatural protective wall (Kholis, 2017) and the *Tandaq Mendewa* moving

around sacred objects in a circle to the left as a sign of respect, presenting the energy and protection of nature. They believe that turning left is a cycle of livelihood and turning right is death. In addition, the practitioners of Movement Scape and Sound Scape must be a postmenopausal woman and a man whose sexual appetite has decreased (generally the elderly). This phenomenon shows that *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa* in practice form complex symbolic actions for rituals (Turner, 1987) of *Islam Metu Telu* Karang Bajo Community.



Figure 3. Motion to Make Left Turns in Concept Actions of *Tandaq Mendewa*
(Photo: Renadi, Kampu Karang Bajo Desember 2010)

Islam Metu Telu as a community belief system provides various sides of existence for the *kampu* community. In the end, they lead their interpretation to place the position of their respective groups in forming the integrity of the system that carries out each role for the integrity of *Wet Bayan*, such as *kampu* Karang Bajo which positions their group as a spiritualist group as a form of solidarity and the strength of the group's internal unity (Doyle, 2007). This provides clarity that *Islam Metu Telu* provides various discourses in each *kampu* group which are expressed differently but with the same goal in the role of *Wet Bayan* integrity. Phenomena like this then formed the ideology of the *kampu* Karang Bajo group which had an impact on the way they gave value to artificial sounds or movements in rituals until they finally had different applied patterns. Althuser said that ideology is not only an abstract system of ideas, but also real and concrete practice material (Putranto, 2010), including Sound Behavior and Movement Behavior. It is known that each *kampu* group has its own ideology and the *kampu* Karang Bajo group has the concept of spiritualism ideology so that in the social structure of *Wet Bayan*, there is *Maq Lokaq Pande* as the caretaker of the supernatural dimension and *Maq Lokaq Walin Gumi* the caretaker of the real dimension as a part Karang Bajo community. This ideology forms a derivative system until the presentation of *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa*. Sound represents the value of the supernatural dimension and motion represents the dimension of real life.

Suling Dewa and Tandaq Mendewa as the Symbolic Identity

Referring to the opinion of Burke and Stets (2009) who say that identity is formed through symbols and the meaning of symbols as a perception, and the opinion of Thomson (2004) which says ideology is the use of symbolic forms and the attraction between interpretation, self-reflection and identity criticism, and if we look at *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa* in the *Metu Telu* Islamic Sect Rite as the Symbolic Identity, we will get an analytical network as seen in Figure 4 below.

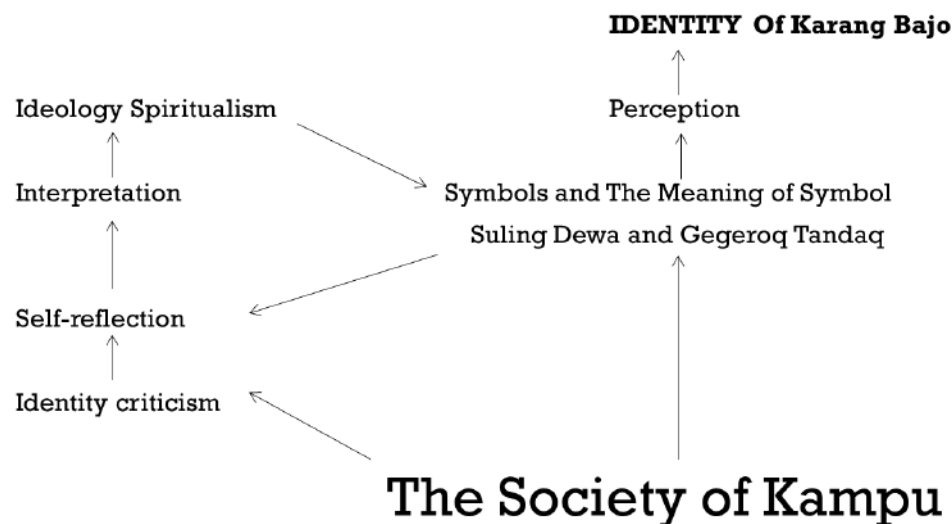


Figure 4. Net Work of Symbolic identity of *Kampu* Karang Bajo
(Nur Kholis, 2021)

The existence of four *kampu* in the homogeneity of *Wet Bayan* and *Islam Metu Telu* as a belief system shows that each village group carries out an identity critique. Furthermore, the *kampu* Karang Bajo society conducted self-reflection by reviewing the group, such as the media case and ritual practitioner. They see their potential by giving special treatment to the Sound Scape practitioner and Movement Scape practitioner, as well as social structures that are part of the society. Because the *kampu* that have the Movement and Sound practitioner are *kampu* Karang Bajo and *kampu* Loloan, so then the *kampu* Bat orong and *kampu* Timuq orong are just the users. Furthermore, they provide the value of interpretation and finally form a spiritualist ideology. In this ideology, they interpret the symbol of the *Suling Dewa* as the bridge of real dimensions to the supernatural dimensions, and the *Tandaq Mendewa* as the bridge of the supernatural dimensions to the real dimensions in the existence of the *Islam Metu Telu* rite process. This is proven through a different perspective from other *kampu* societies such as *kampu* Bat Orong, *kampu* Timuq Orong and *kampu* Loloan. These three *kampu* do not have a strong concept of ideas related to *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa* as a cross-dimensional liaison medium. Their concept refers more to *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa* as a form of blessing and protection. The symbolization of the bridge connecting real and supernatural dimensions owned by *Suling Dewa* and *Tandaq Mendewa* in the end created a perception of the existence of the *kampu* Karang Bajo society which was then able to form a symbolic identity.

Conclusion

Suling Dewa and *Tandaq Mendewa* have a relationship in the manifestation of spiritualism ideology as a form of dimensional balance. In the Islamic ritual of *Metu Telu*, the motion and sound behavior play a role in creating a supernatural wall, attracting energy, protecting nature, blessing and connecting the real dimensions and the supernatural dimensions. Through the spiritualist ideology, the society of *kampu* Karang Bajo formed a symbol of the bridge connecting the real dimensions to the supernatural dimensions for *Suling Dewa*, and the bridge connecting the supernatural dimensions to the real dimensions for *Tandaq Mendewa* during the *Islam Metu Telu* ritual. Basically, this happened through a process of criticizing the identity of the *kampu* Karang Bajo society in bringing out its existence in Bayan Beleq (*Wet Bayan*).

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THE MALAY WORLD: A METHODOLOGICAL MONOLOGUE

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1: Playing with Chance

In February 2021, my panel for the 6th PASEA symposium suddenly fell apart.

The panellists were Ne Myo Aung from Myanmar and Mark Teh and myself from Malaysia. Ne Myo is a musician and musicologist, Mark a performance-maker, and myself a playwright and theatre-maker. We were going to use chance to present our papers in the allotted 1½ hours. The method was simple. We would cut our texts up into 15 meaningful fragments, put them into a common pool and use the *tikam-tikam* to select one piece at a time to read or perform, before stopping in under an hour, with some pieces still unread, to take questions from the floor. The idea was to allow additional unplanned meanings to emerge spontaneously through disrupting linearity and the unexpected intersections of our texts.

Our panel title was *Tikam-Tikam: 45 Pieces of Fragmented Text on the Practitioner's Encounters with Scholars and Other Practitioners from Southeast Asia*. We wanted to invert the trope of the scholar reporting on the practitioner, while using a playful method to present our papers about 'inconvenient histories (Mark), 'cultural rigidities' encountered when recovering and promoting Burmese music (Ne Myo) and the writing of a new play with a male, Malay Other as the protagonist based on my encounter with the ethnochoreologist Professor Mohd Anis Md Nor.

2: Two Coups in February

The three of us met virtually to decide on what to do with our panel when the symposium, which was supposed to happen in Bagan, was changed to being hosted online in Taiwan.

Our lives had changed dramatically by then due to the coronavirus and political crises. Both Malaysia and Myanmar had come under the rule of men who didn't win enough votes to govern in the last elections (in May 2018 and November 2020, respectively). But they had the power to reinstate themselves.

The way it was done in my country was through the so-called 'Sheraton Move' coinciding with the arrival of the Covid-19 virus in early 2020. Some key politicians from the elected Pakatan Harapan coalition government met with their erstwhile political 'enemies' in a five-star hotel, apparently to have dinner. That act of communal eating would cause the government to collapse as sufficient numbers of politicians defected in support of a new Prime Minister and his new coalition. This regime later proclaimed an emergency and Parliament was suspended.

A year later, a coup also happened in Myanmar. But the takeover there was quicker and direct. The military just rolled in and removed the people in power. No shadow play, no meals and no deals.

3: No Mood to Play

"What about our panel? You guys still feel like doing it?"

"Actually, I am in no mood to play."

"Ya."

"Ok, guys, let's call it off."

4: Second Thoughts

But I sat on the quit decision for a while before writing in to ask if I could do my paper on my own. I changed the title because the project turned out to be less about a ‘practitioner’s encounter with a scholar’ and more about her encounter with the present-day Malay world.

5: The Malay World

This was how it all started. In December 2013, I invited Prof Anis to run a workshop for seven arts practitioners. I had wanted him to show us a better approach to making art. What were the things artists should do and think about at the inception of a project? And could he throw in whatever theory would be useful for us to know? But Anis did more than this – speaking mainly in English but slipping effortlessly into Malay now and then (sometimes for effect), he also shared a number of pungent stories from his field research in the region. With his permission, I later compiled a monologue out of the workshop transcripts, staged as *Cakap Dapur: R & D Stories* in February 2015.

The protagonist was a nameless ‘urban professor’ who spoke, following the transcripts, mainly in English interspersed with Malay. By speaking directly to the audience, as is the wont of a theatrical monologue, he cast them as captive participants at his workshop. He lectured them, mocked them, cajoled them to become more rigorous in their process by insisting “there is no such thing as an impulsive artist!”

Although my objective was achieved, I still felt dissatisfied. There was a Malay world hovering in the background of some of the stories from the workshop that had moved me the most but it wasn’t coming out in the monologue.

I think I should say here something about my version of the Malay world. As a third generation Malaysian of Chinese descent, I see it as open and diverse, built from layers of culture seeping into one another. Rooted in prehistoric soil, it is an old and mystical world, a place of power that is benign, populated by beings seen and unseen, a rich, beautiful world surrounded by water, with living roots leading back to ancient India.

6: Foil for an Urban Professor

Five years later, I returned to this unfinished project. But I found that the monological form was not helping me to get at the stories about the Malay world. So I changed the Professor’s motivation – from wanting to educate a bunch of impulsive artists, he would now, as a person from academia and an older generation, be seeking perhaps unconsciously, to build a *communitas* out of the workshop. Rather than speaking to a generic, faceless audience, I created a new character as a foil for him, a young Actor who hadn’t yet found a purpose in life and art.

Immediately identity questions popped up. What’s to be the character’s race? Gender? Language? Background, etc? These were loaded and troublesome questions for me because as an invention, the character had to have a basis in sociological reality and also be dramatically able to interact with the Professor character who was a powerful Malay man of knowledge with a sharp tongue.

Say I make the Actor character a female. This would incur overtones of sexual politics and patriarchy. Say I make the character a Chinese or an Indian. Then racial politics would rear its head. At a suggestion, I changed the scenario from a workshop for practitioners to a classroom at the university but the power relations became just more intense.

Finally it was only possible to make any progress in the writing when the Actor character became more like the Professor character: a male, heterosexual, urban, English-speaking, middle

class, cosmopolitan Malay. They came from the same world. But he was 30-40 years younger. They were both cut from the same cloth but at different times. In every sense, life had become harder for the younger man (as for young people elsewhere in the world). Harder for him to make money, harder to get meaningful work, he would seem to have more freedom but there were actually more curbs on his personal freedom, he had fewer opportunities to travel and get a good education, and he would end up poorer in wealth and assets.

7: Testing

In July 2020, a draft of this new play was given a public reading on Zoom with the working title *Professor Communitas & the Impulsive Artist*. Several people felt the Actor character was no match for the Professor. He was lame, “bland”, lacking in self-confidence and also underdeveloped. Unexpectedly a couple of people found the Professor character to be unyieldingly strong, and wanted to see moments of his vulnerability.

8: Boundaries

After the reading, I discussed with the producer about having the play translated into Malay when it was completed and performed for a Malay audience. Presenting a work in the Malay-language theatre was something I had never done before and wanted to do and this play seemed the right vehicle for crossing what had felt like self-imposed boundaries.

With this in mind, I continued working on the play, still writing in English (my working language) but imagining it being spoken in Malay. But it wasn't long before I began to feel uncomfortable especially when the word “Muslim” came up in the Professor's dialogue. This was not a new addition, it was present in previous versions of the text. But now, it was as if a red line had been crossed – I saw the possibility that all his utterances could become coloured with the signifier and that could be problematic.

9: The Audience Factor

The identity marker of the Professor character as a Malay had not been an issue in his first appearance in *Cakap Dapur* when the monologue was performed by a Chinese actor¹. Likewise in the second iteration as *Professor Communitas & the Impulsive Artist* five years later, there was no issue when the two Malay characters were performed by Malay actors². The identity of the actors and the characters they played was not an issue for the English-language theatre audience comprising multi-ethnic English-speaking urbanites, who would know that the Federal Constitution defines the Malay as a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay customs.



Figure 1. *Cakap Dapur* poster. (Photo by Five Arts Centre)

But what would be the reception from the Malay-language theatre? To find out, we invited a few Malay friends to a private reading of the working text. I explained to them the plan to have the text eventually translated into Malay and performed for a Malay audience.

They then listened to the reading (given by the same two actors who did the earlier public reading) with this audience's gaze in mind. When it was over, they raised the red flag. They advised against the plan. Better for us to stay within the English-language arena given the potential landmines that we could unintentionally step on. There was one person who didn't foresee any problem. It's only a play, surely the audience would know that. I would dearly love to go with him. But from the previous experiences of friends as well as my own experiences in theatre, I knew whose advice to listen to.

10: The Multicultural Body

It was a relief to remove all the incidental references to the Muslim religion from the Professor's text. Through playwriting, I recovered the space for my characters to think and talk about their experiences as people living in a capitalist society with an ancient and complex past, and also as ordinary citizens vis-à-vis the state and the nation.

Although I still used text from the original workshop transcripts for the Professor's dialogue, I cut back on them and reworked them, blending in my own thoughts and questions about making theatre.

I looked for additional materials to flesh out the Actor character from people who were younger, including my former students. One of them happened to be the actor who played the Professor role in the public reading, Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri. He gave me permission to incorporate two of his songs which delved into the mundane and existential issues of a young contemporary Malay man.

I also created several workshop participants as minor characters for the Actor character to play. That is, a performer would play the Actor and, as the Actor, play the other characters.

My intention was for the audience to see the diversity being performed by or through the multicultural body of the performer. In performance, the body performing the Actor would embody and represent the male and the female, the Malay, the Chinese, the Indian and other unspecified ethnicities and sexualities of the minor characters. This demonstration of the multicultural body was a reminder of its continued presence in the land despite the categorisation and segregation of peoples through policy-making and gatekeeping inherited from the British colonial rule of Peninsular Malaysia.

As it turned out, the Professor character grew correspondingly ‘smaller’ as the Actor’s role became bigger and fuller, and the title was changed to reflect this. The play had become ‘younger’ in its representation. *Oppy & Professor Communitas* was performed as ‘hybrid theatre’ on an online platform in April this year (2021, see Figure 2). It was performed by two actors (Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri and Iefiz Alaudin) who performed their parts while seated in front of their laptops in the studio, and it was live-streamed with insertions of pre-recorded video footages being played by our technical director in another room.

11: Iterations

I can now see that what had driven my obsession to write that play about the Malay world had come in part from a longing for the Malay world of my parents when I was a child. It came from a place of yearning for the nation.



Figure 2. *Oppy* poster. (Photo by Five Arts Centre)

12: A Nyonya in Malacca

My mother was born and lived in rural Malacca until her marriage to my father when she then moved to the town. Her family spoke Malay, including her China-born parents. When she came into contact with Malay people and spoke in Malay, they would call her ‘nyonya’, a Malayised Chinese

native. It intrigued me as a child that my mother had a secret self, another identity. But more and more in the last 20 years or so, she came to be called ‘auntie’ by all and sundry. Now she is 89 and the last person to call her ‘nyonya’ was the Malay gardener who used to come to cut her lawn once a month: “Nyonya, you will have to find someone else to cut your grass. I am getting old.”

13: Ali & ‘Azbah’

My father was also born in Malacca. He also had his secrets. He would often appeal to a higher power he called ‘Tuan Allah’ when he was making declarations of truth. We never found out where that came from. In the 1960s, he had business dealings with a Muslim man called Ali. They would have communicated in Malay since my father spoke no English although he was fluent in several Chinese languages. A man of very few words, he told us nothing of what he did outside the house. But we knew somehow, maybe from our grandmother, that Ali lived in Kuala Lumpur but he was also running a transport business in Malacca and my father was helping him to do things when he wasn’t around.

But Ali died suddenly and relatively young in the 1970s, and yet my father continued with whatever he had been doing for Ali but now for his son, ‘Azbah’, who was away in England studying law. Later ‘Azbah’ graduated and came back to take over his father’s business. Now and then, my father would go to meet with this ‘Azbah’. It put him in a good mood. As a child I had seen Ali but was this ‘Azbah’ for real, I used to wonder. But eventually my sister and her husband got to meet with him in Kuala Lumpur. “Yes, he is a lawyer, like our father says.” When my father died (in 2007), ‘Azbah’ who had never visited him at home, came to pay his respects. He even brought his wife and they spoke with my mother.

We didn’t know – we couldn’t have known – that our father owned a lorry-for-hire but of course ‘Azbah’ knew. He had his people in Malacca take care of it, passing to my mother the proceeds every two or three months. My mother said this went on for several years until it was no longer profitable to keep the lorry running.

14: A Man of the Malay World

My father had no qualms sending most of his children to English-medium mission schools. But when two of them ended up marrying Indian men and becoming Catholics, he was displeased and refused to attend their weddings. But we noticed that he had also done the same thing to another daughter when she was marrying a Chinese man who professed no particular religion.

But whatever his unvoiced objections were, they dissolved over time. Just as well, since the last daughter to get married decided on an Australian. He nodded his head when the new men called him ‘father’. He would smile and raise his right hand in acknowledgement. The sole Chinese son-in-law spoke to him in Penang Hokkien, the two Indian ones in Malay, and the Australian one in smiles and nods. He grinned at being called ‘Kong Kong’ by his grandchildren and wrapped his own angpows to give to them at Chinese New Year. None of these youngsters could speak Hokkien. But those who could, spoke Mandarin to him and his wife. Those who couldn’t, spoke Malay.

15: Epilogue

By now (July 2021), so much of our lives have been changed or devastated by the Covid-19. The signs of social distress and restlessness are growing in my country as there seems to be no end in sight to the pandemic. Among the signs are the white flags posted by people to ask for help from the community, while black ones are beginning to appear as calls to the ‘backdoor’ government to step down³.

But some things remain unchanged. In June, an online talk on ‘transcending race through dance’, organised by students at a public university, was cancelled by the institution⁴. People who don’t already know of the sensitivities surrounding race and religion in Malaysia would likely question the reason given: the university did not want to “offend any party”⁵. The cancelled speaker was Ramli Ibrahim, the acclaimed classical Indian dance guru. And the audience, comprising students from the government-funded university, would be predominantly young and Malay. What would have been their response to a talk about ‘transcending race through dance’ by a world-famous Malaysian artist who also happens to be Malay? Sadly, we would never know.

But until the water dries up, the seas in the region will continue to connect the Malay archipelago to India, China, the Middle East and to its neighbours. The Malay world used to be an open, permeable, self-confident and resilient world⁶. This was the inclusive, connected world that I had known as a child through experience and as an adult through reading⁷ and travel that I had wanted and still want to put on the stage – perhaps in a future play one day I will.

Endnotes

¹ Chee Sek Thim as Professor.

² Imri Nasution as Actor, Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri as Professor.

³ The Prime Minister resigned in August 2021 and was replaced by his ally.

⁴ Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM).

⁵ *Free Malaysia Today*, 11 June 2021.

⁶ Wang Gangwu’s talk *Before Southeast Asia: Passages and Terrains*.

⁷ A.R. Embong’s article *Malaysia as a Multicivilizational Society*.

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The 6th Symposium of PASEA focused on two main themes and new research. The main themes were Movementscapes and Soundscapes, and Heritage and Encounter. These themes were represented in the form of regular papers by the PASEA members and also in 'lightning' report papers mainly by Graduate students and also by some of the regular members reporting on their current research-in-progress.



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