

## **East Malaysian Music in the Classroom: Kenyah and Kadazandusun recreational songs and Jatung Utang (Kenyah xylophone)**

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### **Abstract**

*The late twentieth century has witnessed a growing emphasis on multicultural music education. However, as non-Western musics are often incompatible with classical music notation, some fear that this will adversely affect the time spent on teaching basic music concepts. At the same time, Malaysian music educators are woefully short of teaching materials. This paper introduces several folk genres from East Malaysia which offer a unique solution to these two problems. Based on research among the Kenyah over the last 15 years and Kadazandusun community from 2007-2009, a wealth of repertoire has been found to be applicable to the local music education scene. Malaysian music teachers have little access to publications of genuine local folksongs, especially those using the pentatonic scale. The music education syllabus also emphasizes local music instruments, such as the caklempong and gamelan, which are however, far beyond the budget of many schools, similarly, as the sophisticated Orff xylophones. The genres introduced here are especially suitable for music education. Kenyah recreational songs possess several characteristics of special value to music educators. Firstly, they feature homophonic multi-part singing. Secondly, being largely pentatonic, they are especially suitable for the Kodály method. Thirdly, they display regular meter, generally 4/4. In addition, they are accompanied by simple dance-movements. Kadazandusun songs: the examples featured are contemporary versions but they still display the original ethnic so-pentatonic scale and are often accompanied by the Sumazau dance. East Malaysian wood and bamboo instruments such as the jatung utang provide a cheaper and culturally significant alternative to gamelan and Orff instruments.*

**Keywords** *belian dado' (Kenyah long-dance songs), jatung utang (Kenyah xylophone), Kadazandusun, Kenyah recreational songs, local folksongs, pentatonic melodies*

### **Abstrak**

*Pada hujung abad kedua-puluh pendidikan muzik multicultural semakin ditekankan. Walaubagaimanapun, oleh kerana muzik non-Western kerap kali tidak sepadan dengan notasi muzik klasik, ramai pendidik bimbang bahawa ini akan menjejaskan masa yang digunakan untuk mengajar konsep asas muzik yang lazim. Kertas ini memperkenalkan beberapa genre rakyat daripada Malaysia Timur yang menawarkan penyelesaian yang unik kepada masalah berkembar ini. Berdasarkan penyelidikan di*

*kalangan kaum Kenyah selama 15 tahun dan di kalangan Kaum Kadazandusun dari 2007-2009, repertoire yang luas didapati dapat diaplikasikan di persada pendidikan tempatan. Guru muzik Malaysia kekurangan sumber bahan lagu rakyat tempatan, khususnya dalam skel pentatonik. Sukatan pendidikan muzik menekankan alat muzik tempatan seperti caklempong dan gamelan, yang agak mahal dan kebanyakan sekolah tidak mampu memperolehnya. Begitu juga dengan zailofon Orff. Genre yang diperkenalkan di sini amat sesuai untuk pendidikan muzik tempatan kerana: (i) Lagu rekreasi Kenyah mempunyai ciri-ciri seperti nyanyian berlapisan suara, kebanyakan pentatonik, meter yang tetap, biasanya 4/4, dan diiringi gerakan tarian mudah. (ii) Lagu Kadazandusun: Contoh-contoh yang diperkenalkan agak kontemporari tetapi masih mempunyai skel asal etnik so-pentatonik dan biasanya diiringi tarian sumazau. (iii) Alat-alat muzik kayu dan buluh daripada Sarawak/Sabah seperti jatung utang merupakan alternatif kepada caklempong dan gamelan yang lebih murah dan berkait rapat dengan budaya tempatan.*

**Kata kunci** *belian dado' (lagu tarian panjang Kenyah), jatung utang (zailofon Kenyah), lagu rakyat tempatan, lagu rekreasi Kadazandusun dan Kenyah, melodi pentatonik*

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## Introduction

The approach to this paper is drawn from two separate disciplines namely music education and ethnomusicology. Developments in music education and ethnomusicology have led to their convergence at certain points over the past forty years. Some ethnomusicologists have become concerned educators, while many music teachers have become part-time ethnomusicologists in their zeal to find authentic examples of ethnic musics for their students. This has resulted in the emergence of a new field, formed at the interface of the two disciplines, termed “world music pedagogy”<sup>1</sup> by Campbell (2004).

At a meeting in June 1988 (Burton, 2002, pp.162-163) the labels “ethnic”, “folk”, traditional”, “non-Western” and “world music” were each strongly endorsed by scholar-educators from different backgrounds. Every single term, however, also carried negative or politically loaded connotations for other members of the panel. The term “multicultural” was seen to have a political agenda: “ethnic” as implied inherent inferiority; “world music” as envisaging commercial music created through artificial combinations of instrumental and vocal styles; “folk” and “traditional” failed to recognize many classical Asian traditions; and “non-Western” as alienating the non-classical musics of Europe and the Americas. All the members of the panel, however, found that they were all passionately championing the same basic cause, which was the need to incorporate the wide diversity of the musics of the world into music education. As expressed by one member of the panel, “We are on the cusp, as it were, the liaison between ethnomusicological research and the practicality of the classroom” (Volk, 2002, p. 28).

There is a growing belief that music educators should break away from the hegemony of Western Classical music, and seek ways to include various genres of music far removed from that tradition such as ethnic music from African, Asia and South-America, and Western genres outside the classical school.

As reflected in the presentations at the 1998 seminar on “Issues of Multiculturalism in Music Education” (Reimer, ed., 2002), this new field is still striving for consensus and theoretical validity. Issues such as “why (introduce multiculturalism)?”, “what (repertoires to choose)?” and authenticity “what exactly defines a culture’s music?” were considered alongside practical considerations of issues such as “bi-musicality” and “integration in a total music program” versus “distinct area of study” (Ibid 5).

Although most music educators subscribe to the ideal that schoolchildren should be introduced to the various music cultures of the world, this brings into question the practicality of the exercise, given the enormous diversity of music, limitations of time, resources and the need to balance it with the responsibility of building music literacy and basic music performance skills. There is also a need to choose a balanced approach towards how the music is taught. Palmer (2002, p. 34) describes how “Music can be taught as an isolated phenomenon, for its internal values” or as a “complex sound structure that has cultural meaning embedded”, warning that music without context is isolated while cultural context without sufficient musical content is not music. Some educators believe that the focus should not be on the exoticism of the music, but rather, as Schippers (1996, p. 20) proposed:

...what is needed is a programme of world musics which is well integrated into the 'regular music' curriculum...the central focus should be formed not so much by the cultures the music comes from, but rather by the musical uses and principles underlying the music.

Seeger (2002, p.110) suggests that as "no single culture exploits all the possible tones, timbres, rhythms and instruments", teachers could draw from a selection of traditions, enough to enable students to develop "good ears and creative musical minds". An example of a balanced combination, he further suggests, could be "music from Europe for harmonic structures, Africa for rhythmic structures and India for tonal relationships" (Ibid, p. 111).

This last approach is not too distant, at least in principle, from what Zoltán Kodály was advocating early in the twentieth century. At that period in history, of course, Kodály did not have this degree of diversity (nor political correctness) to consider, and his aims were primarily to develop music literacy, giving prominence to musical materials from his native land. Although he championed the use of each nation's own musical culture<sup>2</sup> and resented the hegemony of Western European traditions, he also travelled to other countries to seek the best strategies to incorporate into his approach, adopting the solfa "hand-signs" from the English, and rhythm syllables from the French. The songs used as teaching materials in the Kodály method are designed to develop music literacy in a specific sequence.<sup>3</sup> Teachers use carefully selected materials, ideally, folk songs.

In countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, there has been a gradual increase in emphasis on the inclusion of "non-Western" musics in the school curriculum, while in Asian, African and South-American countries, there are concerted attempts to bring indigenous music into the education system. Numerous materials for instruction in world musics have been produced as a result of collaboration between ethnomusicologists and music educators. In contrast to music texts from the early twentieth century which usually only featured folk songs, often with modified English lyrics, and no information except perhaps the name of the country of origin, many contemporary books contain descriptions of the culture of origin, lyrics of folksongs in the original language and details of instrumentation.

However, many music educationists find they cannot cover such a wide range of styles given the limited class-time. They are faced with a plethora of musical styles, some of which cannot be notated in an accessible form for school-students, and therefore having little connection to other parts of their curriculum which emphasis music literacy.

This paper demonstrates how Kenyah and Kadazan recreational songs, and Kenyah instruments such as the *jatung utang*, a pentatonic xylophone, can make a unique contribution to the solution of this dilemma, particularly in Malaysia, as they are definately Asian in melodic character and reflect Borneon culture, yet largely conform to Western musical syntax.

The approach will be two-fold: each song will be analyzed for musical characteristics useful for teaching musical elements as well as for cultural interest. Other pedagogical aspects and possible applications in the classroom will also be suggested.

## Choice of Repertoire: Kenyah and Kadazan music and Western musical syntax

The genres presented in this paper are genres which have been developed over the last 60 to 70 years within the communities investigated. I have come across older repertoire which demonstrates tonality different from the Western scale, but these have not been included here.

The repertoire presented here displays exact correspondence of Kenyah and Kadazan music to the Western pentatonic scale. Among the Kenyah, this may have developed over the last 60 to 70 years with the influence of Western instruments and music into their culture. The tunings of the *sape* and *jatung utang* were adjusted to match with the harmonica and guitar which were incorporated into their traditional ensembles. The recreational vocal repertoire has also adjusted to this modified tonality.

Song, dance and melodic instrumental music with rudimentary harmony permeates the daily lives of the Kenyah. This contrasts sharply with the environment in most schools. As proposed by Small (1998, p. 210), the lack of musicality of so many people in Western industrial societies could often be “because they have been actively taught to be unmusical.” He further suggests that “schools themselves, alas, and the music tuition they provide, can contribute to this process of demusicalization”.

It is clear that the Kenyah have a highly developed music tradition, as mirrored in their large and varied repertoire of songs. Apart from the songs and dance movements *per se*, there is much that educators can learn from the Kenyah. They have developed an impressive multipart singing tradition in which the whole community participates. This great choral tradition and their varied instrumental repertoire indicate the development of an unusually high level of “musicality” in the community.

### Kenyah Songs: Introduction

The Kenyah dwell in the upper reaches of several rivers in Central Borneo, on both sides of the Sarawak–Kalimantan border. They are exceptionally gifted in music and are well known for their “sape” music and graceful dances. Indeed, the sape has become one of the chief symbols of Sarawak’s rich cultural heritage.

However, there is another facet of Kenyah musical heritage, which has received little publicity, namely their vast repertoire of enchanting songs. These songs are vastly different from Western influenced contemporary songs. While the latter are based mainly on diatonic major and minor scales, Kenyah songs are overwhelmingly pentatonic (Chong, 1997; Gorkinski, 1995). In addition, many are sung in traditional homophonic harmony (a rare form of multi-part singing) and most of the dance-songs display a metric regularity. As such, these songs are not only valuable from a cultural point of view, but could also play a vital role in music education programs.

### Past Research on Kenyah Songs

The Kenyah have amazed many writers such as Galvin (1962), Macdonald (1956, p.230), and Rubinstein (1973) with the sophistication of their vocal music. Scholars

such as Chong (1997), Gorlinski (1989, 1995) and Seeler (1975) have written dissertations on Kenyah dance, instrumental music and song, attesting to the richness of their repertoire in the performing arts. All mention the unusually high quality of choral singing, often performed in two or even three-part harmony.

According to Morrison (1962, p. 266), who travelled extensively throughout Sarawak, “No one who has ever heard Kayans and Kenyahs singing will ever forget it... the whole house, singing in harmony, comes in with a great full chested chorus ...”

Although the Kenyah have a vast repertoire of songs,<sup>5</sup> my research has focused only on specific categories, which I have grouped under the heading “recreational songs”. The songs featured here represent examples from genres suitable for use in schools, such as songs associated with instrumental tunes, *belian dado*’ (long-dance songs) and *belian menat kanjet* (songs of invitation to dance).

“Long-dance” songs are known as *belian dado*’ to the Lepo’ Tau, *badi* to the Sambop, Badeng and some other groups, *badek tiang* to Seeler’s (1975) informants, “*lan-i*” to many others (actually a sub-category of the genre). In a Kenyah longhouse, *belian dado*’ are sung by men, women and children when they perform the *tu’ut dado*’, a simple line-dance in which participants proceed counter-clockwise along the longhouse veranda .

Although strikingly different from any other repertoire in musical structure the *ipet* (traditional rhyme format) bears similarities to that of “older” genres such as *suket*, *kerintuk* and *tidau* (Gorlinski, 1993). Of nine distinct *ipet*, seven were used in similar form in the other songs. Similarities were also noted in the way emotions evoked “joy and longing”. From this, she concludes that *belian dado*’ are an outgrowth of a pre-existing tradition. In a recent paper (Gorlinski, 2005, p.28) she has also noted that societal changes have resulted in a change in status for *belian dado*’. With the wholesale conversion to Christianity and blurring of class boundaries they have now become the defining songs, or “*belian lan*” for the Kenyah. Their less complex structure in comparison to older genres such as *kerintuk* makes them easily accessible to non-Kenyah:

The recent compilation of arrangements of *belian dadu*’ by Malaysian music educator, Chong Pek Lin (1997) is a case in point. Aside from their egalitarian character and technical accessibility, the *belian dadu*’, unlike *kerintuk*, are not readily suggestive of any specific spiritual orientation also makes them “safe” for any setting” (Gorlinski, 2005, p. 29).

### **Selected Kenyah and Kadazan Songs and Their Applications to the Classroom**

As this paper was originally written for a workshop, the songs selected represent a variety of Kenyah and Kadazan songs from various genres which would be easily learnt by participants within the time constraints of the workshop. They are songs which I have taught to my students at the Institute of teacher Education Batu Lintang Campus, and also to schoolchildren at various workshops and in the classroom.

***Songs associated with instrumental repertoire***

These songs are generally short, with melodies corresponding to the main themes of instrumental pieces. They may once have been widely sung during family or communal gatherings but are now largely forgotten. Aside from their direct correspondence to instrumental tunes, their simple structure and tonal range make them ideal for learning of tonic-solfa in the beginning stages. The songs reflect a rich culture, one far removed from the modern urban way of life. Some have playful teasing themes, while others tell of folk tales, love, betel nut-chewing and dancing. The first example below features a well-known dance tune, played by a *sape* duet or in ensemble with *jatung utang*.

**Transcription 1** Sai Ulai Alut Lai (Chong and Lajingga, 2011p. 25)

As sung in Long Moh

Transcribed by Chong Pek Lin

*s, d r m s*

Sai u - lai a - lut lai - ee U - yau A - long nai u - le ku - li  
Sai u - lai a - lut lai - ee Na - i Si - gau u - le ku - li

Tai le - to ny - at su - gi Nyat pa - bet go - sok gi - gi  
We La - lo me - tep be - li Ke - tu - bong ma - dung ki - ri

**Kenyah Lyrics**

*Sai ulai alut lai-ee*  
*Uyau Along nai ule kuli*  
*Tai leto nyat sugi*  
*Nyat pabet gosok gigi*

**Translation**

Paddling the boat home  
Uyau Along returns from his coolie job  
The woman asks for tobacco  
Later she will ask for a tooth-brush

**Actions** Clap and step forward right foot  
Sweep arms (paddling motion) to left (tap left foot)  
Clap and step forward left foot  
Sweep arms (paddling motion) to right (tap right foot)  
Clap hands front (right foot forward)  
Raise both hands above head (tap left foot)  
Lower hands to touch shoulder (left foot forward)  
Clap hands at the back (tap right foot)

### *Musical features*

Tone-set: <i>g d r m s</i>	Meter: quadruple
Tonal center: <i>do</i>	Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic
Ambitus: 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4, P5 ,M6

### *Pedagogical interest*

The lyrics paint an interesting portrait of Kenyah economic activities and customs. The *Uyau Along* is a beloved character in Kenyah folklore who in this song represents the men-folk who travel afar to sell their labour, returning in boats laden with goods for their wives and families. It is interesting to note the inclusion of the Malay words ‘*gosok gigi*’ instead of the Kenyah equivalent ‘*pabet jipen*’ as the latter would not fit the rhyme pattern.

The tetratonic tone-set and rhythmic boat-rowing movements, make it an ideal song for inculcating rhythm and tonic solfa at elementary school level. Trainee teachers at the Institute of Teacher Education Batu Lintang Campus have even taught the song successfully at various Chinese medium primary schools, using the original language.

### **Transcription 2** Chut Tunyang (Chong and Lajingga, 2011, p.21)

As sung in Long Moh  
Transcribed by Chong Pek Lin

s, l, d r m s

Be'un U - tan ke - loh ke - na se - pak me - lu Se-lem se-lem  
yang chut tun - yang na' ma - u Chut tun-

lem yang tai'ee na' me du lu Sai'ee a - me di - a ku - a si-lung a-  
Chut tun - yang na' ma - u

su Chut tun - yang Chut tun - yang na' ma - u Chut tun

#### **Lyrics**

*Be'un U-tan keloh kena sepak melu  
Selem-selem taiee na'me dulu  
Saiee ame dia kua silung asu?  
Chut tunyang, chut tunyang na'mau*

#### **Translation**

The young lady refuses to serve me sirih  
Secretly I slip away  
So ashamed, does my face resemble a  
dog's?  
Stepping on the mud, stepping on the  
mud rejected



### Malay Translation

*Gadis enggan hidangkan aku sirih  
Senyap-senyap ku berangkat dulu  
Adakah mukaku sama dengan anjing?  
Pijak lumpur, pijak lumpur disingkir*

### Musical features

Tone-set: $\underline{s} \underline{l} d r m s$	Meter: quadruple
Tonal center: <i>do</i>	Mode: <i>do</i> -pentatonic
Ambitus: 8	Intervals: M2, m3, M3, P4

The song tells of a forlorn suitor slinking off in the dark (in the interior of Sarawak, this entails stepping on muddy ground, hence the refrain *chut tunyang* – to step in the mud) after being rejected by the girl his heart desires. The polite way to express interest in a young lady is to visit her family, and ask for *sepak melu* (betel nut mixture – the equivalent term in Malay is *sirih*<sup>6</sup>). Receiving the answer that “no-one is free” to prepare the *sirih* for him, he knows he has been rejected. The lyrics reflect Kenyah courting rituals and social interactions. In a typical Kenyah village, any gathering lasting more than 15 minutes is inevitably graced with the partaking of *sirih*.

### Pedagogical interest

The simple tone-set, symmetrical phrasing and rhythmic structure make it amenable to solfa exercises in the earlier stages of a Kodály method. The culturally rich text (betel-nut chewing, courting rituals, muddy roads) could spark interesting discussions on life in the rural areas of Southeast Asia.

### Possible applications

The tune could be sung and played on an instrument, and traditional dance movements performed to it. Playing the melody on the *jatung utang* itself serves as an effective and simple introduction to harmony. Subsequently it could then be used for tonic-solfa practice.

### Belian Dado'

*Belian dado'*, literally “long songs” refers to songs which are sung while performing a simple line-dance. This dance consists basically of a “step and shuffle” or sometimes “stamp, shuffle, step, shuffle” punctuated with stamps at the end of certain phrases. Specific movements and variations have also evolved to accompany some of the songs. Generally, the atmosphere is relaxed, and anyone present is welcome to join in at any time. They are strophic in nature, consisting of several verses, alternating with set choruses. For example, in the song “*Lane*” the chorus consists of two lines:

Kenyah lyrics	Translation
<i>Nelane, eh tuyang</i>	<i>Truly so, my friends</i>
<i>Nelane</i>	<i>Truly so</i>

Often, the chorus is performed in two-part or three-part harmony, with participants randomly joining in any of the parts.



**Figure 1** Batu Lintang students join in a Belian dado' chorus at Uma Badang, Belaga, January 2008

**Table 1** The table below shows the tonal and rhythmic structure for some of the songs

	Title of Song	Tone set <sup>1</sup>	Mode	Meter
1	<i>Along</i>	<i>M: <u>s</u> l d r m s</i> <i>H: s l d'</i>	do-pentatonic <sup>7</sup>	4/4
2	<i>Are Ruti</i>	<i>M: l d r m s l d'</i> <i>H: d s l d'</i>	do-pentatonic	4/4
3	<i>Chin M'bi</i>	<i>M: <u>s</u> l t d r m s</i> <i>H: d m s l d'</i>	Major	4/4
4	<i>Iko Kenai</i>	<i>l d r m f s l t d'</i>	Major	4/4; 2/4
5	<i>Ilun Kuai</i>	<i>M: <u>m</u> <u>s</u> l d r m</i> <i>H: l d r</i>	so-pentatonic	4/4
6	<i>Kun Nelane</i>	<i><u>s</u> l d r m s l</i>	do-pentatonic	4/4
7	<i>Lane (Baram)</i>	<i>M: d r m s l d'</i> <i>H: s l d' r' m'</i>	do-pentatonic	4/4; 2/4
8	<i>Lane (Belaga)</i>	<i>M: <u>s</u> d r m s l d'</i> <i>H: s l d' r' m'</i>	do-pentatonic	4/4
9	<i>Mudung Ina</i>	<i>l d r m s</i>	do-pentatonic	2/4
10	<i>Nai Bilun Merika</i>	<i><u>s</u> d r m s d'</i>	do-pentatonic	2/4
11	<i>Nombor Satu, Nombor Dua</i>	<i><u>s</u> l d r m s l</i>	do-pentatonic	2/4
12	<i>Sayang Dau Kenai Tawai</i>	<i><u>s</u> l d r m f s l t d'</i>	Major	4/4

<sup>1</sup> Key: M= melody; H = harmony; Tonal center: bold font

There is clearly a dominance of anhemitonic do-pentatonic songs useful for application of teaching pitch and intervallic concepts. There is also a predominance of 4/4 rhythms, making these songs particularly useful for inculcation of rhythm. The following song is a typical *belian dado*' in two-part harmony.

**Transcription 3** *Lan-e Tuyang* (Version 1) (Chong, 2006, p. 26)

Lan- e tu- -yang ne- lan ne- - sa lan- -la- - - mat  
Lan- e tu- -yang te- lu ki- -danglan pa- - - duk

Lan- e tu- -yang te- lu ne- man lan- -pa- - - lat ne- -  
Lan- e tu- -yang te- lu ki- -danglan- -pa- - - duk Ki- -

man pa-lat u- - juh - lan de ta - - lan lan de tu - yang men  
dang paduk ba- - tu - lan de tu - - san lan de tu - - yang men

jam pu- yan kum - bin lan de tu- - - - yang  
jam pu- yan kum - bin lan de tu- - - - - yang

***Lan-e Tuyang*** (Truly my Friends)

**Kenyah lyrics**

- Lane tuyang nelan ne sa-lan lamat*  
*Lane tuyang telu neman lan palat*  
*Neman palat ujuh*

**Chorus:**

*Lan de talan, lan de tuyang*  
*Menjam puyan kumbin*  
*Lan de tuyang*

**Translation**

- My friends, let us celebrate  
My friends, let us shake hands  
Lets shake hands

**Chorus:**

Truly, my friends  
How do you do?  
How are things going, my friends?

- 2 *Lane tuyang telu kidang lan paduk* My friends, we walk beneath the beam of  
*Lane tuyang telu kidang lan paduk* the longhouse (2x)  
*Kidang paduk Batu Tusan* The beam which is as strong as  
 Batu Tusan

### Musical features

Tone-set: *M: s l d r m s*

*H: s d r m s l d'*

Meter: 4/4 and 2/4

Tonal center: *re*

Mode: *re-pentatonic*

Ambitus (melody): 8

Intervals: M2, m3, P4

The descant for *Lan-e Tuyang* which begins on bar 6 makes an easy and effective exercise in two-part-singing, as it begins in unison, with the descant then rising to *mi* while the melody falls to *do* (melody: *so, so mi re do*; descant: *so, so mi re mi*). It then continues with its own tuneful melody at intervals of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> above. Students assigned to sing the melody are less likely to be led astray (as is apt to happen for the lower voice) as they merely repeat the ending of the opening phrase of *do re mi so mi re*. In the last five bars, the two-part singing is made easier by two repetitions of the same pattern (melody: *do so, do*; descant: *mi re mi*). The melody ends with the same motif as the first two phrases (*do re mi so mi re*). The singers' familiarity with this should keep them from being led astray by the descants, which now soar to a different ending: *mi so la do' so mi la so*. Both descant and melody are suitable for drills in solfa and hand-signs.

### Transcription 4 *Lan-e* version 3 as sung in Belaga (Chong, 2006, p.22)

The musical score consists of two staves: 'Traditional Descant' and 'Melody'. The descant is in 4/4 time and consists of a single note. The melody is in 4/4 time and consists of a series of notes. The lyrics are written below the melody staff.

**Lyrics**

1 *Itung na' ikem tapi*  
*Ikem tiang ngan sada baiee*  
*Sada baiee sungai lan kanan*

2 *Itung na' ikem lundo*  
*Ini tiang kenda lan lao,*  
*Kenda lao kayu lan jian*

**Chorus :** *Han ne la—ne ,*  
*Lane-e —e*

3 *Liling na' telu liwet*  
*Telu tiang kenda lan tuket*  
*Kenda tuket maput lan bulan*

4 *Bete' lan nemong*  
*Telu tiang singget lan batung,*  
*Singget batung usah lan inan*

**Translation**

It is as if you stopped to rest  
By the banks of the river  
By the banks of the mighty river

Its just as if you sleep  
My friends, under a tree  
Under this humble roof

**Chorus:** Truly so,  
Truly so

We circle back and forth  
My friends beneath the beams  
Beneath the smooth- ended beams

Come, everyone take part  
My friends all together now  
Together now as one

**Musical features**

Tone-set: M<sup>2</sup>: *ḡ d r m s l d'*  
H: *s l d' r' m'*

Tonal center: *do*

Ambitus: 11

Meter: quadruple

Mode: do-pentatonic

Intervals: M2, m3, P4

**Cultural interest**

This song was performed along with others in typical *belian dado'* style in Uma Sambop, Belaga (where such songs are known as *badi*) with the characteristic *stamp shuffle*, *step shuffle* movements. The first two verses reflect on the Kenyah norms of courtesy toward guests. They humbly disparage the simple lodgings provided, indirectly honouring guests by assuring them they are being provided with the best, a form of courtesy, known as *nyebalang* (Gorlinski, 1995, p.270).

Both the verses begin with the Malay word *Itung* used here in the colloquial sense “take it as if”. The third verse is a common *ipet* portraying the long-dance (*tu'ut dado'*), and the reference to architectural features of the longhouse is a common one, reflecting the value of craftsmanship in Kenyah culture. The last verse is an invitation for all to join in the fun. This verse effectively summarizes the essential spirit of Kenyah choral singing: a sense of “oneness” experienced by all participants.

### Possible applications

Each of the verses thus could be the starting point for a discussion on various aspects of Kenyah culture general themes such as hospitality to guests in the rural areas, types of dwellings, and participation in community events.

The song exhibits the musical features of a typical *lan-e* song, displaying pentatonic tonality and simple two-part harmony. For teaching purposes, it constitutes a fairly simple two-part exercise in harmony. For example in bars 6-7 the descant comes in with the pattern *so do' do' do la so* while the melody continues with *mi so so so mi re*. Both patterns are tuneful and easy to drill with solfa and hand-signs.

### Transcription 5 *Ilun Kuai* (Chong and Lajingga, 2011, p.28)

As sung in Long Moh  
Transcribed: Chong Pek Lin

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Ilun Kuai'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has two staves of music with lyrics in Kenyah and English. The second system also has two staves of music with lyrics in Kenyah and English. A 'Variation of melody' is indicated above the second system.

#### Kenyah Lyrics

1. *Kuai maping*  
*Mudung suling apau payan*  
*Ilun Kuai*
2. *Kuai mekat*  
*Lide silat sang usan*  
*Ilun kuai*

#### Translation

- Fan-tailed pheasant  
From the everlasting mountains and  
plateaus  
Orphaned maiden pheasant
- Dove scratching  
The decaying sang leaves  
Orphaned maiden dove

3	<i>Kuai meku</i> <i>Nalan bio ne te tengang</i> <i>Ilun kuai</i>	Hoarse –voiced dove Caught in a big trap Orphaned maiden dove
4	<i>Kuai puteh</i> <i>Mayep murik alut takeng</i> <i>Ilun Kuai</i>	White dove Beckons to push out the boats Orphaned maiden dove
5	<i>Kuai kalong</i> <i>Mayep mudung apau payan</i> <i>Ilun Kuai</i>	Patterned Dove Beckons from the mountains and plateaus Orphaned maiden dove
6	<i>Kuai bala</i> <i>Mayep meka entem hujan</i> <i>Ilun Kuai</i>	Red dove Truss up the gathering rain clouds Orphaned maiden dove

### ***Musical features***

Tone-set: *Melody*:  $\underline{m} \underline{s} \underline{l} d r m$

Harmony:  $\underline{l} d r$

Tonal center: *so*

Ambitus: 8

Meter: quadruple

Mode: *so*-pentatonic

Intervals: M2, m3

### ***Cultural interest***

The song contains poetic imagery (capable of appreciation at different levels) associated movements both graceful and meaningful, and could be used in different ways by teachers to initiate discussions on issues such as endangered animals and environmental issues. I have used this approach, employing group dramatization successfully with a fifth grade class. The imagery is especially beautiful, but the full meaning behind the metaphors for all the different *kuai* (pheasants) is not easily explained. Are the *kuai* really birds, or do they represent women, or spirits with the powers to control nature?

*Kuai* or argus pheasants, are listed as a protected species in Sarawak. Their feathers are well-known as decorations to Iban warrior hats, and people in the interior still hunt the bird for meat.

Perhaps the verse or *isiu ipet* has different layers of meaning and was never meant to be crystal clear to everyone. If *belian dado* ' is the contemporary form of *belian lan*, it should then embody all the richness of verse which characterised the older songs. This text consists of *sebelang* speech (speech designed to show honour and respect) thick with allusion and indirect suggestions (Gorlinski, 2005, p.16).

As Gorlinski (2005, p.18) explains, attentive listeners are constantly awed by the "oblique symbolism and imagery inherent in *isiu ipet*, as well as any narrative it is used to convey" and that the "it is the semi-opacity of this register of rhyme that endows it with authority".

Musically, it consists of a short and deceptively simple but expressive melody, with one phrase in two-part harmony, as shown in the transcription below, hence making it a practical song to teach within a short time, yet rich with content.

The movements for *kuai mekat* pheasant scratching ground are as follows: Both hands raised outwards, above shoulder height, palms down; balanced on left leg; right leg shuffles as if scratching the ground.

Only the last phrase is sung in harmony. The melody is shown in the transcription as the lower voice (*l s m s s s*) while the supporting harmony is the higher voice (*r d l d d d*). In actual performances, the supporting harmony is sometimes sung an octave lower. Sometimes, the singers add a melismatic ornamentation as shown in the first bar of the melodic variant. The basic melody is simple enough to hand-sign with solfa, while the optional ornamentation would give the singer the opportunity to add grace and expression to his/her performance. The one-phrase harmony could be mastered even by elementary classes, and would be an ideal introduction to two-part harmonic singing.

### **Significance of Kenyah Multi-Part Choral Tradition**

In the three songs *Lan-e Tuyang* (Transcription 3), *Lan-e* version 3 (Transcription 4), *Ilun Kuai* (Transcription 5) the descant or alto appears at intervals of a third, fourth, fifth, sixth or octave, and constitutes a distinct and attractive melody in itself, so much so that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish melody from harmony. This characteristic, however, makes them uniquely suitable as teaching materials, as the subsidiary voice is easily taught and remembered by rote. They are ideal for introducing harmony to music classes and teaching multi-part singing to choral groups who have no previous experience singing in harmony.

The various subsidiary harmonies seldom constitute distinct, easily remembered melodies in themselves. Some feature close chordal harmonies, while others are based on interlocking ostinato patterns. Thus, Kenyah harmonies, because of their distinctiveness and the melodious nature of subsidiary parts, are an unusual feature on the world music scene. I have found this characteristic to be extremely valuable in coaching singers with no previous experience in part-singing, and are unfamiliar with sight-reading.

### **Mastery of Vocal Harmony at a Young Age**

In Kenyah society everybody is expected to be musical, and their musical environment ensures that they become so (at least this was so before the advent of boarding schools, which has changed the scene drastically). Thus, singing in harmony is a skill the Kenyah acquire early in life, merely by listening and direct participation. It does not require years of training and music literacy to achieve.

It is intriguing that the ability to sing in harmony comes so effortlessly in cultures such as the Kenyah, Bantu and Samoan peoples, for e.g. Campbell (2004, p.166) mentions that the song *Ata, Ata Mai Pe's Fiafa* in three-part close harmony is sung with children and even in pre-school settings.



In contemporary education approaches, this ability to pick up harmony at an early stage is not taken into account. Kodály and Orff recommend that children first be exposed to simple harmonies such as ostinato, round-songs and bordun. In the Kodály method, children are only introduced to homophonic and chordal harmony, beginning with singing tonic, dominant and subdominant chords at a later stage. Perhaps it is time to consider the wisdom of introducing multi-part singing such as in the Kenyah, Polynesian or South-African traditions, where harmony is picked up naturally as an oral-aural tradition, at a very early stage.

### Belian Menat Kanjet

*Belian menat kanjet* is a category of songs with a specific function: to cajole soloists into performing. In the song below, the lyrics reveal a common tactic used to single out a potential dancer discreetly by mentioning the colour of his shirt, while someone advances towards the unsuspecting victim with the accoutrements in hand.

**Transcription 6** Badi Menat Kanjet (Chong and Lajingga, 2011, p.49)

As sung in Uma Sambop  
Transcribed by Chong Pek Lin

*l, d r m s l d'*

#### Lyrics

*Menat sapai bala  
Menat menat ia  
Menjam, menjam ta'ia  
Kanjet kanjet lasan*

#### Translation

Pull (up) the one wearing a red shirt  
Pull, pull him up  
Skilled, skilled he is  
In dance, solo dance

#### Malay Translation (singable version for use in schools)

*Jemput baju merah  
Tarik-tarik dia  
Pandai, pandai dia*

### ***Musical Features***

Tone-set:  $\underline{l} d r m s l d'$

Tonal center: *do*

Ambitus: 9

Meter: quadruple

Mode: so-pentatonic

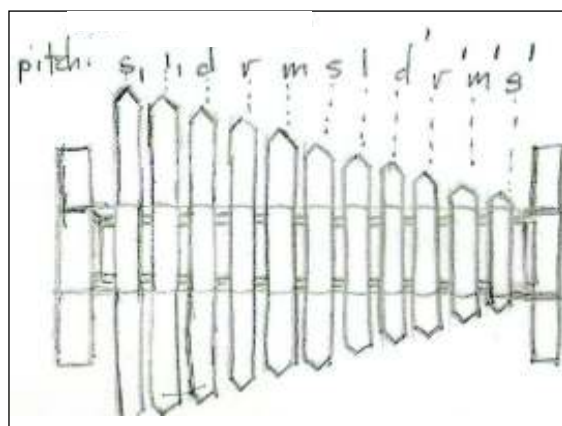
Intervals: M2, m3, P4

### ***Jatung Utang (Kenyah Xylophone)***

The *jatung utang* is a wooden xylophone with 9 to 13 keys, made of bars of light wood (often *kayu jelutong*), strung together with rope and suspended on top of a rectangular shaped trough. The player uses a pair of wooden beaters (see Plate 2) to hit the keys which are tuned to the anhemitonic pentatonic scale ( $d r m s l$ ). A common tone set for 10 keys is (e.g.  $\underline{s} \underline{l} d r m s l d r' m' s'$ ) as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** Jatung utang player, Uma Sambop, 2008



**Figure 3** *Jatung utang* pitches <sup>8</sup>

As it is often played in ensemble with other instruments, a practical concern, when making the instrument, would be to fix its pitch to correspond to the specific harmonica/harmonicas used in the village. The *jatung utang* is often played in ensemble. The exact combination of instruments in a Kenyah instrumental ensemble varies from village to village. A frequent combination features the *sape*, *jatung utang*, and several other instruments such as harmonica, guitars, and various ethnic flutes.

An excerpt of a rendition of *Det diet* by Kasa Jok in Long Mekaba, 2002, is given below:

**Excerpt 1** *Jatung utang* accompaniment (*Det diet*) for *Datun Julud* (long dance)

As played by Kasa Jok  
Transcribed: Chong Pek Lin

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody in the treble staff is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment of chords, mostly consisting of pairs of eighth notes.

**Pedagogical interest**

As mentioned earlier, the *jatung utang* presents a cheap and effective alternative to gamelan (as an ethnic traditional instrument, playable in a culturally relevant ensemble) and also to Orff instruments.

With its pentatonic tone-set, it is an appealing instrument for use in elementary schools. Students experimenting with this instrument easily play pentatonic tunes by ear with one hand, then slowly “double-up” with the other hand, playing principally in thirds, fifths and sixths, thus naturally learning harmony by trial and error.

**Introduction to Kadazandusun Songs**

The songs below belong to a category of songs that has developed over the last 50 years, and is widely accepted by the Kadazandusun as distinctly representing their community. Perhaps the most well-known examples would be *Jambatan Tamparuli*, as sung by Justin Lusah, and *Taragang Rasuk* by John Gaisah. Singer-composers such

as Justin Lusah, Ambrose Mudi (a well-known singer and music educator) and the late John Gaisah consciously wrote and promoted songs based on, or inspired by traditional Kadazan and Dusun motifs and melodies. An inspection of the melodies of the songs shows that they are mainly anhemitonic pentatonic, with the finalis<sup>9</sup> on *s*, (*low so*) rather than *d* (*do*).

**Transcription 7** *Taragang Rasuk* (Chong and Lajingga, 2011, p.59)

As sung by John Gaisah

1 Oi hang Ta-ra-gang-ra-suk poin tu-tu-no o-ku da-a-nga-ran nu-ki-bo-ros Lo-  
2 o-ku da-di-au nga oro si-on o-ku o-nong

5 Oi bi Ta-ra-gang-ra-suk Wa-ro no nang ku-sangan nu-nu Mu-  
6 lo-bi-po-di po-in ta-lad ko di lo tam-ba

9 lut Mu-li ko no-po ta-ra-gang-ra-suk su-ma-lam poh la-id do-  
10

13 ho Mi ru-ba ki-to do ha-ri a-nam Mo-i ki-to in-tong do wa-yang  
14 15 16 17

This song was popularized by the late John Gaisah and is usually sung and danced to the *sumazau* beat.

**Lyrics**

*Oi taragang rasuk*  
*Pointutuno oku daa ngaran nu*  
*Oi taragang rasuk*  
*Waro no nangku sanganu nu*

*Muhang oku da diau*  
*Nga orosion oku onongkiboros*  
*Lobi lobi po di*  
*Pointalad ko dilo tambalut*

**Translation**

Hey person in red (shirt/top)  
Please introduce yourself to me  
Hey person in red  
Do you already have a beau?

I am interested in you  
However I am afraid to speak to you  
Moreover  
You are with a friend

*Muli koh nopo taragang rasuk*      When you are leaving for home  
*Sumalam poh lah id doho*      Please greet me before doing so  
*Miruba kito do hari anam*      Let us meet on Saturday  
*Moi kito intong do wayang*      We'll go watch a movie together

*Oi taragang rasuk*      Hey person in red  
*Miandad kito da muli*      Let's wait for each other to go home together  
*Ongoi oku po pogihum*      I'm going to search  
*Korita sakayan kito muli*      For a car for us to ride home

### **Musical features**

Tone-set:  $\underline{s} \underline{l} \underline{d} \underline{r} \underline{m} \underline{s} \underline{l} \underline{d}'$       Meter: quadruple  
 Tonal center: *so*      Mode: *so*-pentatonic  
 Ambitus: 9      Intervals: M2,m3, P4

### **Transcription 8** *Jambatan Tamparuli* (Chong and Lajingga, 2011, p.59)

As sung by Justin Lusah

*s, l, d r m s l d'*

Pak pak - Kang ku doh      Su-mun-sui doh      jam - ba - tan      Jam - ba-  
 sui doh - jam - ba-tan      Jam - ba-tan doh Tam -      pa - ru - li  
 ka no - di ka - sut ku      Na - ra - tu doh -      jam - ba - tan      Ting - gal  
 di ha - ri - ti - ga      Ta - mu lo Tam -      pa - ru - li      Ming - u

tan doh Tam - pa - ru - li      Bak ka - sut ting - gi o - ku      Su-mun-  
 Pak pak      Kang ku do      Bak ka - sut ting - gi o - ku      Si - la-  
 poh doh - su - ta - kin      No - wid ku di nu - mu - li      On - tok  
 suk poh hi - lu ka - dai      Mo - gi - hum doh ka - sut ting - gi

*Jambatan Tamparuli* is probably the song every Malaysian most readily associates with Sabah. When asked what inspired him to write the song, the composer Justin Lusah recalls walking on the Tamparuli bridge one Wednesday night with John Gaisah and James Ongkili after a 1970's merrymaking session. His high-heeled shoe got caught in the bamboo slats of the bridge. The melody itself was based on the motif of a Dusun tune which he heard someone whistling.

### **Lyrics**

*Pak pak kang ku doh*  
*Sumunsui doh jambatan*  
*Jambatan doh Tamparuli*  
*Bakasut tinggi oku*

### **Translation**

“Pak! Pak!” [Sound of heel knocking against  
 the bamboo slats of the bridge]  
 as I went across/walked across the bridge  
 The Tamparuli bridge [suspension bridge]  
 I was wearing high-heeled shoes

*Sumunsui doh jambatan  
Jambatan doh Tamparuli  
Pak pak kang ku doh  
Bakasut tinggi oku*

*Silaka nodi kasutku  
Naratu lo jambatan  
Tinggal poh doh sutakin  
Nowid ku di numuli*

*Ontok di hari tiga  
Tamu lo Tamparuli  
Mingusuk poh hilo kadai  
Mogihum doh kasut tinggi*

Walking across the bridge  
The Tamparuli bridge  
“Pak! Pak” as I went / walked  
I was wearing high-heeled shoes

“Damn!” my shoes  
They fell off at the bridge  
Left me wearing my socks  
Which I brought home

On Wednesday  
At the Tamparuli tamu ground [bazaar]  
I was scurrying [in and out of the shops]  
as I searched for a pair of high heeled shoes

### **Singable Malay Translation**

*Pak pak berbunyi  
Kasut bertumit tinggi  
Berjalan senangnya hati  
Jambatan Tamparuli*

*Seberang/melintas jambatan  
Jambatan Tamparuli  
Pak pak berbunyi  
Kasut bertumit tinggi*

*Celaka! Oh kasut ku  
Terjatuh dari jambatan  
Tinggal hanya sarung kaki  
Yang aku pakai pulang*

*Pada hari tiga  
Pergi tamu Tamparuli  
Ku lari ke sana sini  
Mencari kasut tinggi*

### **Musical features**

Tone-set:  $\underline{s} \underline{l} d r m s l d'$   
Tonal center: *so*  
Ambitus: 10

Meter: quadruple  
Mode: *so*-pentatonic  
Intervals: M2,m3, P4, m6, M7

### ***Pedagogical interest***

Both songs are amenable to addition of a modified sumazau<sup>10</sup> beat, and thus can also be used as a song-and dance routine in class and on stage.

As these songs are pentatonic, I have employed *jatung utang* and *sape* accompaniment for these and other Kadazandusun songs in the classroom as well as or various workshops and stage performances. The melody for *Jambatan Tamparuli* is an effective song for the learning of the full pentatonic scale using hand-signs. Both songs also have appealing lyrics, with local colour and comedy, features not found in many of the sanitised, moralistic songs composed for primary schools.

### **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Alternative terms (Burton, 2002, pp.162-163) currently in use include “ethnic”, “multicultural”, “folk”, “traditional”, “non-Western” and “world music”
- <sup>2</sup> With Bela Bartok he traveled round Hungary and neighbouring countries, transcribing thousands of folk songs which he later introduced into music education.
- <sup>3</sup> See appendix.
- <sup>4</sup> Boat-shaped lute, tuned to various pentatonic scales; the chief exponents are the Kenyah of Sarawak.
- <sup>5</sup> Song categories such as belian tekana (story-songs), belian burak (rice-wine songs) are not included as melodically as they are less applicable to music education. These are sung in free meter, the pitch range is narrower, and generally consist of a short melodic phrase repeated over and over again.
- <sup>6</sup> Sirih refers to the South-east Asian custom of chewing the betel- nut, betel-leaves and lime-paste concoction.
- <sup>8</sup> Jatung utang (commissioned by our institute from Long Semiyang). Dimensions: longest bar-- 45.5 cm; shortest bar—33 cm. Sketch by Faradiella Bt. Ahmat.
- <sup>9</sup> The “home” pitch, usually the final pitch of a song.  
Sumazau is a traditional Kasazandusun group dance.

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## Biography

Chong Pek Lin is a music lecturer at Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Batu Lintang, Kuching, Sarawak. Over the past 15 years, she has conducted research in Sarawak ethnic music. Inspired by the wealth of vocal repertoire among the Kenyah community, she has written three books *Songs From The Kenyah Community* (1998), *Songs from The Baram: Kenyah Songs from Upriver Longhouses* (2006) and *An Introduction to selected musical ensembles and Folk songs of East Malaysia* (2011) which this book was in collaboration with Anne Anthony Lajinga. In July 2006, she was a recipient of the inaugural ISME-Gibson award for outstanding music educators, presented at the ISME (International Society for Music Educators) 27th World Conference. Along with the award, she received a grant to implement a music education project of her choice. Her third book represents the third stage of the project.