

## ***Tenunan II* by Tazul Izan Tajuddin (b. 1969): A Case Study of Cultural Confluence in Malaysian Contemporary Music**

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### ***Abstract***

*Malaysian contemporary music, an emerging and highly diverse art form, has rapidly gained recognition nationally in Malaysia and internationally, over the last decade. Many Malaysian composers have studied abroad and have established music careers prior to returning to Malaysia. It is their return that has served as a catalyst for the growth of Malaysian contemporary music. Despite their notable achievements, only three known studies (Dainal, 2013; Lam, 2000; Siagian, 2007) have been undertaken on Malaysian contemporary music. One of the most influential Malaysian composers currently is Tazul Izan Tajuddin (b.1969), who has received many prestigious awards including the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2002 and the Lutoslawski Composition Award 2005. Drawing on significant studies of Asian music by Chou (1977) and Coaldrake (2012), this paper identifies Tajuddin's signature musical language, which incorporates elements from Asian cultures, especially Malaysian and Indonesian, within his European-derived medium. Firstly, the paper briefly explains the development of Malaysian contemporary music since the 1950s. Secondly, it provides a biography of Tajuddin and the performance background of *Tenunan II* (2001) for flute, celeste, piano, percussion and string orchestra. Using *Tenunan II* as a case study, this paper investigates the ways that Tajuddin mediates multiple cultural elements through compositional strategies such as structure, time signature, pitch and rhythmic organisation, as well as instrumentation. Finally, it argues that Tajuddin has created a musical language that employs these strategies to create music relevant to modern Malaysia that resists simple categorisation, but supports his role as a broker for cross-cultural contemporary music.*

**Keywords** *Malaysian contemporary music, Tazul Izan Tajuddin, cross-cultural contemporary music, Tenunan II*

Tazul Izan Tajuddin (b.1969) is arguably one of the most influential Malaysian composers in the present Malaysian contemporary music scene. Research by Dainal (2013) and an interview with the composer (personal communication, 3 October 2013) reveal that Tajuddin's signature musical language incorporates cultural elements, especially Malaysian and Indonesian, within his European-derived medium. One of Tajuddin's signature compositional techniques for such cultural confluence is the use of a 'pattern-based' compositional strategy, which he acknowledged to be inspired by Iannis Xenakis

(1922-2001) and Morton Feldman (1926-1987) (personal communication, 3 October, 2013). Utilising *Tenunan II* (2001) for flute, celeste, piano, percussion and string orchestra as a case study, this paper investigates the ways in which Tajuddin applies the concept of ‘*tenunan*’ [weave] as the basis for his compositional strategies to allow for cultural confluence in his music. In this case, the cultural elements involved are Islamic arabesque, *batik* and gamelan music. The first section of this paper will explain a brief historical background to Malaysian contemporary music, focusing from the 1950s to the present. The second and third sections will respectively provide an introduction to the focus composer of this paper, Tazul Izan Tajuddin, and the selected work for analyses – *Tenunan II*. The fourth section will present the core intellectual framework of this paper, which draws upon Wen-Chung Chou’s concept of confluence and Kimi Coaldrake’s research on tonal colouring. This will be followed by analyses of *Tenunan II*, focusing on Tajuddin’s compositional strategies that weave together the selected traditions through structure, time signature, pitch and rhythmic organisations, as well as instrumentation. It is argued here that Tajuddin’s innovative use of the concept of weave mediates multiple cultures to allow for the confluence of musical currents.

### The Development of Malaysian Contemporary Music since the 1950s

The term ‘Malaysian contemporary music’ is also known as ‘Malaysian contemporary art music’ (see Matusky & Tan, 2004), ‘Malaysian art music’ (see Lam, 2001) and sometimes, Malaysian ‘new music’ (see Baes, 2011). In this paper, the term ‘Malaysian contemporary music’ is used to refer to compositions composed by Malaysian composers based on European-derived performance practices. The word ‘Malaysian’ does not signify any particular set of musical characteristics, but rather a geographical perspective. The development of Malaysian contemporary music can be traced through four stages: 1950s to 1970s, 1980s to 1990s, late 1990s to 2007, and 2007 to the present.

#### 1950s to 1970s

By the middle decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Malaysian composers were well trained in the performance of Western and local instruments, and also in the basic theory and elements of Western classical music. They relied heavily on Western models such as symphony, symphonic poem, lyric song and other forms. They have also attempted to write music that would appeal to the wider community within the multicultural society of Malaysia. In 1961, the first orchestra in Malaysia, the Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM) Orchestra, was formed. Composers during this time including Johari Salleh (b.1940), Alfonso Soliano (1925-1990) and Gus Steyn (1927-1992), were not only playing in the RTM Orchestra, but also wrote arrangements of pieces as well as original compositions for the orchestra. The art music of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was known as ‘serious music’ [*muzik serioso*] (Matusky & Tan, 2004, p.393). The musical activity of these composers planted the seeds for the development of a contemporary music movement in Malaysia.

## 1980s to 1990s

With the growth of the Malaysian economy and exposure to Western music in the 1970s, Malaysian musicians were not only able to receive formal musical education locally, but also further their musical studies abroad in the United States and Europe. Composers of this generation include Valerie Ross, Sunetra Fernando, and Razak Abdul Aziz. Unsurprisingly, their musical education training reflects the musical trends in the USA and Europe during the 1980s and 1990s, where particular attention was paid to techniques developed in the post-World War II music world, including serial composition, atonality, polyrhythm, new tone colours and electronic music. In addition, they reached out to the musical, philosophical and cultural elements of multi-ethnic Malaysia. Their compositional outlook generally is global, drawing on Asian aesthetics and sensibilities for their music, while simultaneously further developing and showcasing compositional techniques they have learned and mastered during their studies abroad.

## Late 1990s to 2007

By the late 1990s, the Malaysian contemporary music scene began to flourish. Many important events took place during this period. This includes the formation of Malaysia's first professional orchestra – the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) – in 1997. The MPO gave its inaugural performance at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) in 1998, which also marked the official opening of DFP – Malaysia's first purpose-built concert hall for art music. In 2002, the Associate Conductor of the MPO, Kevin Field, established the MPO Composers Forum - a three-year cycle competition – to discover new talent and new music by Malaysian composers as well as to support and nurture both emerging and established Malaysian composers. The winner of this Forum then represented Malaysia to compete in the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra International Composers Award (MPOICA) in November 2004. The success of this forum was followed by a second Forum in 2005-2007. Both Forums have provided a platform for Malaysian composers to present their compositions and also to meet and interact with other Malaysian composers. Both events brought together established Malaysian composers such as Adeline Wong (b.1975), Kee Yong Chong (b.1971), Tazul Izan Tajuddin (b.1969), Kah Hoe Yii (b.1970), Johan Othman (b.1969) and Chong Lim Ng (b.1972). All six composers are still active within the scene.

## 2007 to the Present

Due to other financial commitments and their busy performance schedule, the MPO did not continue the MPO Forums. Rather, they created the MPO Forum*plus* for specially selected composers of previous Forums who did not make it into the final. Two Forum*plus* were held in 2010 and 2011. The Forums held by the MPO acted as a catalyst for the growth and recognition of Malaysian contemporary music, locally in Malaysia and internationally. Between 2007 and the present, three musical societies

were established by various Malaysian composers and musicologists. The first of the three is the 'Malaysian Composers Collective' (MCC), which was formed in 2007 to promote Malaysian contemporary music. The MCC subsequently released the first CD anthology of Malaysian contemporary compositions entitled 'Faith, Hope & Chaos' in 2008. Early in 2013, they launched the first Malaysian composers digital library, which consists of over 150 compositions of Malaysian composers, as well as key 20<sup>th</sup> century works by Bartok, Ligeti, Stockhausen, Ferneyhough, Xenakis and many more. In 2010, the second society – the 'Society of Malaysian Contemporary Composers' (SMCC) – was formed in 2010 to create interest in contemporary music especially among young people. Their main concert series includes the annual 'Malaysian Composers Concert Series', and the Malaysian Voices concert series. The 'Classical Music Society Selangor and Kuala Lumpur' was also founded in 2010. Their aim was to raise the standard of music education in Malaysia and to provide a platform and encourage positive musical activities. Alongside composers around the world, Malaysian composers since the 1950s have been attempting to incorporate ethnic elements into their composition. Among them is the focus composer of this paper, Tazul Izan Tajuddin.

### **Brief Biography of Tazul Izan TAJUDDIN**

Tazul Izan Tajuddin was born into a Malay family in Banting, Selangor, Malaysia in 1969. In 1991, he received his Bachelor of Music from the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) (Malaysia). With the support of a scholarship initiated by the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Culture of Malaysia, Tajuddin graduated with a Master in Music Composition from Carnegie Mellon University (United States) in 1996. He was awarded another scholarship allowing him to obtain his PhD in composition from the University of Sussex (United Kingdom) in 2002. He has received guidance from many teachers. Among them are Leonardo Balada, Juan Pablo Izqueirdo, Jonathan Harvey, Martin Butler and Michael Finnissy. Tajuddin has also studied with Italian composer Franco Donatoni, and in Paris where he consulted with Brian Ferneyhough.

Tajuddin has received major compositional awards including first prize in the Lutoslawski Composition Award 2005 (Poland), first prize in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Molinary Quartet International Composition Competition 2004 (Canada) and first prize in the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2002 (jury: Joji Yuasa). His works have been performed and broadcast in North America, Europe, Asia and Australasia. His music, particularly the *Arabesque*, *Tenunan*, *Mediasi Ukiran*, *Sebuah Pantun* and *Gamelbati* cycles, has been inspired by Asian cultures, especially Malaysian and Indonesian cultures, as well as Islamic geometrical patterns. He created the term '*gamelbati*' to describe his concept of integrating elements from multiple cultures. The word derives from '**gamelan**', where '*gamel*' means 'to hammer', and in the context of his music, 'to play' and 'to strike'. The word '*bati*' derives from the Malay/Indonesian word '*sebati*', where various elements are integrated to become one component or texture. The word '*bati*' refers also to the Malay/Indonesian words '*barat*' [west] and '*timur*' [east] (Tajuddin, 2005).

After living in the United Kingdom for approximately 12 years, Tajuddin returned to Malaysia in 2009 and has since organised four annual Malaysian contemporary

concert series. Tajuddin is currently an Associate Professor working as the Head of Composition at the Faculty of Music UiTM.

### **Performance Background of *Tenunan II***

*Tenunan II*, dedicated to Iannis Xenakis, was composed in 2001 for flute, celeste, piano, percussion and string orchestra. It won the first prize in the prestigious Toru Takemitsu Composition Award in 2002. The work was premiered by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Ken Takaseki at the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award. The sole judge Joji Yuasa commented that ‘among the finalists [of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2002], there is a Malaysian and I am very surprised and grateful to find such a high quality composer from the country’ (Tajuddin, n.d.).

In 2003, *Tenunan II* was performed by the Carnegie Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of Juan Pablo Izquierdo, at the Carnegie Music Hall, Pittsburgh. In 2007, the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM) Britain selected this work to be performed at the 2007 ISCM-Asian Composer League (ACL) World Music Days in Hong Kong.

### **Cultural Confluence**

Prior to investigating Tajuddin’s compositional strategies for cultural confluence, it is vital to understand the term ‘cultural confluence’ itself. When mentioning the word ‘confluence’, one has to acknowledge Chou’s 1977 article, where he broadly identified two types of East-West interaction in compositions: (i) purely materialistic adoption of Eastern practices; and (ii) confluence of musical currents (Chou, 1977, pp. 60-61). It is important to note that Chou employs the now problematic wordings of ‘West’ and ‘East’, to refer to European-derived and non European-derived performance practices respectively, as they were the accepted terminologies at the time. To achieve confluence of musical currents, Chou (1977) indicated two broad categories that composers should be aware of: ‘(i) instrumental techniques and performance practices, and (ii) aesthetic and philosophical foundations of the tradition’ (p. 61). The first category is further broken down into five subcategories – ‘instrumental techniques and performance practices’ are emphasis on the production and control of single tones; ‘ornamentations’; ‘temporal and rhythm procedure’; ‘the use of specialized improvisation’; ‘evocation of imagery and symbolism for attaining the state of mind necessary for the production of the proper tone quality’. As a whole, the first category refers to the production of sound and sonic effect. The second category is ‘aesthetics and philosophical foundations of Eastern culture’.

To understand Chou’s idea on the first subcategory ‘emphasis on the production and control of single tones’, one can trace back to his 1968 article entitled *Single Tones as Musical Entities: An Approach to Structured Deviations in Tonal Characteristics*. In this writing, Chou (1968) provided for seven traditionally acceptable physical characteristics of a single tone: (i) attack and decay of a tone, (ii) steady state, (iii) pitch, (iv) timbre, (v) intensity, (vi) durational organisations, and (vii) directional

characteristics (pp.88-96). Among these characteristics, timbre or tone colour is an area that has not been thoroughly studied. Current research undertaken by Coaldrake on ways to describe timbre, particularly on *koto*, a Japanese zither, has shed some light into the subject of tonal colouring. Her research on tonal colouring, more specifically, on the four components of tonal colour, allows better understanding of the timbral characteristic of a single tone. The four components of tonal colouring are: (i) instrument, (ii) performance/performer, (iii) sensory experience, and (iv) cultural interpretation (Coaldrake, 2012). Each component can be interpreted respectively as (i) quality of sound characteristic of the instrument, (ii) performance practices, (iii) sonic effect, and (iv) cultural context of both the instrument and its sonic effect. All four components are believed to be part of Chou's first category "instrumental techniques and performance practices" where its core idea is about sonic effect and sound quality – which is also a core research element in Coaldrake's study. Due to the connection to aesthetics and culture, one could also consider Coaldrake's fourth and last component 'cultural interpretation' to be part of Chou's second category "aesthetics and philosophical foundations of Eastern culture". It should be noted that Coaldrake's framework focuses on the analysis of tonal colouring, which placed emphasis on the performance and performer. It is therefore vital to expand the framework slightly to include 'compositional approach and technique' for the purpose of this paper. Table 1 provides a summary of Chou's and Coaldrake's concept of confluence and tonal colour.

**Table 1** Chou's Confluence of Musical Currents and Coaldrake's Four Components of Tonal Colour

Confluence of Musical Currents		Four Components of Tonal Colour
1. Instrumental Techniques and Performance Practices (the production of sound and sonic effect)	a. Emphasis on the production and control of single tones	i) Instruments ii) Performance/ performer (Compositional approach and technique) iii) Sensory effect iv) Cultural interpretation
	b. Ornaments	
	c. Temporal and rhythm procedure	
	d. The use of specialised improvisation	
	e. Evocation of imagery and symbolism for attaining the state of mind necessary for the production of the proper tone quality	
2. Aesthetics and philosophical foundation of Eastern culture	a. Aesthetics, philosophies and concepts	iv) Cultural interpretation

It should be noted that these elements are for guidance. It, however, does not mean that composers should apply all elements listed in order to achieve cultural confluence. The discussion now moves to the analyses of Tajuddin's *Tenunan II* to identify how the composer applies these elements in his composition to create confluence of multiple musical cultures.

### ***Tenunan II* (2001) for Flute, Celeste, Piano, Percussion and String Orchestra**

In *Tenunan II*, the composer's intention of weaving together cultural aspects such as

Islamic arabesque, *batik* and gamelan sonority is evident. In his programme notes to the musical score, Tajuddin (2002) stated that:

*Tenunan* is a Malay word meaning weave. It is visually related to woven and printed patterns of textiles (particularly from Malaysia and Indonesia), [which are known as *batik*]. Even though technically *batik* is not woven, conceptually the piece [*Tenunan II*] is conceived as weaving which happens in the notation, in the process of composing and sound organization of one sound to another.

The following analyses show the ways that the composer incorporates selected cultural elements through structure, time signature, pitch and rhythmic organisations, as well as instrumentation. It should be noted that Tajuddin also applied other compositional strategies for cultural confluence such as ornamentation, which is not within the scope for discussion in this paper.

## Structure

The structure of *Tenunan II* has been designed to weave together cultural elements from *batik* pattern, Islamic arabesque and gamelan music. On a macro level, the structure of the work is inspired by *batik* pattern similar to Figure 1. Although the given *batik* example is not the specific *batik* used as the basis of *Tenunan II*, Figure 1 gives an excellent example of the type of *batik* that may have inspired the composer. From a glimpse, this *batik* may seem to be constructed by identical small pattern tiles; but on a closer look, slight variations in colour, shape and size between one another can easily be detected.

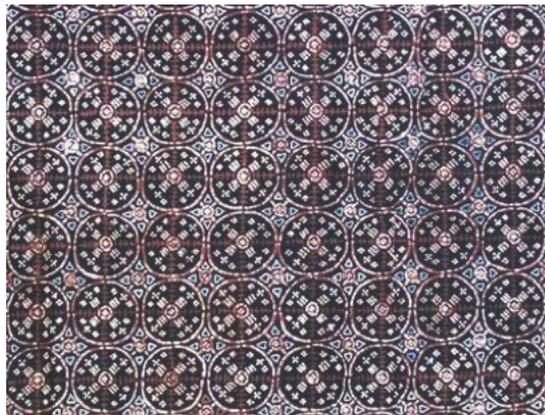
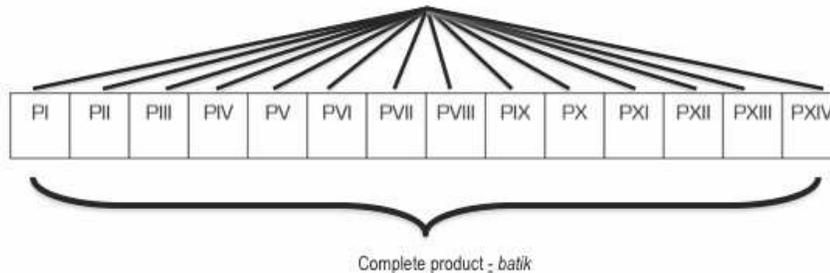


Figure 1 Weaving type *batik* pattern (Koudinoff, 1981).

This *batik* pattern is adapted into the 14 sections of *Tenunan II*, where each section is seen as a pattern tile. Each of the 14 sections comprises seven bars. When all 14 small patterns (named here as PI, PII, PIII, PIV etc) are placed together, a complete product resembling *batik* pattern is formed (see Figure 2). Like the *batik* example in Figure 1,

each section of *Tenunan II* is similar to one another, with variations in time signature, pitch and rhythmic organisations, which will be studied later in this paper.



**Figure 2** The 14-section structure of *Tenunan II* resembles batik pattern (adapted from Dainal, 2013, p.30).

On a micro level, the structure of *Tenunan II* consists of elements from gamelan music and Islamic arabesque. Each section in *Tenunan II* starts with an aggressive vertical attack. In his programme notes, Tajuddin (2002) stated that the vertical attacks at the beginning of each section are a resemblance of the word ‘*kebyar*’ as in the *Gamelan Gong Kebyar*<sup>1</sup>, which means to flare up suddenly. The explosiveness and aggressiveness of this vertical attack is further enhanced by the *sforzando* (*sfz*) instructed by the composer, as well as the short note length of semiquaver. This vertical attack gives the work a sense of pulse. The *tutti* aggressive figure at the beginning of each section is a ‘major’ pulse. Within each section, celeste, flute and percussion play another aggressive short note attack on the first beat of each bar, which can be considered as a ‘minor’ pulse (see Figure 3).

The explosive *tutti* attacks are accompanied by highly intense and unpredictable passages mainly led by the string orchestra. Tajuddin (2002) metaphorically compared this string passage “to the feeling of floating like being in a state of constant flux, either static or chaotic, and unstable”, which he intends to provoke spiritual transcendentalism. To achieve this effect, the performers are instructed to play “as if at night, dream in a state of floating” as shown in the top left corner of Figure 3 (Tajuddin, 2002).

Another cultural element embedded into the structure of *Tenunan II* is the *dafqah*, an important characteristic of Islamic arabesque as listed by Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi<sup>2</sup> (1926-1986). According to al-Faruqi (1975), *dafqah* or ‘outpouring’ is ‘a periodic “launch” at the end of an arabesque section. As each arabesque pattern on an Islamic art work is grasped and understood, the spectator feels an emotional release in this success and in the completion of the unit’ (p.19). At the end of each section in *Tenunan II*, just like at the end of an arabesque section, there is a *dafqah*-like quick gesture leading to the *tutti* vertical attack of the next section, as evident in Figure 4.

<sup>1</sup> *Gamelan Gong Kebyar* is a genre of Balinese gamelan music.

<sup>2</sup> Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi is an expert on Islamic art and music.

**[F] As if at night, dream in a state of floating**  
*Always play delicately, lightly*

**Tenunan II** **Tajud I. Tajuddin**

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The top staves are for the woodwinds: Flute, Oboe/English Horn, Clarinet, and Bassoon. Below them are the strings: Cello, Double Bass, Violin 1-4, Viola 1-4, and Violoncello 1-4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics markings like 'p' and 'pp'. The tempo and mood are indicated by the text above the score: 'As if at night, dream in a state of floating' and 'Always play delicately, lightly'. The title 'Tenunan II' is prominently displayed in the center, and the composer's name 'Tajud I. Tajuddin' is on the right.

Figure 3 Bars 1 to 3 (Tajuddin, 2001).

The image displays a page of a musical score, specifically focusing on bars 42 and 43. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top left, there is a box containing the number '2'. At the top right, there is a box containing 'PVII' and the number '5'. The instruments listed on the left side of the score include Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Clarinet), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Double Bass (DB.). Each instrument has its own staff with musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The notation is dense and detailed, showing the specific musical parts for each instrument in these two bars. The page number '22' is visible in the top left corner, and the journal information is in the top right corner.

Figure 4 Bars 42 to 43 (Tajuddin, 2001).

It is clear that Tajuddin has carefully planned the structure of *Tenunan II*, at both macro- and micro-levels to accommodate cultural elements from Islamic arabesque, *batik* and gamelan. His meticulous approach to cultural confluence is further supported by his time signature, pitch and rhythmic organisations, as well as instrumentation choices.

### Time Signature Organisation

Time signature organisation is one of the compositional strategies used by Tajuddin to transform the concept of ‘*tenunan*’ [weave] into musical ideas. As mentioned in section 5.1, the work comprises 14 sections. The first seven sections (PI to PVII) have their own set of time signatures, which are repeated from PVIII to PXIV, as shown in Figure 5.

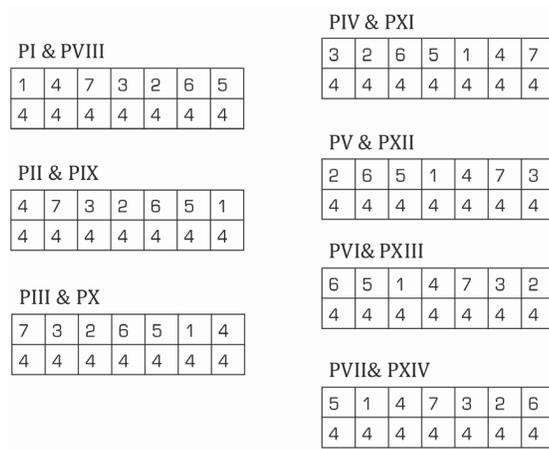


Figure 5 Time signature organisation.

Closer observation of the time signature organisation (Figure 6) reveals that the composer phase shifts the time signature by circulating the time signatures, creating a weave across horizontally, vertically and diagonally. It is known that American composer Steve Reich created this phase shifting compositional technique. This displays the composer’s effort in integrating non European-derived element, such as *batik* weave, with the time signature of *Tenunan II*, using compositional techniques created in the American contemporary music scene.

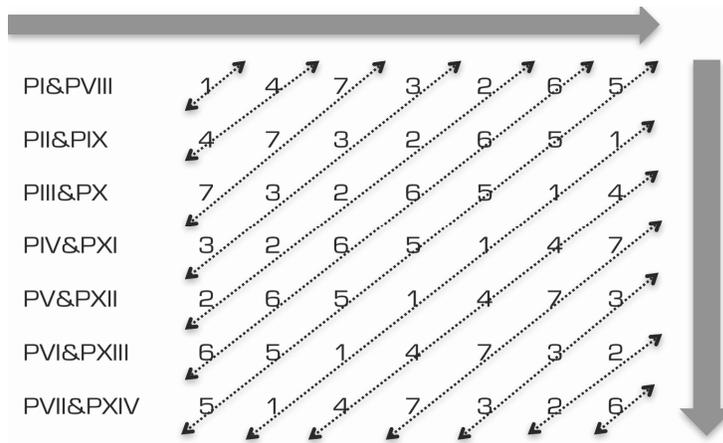


Figure 6 Woven pattern of time signature.

The weaving time signature pattern shown above reaffirms that each section of *Tenunan II* is a batik pattern tile, which can be weaved together to form a final batik product.

### Pitch Organisation

The concept of weave, which has been investigated in the structure and time signature of *Tenunan II*, flows on to the pitch organisation of the work. During a recent interview, Tajuddin disclosed that *Tenunan II* is set to a 7-note series (personal communication, 3 October, 2013). It has been discovered that this 7-note series is, in fact, based on the word ‘*tenunan*’. Each letter from A to Z is set to an ascending chromatic scale, where the letter ‘A’ is the note A below middle-C. Figure 7 shows that by progressing upwards by a semitone apart for each letter, the letter ‘Z’ arrives at the A# two octaves above middle-C.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>
A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A
<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>
A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#

Figure 7 Each letter from A to Z is set to pitches.

Based on this setting, the word ‘*tenunan*’ will form the following 7-note series – E C# A# F A# A A# – as presented in Figure 8. A 5-note chord is then formed with these notes. This 7-note series and the intervals used in the chord formed are the key to unlocking Tajuddin’s clever arrangement of pitches in *Tenunan II*.



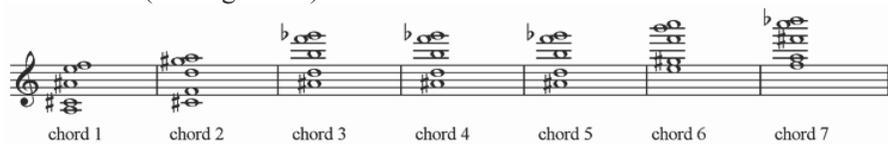
**Figure 8** The 7-note series formed using the word ‘tenunan’ and the 5-note chord formed using these notes.

This 7-note series is then rearranged in ascending order, from the lowest note to the highest, to form a 7-note scale (see Figure 8a).



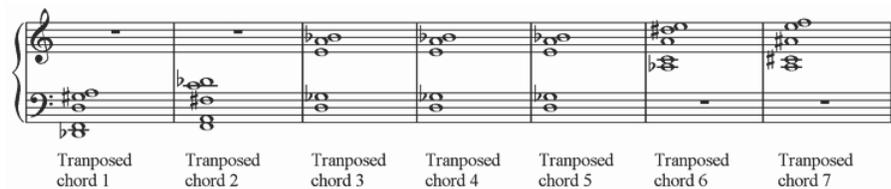
**Figure 8a** Rearranged ascending scale based on the 7-note series formed by the word ‘tenunan’.

The composer assigns each note in the scale with a chord based on the intervallic constructions of the chord shown in Figure 8, which are major 3<sup>rd</sup>, major 6<sup>th</sup>, diminished 5<sup>th</sup>, and minor 2<sup>nd</sup>. Akin to the scale and chordal system in European-derived music notation, each chord is numbered. However, as the chord structure does not conform to a standard formation of chords, they have been numbered using Arabic numbers to avoid confusion (see Figure 8b).



**Figure 8b** Chords 1 to 7.

The composer does not stop here, he takes the chords one step further and transposes them, creating a set of 7 new chords as shown in Figure 8c.



**Figure 8c** Transposed chords 1 to 7.

It has been observed that the transposed chords 3, 4 and 5 have been slightly altered. Instead of an augmented octave, the interval between the lowest and middle note is now a major 9<sup>th</sup>. Tajuddin skilfully organises the transpositions in a way that the highest notes of each chord (A Db Bb Bb Bb E F) are the same as the 7-note scale he has created using the word ‘tenunan’ as pointed out in Figure 8a. Tajuddin then

distributes each of the 14 chords he has created to each of the 14 sections of *Tenunan II*. PI to PVII, therefore, consists of notes from transposed chords 1 to 7 respectively; whilst PVIII to PXIV, comprises notes from chords 1 to 7 respectively. Within the section, each instrument in the string orchestra is given a note, sometimes none, from the chord and will only play this note throughout the section (see Table 2). Again, this compositional strategy enhances the weaving concept in which each section is a *batik* pattern tile. When placed together, the tiles form a complete *batik* product.

**Table 2** Note Distribution of String Orchestra from PI to PVII based on the Transposed Chords

	PI	PII	PIII	PIV	PV	PVI	PVII
Violin 1	D	F#	A	Gb	D	D#	F
Violin 2	F	A	Gb	E	Gb	C	A
Violin 3	Db	F	E	D	Bb	E	E
Violin 4	A	C#	D	Bb	A	D#	E
Violin 5	G#	C	Bb	A	Bb	E	-
Violin 6	D	F#	A	Gb	A	D#	-
Viola 1	F	A	Gb	E	E	C	A#
Viola 2	Db	F	E	D	Gb	C	C#
Viola 3	A	C#	D	Bb	E	A	A#
Viola 4	G#	C	Bb	A	E	A	-
Viola 5	D	F#	Bb	E	Gb	Ab	C#
Violoncello 1	D	A	A	Gb	D	Ab	A
Violoncello 2	Db	F	E	D	E	C	A
Violoncello 3	A	C#	A	Bb	Bb	A	A#
Violoncello 4	G#	C	E	A	D	Ab	C#
Double bass 1	D	F#	D	Gb	E	C	A
Double bass 2	F	A	Gb	E	Bb	A	A#
Double bass 3	Db	F	D	D	D	Ab	C#

## Rhythmic Organisation

In addition to the time signature and pitch organisations, Tajuddin carefully organises the rhythm of each bar so that no two bars have the same rhythm throughout *Tenunan II*. Although not referring to the concept of weave, Tajuddin's plan for his rhythm plays a major role in allowing his pitch and time signature organisations to weave together seamlessly. Figure 9 shows the rhythmic structure of PI, PII, PVIII, and PIX.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Peck Jin GaN". It is organized into four main sections: PI, PII, PVIII, and PIX. Each section is represented by a system of staves. The first system (PI) starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The second system (PII) features a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The third system (PVIII) begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The fourth system (PIX) starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The rhythmic structure is complex, with multiple time signatures and intricate patterns of notes and rests. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format, typical of a musical manuscript.

Figure 9 Rhythmic structure of PI, PII, PVIII, and PIX.

It has been observed, based on Figure 9, that the rhythmic structure of PVIII and PXI, where both are from the second half of *Tenunan II*, are more complex than the rhythmic structure of PI and PII. When comparing bars with the same time signature in PI and PII or PVIII and PIX, it is noticeable that the basic structure is relatively similar with some variations. This reflects that idea of *batik*, where each pattern tile looks alike, but there are slight deviations in colour, size or shape, as shown in Figure 1. In fact, Tajuddin described this pattern in the words of Australian musicologist, Richard Toop, as “a mercurial mosaic in which half a dozen elements constantly recur, but almost always in slightly varied form – the same but not the same, a whirling stasis” (Dainal, 2013, p. 22).

### Instrumentation

The next compositional strategy identified is instrumentation. The instrumentation of *Tenunan II* resembles Bartok’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, Sz. 106, which also includes a piano. The selection of instruments in *Tenunan II*, nonetheless, according to Tajuddin, was not based on Bartok’s well-known work. Instead, these instruments were selected to create a sound reminiscent of the sonority of a gamelan ensemble (personal communication, 3 October, 2013). Tajuddin frequently writes in his programme notes that his compositions are sound-based compositions. To analyse this ‘sound’ that Tajuddin refers to, Table 3 has been created based on Coaldrake’s four components of tonal colour as guidance.

**Table 3** Instrumentation of *Tenunan II* according to the Four Components of Tonal Colour (Coaldrake, 2012)

Four Components of Tonal Colour	Instrumentation of <i>Tenunan II</i>		
i) Instrument: Quality of sound characteristic of instrument	String orchestra	Celeste, piano and percussion	Flute
ii) Performance/ performer: Compositionel techniques	Starts with low strings and gradually adds in with higher strings	Short attack note on the first beat of each bar	Quick explosive, highly elaborated melodic figure at the beginning of each section
iii) Sensory experience: Sonic effect	Increase in texture and intensity	Create pulse	Marks the importance of the beat
iv) Cultural interpretation: Cultural context of instruments and sonic effect	Reflect the principle of sound ‘layering’ in gamelan music	‘Phrase-making’ instruments of gamelan ensemble	Has a similar sonority to <i>suling</i> or <i>seruling</i> (an end-blown bamboo flute), and carries the melodies in gamelan music

Firstly, the concept of sound ‘layering’ is an important principle in gamelan music. In *Tenunan II*, Tajuddin relies quite heavily on the string orchestra to create this layering of sound. The work starts with low strings and gradually adds higher strings, which increases the texture and intensity of the work. The composer has chosen to use percussive instruments and piano because the role of percussion in the gamelan

orchestra is inevitably of high importance. In gamelan music, percussion instruments are called ‘phrase-making’ instruments (Lindsay, 1992, p.10). They are responsible for creating the pulse ‘skeleton’ within a performance. The percussion in *Tenunan II* play a similar role. They are assigned to play a short attack note on the first beat of each bar, creating pulses throughout the work as explained in section 5.1. The flute is chosen due to its sonority, which is quite similar to the *suling* or *seruling* (an end-blown bamboo flute) used in gamelan. The flute carries a quick explosive and highly elaborated melodic figure at the beginning of each section. It also helps mark the importance of the beat. This role is akin to that of the *suling*, which is to carry the melodies in gamelan music.

**Conclusion**

Based on the above analyses, it has been identified that Tajuddin applied four of Chou’s listed elements in Table 1. Table 4 summarises the four compositional strategies used by Tajuddin to attain confluence of musical currents.

**Table 4** Tajuddin’s Compositional Strategies for the Confluence of Musical Currents

Confluence of Musical Currents		Tajuddin’s Compositional Strategies
1. Instrumental techniques and performance practices (the production of sound and sonic effect)  (i) Instruments (ii) Performance/performer (compositional approach and technique) (iii) Sensory effect (iv) Cultural interpretation	a. Emphasis on the production and control of single tones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch organization-gamelan</li> <li>• * Instrumentation - gamelan</li> </ul>
	b. Ornamentation	
	c. Temporal and rhythm procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhythmic organization – gamelan, batik tiles, weave</li> </ul>
	d. The use of specialised improvisation	
	e. Evocation of imagery and symbolism for attaining the state of mind necessary for the production of the proper tone quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance instruction to play ‘as if at night, dream in a state of floating’</li> </ul>
2. Aesthetics and philosophical foundation Eastern culture (iv) Cultural interpretation	a. Aesthetics, philosophics and concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure – batik pattern, Islamic arabesque and gamelan</li> <li>• Time signature organization-batik, weave</li> <li>• Instrumentation-gamelan</li> </ul>

The table highlights that the structure of *Tenunan II* is based on aesthetics and concepts of Indonesian and Malaysian cultures, in this case, Islamic arabesque, *batik* and gamelan. The time signature organisation of *Tenunan II*, likewise, can also be considered under the “aesthetics and philosophical foundations of Eastern culture” category due to its reference to the concept of weave. The next strategy, pitch organisation can be loosely considered under the subcategory of “emphasis on the production and control of single tones”. This is confirmed by the fact that when each instrument is assigned with a note from a chord and only plays the assigned notes throughout the section, performers are naturally required to focus more on the production and control of the

single tone they are playing. Instructions on producing and sustaining the notes such as ‘accent’, ‘pizzicato’, ‘arco’, ‘sul tasto’, ‘molto vibrato’ and more, are given to assist the performers achieve the sonic effects desired by the composer. Additionally, it was noted that Tajuddin (2001) requested the performers to play “as if at night, dream in a state of floating” and such requests clearly fall in the subcategory of “evocation of imagery for attaining the state of mind necessary for the production of the tone quality”. To add texture and layers to the sonic effects of *Tenunan II*, the composer carefully planned the rhythmic organisation in *Tenunan II* which can be listed under the subcategory of “temporal and rhythm procedure”. The percussionists of this work play a major role in giving both major and minor pulses, just like in many Southeast Asian musical ensembles including the gamelan. On the one hand, the composer’s instrumentation can be considered under “emphasis on the production and control of single tones”. Rather than focusing the control of one single tone, however, he combines many tones to create the sonic effect he seeks. On the other hand, instrumentation can also be listed under “aesthetics and philosophical foundations of Eastern culture” as the sound he is trying to create is reminiscent of gamelan sonority.

In conclusion, Tajuddin applies five compositional strategies: (i) structure, (ii) time signature, (iii) pitch, (iv) rhythmic organisations and (v) instrumentation, to create a confluence between his European-derived compositional tools and his interest in Indonesian and Malaysian cultural currents. Despite the fact that his works are based on European-derived elements such as the use of notated music, extended technique and instrumentations, Tajuddin derived his own pattern-based compositional method, inspired by the concept of weave, to incorporate ethnic elements into his composition. As a result, a confluence of multiple cultural currents is achieved. *Tenunan II*, as suggested by its title, is the second work of the *Tenunan* series. The structure, time signature, and pitch organisations of *Tenunan II* derive from the first piece in the series – *Tenunan* – composed in 2000. Since then, Tajuddin has composed eight more pieces under the *Tenunan* series, and all of them are, in one way or another, based on the settings of the first piece – *Tenunan*. It is, however, not the scope of this paper to discuss in depth about the variations and alterations he made in each of the compositions. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the composer continuously strives to discover and generate new ways of incorporating ethnic cultural elements especially from Indonesia and Malaysia into his music through his other creative outputs. Among his oeuvres are the *Gamelbati* and *Sebuah Pantun* series where he used gamelan numbers and scales as the basis of the works’ pattern and sound organisation. The latter series, on top of the gamelan numbers and scales, is also a reflection of the *pantun* form, a Malay poem. Despite his focus in accommodating multiple ethnic musical currents into his music, his compositions are essentially presented in the form of European-derived notation. In addition to his notation, most, if not all, of his compositions are composed for instruments within the European-derived performance practices. It is his creativity and originality, shown through his carefully planned compositional strategies, which allow him to realise his vision for musical confluence. All in all, Tajuddin’s signature musical language, which employs multiple strategies to create music relevant to modern Malaysia, resists simple categorisation, but supports his role as a broker for cross-cultural contemporary music.

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