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Editorial

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The Malaysian Journal of Music, Volume 9, presents ten articles on issues in ethnomusicology, musicology, composition, music education, popular music and music technology. These issues derive from countries including Japan, Korea, The Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, United States of America and Malaysia.

In the first article, “Answering questions, questioning answers: Understanding *tradisi* and *moderen* in the intellectual process of Balinese new music creations,” I Wayan Sudirana, a Balinese music composer, performer and academician discusses the juncture between “traditional” and “modern” in Balinese music composition. He presents reasons why Balinese composers are hesitant to create new Balinese compositions that differ from the traditional forms. Among them are the fear of *merusak budaya* (destroying tradition); losing one’s self; the perception of “tradition” as cyclical and should not change; and a resistance toward western musical colonisation. The desire to preserve tradition is also motivated by the tourism industry’s promotion of “authentic” and “traditional” music to attract international tourists. In this article, Sudirana argues that new musical compositions are not just composed based on free flow intuition but are formed by concepts that are artistic and intellectual. He expresses that Balinese musical compositions should not be conceived as mere commodities for the tourism industry but an expression of a composer’s philosophy and creativity.

Juxtaposed with Sudirana’s article is the fourth article written by I Komang Sudirga titled, “Innovation and change in approaches to Balinese gamelan composition”. Sudirga presents various new music compositions by Balinese composers living in this age of global accessibility. Globalisation triggers inspiration for innovation, yet it simultaneously spurs the desire to maintain tradition. Sudirga states that progressive and conservative audiences and judges of Balinese music competitions often control the extend and boundaries of change in Balinese musical compositions. This article highlights six Balinese music composer’s exploration of their identity in connection to a global space through their compositions. These compositions are inspired by geo-cultural locations; creation of a new gamelan set in collaboration with the performing arts; the diatonic tonal system; pan-Asian instruments and new tuning systems.

In the second article, “Assessing practice habits: A study of collegiate instrumental teachers’ estimation of students’ practice habits versus students’ self-report”, Lau examines whether collegiate instrumental teachers are able to effectively estimate their student’s practice habits from observation of their performance ability during class time. The results reveal that collegiate instrumental teachers are not able to effectively estimate their students’ practice habits from merely classroom observations.

Shin’s article on “Self-directed learning in music educator teacher education: Perspective from pre-service music teachers in South Korea” investigates the attitude

and impact of pre-service music teachers toward self-directed learning. This article contributes to new approaches in learning among professionals who are working while studying. Provided the task of organising a thesis seminar, the teachers reported that they were anxious and lack confidence in interpreting the many available educational resources. However, the teachers also stated that self-directed learning gave them agency over their learning processes and peer reviews contributed to the development of critical thinking and meaningful conversations on their research topics.

In the fifth article, “Zaum Box: New music for speaking percussion”, Adler, a composer from the United States of America reviews his experiences in composing ten music compositions for solo speaking percussionist. This article combines research in contemporary music composition with the composer’s own creativity in utilising 20th century composition techniques including futurism, Fluxus, post-tonal music theory, indeterminacy and nonconventional notation. Alder also discusses the relationship between text, sound and music in selected scores. This article presents an approach to research in composition, an increasingly common practice among composers today.

In the sixth article, Taton, in “Rendering the popular as "tradition": The music of Virgilio "Piroto" Petcheller and the Panay Bukidnon *banda* music practice in Panay Island, Philippines” discusses an interesting musical phenomenon in the popular music scene of The Philippines. He posits that *banda* music of Panay Bukidnon is actually inspired by the “popular” songs sung by Virgilio “Piroto” Petcheller Piroto in the 70s. Considered “popular music” due to its media promotion, Piroto’s sings folk music that derive from traditional *harana* (serenade) and *komposo* (ballad) genres. His songs are somewhat traditional due to its portrayal of a pastoral background and West Visayan folk music. This article demonstrates an interesting reversal process in which popular music draws from “traditional” musical genres. Jose argues that the “traditionalising” of the popular portrays the mobility of identity among the Panay Bukidnon who are able revert between the popular and traditional in their music.

Syarif, Azhari, Suprpto & Hastuti in “Human and computation-based musical representation for gamelan music” establish a text-based pitch model to represent *karawitan* music. This data represents the musical elements of *karawitan* as pitch numbers, pitch registers or octaves, pitch values and others so that they can be read by humans and computers. Ghending Scientific Pitch Notation (GSPN), a music representation model for the *karawitan* was created to represent musical elements from sheet music for this purpose.

In the eighth article titled, “Japan’s nightingale geisha singers: Listening to women through audio media”, Jude provides a background to the historical and cultural context of the geisha *kashu* recordings of the 20th century. The life of geisha *kashu* recording stars such as Yoshiwara Shimeji, Fujimoto Fumikichi and Kouta Katsutarō is presented to revise an orientalist and sexist approach toward perceiving the performers and their musical. In this article, Jude also distinguishes between the original Japanese short shamisen songs associated with geisha and those of the *kashu* pop star.

Pugh-Kitingan, in “Revisiting the Dusunic boat lutes of Sabah: Disappearing musical traditions” compares the differences in the organology, performance

techniques and musical styles of the Kadazan Dusun “boat lutes” known as *sundatang* among the Tambunan and Rungus; and *gagayan*, Lotud. This comparative study concludes that the term “boat lutes” is invalid as these musical instruments have no connection with boats. They actually represent the human body—the pegbox as the head and the soundbox as the body, sometimes vice versa. Pugh-Kitingan also establishes that the *sundatang* and *gagayan* are structurally different from the *sape* of Sarawak and Kalimantan or *kecapi* of the Bugis from Tawau. They are more akin to the cultural tradition of Southern Philippines and Sulawesi. This article suggests that these boat lutes may originate from Northern Borneo.

Chan, Kwan, Lee & Boyle in “Intertextual observations of Jimmy Boyle’s handwritten manuscripts” examine the 177 items left behind from Boyle’s published and unpublished manuscript; and hand copy of other’s manuscripts. This study deconstructs the single dimensional portrayal of Boyle as a patriotic songwriter. Examinations of his manuscripts show that Boyle was a versatile composer and musician with diverse musical interests.

Clare Suet Ching Chan

Chief Editor

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