

Jimmy Boyle's Sentiments as Revealed in the Manuscripts of Sketches of Songs and Instrumental Melodies

Chan Cheong Jan & Lee Sze May

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

James P. S. Boyle

Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan, Malaysia

Abstract

Jimmy Boyle (1922-1971) is known as one of the pioneers in jazz and a composer of patriotic songs in Malaysia. Despite the numerous biogs, webpages and video uploads that mention Boyle, systematic research on his music has only begun recently. Hand-written manuscripts containing 79 sketches of songs and instrumental music by Jimmy Boyle were recovered in 2013, and these manuscripts have since undergone analysis. In this paper, we intend to identify the different dimensions of Boyle's perspectives as a composer in producing these sketches. Three themes were created to group the different sentiments of Boyle based on the styles of composition observed in the sketches, namely, Boyle as a popular songwriter, Boyle as a jazzman and Boyle as an enthusiast in ethnic music. Boyle displayed a broad capacity in the way he used his music. He had the ability to compose in different sentiments, either as a social advocate, a layperson, a jazz artist or a knowledge seeker. He manoeuvres between these sentiments skillfully, shifting his centres of focus from Malay cultural nationalism to private expressions in English, to 'authentic' modern jazz, and to the music cultures of 'others'.

Keywords *Malaysian popular music, Jimmy Boyle, music analysis, Penang island, unpublished composition*

The late Jimmy Boyle's (1922-1971) iconic position in Malaysian music history came about as a result of the long lasting and widespread popularity of the songs he composed, and his contribution as one of the pioneering jazz pianist-composers in the country, alongside Alfonso Solianos. Living in the multicultural port city of Penang at the juncture of time leading into the post-colonial era, Boyle was at a strategic position to contribute with his music. He witnessed the importation of broadcast music and was an active musician for Radio TV Malaysia. Boyle's *Kemegahan Negaraku* (splendour of my nation) accompanied the hoisting of the first Malaysian flag. The legacy of Boyle, his life and his music, has yet been examined in depth. With the recovery of his manuscripts and recordings at Universiti Putra Malaysia in 2013, information is now available to assist in constructing a more complete picture of Boyle's musicality. In this paper, we intend to identify the different dimensions of Boyle's perspectives

as a composer in producing the sketches of songs and instrumental melodies in the recovered manuscripts.

As a study of Boyle is completely new in academia, much background information is needed before proceeding with the findings. Below is an overview of Boyle's life events, his identity and related social events that contextualise Boyle's music career. Born on the 26th of July, 1922 at Kelawai Road, Penang, Boyle received his education at St. Xavier's Institution, Penang and later at Raffles College, Singapore. After being a P.O.W (prisoner of war) during the Japanese occupation of Malaya between 1942-1945, Boyle began his career as a teacher in 1946 at St. Xavier's Institution and maintained his teaching position until his death.

The performance of Jimmy Boyle's trio was regularly aired by Radio Malaya's English language service (Haryany Mohamad, 2013). Boyle was also actively involved in arranging, composing, playing and recording for radio and television, national and state functions, schools, associations, as well as in night clubs. Boyle's own performance of his jazz tune, *Legak Penari* was aired during the Voice of America Jazz Hour in the USA. His composition was also sung and performed by musicians from abroad, such as Jack Teagarden and Anneke Gronloh. Most importantly, Boyle's many Malay songs portraying patriotism continue to have an impact on Malaysian society to the present day. Boyle died of a brain haemorrhage on 8th May, 1971 (Boyle, 2014, p.2-21).

Today, Jimmy Boyle is remembered primarily as a composer of patriotic songs of Malaysia. Malaysians would have sung Boyle's song *Putera-Puteri* and *Kemegahan Negaraku* at school functions, or have heard them being played by the national TV numerous times without necessarily knowing name of the composer. Other well-known songs by Jimmy Boyle include *Gema Rembulan*, *Jauh-Jauh*, *Chendering*, *Sungai Pahang*, *Rayuan Mesra*, *Bunga Negara*, *Tepi Pantai*, *Legak Penari*, *Api dan Ayer*, and *Ke Hulu Ke Hilir* (Boyle, 2014). His last song *Rukun Negara* (the national principles), which was created a week before his death, was intended to bring a spirit of togetherness to various ethnicities in Malaysia by singing it (Wong, 2014).

The importation of British military bands - which consisted of members from India and the Philippines - helped to kick start the development of Western music in the country (Chopyak, 2007). Eventually, this group of people also became the musicians who formed dance and cabaret bands, which provided background music for the *bangsawan* theatres. Western instruments such as pianos, clarinets, saxophones, and trumpets were introduced at the turn of the 20th century, and became popular in a short period due to the establishment of radio stations, as well as film and recording companies (Tan, 1993, p.8- 16). By the 1950s, Western rock music had exerted its influence in the Peninsular, beginning with rock 'n' roll music such as "Rock around the Clock" performed by local Malay artists (Matusky & Tan, 1997, p.447). This was followed by the viral influence of 'Beatlemania', in which *pop yeh-yeh* spread rapidly in Malaysia during the 1960s (Schnabel, 2013). The local version of guitar bands *kugiran* which is an acronym for *kumpulan gitar rancak* (upbeat guitar group) became popular nationwide. Boyle consciously differentiated jazz music from the rock music that had become prominent in the Peninsular from the 1950s. As an exponent of jazz, he stated that rock and roll is 'not good music' and it is a 'gimmick' (Boyle, 2014, p.42).

Penang and the Eurasian Musicians

The port city Georgetown has been the frontier of cultural exchange since the late 18th century. The population census of Georgetown in 1835 had already indicated the residence of Europeans, Armenians, Malays, Achenese, Batak, Chinese, Chullians, Bengalese, Siamese, Burmese, Arabs, Parsees, Native Christians and Caffrees (Africans) (Tan 2011, p.i). This demography of Penang sets the context in which diverse cultural and art forms interacted. The Eurasians, descendants of European and Asian intermarriages, form less than one-percent of the population of Penang, but played an important role in the development of music in Penang (ibid, 42). Jimmy Boyle topped the list of names of the Eurasian musicians in Penang. Rozells and Rodrigues (2002) documented a list of Eurasian musicians of Penang and their contributions, which includes Larry Rodrigues (the guitarist for Boyle's trio), Rudy Baum, Joe Rozells, Stanley D'Almeida, Spencer Rangel, Max Fletcher, James Symons, Andy Costello, William Scully, Douglas DeSouza, John (Scully) Lim, Kathleen Rodrigues, and others.

Living as a Eurasian came with several premises that characterised the development of Boyle's social life. Many Eurasians had earlier opportunities in higher education and more exposure to the fine arts and culture of the West, including music, compared to the other communities in Malaysia. As Tan (2011, p.42) pointed out, they were fluent in English and they worked in the government service, in trading firms, in schools and in hospitals. By population size, they remained as a minority in the country. This necessitated a constant positioning of their identity within the broader set up of Malaysia. In the divide and rule scheme practised first by the British administration and later by the Malaysian government itself, the population had been administered by way of three major ethnic groups and only one category for all minorities who did not belong to the major group. For survival, it was, and is still vital for Eurasian society to appeal to the larger society by defining and redefining their relationship with certain cultural roots, as well as their role in certain social functions .

Sarkissian (2000) reported such examples of social positioning of the people in the Portuguese Settlement of Malacca. The residents reportedly seized the opportunity to establish the Settlement (as part of the Historical Malacca representation, mainly for tourism purposes) to transform the negative ethnic stereotypes of "lazy, music loving Portuguese-Eurasian" to role models of "hard working culture keepers" (Sarkissian, 2000, p.161)¹. Though it is understood that each Eurasian community in the Peninsular has their differences, the need to survive as a minority remains the same. This act of positioning is made possible and is enhanced by their flexibility to converse between different cultures, and also by their ability to utilise the vast cultural resources that are prevalent in their daily lives. A cross-cultural way of living and syncretism is a given nature to the Eurasian community, and this allows them to seek creative solutions to gain a voice in broader society.

Lagu Melayu and Jazz

Mohd Ghouse Nasaruddin was reported to say that 'Malay music' was closest to Boyle's 'heart and soul'. Austin Rajamoney testified that Boyle was persistent about

including a 'Malayan song' in his jazz programme. Boyle was well-known to be a keen promoter of local and Malay characteristics in modern music. In order to understand this facet of Boyle, the popularity of *Lagu Melayu* as a broadcast genre in the port cities in the 1930s needs to be commented on. The distribution of 78 rpm discs in British Malaya under the label of 'His Master's Voice' (HMV) in the 1930s and early 1940s has made popular a repertoire of Malay songs known as *Lagu Melayu*, produced by recording artists such as Ahmad CB, Aman Belon, Aminah Nani, Ainon Chik, Zubir Said (composer), Khairuddin bin Umair-ruddin, and Minah Yem (Tan, 2013). By combining Western popular music idioms with Malay and other local music elements, *Lagu Melayu* was but a new form of music that catered to the multiracial audience in the Peninsular (ibid). Audiences of diverse cultures were ministered by new songs in the Malay language that promoted an inclusive view of 'Malayness'. In Tan's own words:

I argue that, by using the Malay language instead of English, by incorporating hybrid musical elements and by composing texts about Malay progress, the artistes were creating and communicating a form of Malay cultural nationalism that was not only modern, but also cosmopolitan and inclusive. (ibid, p.459)

Although the development of *Lagu Melayu* under the Japanese occupation is yet to be discovered, it can be assumed that the influence of *Lagu Melayu* remained through the 1950s and the 1960s. The idea of 'Malay cultural nationalism', as Tan put it, would have been understood well by the musicians, composers and poets alike, including Boyle himself. It is therefore not surprising to observe in the 1960s and 1970s a trend of the jazz composer trying to promote new *Lagu Melayu(s)* which incorporated jazz idioms. In the International Jazz Day Forum 2012, Mokhzani Ismail, Music Director of RTM, testified that the prominent jazz composer Alfonso Solianos moved his career location from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok in 1965, following his frustration over the lack of support from the public towards the jazz version of Malay songs that he composed. Ahmad Merican also testified that the newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*, published an article condemning musicians like Alfonso and Ahmad Merican for destroying the nature of Malay songs (Forum record, 2012). It was evident that the jazz composers in the 1960s had attempted a bottom up effort of promoting jazz music to the society, while at the same time trying to emulate the idea of 'Malay cultural nationalism' by merging jazz idioms with *Lagu Melayu*. In contrast to Solianos, Boyle was successful with *Lagu Melayu*: His songs enjoyed long lasting and widespread popularity in the country, although they were rarely mentioned as the jazz versions of *Lagu Melayu*.

Material and Concepts

Materials

Writings on popular music in Malaysia include those by Chopyak (1986, 1987, 2007), Tan (1984, 2013) and Lockard (1991, 1995, 1996). Boyle's son James Boyle's (2014) book, alongside his thesis, on the life and music of Jimmy Boyle can be stated as the only research literature available to date which focuses on Boyle. Rozells and Rodrigues

(2002) have also written a description of Jimmy Boyle. In James Boyle's book, Jimmy Boyle was regarded as "a man of great passions" in many areas. He attributed Boyle's style of songwriting to the influence of Tin Pan Alley in the USA, in which captivating melodies and a sense of national pride were featured (Boyle, 2014, p.21, 52). Penang's popular music of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were documented through exhibitions organised by the Penang State Museum in 2010 and 2013 (Haryany Mohamad, 2013). Apart from published materials, several online blogs and articles about Jimmy Boyle were created by various individuals. Boyle's popularity can be observed through the many personal uploads of his songs such as *Putera-puteri* and *Jauh-jauh* on Youtube.

Precepts

Determining that the sketches of songs depict 1) the informal side of the composer; and that Boyle's musicality is inseparable with 2) the idioms of jazz; and 3) the spirit of nationalism; theories related to these aspects were applied to form the basis of discussion.

1) The meaning of examining the manuscripts of sketches lies in the possibility of discovering a side of Boyle's inclinations and intentions in music that is different from his public image. We base our understanding of this private-public significance of a composer on Spivak's idea of 'on mode' (to behave in response to social expectation and norms) and 'off mode' (to behave as freed from external control) of a person in relating to the society (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). We assume that decision making in the process of composition could involve external factors or otherwise. 2) On the ways of thinking in jazz, we apply the discourse of authenticity in jazz expounded by Thomsen (1998). The ethos of modern jazz, to which Boyle subscribed to, was closely related to the discourse of authenticity in modern arts. 3) On nationalism, we adopt David Miller's (2008, p.296) idea that the basis of a nation is in the shared culture of the community of the place. Approaches in describing musical examples of local songs by Kartomi (1998) and Tan (1993) were referred to, in addition to Tan Chong Yew's (2012) approach in song text analysis.

Conceptual Framework

By sentiment, we refer to ways of thinking, opinions, beliefs, and other matters that motivate a composer in making artistic decisions in certain ways that is manifested in the outlook of the end product - the composition. The sentiment of art creation may derive from pure personal interest towards certain things, or from the way in which the artist relates to their surroundings. Our investigation on the manuscript of sketches of songs revealed that the relevant areas of focus are the inclinations and intentions of Boyle behind these sketches. Inclination may come as a personal interest in certain compositional themes and materials. It may also reflect the composer's choice of ideology in music and arts. Intentions, on the other hand, could be the composer's preferred way of response to a social situation at time. A composer's artistic sentiment could well be a combination of several inclinations and intentions. Similarly, the artist's sentiment behind a song could be related to multiple areas of interests and the intentions of the composer.

In this paper, we create a few themes to group Boyle's sketches and the sentiments that lie behind them in order to outline certain dimensions of him when he composed. They are Boyle as a songwriter, Boyle as a jazzman, and Boyle as an enthusiast in ethnic music, in order of the more known to the less known dimensions of him in society. These themes were identified by relating the form and style of the musical sketches to social phenomena, ideologies, or arguments that were prevalent during Boyle's time, as well as to Boyle's own opinions expressed in words, or through his activities. Discussion of each theme covers the examination of the music examples through which certain inclinations and intentions of the composer can be identified.

Manuscript of Jimmy Boyle's Sketches of Songs

In 2013, manuscripts containing a total of 79 sketches of songs and instrumental music written by Jimmy Boyle, which had been kept by his wife after his death in 1971, were recovered and archived at the Music Department of Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang (Refer to Figure 1 for a sample of the manuscript). The content of the sketches consist of Boyle's songs and melodies, mostly unknown and unpublished, and some hand written copies of well-known existing songs. Most of the sketches come with an indication of the date of writing. For the songs, song texts were written on the manuscripts. Some manuscripts have explanatory notes, and also drawings. Some have stains, bums and incomplete tom spots. Among the sketches that were recovered, 39 were identified as Boyle's own compositions, of which the basic information about them is provided in Table 1.



Figure 1 Hand-written manuscript containing sketches of "Sunset of Bangkok" by Jimmy Boyle (note the drawings on the left and the notes at the bottom of the score)

Table 1 Manuscript of sketches of songs by the late Jimmy Boyle (recovered and sorted by Chan, C. J, Boyle, J.P.S., & Lee, S.M., March, 2015)

No	Title	Remarks
01	<i>Fajar Murni</i>	Half page (5 lines), 5 th April 1959. "Chinese in Malaya".
02	<i>Suasana Senja</i>	Half page (7 lines), 8 th April 1959, same sheet with "FAJAR MURNI".
03	<i>MutiaraKu</i>	1 page (with English songtexts), Oct-Nov 1959.
04	<i>Kaseh-gema Ria</i>	Half page (incomplete score), 19 th Oct 1959.
05	Tender Memories	Half page (6 lines) with English songtexts, 18 th Nov 1959.
06	<i>Rayuan Hati Ku</i>	1 page, 4 th April 1961.
07	Hope	1 page (half page of English songtext), 12 th Sept 1961.
08	<i>Maktab Tengku Khurzhiah</i>	1 page (include half page of letter), voice + piano score, 28 th Nov 1962.
09	The Focal Point	1 page, Modern Jazz Composition, Nov 1964.
10	The Swan [tian jing de tian er]	Half page (5 lines), 12 th Dec 1964, 12.30 am.
11	Bitter Sweet	Half page (6 lines), 12 th Dec 1964.
12	Jl:l'tTIY:Jt,rffli [yue guang xia de zhu qiao]	Half page (4 lines), 12 th Dec 1964.
13	ffffe!'ls' [tian yu ku]	Half page (4 lines), 14 th Dec 1964.
14	X'mas Theme Intro Song	1 page, 21 st Dec 1964.
15	Mutiara Timor	Half page (5 lines), 1965, same sheet with "Kaseh-gema Ria".
16	The Fifth Temperament	1 page, Modern Jazz, 26 th July 1965.
17	<i>Awan Putih</i>	1 page, 4 th Oct 1965.
18	Sunset on Bangkok	Half page (with short description and drawing), composed in Bangkok, 25 th Dec 1965.
19	Ipoh and A-Go Go	Half page of music (5 lines) with English songtext on another page, 10 th September 1966.
20	Caravelle	1 page, Modern Jazz, 1st April 1967
21	BANG-KO-GO	1 page (with English songtexts), composed in Bangkok, 17 th April 1967.
22	<i>Harapan (HOPE)</i>	Half page (4 lines), 12 th September 1967.
23	Kowloon	Half page (5 lines), 16 th Dec 1969.
24	<i>Pening (Dizzy)</i>	1 page, 27 th Feb 1970.
25	S.M.I. Song	1 page, 5 th Aug 1970.
26	<i>Chiranan</i>	1 page (4 lines of music and half page of songtexts), date not stated.
27	<i>Durian</i>	1 page (5 lines), no date and composer were stated.
28	<i>Hilang tiada Berjauhi</i>	1 page, date and composer were not stated.
29	I Lost My Love at Pesta Ria	1 page (5 lines) and half page of English songtexts, drawing of map at bottom.
30	<i>Lagak-Penari</i>	2 pages, incomplete word on top of the page (burned), "S'O'S' 14" written on top right of page 2.
31	<i>Medhini (The Sage)</i>	1 page (6 lines), a Thai Song, no date stated.
32	<i>Mehdini</i>	1 page (4 lines of music and half page of English words). Date and composer were not stated.

33	<i>Sakura Idaman Ku</i>	2 pages (English words and 1 page of unknown notes), no date stated.
34	<i>Sekolah Menengah Teknik</i>	1 page, drawing, voice+ piano score, no words on this sheet.
35	<i>Taman Tak Bernama</i>	Half page (6 lines), no date and composer were stated.
36	<i>Wanita Sejati</i>	2 pages (Clarinet, Alto, Tenor, Baritone)

It can be safely assumed that the songs and tunes in Table 1 are not traceable from other sources at the present day. Several manuscripts have indications on the upper right corner that the music was written for the national broadcast RTM. Other than those sketches, the contexts in which the sketches were made could not be ascertained. Some sketches were incomplete, and others cancelled and rewritten, giving glimpses of the work in progress by the composer. Several tunes have few versions showing the signs of changes in chord names, melodic lines and other details.

What is clear is that these sketches of songs and melodies imply a more private stage of music creation as their characters are in contrast with the known songs of Boyle in several ways. A quick glance at the titles of these sketches reveals some familiar titles with the known songs, especially those that touch on the nature, like sunset (Sunset on Bangkok); sakura (*Sakura Idamanku*); cloud (*Awan Putih*); moonlight (*It B]ttffi*); *yue guang xia de zhu qiao*, literally 'the bamboo bridge under the moonlight'; swan (*'H5 B"3::KM, tian Jing de tian er*, literally 'the quiet swan'); and parks (*Taman Tidak Bernama*, literally 'the unnamed park'); which are in accordance with Boyle's known song titles like *Chendering* (*name of beach*); *Api danAyer* (*fire and water*); *Tepi Pantai* (*by the beach*); *Sang bayu* (wind); *Bunga Negara* (national flower); *Ka-hulur ka-hilir* (up and down the river); *Sungai Pahang* (Pahang River); and so on.

The presence of some titles in the sketches that employ the first person position indicates the personal space of the composer, and this is not common with the known songs. These are "I lost my love in *Pesta Ria*"; *Mutiaraku* (my pearl); *Sakura Idamanku* (voice of my love one); and *Rayuan Hatiku* (the appeal of my heart). None of the known songs of Boyle carries such personal space. Although the famous patriotic title *Kemegahan Negaraku* (the splendour of my nation) has the word 'my', its usage is impersonal. To enhance this private and personal character of the recovered manuscripts, the public and patriotic titles that are typical of Boyle's social image as a patriot is absent in this collection.

The unpublished sketches of the songs by Boyle are not just works in progress, but they are more explorative in nature, as compared to the known songs whose structures are simple and neat. Some key differences lie in the aspects of phrase structure, the use of motif/theme, and the development of phrases. The known songs are symmetrical, even in their phrase structure. For example, *Putera-Puteri* and *Kemegahan Negaraku* both have a consistent two-bars per phrase throughout the song, which is 2+2+2+2. Both songs contain a simple repetition of a theme, and with little motivic or rhythmic variations.² As the analysis of some of the sketches of songs in the following sections reveal, the unpublished songs have various structures. While some of the sketches resemble the simple structures like the known songs, spontaneity, abrupt changes and multiple motifs are observed within short sketches of 24-32 bars.

Theme 1: Boyle as a Popular Songwriter

Jimmy Boyle is known foremost in Malaysia for the long lasting popularity of his songs which were sung through generations for more than half a century, and performed across a variety of social venues ranging from venues for entertainment, artistry to education. These songs were the result of melodies composed by Boyle and song texts in *Bahasa Melayu* created by a lyricist. As far as the public is concerned, Boyle's songs are in Malay language despite not being a native speaker of Malay himself. Little was known that Boyle himself had been writing song texts as well, in English, many of which remained informal and unpublished. The composer's song texts and the lyricist's are separate sets of texts, which are not translated from English to Malay. Here we can encounter a more personal image of Boyle. For example, Boyle's song text for the famous song *Jauh-Jauh* (meaning 'far away') expresses directly from a first person position, as compared to the formal song text in Malay written by Zainal Abu; though both versions depict the same topic of longing towards something far away. Like *Jauh-jauh*, Boyle's song texts in the sketches were also narrative from a first person viewpoint, which give us glimpses into his life experiences and personal feelings at that time. Here, nationalism and patriotism have no place, but romance takes over the centre stage.

"Hope" (Example 1) is reflective in nature, and a subject to which the monologue is directed to is clearly present. The melancholic song text describes a love that was never realized, and yet the author was waiting expectantly. The phrase "hope is life again" features the expectation in regaining what was lost, but in a gloomy tone. In "I lost my love in *Pesta Ria*" (*Pesta Ria* meaning funfair), one (supposedly the composer himself) met a lady in a funfair and they spent some romantic time together for a while (Example 2). The ending has a tragic turn when he lost his love as the lady finally had to leave. In both examples of "Hope" and "I lost my love in *Pesta Ria*", the private side of Boyle was revealed. With Boyle's consistent practice of indicating the dates of creating each sketch³, these songs are arguably a casual response that Boyle posed in relation to his own life experience in a journaling manner.

It is clear that Boyle understood the characteristics needed in order for a song to be popular. At times, he would consciously compose in a way that is easy to listen to and remember. This point will be evident if readers compare the musical structure of the song sketches here and those of instrumental ones discussed in a later section. In both "Hope" and "I lost my love in *Pesta Ria*", simple, even and symmetrical phrase structures were employed, with frequent repetitions of single motifs. Little artistic explorations or experimentations were done. In fact, the title and the structure of the songs strongly resemble existing songs from the USA.

"Hope" takes the typical form of a slow waltz in Broadway music, not unlike "Fly Me to the Moon". The simple structure has four eight-bar phrases developed in A-B-A-C form. Melodic sequences were used extensively. Though not limited to Boyle alone, the acute melodic turn in bar 15 (octave leap), and bars 26-27 (covering a range of a seventh in short duration), are some challenging figures which can be similarly observed in his known songs. "I Lost My Love in *Pesta Ria*" resembles "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" which was written in 1953 by George Cory and Douglass

Cross and made known by Tony Bennett. It has a simple structure of 32 bars A-B-A1-C, with a division of 8 bars for every section. The harmony of this song, however, has a certain level of complexity, yet these were within the common technique used in popular songs of that time.

Hope

Jimmy Boyle

Slowly

Am Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Gm⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷

9 Dm⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷(add9) E⁷ Am

14 D⁷ D⁷ G⁷ E⁷

18 Am Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Gm⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ Dm⁷

26 F⁶ Fm⁶ C⁹ A⁷(add9) Dm⁷ RH G⁷ Ab Db (32 bars)

Hope's lyrics:

Hope is life again - With this sweet refrain
 Tho' it can be said that - love's (life's) never came
 Everytime I feel that life seems never gay
 But oh to be alive is just like May

Day to day - I'll sing - this simple melody
 To live just for a hope that can be true
 A cherished love I know that we alone can share
 So Hope is life again - I'll smile for you

Example 1 Hope

I Lost My Love at "Pesta Ria"...

Jimmy Boyle
Composed music and lyrics

I Lost My Love in "Pesta Ria" ..

Lyrics:

I met here at a "Pesta Ria"
She smiled then, and my heart went wild
She told me that she was lonely
I took a chance, with a love that could be true
- all my life

We danced on - without words to say -
We knew then, that we found our true love
The end came, when she just had to leave me
I knew, I lost my love at Pesta Ria...

Example 2 I Lost My Love in "Pesta Ria"

The sentiment of Boyle behind these unpublished sketches of songs can be crystallised by considering together with his more public activities in promoting jazz idioms through composing *lagu melayu*, a movement among the jazz composers championed by Alfonso Solianos in the 1960s. *Lagu Melayu*, or the songs in Malay, but also perceived as a genre in a loose sense, had been a vehicle for the musical development in the multicultural societies of Peninsular Malaysia. *Lagu Melayu* appeared as a new hybrid form of Malay song in the 1930s, and was regarded as a bottom up movement by the musicians, for an inclusive version of cultural nationalism (Tan, 2013). In the 1960s, Boyle and other jazz composers must have recognised the wide reaching and unifying effect of songs sung in Malay language. The composition of many *Lagu Melayu*

in jazz idioms in the 1960s, as I argued in another paper (Chan & Boyle 2014), was an effort to create a shared memory for the construct of nationalism for the newly formed multiracial nation of Malaya then and later Malaysia. This intention of upholding the Malay language through music resulted in his famous jazz ballads like *Jauh-jauh* and *Cendering*. This intention was at the same time a strategy for Boyle to position himself as a key player within the new nation system.

The intentional aspect of composing *Lagu Melayu* is contrasted even more with the discovery of Boyle's self-written English song text in the sketches. English is the language that Boyle was *inclined* to express with, and publishing songs in the Malay language (with song texts provided by the lyricist) is what Boyle *intended* as a composer in relating to the society at large.

The two-fold argument of inclination versus intentions also applies to the way patriotic songs are created. The jazz composers of the 1960s were at the same time composers of prominent patriotic songs in Malaysia. Apart from those requested by authorities, some of Boyle's patriotic songs were composed on his own initiative. Boyle *intended* to address, with passion, the society with nationalism and patriotism in his patriotic songs like *Putera-Puteri* (the youth) and *Rukun Negara* (national principles). Meanwhile, the romance illustrated in the private sketches like "Hope" were pure personal *inclinations* freed from the social setting he was placed in. Boyle deployed the public discourse (nationalism) and material (national language) to serve the nation while preserving a private space for his personal feelings (romance). Boyle's capacity in handling these different perspectives as a musician is noteworthy.

Theme 2: Boyle as a Jazzman

Boyle is rightfully a jazz composer. The term 'jazzman' is chosen as a theme of Boyle's sentiments here instead of 'composer' as it is closer to the way Boyle relates to jazz. Instead of being a composer per se, Boyle's jazz pieces are an extension of his pianist-songwriter identity. It is the spirit of the 'authentic' jazzman (of the modern jazz ethos) that distinguished his songs and his playing from his contemporaries. The public perceive Boyle as "a famous jazz pianist who composed many local songs" (Tan, 2011, p.42), but hardly a jazz composer. In general, scores of instrumental jazz tunes composed by local composers in Malaysia in the 1960s are hardly traceable. Recordings of Boyle's playing on the piano, often his own compositions, were kept exclusively in the open reels left in his residence.

As evidently shown in the sketch of "The Focal Point" (Example 4) and "The Fifth Temperament" (Example 5), Boyle's writing style for instrumental pieces contain adventures, intuition and spontaneity that are far from the simple structure of his better known songs. "The Focal Point" has more than 40 bars with some indication for arrangements and instrumentations, while the manuscript for "The Fifth Temperament" has more than 32 bars, with the music continuing into one of his songs *Chendering*. Both manuscripts have signs of corrections and remarks made after rehearsals, obviously for the recording at TV Malaysia. For the purpose of discussion in this paper, the beginning sections of these sketches are sufficient to bring out the sentiments of Boyle as a jazzman, in contrast to the earlier sentiments as a songwriter.

Both sketches have the composer's indication of 'modern jazz' on the upper right, clearly showing the ideology that these pieces of music are focused on. The melodic lines are in accord with the standard jazz tunes, not unlike "Sophisticated Lady" by Duke Ellington, with the aggressive use of chromatic features and the play of harmonic colors. The twisted turns of the melody are typical of bop licks. It is also consistent with the tradition of bop where the main tune itself appears in the form of improvisation lines. Without doubt, these two pieces are to be played as a medium swing, as the word "Bounce" on the upper left of "The Focal Point" suggests.

Adventurous, intuitive or spontaneous elements are common in these sketches. To name a few, the 4th bar of "The Focal Point" (Example 4) has an acute octave leap on the melody; the quick change of harmonic color from Fm7 (bar 6) to F (bar 8); and the emphasis on the unresolved Eb placed on the chord of C (bar 12). The concluding phrase of this section (bar 13-16) utilises deviation (modulation to foreign key bar 13-14) and dissonance (G# at bar 15, as a 16th note for B7, as well as a dissonant #3rd in the arrival key of E minor), resulting in an unexpected and colorful turn. "The Fifth Temperament" (Example 5) plays aggressively, with sub-divisions of note durations, which resembles the outcome of an improvisation line. A colourful chord progression is observed from bars 5-6 using dominant 7th chords overlapping with substituting functions (Ab7 for D7, Db7 for G7). The series of abrupt phrases over bar 5-7 is evidence for spontaneity and intuition.

The Focal Point

Modern Jazz Composition
Jimmy Boyle
Nov 1964

The musical score for "The Focal Point" is presented in three staves. The first staff (bars 1-4) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), indicating E minor. The chords are Em⁹, F, Em, and F. The second staff (bars 5-8) continues with F, Em⁹, Am, Dm⁷, and G⁷. The third staff (bars 9-12) features C, Ab⁶, Bbm⁷, B⁷, and Em⁹. The melody is characterized by chromatic runs and triplet patterns.

Example 3 The Beginning Section of "The Focal Point"

The Fifth Temperament

Modern Jazz
Jimmy Boyle
(26/7/65)

Moderato (groovy)

Example 4 The Beginning Section

One piece of information that supports Boyle's stance in modern jazz is the broadcast of comments given by the American jazz giants about Boyle's piano style, contained in an open reel recovered by the researchers in 2014 (original recording date unknown, speculated to be the 1960s). Billy Strayhorn, Mercer Ellington, and Gerry Mulligan, upon hearing the recording of Boyle's piano playing, commented that Boyle had a great deal of humour in his playing which was reminiscent of Thelonious Monk and Teddy Wilson. When compared with the recording of piano playing of Alfonso Solanos that was highly technical in bop vocabularies, the panel commended Boyle's playing as "he tried to create something new in his playing" (full report in footnote)4. The discontinued sense of space in Boyle's playing, which can also be seen in bars 7-8 of Example 4, marks Boyle as a jazzman beyond technical excellence.

The close relationship between the ethos of modern jazz and the idea of 'authenticity' derived from the modern arts movement in the 20th century is worth a closer look. LeRoi Jones, in his radical piece of work "Blues People" takes bebop as the 'authentic' (black) jazz. Despising the earlier big band jazz played in the dance halls as something commercial to please the white middle class, bebop speaks honestly (hence authentic) from the players' perspective. It is a kind of 'secret code' that transforms the self, caught in anxiety and shame (Thomsen, 1998, p.76-80). From a performance perspective, the 'authentic' jazz is defined as "the small-band jazz represented by bebop with its heavy emphasis on improvisation on the standards and blues, and a swinging rhythm in four-four time in which the bass usually was made to state the beat explicitly" (ibid, p.84).

This idea of 'small-band' jazz is coherent with Boyle's trio activities. The broader discourse on authenticity in arts, like those written by Taylor Charles (1989, 1991) and Richard Handler (1986), deals with an existential crisis of self that is caught between a strong admonishment on self reliance on one hand and the deep sense of a lack of existence, characterised by immense anxiety caused by doubts over what is reality in life. Two major characteristics of authenticity relevant for the discussion of the development of jazz in Malaysia have been 1) the detachment of self from the surroundings; and 2) the rejection of commercialisation and mannerism (Chan & Boyle, 2014). Authenticity places the focus more on the inwardness of self, rather than a relationship with the surroundings. "The Focal Point" and "The Fifth Temperament"

were a form of self-quest, to fulfill artistic needs without considering the acceptance of the audience. This is especially true as modern jazz was a foreign sound to the local public then, so much so that Alfonso's jazz version of *Lagu Melayu(s)* were rejected in the 1960s.

The second characteristic of authenticity is the rejection of commercialisation and mannerism (Chan & Boyle, 2014). Part of our previous writing is relevant.

" . . . flowing from the first features, artists consciously draw a clear line between what is perceived to be authentic and what is not. There are things that one 'should' avoid engaging with in preserving his authenticity, for example, anything that has commercialisation, cheap popularity, and utilitarian activities. The purpose of art creation is not to please the majority but for the 'genuine' audience, and that it is even said that the true and most qualified ones to evaluate are the artist themselves. Even when artists occasionally engaged themselves in the 'wrong' activities, they made clear distinction that those are not their main activities. Mixing the authentic and the utilitarian would result in a second-class reputation, or a 'fake' artist." (Chan & Boyle, 2014)

The idea of authenticity contradicts with activities that aim at gaining popularity. Boyle is unique in this respect: He could contain both the idea of authenticity and the quest for popularity in a person. At times, Boyle consciously applied the idea of nationalism, the power of national language, and the simple song structure to achieve popularity as a songwriter. At other times he maintained a practice of self-quest in his jazz playing and composing, to be like one in the modern jazz history.

Theme 3: Boyle as an Enthusiast in Ethnic Music

Boyle taught in a high school until his sudden death in 1971. His music career developed during after school hours. Being an educator in a public school gave him different starting points compared to his contemporaries, of whom many were employed full-time with the national broadcast orchestra. The third theme here reveals the least known fact about Boyle: He conducted field recordings among the native tribes in the Peninsular, and created sketches of tunes which imitated the music of ethnic groups. Coupled with the fact that Boyle was also a painter, his broad scope of interest and flexibility in handling tasks of a varied nature set him apart from his contemporaries as a multifaceted artist.

"The Swan" (Example 5) and "Bitter Sweet" (Example 6) were pentatonic representations of a Chinese folk-popular tune. Understandably, another person who was well-versed in the language wrote the Mandarin characters for the titles in a skillful manner. In "The Swan", Boyle developed the motif in bars 5-6 into a song which consists of four eight-bar phrases. By the term 'soothingly', Boyle aimed at a lyrical and legato picture of his imagined Chinese characteristics. This is supported by the frequent use of 8th notes, frequent slur marks, and the leap of melodic progression kept within a perfect fifth. In "Bitter Sweet" (Example 6), Boyle uses a minor pentatonic, and creates a phrase unit of two-bars in length, repeated uniformly throughout the piece. Both sketches strongly resemble existing Chinese folk-pop tunes sung in Malaysia, as well as some Malay tunes that portray the Chinese pentatonic scale.

The Swan (I itt{tat)

Jimmy Boyle

(Termeloh 12.30 am)
12112164

Soothin gly

I Am Am Arn ,3-, Am Arn

@e 11 Jf®} r jj1tf y | F" v r mJl z | jfD) 1.2 jfPJ .1 11

6 Am Dm C Am Am Dm C Am

14 F Em C Em F Em C Em

&17 Dm Dm C Om Am Om C C

Jfftr, 'mr l nPfr, / Cflr :x(i- lfl .: -||

Example 5 The Swan

Bitter Sweet (-&tt MJ)

Jimmy Boyle

12112164

Lento

Bbm Bbm Bbm Bbm Bbm Db Gb Gb Bbm

& v 1 J w J w r EtJ | J fi | J. p RT

6 Bbm Bbm Bbm Bbm Bbm Db Gb Gb Bbm

4 h: rJJJJJ1 Jj J J.J'JJJJ JJJJ J.) JJJJ .n | J.WJJgd .rr|

V,'

14 Gb12 0)11 d, J Jy@ | J.0 | Ebm J)9 | J.roi JhJJJ Bbm

22 El>m Gb Bbm r,

Example 6 Bitter Sweet J. JJJJ; | J. , ||

Sunset on Bangkok

Composed by Jimmy Boyle
(written in Bangkok)
25 December 1965

Andante Cantabile

The musical score for "Sunset on Bangkok" is written in 4/4 time and consists of six staves of music. The tempo is "Andante Cantabile". The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, semiquavers, and rests. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, Am, F, and Dm. The score ends with a double bar line and the number 16.

Example 7 "Sunset on Bangkok" with hand written notes

"Sunset on Bangkok" (Example 7, original manuscript in Figure 1) is unique among the sketches due to its complex and asymmetrical melodic shape. According to the composer's handwritten note, it is a reflection of the atmosphere of a peaceful and warm sunset of the pagoda and wat in Bangkok. This composition resembles a narrative style of chanting: short phrases of triplets and semiquavers, frequently interjected by short rests, and developed without repetitions. Very few chords were used: I, III, and V (d minor, F major, and a minor). The manuscript itself has several discrepancies, at bar 9, bar 13, bar 14 and bar 15, which warrants further investigation. For example, bar 13 has only three beats in a 4/4 time measure. Boyle's sketches of ethnic music displays his interest in the sound of different cultures, away from the jazz idioms as well as the popular song structure that he subscribed to. As they were never published, these sketches remain a sign of Boyle's personal interest or *inclination* to reproduce different types of music.

Concluding Remarks

Jimmy Boyle composed well-known numbers such as *Putera-Puteri* and *Gema Rembulan* as ministrations to the society. Serving the people of Malaysia with his own Malay versions of Tin Pan Alley songs, he had the intention to evoke patriotic feelings and a sense of unity among the Malaysian public. In order to do this, creativity and desire to express is not sufficient alone. The structure of the song must be *intentionally* made simple and familiar to be received well by the public. Yet, in the sketches of English songs like "Hope" and "I lost my love in *Pesta Ria*", Boyle understood his right to express himself freely as a layperson. He was compelled to translate his thoughts and feelings into song, journaling the movement of his heart with melodies, song text, and drawings. In the sketches for jazz like "The Focal Point" and "The Fifth Temperament", he conducted a self-quest in search of perfection in jazz. This jazz making is surprisingly untainted by his other sentiments to entertain the public with popular songs. He embraced the modern jazz idioms more radically than his contemporary jazzmen, but he could also return to his sentiment of a popular songwriter more thoroughly than others. In the sketches for ethnic music, Boyle understood the function of notation other than to compose and arrange music. Notation can be a tool of learning to fulfill one's curiosity to approach the culture of 'others'.

Boyle displayed a broad capacity in the way he used music. He had the ability to compose in different sentiments, either as a social advocate, a layperson, a jazz artist or a knowledge seeker. He manoeuvred between these sentiments by skillfully shifting the centres of focus from one to another, as if there were different departments of personalities within one person. In public places, his centre was the Malay language and nationalism. In private spaces, for the mere record of his daily encounters, he put English and simple song structures at the centre of focus. In his desire to deepen the level of artistry, he would put bebop and authenticity at the core, without the need for public acceptance. In fulfilling his intellectual curiosity, the musics of other culture become the centre of focus, while all of his other sentiments would take a break.

The conclusion we arrived at here is temporary and valid only for the limited number of sketches examined. Nevertheless, it provides directions for further research of Boyle by utilising the themes proposed. These themes shall be further examined and verified with other sets of information, with the recorded data for example, to form a more complete picture of Jimmy Boyle's musicality.

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FORUM

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Endnotes

- ¹ This example is raised as it is one of the most rare academic documents on the social position of the Eurasian community. The residents of the Portuguese Settlement had a low social-economic status and are different from the upper class Eurasians in Malacca (Sarkissian, 2000, p.31).
- ² The music scores for the published songs such as *Kemegahan Negaraku*, *Putera-Puteri* and *Jauh-Jauh* are not provided in this paper. Readers may find them in Boyle (2014): *Kemegahan Negaraku* (p.59), *Putera-Puteri* (p.71), and *Jauh-Jauh* (p.80). Alternatively readers can also find this music on the internet as they have been uploaded numerous times by different sources.
- ³ Unfortunately, the year of composition cannot be identified for "Hope" due to the poor condition of the manuscript, and there was no date indicated for "I lost my love in *Pesta Ria*".
- ⁴ In the middle of 2014, a total of eight reel tapes from Jimmy Boyle's collection were transferred into an audio digital file. There are various types of recordings, including performances of Jimmy Boyle's compositions, Jimmy Boyle's own playing, Jimmy Boyle's recordings of Malaysia ethnic music, and radio *program mesin* which he participated in. Jimmy Boyle's trio participated in one session of the Voice of America Jazz Hour (VOA Jazz Hour), a radio programme in the USA broadcast from 1955 until 2003. The audio recording of Boyle's Trio playing a tune "I Surrender Dear" (with Boyle on the piano, M. Yassin on the bass, and Abdul Rahim on the drums) was played before a panel consisting of the jazz giants Billy Strayhorn, Mercer Ellington, and Gerry Mulligan. Ellington commented that Boyle had a tendency to take on the characteristics of earlier American or English styles. However, an oriental mode could also be heard in his playing. One of his suggested influences for Boyle was Teddy Wilson. Mulligan pointed out that Boyle's piano style was reminiscent of Thelonious Monk, especially with the use of long piano arpeggios and the humor that they tried to create. Strayhorn showed an interest in Boyle's playing, as he found him trying to create more new ideas in comparison with the other bands.

Biographies

Chan Cheong Jan is a senior lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). He trains the jazz majors of the undergraduate programme and supervises postgraduate music research. Email: chan@upm.edu.my, chanupm@gmail.com

Lee Sze May is pursuing her master's study in UPM, with a focus on Jimmy Boyle's compositions. She obtained her Bachelor of Music in UPM in year 2013. She was awarded UPM Graduate Research Fellowship and now works as a research assistant in the Music Department, UPM.

James P. S. Boyle is a lecturer at the National Academic of Arts, Culture and Heritage, and an award winning composer, pianist and music arranger.