

MALAYSIAN

MUSIC JOURNAL

Volume 5
Number 1
June 2016
ISSN 2232-1020

Penerbit Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
Tanjong Malim, Perak
2016

MALAYSIAN MUSIC JOURNAL

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Editorial

In the Volume 5, Issue I of the Malaysian Music Journal, we present six articles from the areas of interdisciplinary research, ethnomusicology, music education, composition and electronic music. The articles in this volume broaden our view of song text composition, music modules produced by the ministry, musical notation systems, adaptation of world music pedagogy, inspirations to compositions and the quality of digital recordings. These articles also address the continuous negotiation among musicians and composers between musical sustainability and innovation.

In his article, *The Evolution of the Polpolot: Innovation and Continuity in a Baluan Song Form*, Lewis discusses the usage of language in the song text of polpolot, a two-part vocal form from Baluan Island in the Manus province of Papua New Guinea. He posits that polpolot is increasingly being sung in Tok Pisin, the official language of the new nation and the English language, rather than the indigenous language in which it was originally sung, Ngolan Paluai. Lewis refers to this choice of language as ‘looking inward and outward’ in which the use of contemporary indigenous language is more inclusive of the younger generation of Baluan, while the use of English as more engaging of an international audience. This article demonstrates a degree of sustainability that evolves in a manner, which does not compromise the interests of the current generation.

Siti Eshah, Zaharul Lailiddin and Doig validate the effectiveness the Cultural Arts Guidance Program (PBSB) implemented on the Malaysian schools by the Department of National Culture and the Ministry of Education of Malaysia in their article, *The Validation of a Basic Knowledge Test of Music for the Cultural Arts Guidance Program (PBSB) in Malaysia Using the 2 Parameter Logistic (2PL) Model Item Response Theory*. This article demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses in the cultural programmes implemented by the ministry. These assessments provide guide on areas that need to be strengthened and improved.

In this article titled *South Indian Konnakol Makarome in Western Teaching*, Makarome posits that the rhythmic ideas of the konnakol, or South Indian vocal percussion are useful for the teaching of Western Musicianship. The vocalisation of rhythmic patterns and improvisation structure aid in the learning of rhythmic patterns and improvisation patterns respectively. This adaptation demonstrates an innovative approach to teaching and learning and broadens our understanding of the musical systems of the world.

Made Hood, in his article, *Notating heritage musics: Preservation and practice in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia* examines the function of heritage and hybrid notation namely Balinese ding dong notation and Javenese kepatihan cipher notation today. He argues that even with the western staff notation, many indigenous musical notations provide important information for the interpretation of the music. These notations also serve as memory aids for teaching and learning traditional music. Hood's article shows the complexity of documenting music into visual formats and how communities are continuously searching for ways to sustain musical heritages.

Kamarulzaman enlightens us on the inspiration and motivation to his composition, GhaMuhyi, in his article titled *Inspirasi Penciptaan Komposisi Muzik GhaMuhyi: Sebuah Karya Muzik Baharu Bersumber dari Muzik Tradisional Ghazal Melayu Johor*. Underlying Kamarulzaman's composition is the desire for the new without compromising the traditional. He includes divinity themes, numeric forms and dilutes the division between absolute and programme music in GhaMuhyi. Kamarulzaman tries to promote malay ghazal music to the category of popular entertainment, demonstrating how the popular aesthetic approach may be utilised in music compositions without compromising its traditional elements. This article presents an approach to the sustainability of traditional music that is contemporary and popular.

Ahmad Faudzi evaluates selected music recordings on the sape, a traditional plucked lute zither from the Sabah and Sarawak. In his article, *Reviewing the Recording Quality of a Local String Instrument (sape) from the Perspective of Sound Preservation*, Ahmad Faudzi posits that the quality of the sape recordings today is determined by different sampling rates, choice of microphone placements, and acoustic environment. He argues that these sape recordings in Malaysia do not reflect the actual or "raw" of the sape. Ahmad Faudzi proposes for the artistic preservation of sape as a unique sound source. He emphasises the need for the "preservation" of unique sound sources in music recordings.

Clare Chan Suet Ching
Chief Editor