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Creative Interventions

Musical Voices

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CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS – MUSICAL VOICES

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CAMELLIA SITI MAYA MOHAMED RAZALI
CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS – MUSICAL VOICES

A dissertation comprising a Portfolio of Compositions and a Commentary, submitted
to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts.

Department of Music
May 2019

Abstract

The abundance of cultural interaction and integration in today's world shows how our present lives constantly intertwine around each other's, with those diversities enriching our thoughts, arts, and lives. I felt this acutely when composing the eleven submitted works. Music composition now offers an inventive musical freedom beyond the limitations of traditional methods, with the potential to follow a more diverse array of ideas wherever they may lead. Enough resources and tools of music composition from various cultures in the world have become integral in such intercultural activity that we have now coined the term 'intercultural' music. Therefore, this composition portfolio seeks to show the rewards of making such an artistic effort of communicating through the means of more than one cultural influence. My compositions demonstrate a journey of combining influences personally both external and internal into the instrumental and vocal works of the present portfolio.

Dedication/Acknowledgements

First and foremost I thank Allah the Merciful for His grace upon letting me complete my thesis and portfolio.

An immeasurable feeling of gratitude goes to Dr. Michael Ellison for his endless support and generosity in sharing his knowledge and time to see the fruitful outcome of this thesis together.

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I will cherish and treasure all my university friends and acquaintances I have made in Bristol, for truly inspiring my time here.

To my husband, Marzelan Salleh, thank you for taking on this journey with me, which I would not have had the courage to do so without your invaluable companionship.

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My dear parents Ghazali Yusoff and Hatijah Ayob, and in-laws Salleh Amin and Rokiah Sawal, my incomparable love for all of you, for always being there.

Dear Grandmother Miriam Yusoff, this is dedicated in your memory, the kindest person I have ever known.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: DATE:.....

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Malaysia

Malaysia, a country situated in South East Asia, borders Thailand, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia. Malaysia is made up of Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (Malaysian Borneo), which is separated by the South China Sea. Even though Islam is declared as the official and largest practiced religion in Malaysia, its non-Muslim citizens such as Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus are allowed freedom of religion, as stated in the constitution. Malaysia's multi-cultural, multi-faith and ethnic diversity not only plays a large role in its political and economic decisions, but also enormously influences the arts, culture, and cuisine of the Malaysians.

Being a Malaysian, and having been living here, has positively shaped my thoughts and outlook towards diversity and differences. Personally for me--yet I speak for nearly all Malaysians--being a part of a diverse nation has taught us to celebrate each other in a joyous, sharing way without any hostility. We Malaysians have become so accustomed to such differences built around us that we have learnt to accept and embrace without divisiveness. We do not only adapt towards each other, but we literally live in each other's cultures

From yesteryears until now, Malaysians have been travelling abroad and even many have settled down in newer pastures in foreign countries. Even after many years overseas, Malaysia is a part of my identity and unquestionably has helped define a large part of me. Living in Malaysia where we celebrate our differences, we understand that diversity is unavoidable and this, plus the kinds of diversities we experience makes us unique from other nations. We do not feel pressured in any way to form a melting pot, but instead enthusiastically embrace individualism. This multicultural environment, which is familiar and inseparable to Malaysian society, has become an advantage for us especially in relation to current globalization and its influence on the art world today. From the start, knowing that it is quite all right to be different seems to be a plus point to all whom I meet.

The Malays

Multiracial Malaysia consists of Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban, Dayak, Kadazandusun, Eurasians and other race and ethnic groups. The Malay community makes up the majority of the population in Malaysia. In general, the Malays are the people who speak the Malay language and live on the east coast of Sumatra, the Riau Islands, the Malay Peninsula and the coastline of the island of Borneo. The people of this region (the Malay Archipelago) can be recognised by the encompassing term ‘Malay’.

The Treaty of 1824 between the English and the Dutch resulted in a division of the Malay world. The term ‘Malaysian’ is used to refer to citizens in Malaysia while the word ‘Malay’ refers to the language, culture, and ethnicity, and this also covers a larger geographical area. The Malays have a diverse kind of music and dance, which themselves are fusions of different cultural influences. Histories of past colonisations and trading activities have greatly influenced the amount of cultural interaction seen especially in the traditional music and dance of the Malays. Influences as far as Arabia and Persia to India in the west, and China to the northeast are seen evident in the ritual performance and instrumentation of Malay traditional music.

Malaysian Malays are and will always be connected politically, socially, and culturally to other Malay communities in other parts of the region despite national borders. Up until to the present time, there has always been a good relationship amongst Malays in different countries. This is due to the Malays’ common religion, Islam, and also through the strong common bonds of food, art, and culture. Academic institutions such as the universities in the ASEAN region had always and continue to develop and foster closer bonds amongst Malays in various ASEAN countries through arts and cultural movements and intellectual discourses.¹

¹ ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members include Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Malay Music

Traditional Malay music mainly belongs two categories: secular and non-secular music. Secular music is performed in public for entertainment purposes in a relaxed and enjoyable manner whereas the non-secular belongs to royal court performances. Furthermore, these two categories are further divided into classical, folk, and syncretic (or acculturated music) categories.² Syncretic music in traditional Malay music refers to the elements contained in the music derived from various influences of both local and foreign music of Arabic, Persian, Indian, Chinese, and the West. The types of traditional Malay music exist in a variety of vocal, dance and theatrical forms.

Classical and folk music such as *Nobat*, *Mak Yong*, *Mak Inang*, *Dikir Barat*, *Ulek Mayang*, and *Menora* existed even before the British colonial period, and syncretic music such as *Zapin*, *Ghazal*, *Dondang Sayang*, *Joget*, *Boria*, *Keroncong*, and *Bangsawan* became established in the 16th century after the Portuguese rule.

Intercultural Music?

In the 21st century, an increasing interest within the musical research areas of composition and performance, plus technology advancements and major current and historical events have demonstrated a fast-growing importance given to cross-cultural insights. Intercultural music can be found in various styles these days ranging from classical and contemporary music, even in popular songs or in art songs. What defines music as intercultural actually brings on a whole broader set of questions. Before, I assumed when musical elements of at least two or more different cultures are combined into a musical composition, intercultural music is created. However, a deeper understanding and a closer observation has brought me to realize that while ‘intercultural’ is a term used for a huge variety of music being made these days, there is and can be no one definition or style. Therefore, it is better to explain that some music being produced today could probably fall under the rubric ‘intercultural’ because what is most distinctive about this music is that actual intercultural activity

² Patricia Matusky & Tan Sooi Beng, *The Music of Malaysia: The Classical, Folk and Syncretic Traditions*, (New York, Routledge, 2017), 8-11.

and negotiation take an active role. For example, today we find composers not necessarily originally belonging to one (or sometimes any) of the cultures featured in their music, but still it is possible to claim their composition as intercultural. This is because the origin of the composer becomes secondary as, most importantly, intercultural phenomena and intersections of the influences of varied traditions are actually happening in the music itself.

Compositions involving cross-cultural elements have long existed even before the 21st century. Composers such as Bela Bartok, Igor Stravinsky, Olivier Messiaen, and Toru Takemitsu, to name a few, have been employing different elements and techniques from various traditional and cultural sources into their compositions. But today's meaning and use of this term are attempting to get at a newer phenomenon, which includes both the much more globalized state of today's world and the falling away of attitudes such as 'exoticism' and 'orientalism'— often precisely because composers from previously 'exotic' areas are the ones composing the music. Therefore, I would like to stress that I am not intending to say in this portfolio that intercultural music composition is something completely new, but that my compositions - deriving some elements from my own country's traditional background, and a host from Western classical, 20th century, and contemporary music - can contribute a new set of knowledge and new outlooks by contributing new sounds to the body of musical composition expertise.

In his book *Essays on Music in Africa 2*, Akin Euba asserts,

Interculturalism exists in all known music of the world today, although they may occur in different kinds of expression and forms be it African traditional music, Middle Eastern or European classical music.³

Intercultural music includes all types of musics, from the traditional and contemporary, popular and art. For example, Johann Sebastian Bach's music has been proven in musicological research to be generally made up of three cultural traditions, which are German, Italian and French. Antonio Vivaldi's (Italian) concerti's creative

³ Akin Euba, *Essays on Music in Africa 2. Bayreuth African Studies Series*, (Iwalewa-Haus, Universitat Bayreuth, 1989), 154.

procedures and 17th century French overture are clearly noticeable in Bach's organ works. Therefore, physical evidence of intercultural music can be proven when materials from diverse cultures are combined into a single, contemporary composition.

The term and concept of intercultural music was earliest coined and accepted by exponents of this phenomenon and later used in publications by scholars such as Margaret Kartomi as early as the 1980s.⁴ As regards to Asian music, traditional music in Asia is a product of intra-cultural interaction among various ethnic groups within a country as well as foreign cultures such as those of Persia, India, China, Indonesia and Europe. Ric Knowles discusses the searching pursuit by Western artists, in the early 20th century, to discover the world's performance cultures in an effort to revitalize and renew a decadent Western tradition during the heyday of interculturalism.⁵ In a sort of the same way, I see this portfolio as my pursuit of discovering two different music cultures in an effort to revitalise and renew my compositional palette.

Research Objective

As some European composers did in the 1900s during their specific countries' political independence or unification movements, in this 21st century, many Asian composers have become determined to develop a 'national style' of music for their homeland by letting their origin of culture speak through their concert music. However, in this era, interestingly this determination is not necessarily a source for nationalistic movement, but a source for intercultural musical dialogue between two or more contrasting musical sources that finds new ways of navigating modernity. Globalisation has resulted in numerous compositional efforts and devices of creating effective intercultural music. Previous nationalist composers of the west such as Shostakovich, Bartók, Ives, Falla, Janacek, Kodaly and perhaps Copland to name a few, turned to folk songs and dances, rhythms and harmonies, national legends and history of their countries as foundation in their compositions for operas, symphonies,

⁴ Margaret Kartomi, *Musical Journeys in Sumatra*, (University of Illinois Press, 2012).

⁵ Ric Knowles, *Theatre and Interculturalism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

and other forms of music. They employed musical ideas or motifs that are identified with their country, region, or ethnicity.

However, being part of a wonderful diverse nation, which appears to have benefited, even thrived, from each of its ethnic communities' individual strengths, this research project for the Degree of PhD in Music Composition intends to:

1. Find ways to create a 'sound world' referring to the musical and sound areas of the 'Malay world' including my personal reactions towards them into my compositions.
2. Enrich and highlight a culture through the means of exploring my own creativity towards sound and music by creating a live connection and a sense of communication between Malay traditional music and my current compositions.

Research Questions

Certain main compositional issues to be reconciled in this study are:

1. Aspects of Malay music sonorities compared to music of western tradition and how these interact with one another.
2. How do I combine modal melodic content with more adventurous harmony to help produce an understandable/acceptable new Malay music?'

As tradition is ever-changing and constantly reinterpreting itself, as life is, culture becomes an consensual endeavor. The important questions to be answered are what we want to express, and how. In addition, the existing models provided by, for example, Gyorgy Ligeti, Kaija Saariaho, Takemitsu, Unsuk Chin, Dai Fujikura, Toshio Hosokawa, and Olivier Messiaen - all composers firmly within the Western contemporary canon but in some way profoundly influenced by either endemic or external influences of strong, non-European or vernacular music - will provide

techniques and sometimes suggest possible ways of resolving a particular compositional problems.

Problems/Obstacles

Compositional problems I expected to occur in this research project include the lack of written music materials or notated scores of Malay traditional music. This is due to the fact of the Malay culture being traditionally handed down through verbal communication rather than by written documentation. However through recent efforts of ethnomusicologists, there have been improvements of access to some forms of documented information and notated scores of the music mentioned above. When referring to traditional Malay music, then, mainly I refer to live performances, including audio and video recordings of the performances for guidance.

Evolution of my composition portfolio

At the University of Bristol I am involved in an undoubtedly ‘Western-style’ composition programme, writing for Western musical instruments and using notation techniques thoroughly developed in the West. Finding Malay elements from outside this immediate context has helped me find a relevant compositional voice, providing another source—or pole—which I can recognize, integrate, and be inspired by.

‘Creative Intervention – Musical Voices’ is the main idea behind my portfolio of instrumental and vocal compositions. The Malay traditional music of: *Nobat*, *Ghazal* and *Caklempong* are the music models used in several of my compositions.

Of all the Malay music mentioned above, *Nobat*, a centuries-old royal instrumental ensemble for, is the only royal court music represented. An ensemble of six instruments plays *Nobat* music: – the *gendang negara* or large drum, *gendang ibu*, *gendang anak*, *serunai* (flute/clarinet), *nafiri* or trumpet and *caklempong* (small gong). *Nobat* was only performed and could only be played at the Sultan’s orders for important court ceremonies, for example during the installation of the Sultan, and for

his birthday in the palaces of the sultans. The existence of the *Nobat* ensemble dates back to the 16th century, even before Malaysia's independence.

Ghazal in Malaysia, originated from Persian, Western, and Indian influences and is a syncretic form of Malay traditional music. Originally only performed during royal court celebrations, *ghazal* is now categorized as secular music as it evolved into a standard form with fixed ensemble, including the violin, *gambus (ud)*, *tabla* and harmonium and is frequently performed during special occasions around the country.⁶

Caklempong is a traditional Malay musical instrument from the idiophone family consisting of small knobbed gongs. The *caklempong* originated from the Minangkabau community in Negeri Sembilan and has spread to other states in Malaysia and today the music of *Caklempong* has grown to be one of Malaysia's national sonic heritages.

The dimensions of music and composition are so vast, there is never a definitive way to measure it. Both consist of tangible and intangible aesthetical values and qualities that are human-made, yet somehow are divinely inspired. But before acquiring the technique and methods of composing, there has to be a scheme of studying the procedures of composition, thus, focusing on the objective aspects of music. The scope of music and composition nowadays zooms in on both empirical and conceptual dimensions of music (concrete versus abstract, or practice versus theory, intuition versus analysis, subjective versus objective), and tries to conceive it. The composer Luciano Berio (quoted here in paraphrase by Ben Earle),

Music should never be assigned to systems—by neither composers nor analysts. There has to be 'a dialogue between the substance of sound and the substance of music, between the ice of rigour and the heat that lies below it, between the sound of sense and the sense of sound.'⁷

⁶ Matusky & Tan, *The Music of Malaysia*, 154.

⁷ Ben Earle, Remembering the Future by Luciano Berio, *Music & Letters Vol. 89, No. 2* (UK, Oxford University Press, 2008), 131.

In discursive contexts, composers, musicians, and music researchers, are seldom uncooperative, offended or frustrated by any intellectual questions or criticisms discussed directed to their techniques of music-making. However, they are more concerned and assertive on the direction of their musical work – on elusive areas such as how and what music expresses through its power of suggestive and abstract meanings:

Discourses on music do not perturb us... but we know that music can occasionally perturb us when, loaded with meanings, it begs to be spoken about, questioned, and related to an elusive *elsewhere*.⁸

Composing music is an art that requires much attention to detail and purposeful direction. The act of composing requires combining knowledge—of harmony, form, orchestration, instrumentation, etc. with creativity. It is, I would say ‘a creation inspired knowledgeably’. In Bloom’s taxonomy of learning domains, creativity is the highest order of thought of the six major categories. According to Donald Clark,

The cognitive domain’s highest level, which is Creating is described as being able to build a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Also, putting parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure.⁹

As such, creating music or composing music undeniably involves a lot of thought and deliberation poured into it, since every creative act involves reflection and contemplation. Personally, in composing this portfolio, the greatest challenge is in synthesizing diverse elements into a coherent whole.

The phenomena described above clearly also defines the mechanisms of composing music and what composers do. An article from David Krathwohl further establishes this account where he specifically points out,

⁸ Earle, Remembering the Future, 51.

⁹ Donald Clark, Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains, Retrieved 4 Aug, 2016. <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html>.

Writing compositions calls for producing, and, as such, would be classified as an example of Create.¹⁰

Instrumental Music

One of my earliest compositions during my time here at Bristol is *Klibat* (Chapter 3). Through *Klibat* I was exploring gestures and starting to gain knowledge of writing for specific solo instruments. My studies during this time concentrated mainly on themes according to concepts and theories depending upon Western compositional language and technique. Later on, I developed an inclination towards Malay concepts for my compositions and I began to explore my own personal artistic responses for these ideas. That brought forth the composition of *Neither, nor, but here...* (Chapter 5). This composition can be placed as a bridge towards my goal in this composition portfolio.

As my new interest progressed, I ventured into writing *Senja* (Chapter 7) for orchestra using materials from *nobat* music. From this moment onwards my direction became clearer as I wanted to uncover a more innovative and aesthetic way of composing music using Malay themes, materials and conceptual notions, along with western instruments and medium. Since these works, bringing forth the Malay and Malaysian idioms into contemporary composition has become my main concern.

Composers still use ideas and motifs from local themes but somehow in this internet-dominated age, the message and identity of the music outcome comes across differently. Composers I may name such as Unsuk Chin (South Korea) and Toru Takemitsu (Japan), Dai Fujikura (Japan), Toshio Hosokawa (Japan) these days combine Eastern and Western music, philosophies and instruments when producing new creations.

Chin, in a short interview at her publisher Boosey and Hawkes' website, 'Unsuk Chin on Unsuk Chin'¹¹ expresses that for her, there are no borders in music or

¹⁰ David Krathwohl, A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview. *Theory Into Practice*, 41(4) (2002): 212-218, Retrieved on 4 Aug, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1477405>.

¹¹ <http://www.boosey.com/podcast/Unsuk-Chin-on-Unsuk-Chin/100716>. Retrieved on 20 Aug, 2016.

composition or any classification of European or Asian instruments. Instruments are just instruments and music is music. Her background gives her a lot of freedom of how she wants to be a composer. She also explains that composers from Asia, like her, are in a way advantaged in that they can be free from all kind of dogmas, credos, and histories unlike certain European composers who constrain themselves to one of many different school of thoughts in music. This, I could relate to as I agree that as a composer from Malaysia, I have not been tied down by any style of music and compositions, due to our history of being exposed to so many different influences.

Takemitsu is another influential figure as a composer who fuses opposite musical traditions or worlds in his works. Even at times when he finds difficulties using and blending traditional Japanese instruments with a conventional Western orchestra, such as in *November Rain* (1967), his innovative ideas of manipulating instrumental and orchestral timbre has helped him create a sound world typically his own, such as in *Autumn* (1973) with its greater integration of Japanese instruments and the orchestra. Surprisingly, in the beginning, Takemitsu was not too keen to be labeled as a Japanese composer and avoiding any reference towards Japanese music and other traditional music in his compositions. But after discovering the abundance of materials and qualities of Japanese traditional music, Takemitsu realized its value in enriching his own works in terms of colour, pitch organization, harmonic language, and rhythm.

Toshio Hosokawa implies traditional Japanese music culture with the ideas of Zen Buddhism into his works using western theory. Dai Fujikura, a younger composer also from Japan but working in the UK, has produced works such as *Okeanos Breeze*, which is written for Japanese and Western instruments.

As for my solo pieces for clarinet and bassoon, I studied Luciano Berio's *Sequenza* scores for his techniques of ambiguous pulse and time, and his exploration of the instruments' different registers. I also observed his contemporary writing techniques for these instruments and physical limits of performance through extended techniques such as singing through the instruments, circular breathing and adjustment of tongue to modify airflow. His *Sequenza* scores also showed me the quality of the

use of gestural writing, and the importance of composing lines, shape, structure and form.

During my earlier years at Bristol, I first discovered Ligeti's micropolyphony, which suggested for me a new approach towards composing. His technique opened up a new avenue for me, which I applied in *Senja* (Chapter 6).

The final and largest work in this portfolio is *Tekad* for orchestra. *Tekad* integrates the music of *caklempong* and even includes the instrument of *caklempong* into the musical score. This is the only piece in the portfolio that takes the step of using a Malay traditional instrument as one of the instruments in the orchestra.

Vocal Music

Bringing in text into my latest compositions helped to deliberately raise the prominence of a Malay theme, especially when my choice of literary sources has involved Malay language text and poetry. Combining two different art forms into a single body justifies the effectiveness of composing contemporary music with Malay text, and in turn justifies inclusion of Malay elements within a contemporary musical language. With these texted pieces, recently, my portfolio has taken on a new route towards a goal I had envisioned from the start. This compositional portfolio records the progress and direction I have taken so far for its completion. *Wahyu* (Chapter 10), *Menambat Rakit* (Chapter 11), *Prosa Air Mata* (Chapter 12), and *Tekad* (Chapter 13) are the latest compositions I have undertaken in my journey towards submitting a PhD composition portfolio.

Enlightened by this current pursuit of reflection and contemplation in my music, I strived to find extra-musical meaning to inform my music as well as purely musical forms. While composing music for instruments for my composition portfolio, I began to have ideas for composing according to text and voice. The obvious choice was to look for words or spoken text to compose music for. It was an important discovery, when I realized it felt very natural for me to start composing when I had a certain text – brief, or as long and descriptive as poetry to associate with towards my own effort in composing. I felt it helped my compositions to have an extra personal

meaningful connection for the audience when listened to, and also for myself as I wrote it down. After completing *Neither, nor, but here...* which was inspired by a short inscription of *Nobat* music (as described in Chapter 5), the desire to search for more expressive text took place and led me to discover a whole palate of poetry written by Malay poets in Malaysia. So, naturally for me I was deliberately drawn into the world of poetry. At first, thoughts of English poetry came, but it was more suitable for my current position in composing and in accordance towards the objective of this portfolio, I reached out positively for Malay poetry by the two renowned Malaysians. Two of my favourites and highly respected figures in their own rights are Dato' A. Samad Said and Usman Awang. The discovery of their work is very much in line with this composition portfolio of my representation of Malay inspiration and sound world identity.

The reason of my transition towards vocal works, and specifically choosing Malay poetry as text for them is to me the best way to highlight the Malay identity and its spirit most directly and effectively. Language is the closest encounter of any culture and a country. Language is the most common method of human communication because it expresses thoughts and emotions, and thoughtful meaning. Expressivity becomes possible when music and language crosses each other's borders of communication, which deepens the emotive content of my voice compositions.

In Malaysia, there were previous efforts by poetry enthusiasts, poetry clubs and artistic endeavours to revive the love and appreciation of poetry through readings and performances of poetry with the accompaniment of musical instruments. However, these 'poetry readings – performances' were only limited to someone plucking a distant melody and strumming the guitar while accompanying another reciting a poetry. Never before in Malaysia has an effort been made to specifically compose a piece of music for poetry, let alone a contemporary piece of music that is artistically aesthetic.

The other main reason behind my composition for voice is the question of; why not bring forward the Malay literature and nuance into a contemporary idiom in music and arts? Not many and not enough have been created before to utilise the abundance of artful resources from the Malay culture. Therefore, it was very much

appropriate to use Malay poems as the sources of text for my three vocal compositions (Chapters 10, 11, and 12). These three poems have three different underlying meanings and messages. Two are from Dato' A. Samad Said and one from Dato' Usman Awang.

Kurtag's song cycles such as *Scenes from a Novel* and *Kafka-Fragments* have influenced my voice compositions. Both works are based on Hungarian and Russian texts, respectively. *Kafka-Fragments*, which was completed between 1985-1987, is 40 pieces of personal writing collected from Franz Kafka's own notebooks, diaries and letters. These texts are actual text fragments in themselves, which Kurtag has given his own titles to the individual fragments. The violin part is technically demanding and challenging in certain places while the soprano part is a spread between lyrical and violent. I was attracted towards Kurtag's *Kafka-Fragments* because of his inventive skill and imagination in producing a highly expressive composition. *Scenes from a Novel* was completed in 1982, before *Kafka-Fragments*, and includes the violin, bass, and cimbalom, accompanying a soprano. *Scenes from a Novel* is based on 14 texts by Rimma Dalos, a Russian writer. This work consists of 15 songs (a text is used twice) of loneliness, but with deeper complex meanings and messages, which Kurtag has written highly evocative and thought-provoking music for.

Kaija Saariaho's *L'amour de Loin* provided some wonderfully lush instrumental writing suggestions. Her tonally derived undulating harmonies and bits of dissonance, along with her rising and falling harmonies gives an overall mesmerizing aural impression. She frequently uses pedal tones with hints of medieval harmony together with lamenting melodies thus, staging a perfectly haunting and resonant opera.

Other Influences

Besides music and text, it is also common for modern composers to find inspiration for their work in a visual image. Xu Bing's famous 'Square Word Calligraphy' is a reinvention of Chinese calligraphy and English alphabets, and has questioned the idea of communication and manipulation of language. This work of his has certainly inspired me in a way that is also similar to what I am trying to portray in

music on the surface level. The appearance of something is what we perceive at first sight, but after peeling off the layers and looking carefully at an object, it is clear that what we had seen earlier and our preconceived judgments are not the same as what the actual presentation really is.

Therefore, I think this idea of preconceived understanding of what we are familiar with compared to the actual explanation or actual existence of something or someone is what I am portraying into my composition portfolio. On the visual level, the music compositions look and seem familiar, but after listening and analyzing, and peeling off the layers from the surface, what you will discover are compositions worth hearing, for they do not sound like what they seem to be.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

SUITE FOR WINDS (2013) (2016)

- I. KLIBAT - for solo Clarinet (2013)***
- II. KLIBAT II - for solo Bassoon (2016)***

At most times, solo instrumental pieces demand a highly virtuosic, or dexterous performer to perform music at fast speeds; or at other times require advanced performers who are able to execute highly technical passages, which are unconventional in musical text and performance. Either way, both situations require not only a very skilled performer, but also one who fully understands the fullest limits of their instrument. In a way, solo pieces are an opportunity to showcase the various strengths and talents of performers going beyond their possibilities. Meanwhile, for composers, writing solo pieces are also a compositional challenge. In my personal experience, it is similarly going into an extreme creative situation which fascinates me. This fascination is the reason behind my intent to compose a suite of solo pieces for wind instruments, namely the clarinet, and bassoon.

One reason I have chosen wind instruments for my suite of solo works is because of the easy connection between wind instruments and voice. As Steve Connor states,

The human voice is pure, refined, characteristic and highly personal. Meanwhile, wind instruments can be expressively similar to the voice because they share the voice's inability to play chords. Through the movement of melody, the voice organizes the music temporally, relating in time.¹²

There is also an interesting thought that has come across in the article written by Conner, where he mentions,

The flute-voice represents the power of the one to become many [wind instruments are single voice instruments, but capable of

¹² Steven Connor, *The Decomposing Voice of Postmodern Music*. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 467.

producing multiple voices when combined]... Lyre [The lyre] contains many voices, which it organizes synchronically [The lyre, a chordal instrument, is able to produce multiple voices at the same time]. The many-become-one represented by the lyre.¹³

I had never seen the representation of wind instruments and voice, and chordal instruments like this before, so it definitely shed a new light into my musical thought and expression.

In his final lecture, Berio observed that,

A composer's poetics is always something different from his or her music's analyzable aspects – like a form, which is always something more and different from the sum of its parts.¹⁴

In my suite for wind instruments, music has become a wordless text. Music here now similarly represents a prose text. However, it is autonomous, developing itself from its original state in its own way, therefore having its own needs. A combination of ideas into different mediums is the key behind these three solo pieces. When mentioning about its tonality, I pre-determined its harmonic language would be freely non-tonal.

Performance of Suite for Winds does not necessarily require an extroverted, theatrical performance. However, the woodwind's expressive abilities and idiomatic virtuosity are still on display.

Approaching the wind suite compositions through gestural writing calls for mental pictures of lines, movement, speed and velocity. As Richard Causton writes, summarising a definition by electroacoustic composer Denis Smalley “Gesture is concerned with its ‘energy profile’ or dynamic patterning.”¹⁵ Musical gesture can be described as not merely physical actions. Musical gestures actually comprises of both complex and immediate human expressive movements. Musical elements such as dynamics, tempo and pacing, metrical placement, timbre, articulation, and phrase

¹³ Connor, *The Decomposing Voice of Postmodern Music*, 467.

¹⁴ Earle, *Remembering the Future*, 126.

¹⁵ Richard Causton, Berio's 'Visage' and the Theatre of Electroacoustic Music, *Tempo New Series, No. 194, Italian Issue*, (UK, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 15-21.

structure may contribute to gestures on a musical plane. A combination of these elements may be bound together as a continuous whole, creating a sequence of large or smaller gestures integral to expressiveness. Nevertheless, each musical gesture has a shape and purpose, whereby it has a beginning point followed by closure. Before beginning to compose for this suite, I discovered and looked into Berio's *Sequenzas* for various instruments. With regard to Berio's own *Sequenza* for flute (1958), for clarinet (1980), for oboe (1969), for alto saxophone (1980), and bassoon (1995), which distinctively display a certain freedom towards its duration.

Ex. 1: Excerpt of Berio's *Sequenza* for Flute¹⁶, showing very precise rhythmic notation and specific durations without the use of metre and barlines

¹⁶ Luciano Berio, *Sequenza I for Flute*, (Milan, Universal Edition, 1958).

Ex. 2: Excerpt of Berio's *Sequenza for Clarinet*¹⁷, rhythm notation is combined with quasi-proportional spacing

There is an emancipation of pulse and tempo in these pieces, which contributes enormously to their impression of 'openness'. In speaking of this idea, Berio states,

To affirm the notion of 'openness', wherein the performer (or listener), rather than following a viewpoint embedded within the

¹⁷ Luciano Berio, *Sequenza IXa for Clarinet*, (Milan, Universal Edition, 1980).

work, is compelled actively to ‘collaborate’ with the artist in creating it. Only the composer or performer is aware of the element of choice in an aleatoric or semi-aleatoric composition. ‘Listeners have no choice because, they have no point of reference.’¹⁸

Ex. 3: Excerpt of Berio’s *Sequenza* for Alto Saxophone¹⁹, showing an interesting tension between flexibility and precision in playing



Ex. 4: Excerpt of Berio’s *Sequenza* for Oboe²⁰, showing strict organization of pulse and tempo

¹⁸ Earle, *Remembering the Future*, 80.

¹⁹ Luciano Berio, *Sequenza IXb for Alto Saxophone*, (Milan, Universal Edition, 1980).

²⁰ Luciano Berio, *Sequenza VII for Oboe*, (Milan, Universal Edition, 1969, rev. 2000).

Where Berio employs the compositional technique of aleatoricism or semi-aleatoricism in his *Sequenzas* to achieve freedom in duration (Example 1-4), I have instead opted for stricter temporal notation. I have substituted aleatoricism for writing out actual notes on how I want it performed, but nevertheless having the same final result audibly (Example 5 & 6). The result is that an ambiguous sense of time is achieved through gestural changes in the pulse of the music through choice of notes' duration, speed of notes, and rests often in the performer's hands.

Ex. 5: Excerpt of *Klibat*, showing ambiguous time and duration

Klibat
Glimpse

Camellia Mohamed Razali

Score in C
* Bar lines serve as a means of orientation; there is no metrical pulsation.

♩=60 Mischievous

Clarinet in Bb slap tongue

p < *mf* > *p* - *mf* > *p* > *pp* > *ppp* *p*

Cl. lip bend

p < *mf* > *p* < *mf* > *p* > *pp*

Ex. 6: Excerpt of Klibat II, showing ambiguous pulse

Klibat II
Glimpse II

Camellia Mohamed Razali

A $\text{♩} = 54$ Adagio

Bassoon

mf *p* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

sempre espress.

5

p *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf*

For clarification, there is no perceivable musical difference between the free and the controlled notational systems here, because this time the medium is for a solo instrument, thus freedom in time can be achieved through both notations. The performer is able to make the *diminuendos* as long as the performers need to, stretching and expressing passages within the pacing of phrases. The written notes and gestures of this suite bring out just the right responses from the clarinet and bassoon, showing different characteristics of both instruments. The passages rather look freely played on the page, however, they aren't actually as free as they might appear, because they are actually dictated by the written speed.

The quality of the suite requires an instrumentalist to think about being beautiful in sound production, by letting everything flow effortlessly from one moment to the next even including sometimes surprising turns, breaks or disruptions. Across three years, these two works were all composed at particularly different times and musical outlooks. In terms of sound and structure, however, both solo pieces in this Suite for Winds seem to be very similar. However, there are some obvious differences among them. Underneath the musical surface of this suite, we shall find contrasting compositional processes and aesthetic purpose.

CHAPTER 3

SUITE FOR WINDS

I. KLIBAT (Glimpses)

Solo clarinet in B flat

2013

The first solo piece of this suite is for clarinet. *Klibat* (Glimpses), or brief images of the clarinet's sound (as the title suggests), pictures the solo clarinet moving and hiding from one's view. It combines legato lines with short bursts of staccatissimo. Loud short notes with soft high held notes move through different dynamics in between pauses and silences, as one would when holding one's breath when hiding from view. These are the sketches or imagination of movements I had in mind before writing *Klibat*. However, with my initial understanding of clarinet as a melodious and singing instrument, I had a slight inhibition to proceed with this piece. A commission received from the Contemporary Music Venture Concert Series 2013, at the University of Bristol, changed my mind and encouraged me to complete the piece for the concert in February 2013.

To realize the imagined sound and movements of my new clarinet piece, I decided to begin with a different approach and turned to gestural writing. To actually shape this work for solo clarinet, I used a composing process that concentrated more on obvious elements of music; gesture and tone colour. Gesture for me, as I have found out through reading and through my observation, is actually capturing the movement or feelings of movement through music. Gestural writing also actually extends into and could actually be inspired by visual art and literature. For me, its essence is about subconscious lines that are connected to create direction and motion.

Gestural writing

The brush strokes on a canvas are visible markings of an artist's gesture, as in music, sound and its movement in time is an audible gesture on an instrument. In a broader sense of meaning, gesture does not mean only movement, but a movement that can express something, and represents a special meaning. It is more than a body

action, or an activity. According to Iazetta, “gesture is an expressive movement that becomes actual through temporal and spatial changes.”²¹ Obviously this statement describes gestures as more than simple movements, but rather gestures are actually movements with meaning.

Nevertheless, when dealing with music and especially with composing music, there are different subtle affects of gestures that need to be appropriately specific in terminology. It is important to keep in mind that a classification of gestural types is only intended to point out some of the different functions of gestures. For example, Francois Delalande defines musical gesture as the meeting point of observable actions and mental images.²² He further argues that musical gestures may be studied at various levels, using the terms effective, accompanying and figurative gestures.²³ The term ‘effective gesture’ indicates a sound-producing gesture, while the term ‘accompanying gesture’ is used for the movement that supports the effective gesture in various ways, and the term ‘figurative gesture’ refers to a mental image that is not directly related to any physical movement, but which may be conveyed through sound.

Based on the above viewpoints, it seems straightforward to define three available types of musical gesture. Firstly, as an action pattern that produces music, second, a gesture that is encoded in music, and thirdly, a physical gesture which is made in response to music.

For example, a listener reacting towards music either through physical movements such as body swaying or nodding is a gesture made in response to music. The performer producing the sounds on the instrument is also reacting in response to the music notation written on the music score, therefore making physical and also figurative gestures. The musical performance depends in many different ways on the

²¹ Fernando Iazetta, *Meaning in Musical Gesture*, In Marcelo M Wanderly & Marc Battier (eds.) *Trends in Gestural Control of Music*, (Paris, IRCAM, 2000), 13.

²² Francois Delalande, *Le Geste, outil d'analyse: quelques enseignements d'une recherche sur la gestique de Glenn Gould*. *Analyse Musicale*, (extrait de 1988), 43-46.

²³ Claude Cadoz and Marcelo M. Wanderley, *Gesture*, In Marcelo M. Wanderley & Marc Battier (eds.), *Trends in Gestural Control of Music*, (Paris, IRCAM, 2000), 77-78.

player's physical gestures. Pressing a key or sliding a bow during a performance are movements that hold a meaning in themselves. And at the beginning of this cycle of gesture is the Composer, who has determined from the beginning the gestures demanded from the piece written through the composer's notation, articulation, dynamic curve, beat and tempo, form, direction and shape. Composers establish how a sound will be produced, they determine some characteristics of that sound, they set up connections with previous sonic events, and, at the same time, they mould a frame or path to further sounds. In this cycle of gesture, then, the composer is at the start of the gesture cycle, the listener at the end, and the performer in the middle, involved with every type listed above.

Previous examples of gesture could be seen and heard in scores such as from the third movement of Beethoven's string quartet in B flat Major, Op. 130, whereby there is a sense of winding down as energy begins to decline. In the third measure of the example, the chromatic step sequence suggests a winding down of energy (Example 1).

Ex. 1: Third movement of Beethoven's string quartet in B flat Major, Op. 130

Furthermore, in the opening of Brahms First Symphony, there is a sense of friction and conflict between the pedal point and the ascending voices struggling to emerge and break free. Further friction is generated by contrary motion in this example (Example 2).

Ex. 2: Brahms First Symphony, opening

Un poco sostenuto

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Brahms' First Symphony. It features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo/mood is marked 'Un poco sostenuto'. The Violin I and II parts are marked 'f espr. e legato'. The Viola part is marked 'div.' and 'f espr. e legato'. The Violoncello part is marked 'f espr. e legato'. The Contrabass part is marked 'f pesante'. The score shows the first four measures of the piece.

Gestural writing in *Klibat*

Subsequently, I chose to make angular movements in my writing for *Klibat's* music to adjust to the conceptual idea of *Klibat's* compositional style. In this work, these senses of angular direction and motion felt by listeners are achieved through my choices of articulation, tone colours and dynamics. I am very much in favour of utilizing contrasting tone colours of the clarinet. The clarinet is a very flexible and versatile character, with a wide array of sound qualities possible. It can be smooth and lyrical and sharp and aggressive in all its registers of low, middle and high.

The very last thing I actually did in *Klibat* was to assign pitches to the shapes I had composed. In short, I was not concentrating first on pitch when I started composing this piece. Instead, I implemented different gestures. By approaching musical composition through gestural writing, I was able to create music that is more effective, directed and whole.

Klibat begins with a slur quaver leap upward of Major 6th apart followed by a downward leap of Major 7th below. The opening phrase oscillates smoothly in dynamics, before the punctuation of two pitched slap tongues. This early section and section A is characterized mainly by longer note values such as quavers, crotchets and minims compared to the rest of the piece. Accelerating / decelerating semiquaver groups create uncertainty and tension. There are also quintuplet groups combining small-interval steps with large leaps. Rehearsal mark A then ends with a fluttertongue to a fast *appoggiatura* leading to trills in high B flat to high B natural, punctuated twice in *marcato*. The pitch centre for the introduction and rehearsal mark A is on pitch-classes F# and D. These two pitches are the first two pitches that appear in the beginning (Example 3).

Ex. 3: Beginning of *Klibat*

Clarinet in B \flat $\text{♩} = 60$ Mischievous

p \langle *mf* \rangle *p* \langle *mf* \rangle *p* \rangle *pp*

Rehearsal mark B is also active with fast semiquaver rhythms in quintuplets, sextuplets and septuplets. These septuplets move chromatically, before slowing down to *ritardando* and fading away *pianississimo*. Rehearsal mark B is a fairly quiet section containing playing techniques such as *vibratos* and key trills. The pitch centre for rehearsal mark B is E, even though it ends in D#. Therefore, as an audience, there is a feeling of anticipation, which is the same for the music, as the character is in suspense of being found (Example 4).

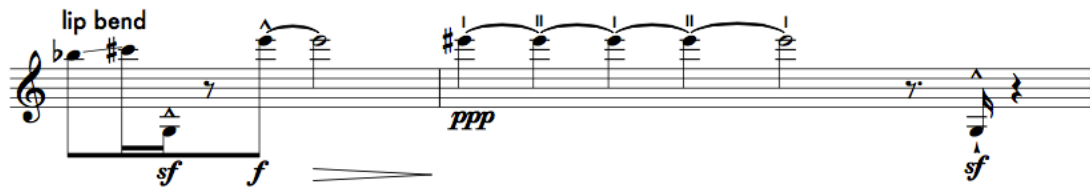
Ex. 4: Anticipation and suspense

pp *sempre* *rit.* *pp*

dying away *ppp*

Rehearsal marks C and D are loudest compared to the earlier movements. Section C begins with the pitch E following the D# from the end of section B. Section C has many gaps and rests that are filled in with sporadic slap tongue quavers and a lip bend (Example 5). The lower range of the clarinet is explored here through groups of semiquavers in *pianissimo* (Example 6).

Ex. 5: Slap tongue and lip bend

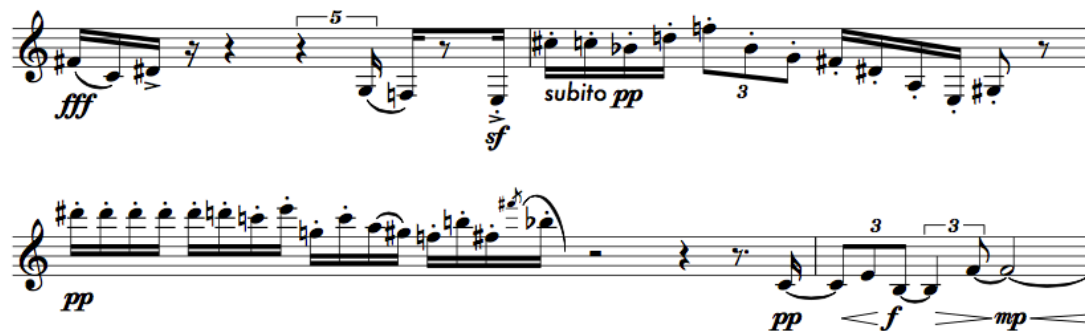


Ex. 6: Clarinet in low range semiquavers



Rehearsal mark D is filled with running semiquavers and staccato semiquavers in *pianissimo* (Example 7), followed by repeated G natural and ending in a succession of 5 slaptongues, followed by a high rolling E, a major 3rd above the last note of middle C. Section D has a faster momentum than the rest of the piece until the end, as it feels like the character is found at last, unable to hide any longer (Example 8).

Ex. 7: Running semiquavers in *staccato*



Ex. 8: Faster momentum in rehearsal mark D

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff contains a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a series of eighth notes with dynamic markings *f*, *mp*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The second staff begins with a five-note quintuplet marked *fff*, followed by five slurs over eighth notes marked *sf*, labeled "slap tongue". This is followed by a slur over eighth notes marked *ff*, labeled "flutterzunge", which then transitions to a final note marked *p*.

Conclusion

Klibat, for solo clarinet is articulate and precise in its execution of syncopated accents, slap-tongues and trills to articulate its primary concern with musical gesture. *Klibat* demands the clarinet's wide range, from the low *ppp* semiquavers right up to *fff* accented high notes of F#. *Klibat's* music is a momentum moving from moments of activity dissolving into silence.

Up until now, there has been no single clear definition of gesture, although most authors seem to agree that gestures involve both body movement and meaning, and they can be considered vehicles of human musical communication. However, this approach to the concept of gesture remains unclear to some extent and will therefore be necessary to differentiate in more detail. In all of this, as composers, it is important to remember the multi-functionality of gestures, which is that one single gesture may have multiple functions and meanings and affects ranging from the more physical to the more metaphorical, and these different functions enrich our musical experiences.

CHAPTER 4

SUITE FOR WINDS

II. KLIBAT II (Glimpses II)

Solo Bassoon

2016

This piece begins with a three-note statement repeated twice in similar motion and a slow and continuous, melancholic melody is written out. (Example 1). Continuous soundings of a crescendo quintuplet rolling down, coupled with rising stepwise motion set up the momentum for the piece ahead (Example 2).

Ex. 1: Opening bassoon melody

A musical score for Bassoon in 4/4 time, marked **Adagio** with a tempo of quarter note = 54. The piece begins with a three-note statement (*mf*) repeated twice in similar motion (*p*, *mf*), followed by a crescendo quintuplet (*pp*, *mf*, *pp*) with a *sempre espress.* marking.

Ex. 2: Rolling down crescendo quintuplet

A musical score for Bassoon in 4/4 time, starting at rehearsal mark 15. It features a quintuplet of notes with a crescendo dynamic (*mf*) and a *p* marking.

In the pitch realm, darkness gives way to clearness, as *Klibat II* slides through to its later sections. Within those constraints there are a wealth of other factors, as tones are suspended in air as they rotate through timbres. Large intervallic leaps jump out the work especially at rehearsal mark B (Example 3), then at rehearsal mark D (Example 4). This is actually the main plot of the work.

Ex. 3: Large intervallic leaps in rehearsal mark section B

A musical score for Bassoon in 4/4 time, marked **Più mosso** with a tempo of quarter note = 70. It features large intervallic leaps (*mf*) and a *pp* marking.

temporal character of the motive. Rhetorical gestures include the break or disruption of the flow of its musical discourse.

The ‘energetic shaping through time’ is the closest description of gesture that interests me here. The idea of existing energy in gesture leads on scholars into describing gesture also as a ‘dynamic field’ or having ‘biological urges’. In actual fact, the gestural energy of a melody is more essential than the sequence of pitches of a melody. Gesture lies in its continuity of motion through a path for which tones are landmarks. To clearly describe the definition of gesture, it can be seen as this – melody occurs between the tones, in the sweep of kinetic energy that flows through and becomes dammed up as potential energy.

The strong theatrical flavor of the piece results from the fact that it is based on three agents. The three elements I would like to define as musical agents are gravity (G), inertia (I), and momentum (M) (Example 8). All three provide sources of gestural energy in this solo bassoon piece, which I draw from. The first source of this gestural energy in my solo bassoon piece derives from our sense of gravity of down and up in its pitch space (Example 9). The pitch space gives a spatial perception of the total space available for the listener. Secondly, there is a force of inertia when there is a tendency to continue even after reaching stability, or for this matter, when the pitches aren’t active in movement or in pitch activity (Example 10). All this will then naturally bring forth the momentum of the piece, a continuity derived from the beginning.

Ex. 8: Arrows indicate the directional forces of gravity (G), inertia (I), and momentum (M)



Ex. 9: Arrows indicate the directional forces of gravity (G) in *Klibat II*

A ♩=54 Adagio

mf sempre espress. *p* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

Ex. 10: Arrows indicate the directional forces of inertia (I) in *Klibat II*

5

p *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf*

9

mf *p* *mf* *pp* *p* *mp*

15

mf *p* *mf*

molto accel. ♩=80

Conclusion

Upon completion, I discovered that when composing music it is difficult to lie. Gestures in music when performed shall easily reveal intentions, emotions and actions or the ‘musical truth’. Inspired by Dai Fujikura’s *Calling* for solo bassoon, *Suite for*

Winds is idiomatically written with percussive and exuberant lines for both clarinet and bassoon that requires from the performers a feat of technical rigour and finesse. Elaborate lines contrasting with more sustained lines becomes the motivation for the development of this composition. Sporadic interjections from the instrument with an overlay of powerful, angry gestures surge out of the bassoon. With some timbral mixtures, there is both a tranquility and obsessiveness in *Klibat II*.

CHAPTER 5

Neither, nor, but here...

Wind quartet (flute, oboe, clarinet, horn in F)

2013

***‘Maka nobat pun dipalulah dan nafiri pun diutitlah terlalu merdu
bunyinya.’***

Then nobat music was heard and the ever too melodious sounds of the nafiri
blew.

- Kamus Dewan, 4th edition.

Nobat

Upon hearing *nobat* music performed at occasions of formality or royalty, I was attracted to its strophic structure and unique soundworld. Its seemingly irregular drumbeats are actually signals articulated by rhythmic beats. *Nobat* music is a royal court music only played in the palaces and in the presence of royalties. The nobat court orchestra belongs to the Malay sultanates of West Malaysia and Sumatra, serving as symbols of sovereignty and part of his regalia.²⁵ Another meaning of *nobat* if looked upon its literal meaning, is in English, to be crowned. So therefore, *nobat*, both in its language and musical meaning, is relating towards the notion of royalty, king and ruler. Originating from a secular Middle Eastern musical tradition, *nobat* music developed in Malaysia as a tradition for Malay kings. With its special acoustic characteristics and aesthetics, *nobat* music has supported the power of the Malay kings since the fifteenth century.

Exclusively court musicians perform *nobat* music during important ceremonies such as the enthronement of kings or the births of royal babies, and *nobat* music is never allowed to be played in public performance or for any entertainment purposes. The *nobat* ensemble consists of the *gendang nahara* or large drum,

²⁵ Margaret J. Kartomi, The Royal Nobat Ensemble of Indragiri in Riau, Sumatra, in Colonial and Post-Colonial Times, *The Galpin Society Journal Vol. 50*, (Australia, Galpin Society, 1997), 3-15.

gendang ibu (medium drum), *gendang anak* (small drum), *serunai* (oboe/clarinet), *nafiri* (long silver trumpet) and *gong* (gong) (Figure 1). It is also worth mentioning that the western named instruments in brackets serve purposefully only as reference of the timbre and character of sound of the original instruments, but never a full comparison of the type of instrument.

The *serunai*, which is a reed instrument has seven holes above and one hole below, and made of wood. It serves as the main melody in *nobat* music, and signals the start of the music and cues the melody (song) that is to be played, thus it is always played at the beginning. The *nafiri* is also a reed instrument and is made of silver, and is 33 centimetres long with a silver cone shaped bell at its end. *Gendang nahara* keeps the tempo and beat of *nobat* music and its surface, which is made of mousedeer skin is hit with a pair of rattan sticks as long as 30 centimetres. *Gendang ibu* and *gendang anak* are double-sided barreled drums. They are played by hitting a stick on the right side of the drum and the left palm plays the left side of the drum. The right-hand side of the drum's surface is made of cowhide while the left-hand side of the drum's surface is made of goat hide. The gong is made of brass and is hung on a wooden frame when played. It is hit with a large wooden mallet.

Fig. 1: Instruments of a *Nobat* ensemble

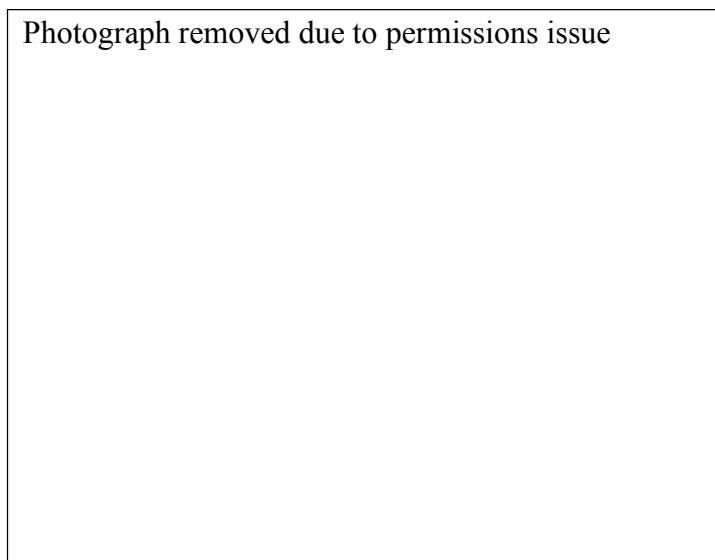
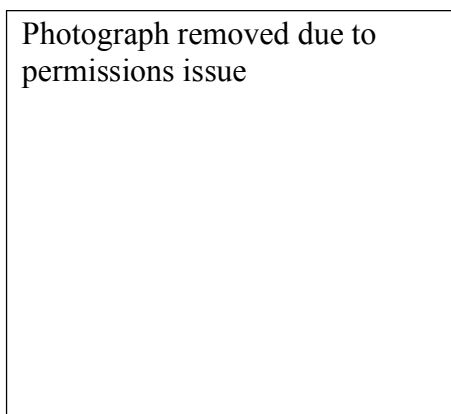


Fig. 2: Musicians of a *Nobat* ensemble



Upon receiving a commission to compose for a wind quartet at the Contemporary Music Venture Concert Series CMV 2013 in Bristol, I decided to put forward this piece. This piece will be a show of my personal reaction towards *Nobat*. The idea I had behind this piece was to bring my own interpretations of the *serunai* and *nafiri* into the wind quartet.

In the *nobat* musical tradition, the *serunai* melody is highly ornamented with trills, triplet figures, *acciaccatura*, *portamento*, *appoggiatura*, and turns. In contrast, the melodic line of the *nafiri* is rather static with a focus on the interval of a perfect 4th, minor 3rd, or a single sustained pitch. The dotted rhythm and the *appoggiatura* are featured in this *nafiri* melodic line using sustained pitches that are clear and loud. With its highly ornamented melodic lines, loud and precise rhythmic patterns, and the fanfare-like motifs on the *nafiri*, this music tradition is considered to project power and majesty for the Malay kingship.

The music of the *nobat* tends to be slow and medium in tempo and is very stately and majestic. A transcription of an excerpt of *Belayar*, a very important piece for a king's installation by Patricia Matusky is shown below (Example 1).

Ex. 1: An excerpt of *Belayar*. Transcription by Tan Sooi Beng²⁶

The first musical score is for an excerpt of *Belayar*. It consists of five staves: Serunai, Nafiri, Nengkara, Gendang nobat, and Gong. The Serunai staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 50$. The first measure is a whole rest. The second measure contains a quarter note with a sharp sign, followed by a dotted quarter note. The third measure is a trill (tr) over a quarter note. The fourth measure is a trill (tr) over an eighth note. The fifth measure is a trill (tr) over a quarter note. The Nafiri staff is in treble clef and contains whole rests for all five measures. The Nengkara staff is in 4/4 time and contains whole rests for the first two measures. From the third measure, it features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, grouped into three sets of triplets. The Gendang nobat staff is in 4/4 time and contains whole rests for the first two measures. From the third measure, it features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, grouped into three sets of triplets. The Gong staff is in 4/4 time and contains whole rests for all five measures.

The second musical score is for another excerpt of *Belayar*. It consists of five staves: Serunai, Nafiri, Nengkara, Gend., and Gong. The Serunai staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a trill (tr) over a quarter note. The second measure is a quarter note with a sharp sign, followed by a dotted quarter note. The third measure is a quarter note with a sharp sign, followed by a dotted quarter note. The fourth measure is a quarter note with a sharp sign, followed by a dotted quarter note. The fifth measure is a quarter note with a sharp sign, followed by a dotted quarter note. The Nafiri staff is in treble clef and contains whole rests for the first two measures. From the third measure, it features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, grouped into three sets of triplets. The Nengkara staff is in 4/4 time and contains whole rests for the first two measures. From the third measure, it features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, grouped into three sets of triplets. The Gend. staff is in 4/4 time and contains whole rests for the first two measures. From the third measure, it features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, grouped into three sets of triplets. The Gong staff is in 4/4 time and contains whole rests for all five measures.

²⁶ Matusky & Tan, *The Music of Malaysia*, 134.

Serunai 3 *tr*
 Nafiri
 Nengkara
 Gend.
 Gong

Serunai 5 3 *tr* 3 *tr*
 Nafiri
 Nengkara 3/4 4/4
 Gend. 3/4 4/4
 Gong 3/4 *p* 4/4

Serunai *tr* *tr* 5
 Nafiri
 Nengkara 3 3 3 3
 Gend.
 Gong

C

Serunai

Nafiri

Nengkara

Gend.

Gong

C2

Serunai

Nafiri

Nengkara

Gend.

Gong

D

$\bullet = 50 \cdot 60$

Serunai

Nafiri

Nengkara

Gend.

Gong

accel.

From the excerpt, music of the *nobat* can be seen as consisting of a melodic line played by the *serunai*, a rhythmic part played by two types of drums, which are *gendang* and *gendang nahara*, and a third layer of sound played on the *nafiri*. There is also a gong part, which usually marks off the ending of the drums rhythmic patterns.

Neither, nor, but here...

Neither, nor, but here... represents my own personal approach to sound with the use of wind instruments. I am exploring deeper into the sound world of wind instruments to enable me to manipulate the sounds.

The other key concept of this composition is to purposely highlight the disconnected relationship between all four instruments, flute, clarinet in B flat, oboe and French horn. This disconnected concept of relation comes from the composer Wolfgang Rihm in his chamber music, '*Kein Firmament*' (1988) for bass clarinet, contrabassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, 2 violins, viola, 2 cellos, double bass, piano, and 2 percussions.

Thus *Kein Firmament*, for ensemble (1988), is a substantial work in which the influence of Cage is embodied in the compositional process, pages of the score being shuffled in an unpredictable fashion to avoid any suggestion of continuity. Ultimately, the influence is expressed in terms of the interplay between sound and silence, but Rihm's individuality is still evident in the sounds themselves, which tend to be strongly accented, and often emphasize extremes of loudness or softness.²⁷

Wolfgang Rihm creates displacement through breaks and interruptions. The constant search for disconnection together paradoxically creates a total consistency of sound activity. '*Neither, nor, but here...*' has a fragmentary, sketch-like quality to it. Therefore, in this piece, rather than having the four wind instruments interacting together in twos or a trio or in fours, the wind members of '*Neither, nor, but here...*' are most often seen as 'conversing' with one another in solos (Example 2).

²⁷ John Warnaby, *Musica Nova 1990*, (UK, Cambridge University Press, 1990), 36-37.

Ex. 2: Fragmentary conversations between instruments

The wind instrument lines in *‘Neither, nor, but here...’* are notated precisely, without utilising any limited aleatoric techniques. But nevertheless, there are a few fast passages in sextuplets, septuplets and nonuplets, intentionally not synchronized so that the winds’ quaver sextuplets and semiquaver septuplets wash into one another, such as in bar 30 until bar 33. These are to push forward the motion of the music and at the same time to show contrast of texture. The fast passages in bars 30 – 33 are placed between two quiet and slow interludes (Example 3), firstly of the flute (bar 1 – 25), and secondly, of the oboe (bar 49 – 53). The result is a sense of resolution of the tension set up in between.

Ex. 3: Sextuplets, septuplets, and nonuplets wash into each other

There are moments of counterpoint writing in triplet quavers resulting in triads in bars 53 (Example 4) and 59 (Example 5), between the oboe, clarinet and French horn. These counterpoint triplets are for momentary connected relationships of the instruments. In the effort to create an unusually distinctive soundworld, this piece has combinations of free and synchronized rhythms. This mixture of rhythmic activity creates different intense or fragmented sections, which makes this piece all the more interestingly curious.

Ex. 4: Triplet quavers in oboe, clarinet, and horn (bar 53)

Musical score for bar 53. The score is in 3/4 time. It features four staves: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Horn in F. The Flute part has a melodic line with a trill-like figure. The Oboe, Clarinet, and Horn parts feature triplet quaver patterns. The Flute part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Oboe, Clarinet, and Horn parts have a dynamic marking of *mf*.

Ex. 5: Triplet quavers in oboe, clarinet, and horn (bar 59)

Musical score for bar 59. The score is in 4/4 time. It features four staves: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Horn in F. The Flute part has a trill. The Oboe, Clarinet, and Horn parts feature triplet quaver patterns. The Flute part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Oboe, Clarinet, and Horn parts have a dynamic marking of *f*.

Bar 61 onwards until the end is the climax of the piece, where all four instruments are playing at their loudest and interacting together more frequently through passing semiquavers and quintuplets, ending together at the chord of two

perfect fourths (Example 6). The final interval of perfect fourth brings the final moment of remembrance of an old and distant tradition, a reminiscence of the sounds of *nafiri* and *serunai*.

Ex. 6: Final perfect fourth interval, point of reminiscence

The musical score for Example 6 is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Horn in F. The Flute part begins at measure 61 with a dynamic of *mf*, followed by a *ff* section, and then a *p* section. The Oboe part enters with a *p* dynamic. The Clarinet in Bb and Horn in F parts also enter with *p* dynamics. The second system continues the music, featuring triplets and various dynamics including *f*, *mf*, *f*, *p*, and *ff*. The piece concludes with a final perfect fourth interval.

Conclusion

Nobat traditionally displays the majestic qualities of a Malay king in its music, but the personal reaction and outcome of composing ‘*Neither, nor, but here...*’ displayed a contrast of emotion with instead developing a constant calmness and strength throughout. ‘*Neither, nor, but here...*’ eventually turned out to be an untypically quiet and gentle work. Its brevity enhances its intense expression. Nevertheless, it is effective. For its form, unification and compositional language, it is concentrating on the essential linear, gestural or melodic expansions or transformations rather than harmonic structure.

CHAPTER 6

A Piece for String Quartet

String quartet (violin I, violin II, viola and violoncello)

2014

Ghazal

Ghazal is a relatively new genre of traditional music, originating in Johor (a state in Malaysia) in the late 19th century from Arab, Portuguese and Indian sources, but found also throughout the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. According to Abdullah bin Mohamed, quoted in Chopyak, the term *ghazal* is Arabic but passed into Persian, Turkish, Urdu and Malay and has acquired different meanings in these languages.²⁸ In Arabic literature, the *ghazal* is a poetic genre. It was a form of love poem, often also and *ghazal* in Persian and Urdu has developed into a vehicle for serious poetry. In Malay, the *ghazal* is not a poetic or musical form: it is rather a name applied to a musical session, a sort of a group musical party, consisting of traditional Malay folksongs controlled and disciplined by a small number of musical instruments—mostly of foreign origin—with harmonium as the leader.

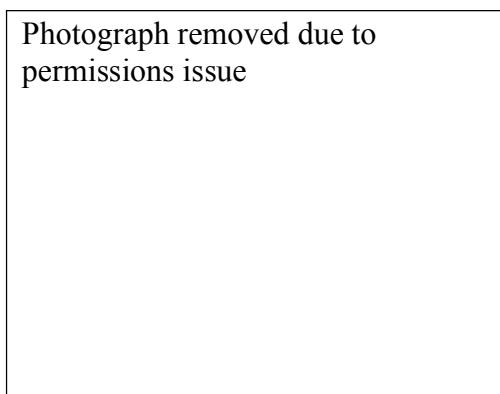
In Malaysia, the term *ghazal* seems to refer to a specific accompanying rhythm pattern, or an instrumental group, or/and the process of performing this music. There are variations in the orchestration used, but a basic *ghazal* group includes a violin, guitar, *gambus* (oud), tambourine, maracas, two tablas, and one harmonium. On occasion, Chopyak informs us that the Malay *rebana* and *gendang* are used to supplement or replace the second tabla. The violin plays the basic melody with the guitar and *gambus* providing the countermelodies. The harmonium usually plays countermelodies as well as occasional thirds (major/minor). *Ghazal* tempo is usually fairly quick. In an interview by Chintaka Meddegoda, Mohd. Anis Mohd. Nor suggests that *ghazal* was used to accompany dance in Johor as early as 1956.²⁹ The

²⁸ James D. Chopyak, *Music in Modern Malaysia: A Survey of the Musics Affecting the Development of Malaysian Popular Music*, *Asian Music vol. 18, No. 1* (USA, University of Texas Press, 1986), 111-138.

²⁹ Chinthaka Prageeth Meddegoda and Gisa Jähnichen, *Hindustani Traces in Malay Ghazal: 'A song so old, and yet still famous'*, (UK, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 12.

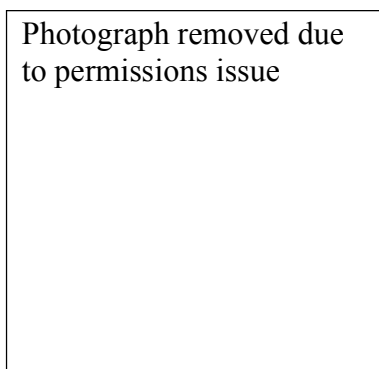
Ghazal musicians usually comprise 7 to 9 people, wearing *Baju Melayu* (traditional Malay costume for men) with *songkok* (mens' black headgear) and the *sampin* (embroidered cloth worn around the waist and hips) (Figure 1).

Fig. 1: A typical Ghazal ensemble



Ghazal is sung in Malay, but its songs reflect much Hindustani and Persian influence. It was originally sung in the Hindi language, accompanied by the *sharringgi*, a traditional chordophone, the Indian sitar, tabla and harmonium, and is still publicly performed in its original form within the Malaysian Indian community.³⁰ The violin and the gambus (Malay lute, originally Middle Eastern 'ud) have since replaced the *sharringgi* and the sitar. Today, modern ghazal groups also use such instruments as the mandolin, guitar, flute, Japanese drum, accordion, clarinet and ukelele. Ghazal music is non-notational and based on the Indian tal, which basically means that it is built from blocks of cyclic rhythmic patterns.³¹ (Mohd Ishak 1978).

Fig. 2: A harmonium



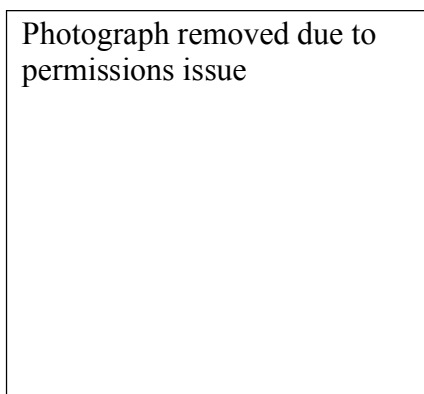
³⁰ Chopyak, *Music in Modern Malaysia*, 111-138.

³¹ Meddegoda and Jähnichen, *Hindustani Traces*, 31-33.

Fig. 3: A gambus



Fig. 4: A pair of tablas (in front of the player), and a rebana (on player's lap)



In the beginning, Ghazal was also known as “Gamat” meaning happy and lively. Nowadays Ghazal is better known as Ghazal Johor as it is now very much attached to the cultural identity of the Malay community in the state of Johor. Up until now, Ghazal is often performed during celebrations in Johor and also in palaces during royal ceremonies.

Performance with Quatuor Bozzini – Bristol New Music Festival 2014

The Bozzini String Quartet successfully performed the first movement of this piece for the New Music Festival in Bristol 2014. The first movement of my string quartet is my personal sound vision of a *ghazal*. Originating from ancient Arab times, *ghazal* is a form of poetry, often about love (either of divine or earthly love), pain and separation. However, after the *ghazal* poetry was brought to Asia through the Sufi

mystics, *ghazal* is now found in many other languages. Nowadays we can find ensembles playing *ghazal* music with vocalists singing about the same themes of love.

In Malaysia, *ghazal* has transferred into a standard form with a fixed ensemble, including the violin, *gambus (ud)*, *tabla* and harmonium, showcasing a combination of Persian, Indian and Western influence towards this particular Malay music. I have chosen the first movement of my string quartet to manipulate the sounds of *ghazal* into a new medium consisting of only string instruments.

(Example 1) shows a transcription of the harmonium melody in *Pak Ngah Balik* and *Sri Mersing (Example 2)* by Chintaka Prageeth Meddegoda. In his book, Meddegoda explains the harmonium's role in Ghazal as playing intervals, chords, and arpeggios.³² The harmonium players also tend to play full chords either intentionally or non-intentionally while playing. Characteristically, the drone of the harmonium always accompanies *ghazal* music in Malaysia.

Ex. 1: Notation of the harmonium melody of the first stanza in *Pak Ngah Balik*.
Transcription by Chintaka Meddegoda³³

³² Meddegoda and Jähnichen, *Hindustani Traces*, 206-215.

³³ *Ibid.*

Ex. 2: Notation of the harmonium melody of the first stanza in *Sri Mersing*.
 Transcription by Chintaka Meddegoda³⁴

In my piece, I have not followed the *ghazal* musical form, but specifically aimed to capture the character of the harmonium drone and violin into the first movement, which is represented by the harmonics and harmonic *glissandos* in the violas and cellos. And to evoke the essence of middle eastern music, for sections 1 and 2 of this string quartet, I have based upon the pentachord of G A B \flat C# D from the *Hijjaz maqam* (Example 3).

Ex. 3: *Hijjaz maqam*

The high-pitched *glissandos* in *pianissimo* strings also portray the lament and the feeling of longing and sighing of a sad lover. Sound of the melodic minor scale

³⁴ *Ibid.*

beginning on the 5th degree is hinted occasionally in Violins 1 and 2 for example in bar 12 (Example 4), and bars 17 – 18 (Example 5).

Ex. 4: Melodic minor in violin I

Musical score for Example 4, starting at bar 12. The score is in 6/4 time and has one flat (B-flat). It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin I plays a melodic line with a slur and a fermata, marked *mp*. Violin II plays a similar melodic line, also marked *mp*. Viola and Violoncello play a low, sustained line marked *ppp*.

Ex. 5: Melodic minor in violins

Musical score for Example 5, starting at bar 17. The score is in 6/4 time and has two sharps (F# and C#). It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin I plays a melodic line with a slur and a fermata, marked *mf*. Violin II plays a similar melodic line, also marked *mf*. Viola and Violoncello play a low, sustained line marked *pp* and *mp* respectively.

These examples could be compared to one of the popular songs in ghazal, *Sri Mersing*, shown here with both the main and counter melody in vocal and violin parts respectively (Example 6). The melismatic character of *Sri Mersing's* melody is depicted in my first movement as seen in Examples 4 and 5.

Ex. 6: Vocal and violin lines of a popular ghazal song, *Sri Mersing*

SRI MERSING

NN
Lagu Melayu
Notasi: Rizaldi

Rentak Senandung ♩ = 60

Vocal

Se ri Mere sing

Violin

Vocal

la gu lah Me la yu di ka rang o leh bi du an da hu

Vln.

Vocal

lu

Vln.

Bar 40 is the beginning of the second movement. This is the shortest movement in the whole piece. The harmony is centrally focused on the pitch class G. But also moves to the dominant pitch class, D occasionally. In non-western music, the dominant is an important concept, where the dominant D is in the upper range of the pentachord (G A B \flat C \sharp D). Once again there is a drone influence in the cello with tied quavers and offbeat accents. The triple time signature promotes a certain amount of momentum for this section, moving the notes forward. Besides the drone in the cello, this section is also characterized by the swelling melodic gestures of the viola and the swelling gestures of the two-note a tone apart in violin I (Example 7).

Ex. 7: Cello drone, swelling notes in viola and violin I

II **Energico con fuoco**
 40 ♩ = 120

Violin I
 Violin II
 Viola
 Violoncello

Violin 2 supports the harmony sporadically and plays the counter melody sometimes. Again there is a melodic minor scale in violins 1 and 2 at bars 60-62 (Example 8).

Ex. 8: Melodic minor melodies in violins, violin II supports harmony and counter melody

60

Violin I
 Violin II
 Viola
 Violoncello

The swelling *espressivo* melody of the viola continues to the higher ranges of treble clef and ends into the high held suspended note of C#. This high-suspended C# in treble clef is tied into and leads to the third section of the quartet (Example 9).

Ex. 9: Viola's ascending melody

The musical score for Example 9 is written for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at measure 74. The Viola part features an ascending melodic line, starting with a *mf* dynamic. The Violoncello part provides harmonic support with double-stopped quavers and crotchets, starting with a *p* dynamic. The Viola part concludes with a high note C# in the final measure.

The third movement is different from the first and second movement in terms of metre and pulse, and melodic material. As the high note C# in viola from the second movement is continued into the third movement, the melodic movement of the viola moves downwards and continues to move freely and comfortably in the lower, middle and upper registers of the viola. This wavy contour of the viola melody in steps and occasional leaps is moving alone like a short cadenza. However, irregular harmonic punctuations of double-stopped quavers and crotchets are provided by the violins I and II, and cello. Tied notes of harmony in the accompanying violins and cello bring the viola melody to its end at bar 100 (Example 10).

Ex. 10: Melodious viola, harmonies provided by violins and cello

The musical score for Ex. 10 consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems, starting at bar 91 and ending at bar 95. The Viola part is the central focus, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings of *mf* and *p*. The Violin I and II parts provide harmonic support with dynamics of *p* and *mp*. The Violoncello part also provides harmonic support with dynamics of *p* and *mp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets.

In overall, to create unity and coherence in the third section of this piece, I have used a pitch-class set (E ♭ G# C# F) as a basic structural unit to connect musical ideas and harmony. The intervals between the three bottom notes, E ♭ G# and C#, are perfect fourths apart, and the top two notes, C# F are a major 3rd apart. As a whole, the first part of the third movement is based upon these four pitches (pitch-class set). This pitch-class set is musically expressed in a variety of different ways. In the beginning of section III (bar 81), it is the melody that begins (Example 11). At bar 92, it appears as a musical melody for viola and it appears also as harmony at bar 92 between violins I and II, viola, and cello (Example 12). Also, it is the chord in bar 100 (Example 13).

Ex. 11: Pitch-class set (E ♭ G# C# F) in viola, bars 81 and 83

The musical score for Ex. 11 shows the Viola part from bar 81 to 83. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems, starting at bar 81 and ending at bar 83. The Viola part is the central focus, featuring a melodic line with dynamic markings of *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets.

Ex. 12: Pitch-class set (E ♭ G# C# F) as both melody and harmony

Violin I: *p* (measures 92-94), *mp* (measures 95-96)

Violin II: *mp* (measures 92-94), *mp* (measures 95-96)

Viola: *mf* (measures 92-94), *mf* (measures 95-96)

Violoncello: *p* (measures 92-94), *p* (measures 95-96)

Ex. 13: Pitch-class set (E ♭ G# C# F) as a chord at bar 100

Violin I: *ppp* (measures 99-100), *mf* (bar 100)

Violin II: *ppp* (measures 99-100), *mf* (bar 100)

Viola: *mf* (measures 99-100), *mf* (bar 100)

Violoncello: *pp* (measures 99-100), *mf* (bar 100)

The third movement progresses on with the Violin 1 now having a brief *cadenza* consisting of quavers and semiquavers. Repetitive quaver patterns in twos play below the cadenza line in Major and minor 2nds or fifth apart, which are played by the violin 2, viola and cello from bar 117 until bar 128 (Example 14).

Ex. 14: A brief *cadenza* by violin I accompanied by repetitive quaver patterns in other strings

The musical score for Example 14 consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 120-123) includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin I plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mf*, *p*, and *mf*. Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello play repetitive quaver patterns with a *ppp* dynamic. The second system (measures 123-126) includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin I continues its melodic line. Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello continue their repetitive quaver patterns.

There is a very short passage of four bars long of melody and counter melody between violin 1 and violin 2 before the piece moves on to a three-part counterpoint section for violin II, viola and cello (Example 15).

Ex. 15: Violins melody and counter melody; violin II, viola and cello counterpoint

The musical score for Example 15 consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 132 to 134. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 at the beginning of measure 133. In measure 132, Violin I plays a melodic line with a slur and an accent. Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello play a counterpoint consisting of eighth notes. Dynamics are marked as *mf* for Violin I and *mp* for the other three instruments. In measure 133, all instruments play a sustained chord. Dynamics are *mf* for Violin I and *mf* for the others. The instruction *legato espress.* is written below the Violin II and Viola staves. In measure 134, Violin I plays a melodic line, while Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello play a counterpoint of eighth notes. Dynamics are *mf* for Violin I and *f* for the other three instruments. The second system covers measures 134 to 136. It features three staves: Violin I, Viola, and Violoncello. The time signature is 4/4. Violin I plays a melodic line with a slur. Viola and Violoncello play a counterpoint of eighth notes. Dynamics are *mf* for Violin I and *f* for the other two instruments.

This section moves towards an ending by the cello leaving the counterpoint and violin 2 plays semiquavers with the viola playing accented crotchets on the downbeats. Violins 1 and 2 and cello will play successive chords in crotchet beats in *ritardando* and *piano* before this third movement ends (Example 16).

Ex. 16: Towards the end of the third movement

The musical score for Ex. 16 is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at measure 140, includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Violin II and Violoncello play a melodic line starting with a *mf* dynamic. The second system, starting at measure 142, is marked *Allargando* and *rit.*. It shows a dynamic progression from *ff* to *pp* across the measures. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The final and fourth movement of this string quartet is a homage to Bela Bartók. In his pieces, Bartok uses the expression *Bulgarian rhythm*, when he marks the bar structure at the beginning of such a piece with additive metres such as 2+2+3/8. Karpati explains,

This structure shows the inner asymmetric articulation, for example 2+3+3/8. As this articulation falls upon identical time units, this belongs to the case of divisional metre, it should be added, however, this is a particular case of divisional metre, because the basic bar structure – according to the asymmetric division - has been created by the additive principle. In other words: this type of metric structure is a special combination of divisional and additive thinking.³⁵

³⁵ Janos Kárpáti, *Alternative Bar Structures in Bartók's Music*, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 47(2), (Hungary, Studia Musicologica, 2006), 133.

Bartok is actually defining the grouping of the notes, that is the metre. This 2+3+3/8 division in principle stands close to the metric division of the 6th Bulgarian dance of *Mikrokosmos* (3+3+2/8), since the sum value of the quavers is 8, otherwise grouped, it could be 4/4 (Example 16).

Ex. 16: Mikrokosmos No. 6



Bartok's use of additive metres has inspired and a very similar occurrence is found in the use of additive rhythms in the fourth and final movement of this string quartet. The additive rhythms of 2+2+2+3/8 (Example 17), 2+2+3/8 (Example 18), and 2+3/8 (Example 19), are all actually 9/8, 7/8 and 5/8 respectively. The only difference is now the quaver beats are divided into groups of two and threes. In this piece, the violins have the accents in order to produce a 2+2+3/8 pulsation.

Ex. 17: Additive rhythms, 2+2+2+3/8



Ex. 18: Additive rhythms, 2+2+3/8

Musical score for Example 18, measures 157-158. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The time signature is 2+2+3/8. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music is marked *f* (forte). The rhythm is additive, consisting of two groups of two eighth notes followed by a group of three eighth notes. The notes are: Violin I: G#4, A4, B4, C5; Violin II: G#4, A4, B4, C5; Viola: G#3, A3, B3, C4; Violoncello: G#2, A2, B2, C3. The first measure (157) ends with a fermata over the final note. The second measure (158) continues the pattern with a fermata over the final note.

Ex. 19: Additive rhythms, 2+3/8

Musical score for Example 19, measures 163-164. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The time signature is 2+3/8. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music is marked *f* (forte). The rhythm is additive, consisting of a group of two eighth notes followed by a group of three eighth notes. The notes are: Violin I: G#4, A4, B4, C5; Violin II: G#4, A4, B4, C5; Viola: G#3, A3, B3, C4; Violoncello: G#2, A2, B2, C3. The first measure (163) ends with a fermata over the final note. The second measure (164) continues the pattern with a fermata over the final note.

These additive metres are especially common in notating folk music or non-western rhythms in non-western music. The above quoted examples of additive metre are not connected only with folk song arrangements. As discovered, these additive metres are the driving force behind this movement's pace and direction.

The momentum of this movement moves non-stop right until the end of the piece where the last 11 bars of music is a repetitive three-note quaver in *staccato fortissimo* (Example 20).

Ex. 20: three-note quavers in *staccato fortissimo* until the end

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet, measures 222-224. The score is written for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music consists of three-note quavers in staccato fortissimo (f spicc.) until the end. The dynamics are marked as f spicc. and ff. The score is written in a system with four staves. The first staff is Violin I, the second is Violin II, the third is Viola, and the fourth is Violoncello. The music is in 3/4 time and features a sequence of three-note quavers in staccato fortissimo (f spicc.) until the end. The dynamics are marked as f spicc. and ff.

Conclusion

Composing for a string quartet and working with *Quatuor Bozzini* has made me discover and experience string quartet music through the eyes and ears of the players. Such a huge wealth and range of sounds are possible through the violins, viola, and cello that composers like me, are always wanting to come up with something new for a string quartet. I managed to express a variety of unusual and unearthly sounds and tones to the music by applying some extended techniques (e.g. first movement). With a group of many possibilities, the experience in the composer's kitchen and performance by *Quatuor Bozzini* was very rewarding and essential for a composer to obtain knowledge of writing for string quartet performers, especially pertaining to notational and technical issues.

As this string quartet was composed in the early years of this portfolio, initial efforts of implementing cultural nuances into the string quartet such as *ghazal* music and Eastern-European folk music with the implementation of additive rhythms, is simply showing the fact of how sensitive a point this was in the creative compositional process.

CHAPTER 7

SENJA

Orchestra

2014

Senja means twilight. The time of day that is relatively short and lasting only about 45 minutes in Malaysia yet holds a mysterious aura in the culture of Malays. Twilight in Malaysia is roughly around 7 p.m. until 7.45 p.m. all year round. It is believed to be the witching hour or a taboo hour to be outdoors especially children are not allowed to play and adults to roam outside. These are to do with the animistic beliefs of ancestors and also along with the teachings of Islam whereby, it is usually the time of Maghreb prayers, and therefore it is encouraged for Muslims to perform the prayer instead of spending time idly.

For *Senja*, I have opted to present the animistic beliefs of the ‘witching hour’ hence the approach towards an exploration of delicate, sensual sounds in slowly shifting textures to create a suspended sense of time. The large blotches of sound are subtle yet resonant in the timbral instrumental sounds. These different colours emerge almost unnoticeably. The texture is shaped and pulled in different ways, as if it is manipulated into its own direction effortlessly.

Ligeti and Micropolyphony

In his sound mass compositions, Ligeti explores sudden timbral shifts between instruments of the orchestra. This orchestral piece, especially in the third movement, was influenced by the style and technique of micropolyphony as in Ligeti’s sound mass orchestral compositions. I am exploring the importance of timbre, dynamics, textures and rhythms in creating washes of sounds and colours. After studying Ligeti’s sound mass orchestral pieces, I felt encouraged to challenge myself to use new techniques in composing. However, micropolyphony is only one of the compositional languages that I am using in *Senja*, which is written for a full orchestra.

Micropolyphony is a kind of polyphonic musical texture and also a compositional technique developed by György Ligeti which consists of many lines of dense canons moving at different tempos or rhythms, thus resulting in vertical cluster chords. Canon is a strict form of imitative polyphony (linear or horizontal), while a cluster chord is a harmonic structure (vertical). However, in micropolyphony, Ligeti has developed them simultaneously together to achieve musical texture and a compositional technique. According to David Cope,

micropolyphony resembles cluster chords, but differs in its use of moving rather than static lines"; it is "a simultaneity of different lines, rhythms, and timbres."³⁶

In his sound mass compositions, Ligeti is highlighting the importance of texture in the compositional process. What's interesting here is that Ligeti is using a polyphonic texture with lots of tiny imitated lines to create a sound that is very similar to a cluster chord or a pile of pitches. The reason Ligeti simply doesn't write a cluster chord is because there is a difference between these two dissonant structures whereby constant movement of the lines in his micropolyphony creates a dynamic quality while a cluster chord seems more static. Differences between micropolyphonic texture and conventional polyphonic texture can be explained by Ligeti's own description:

Technically speaking I have always approached musical texture through part-writing. Both *Atmosphères* and *Lontano* have a dense canonic structure. But you cannot actually hear the polyphony, the canon. You hear a kind of impenetrable texture, something like a very densely woven cobweb. I have retained melodic lines in the process of composition, they are governed by rules as strict as Palestrina's or those of the Flemish school, but the rules of this polyphony are worked out by me. The polyphonic structure does not come through, you cannot hear it; it remains hidden in a microscopic, underwater world, to us inaudible. I call it micropolyphony (such a beautiful word!).³⁷

³⁶ David Cope, *Techniques of the Contemporary Composer*, (USA, Schirmer Books, 1997), 101.

³⁷ Jonathan W. Bernard, Voice Leading as a Spatial Function in the Music of Ligeti, *Music Analysis* Vol. 13, No. 2/3, *Twentieth-Century Music Double Issue* (Jul. - Oct., 1994), (USA, Wiley, 1994), 227.

I. First movement

In overall, *Senja* is divided into three main movements. The first movement of this piece is based upon the main theme made up of three notes (C, C#, D). These three notes move chromatically upwards and downwards step-wise seen in the beginning, in the parts for cellos and double basses. Chordal harmonies answer the calling of this theme with chords moving in chromatic step-wise motion in woodwinds, brass and tremolo strings (Example 3). These three pulsating notes are slow but provide a strong directional force guiding the listener further into the realms of mysterious twilight in *Senja*.

Ex. 3: Beginning of *Senja*, first movement

The musical score is for the beginning of the first movement of *Senja*. It is in 2/2 time and marked with a tempo of quarter note = 50, with the instruction "Brooding, espressivo". The score includes parts for Clarinet in Bb 1,2; Bass Clarinet in Bb; Horn in F 1,2; Trombone 1,2; Tuba; Violin II; Viola; Violoncello; and Contrabass. The woodwinds and brass play a chromatic sequence of notes (C, C#, D) with dynamic markings of *mp*, *mf*, and *mp*. The strings play a similar chromatic sequence with dynamic markings of *pp* and *p*. The Viola part includes the instruction "div., sul pont." and the Horn part includes "bouche" and "a2 con sord.". The Tuba part includes "con sord." and the Violin II part includes "sul pont.". The score is marked with first endings and dynamic markings throughout.

As each event progresses singularly, a motion begins to emerge from within the stasis of sound. Solid blocks of sound start to rumble and shimmer with increasing speed. A continuous semiquaver movement in high violins is interrupted by dissonant brass and wind figures. A powerful mix of plucked and snap pizzicato strings with

sudden sharp interruptions of distinctive irregular staccato quaver beats in brass and woodwinds is a contrast of orchestration and rhythmic and melodic gestures, and contrasting dynamic levels (Example 4).

Ex. 4: High strings, dissonant brass and woodwinds, plucked and snap pizzicato strings, irregular beats

The image displays a detailed musical score for an orchestral piece, labeled as Example 4. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes parts for the following instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Horn in F, Trumpet in Bb, Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Wood Blocks, Glockenspiel, Marimba, Vibraphone, Piano, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The tempo is marked as '♩ = 100 Lively'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the woodwinds and brass instruments, with dynamic markings such as *f* and *mp*. The second system shows the strings and percussion, with dynamic markings including *mp*, *p*, *ff*, and *pp*. The strings are playing a continuous semiquaver line, and the woodwinds and brass are playing staccato quaver beats. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts.

It is like a beginning of a fanfare, signaling a feeling of growing power. Despite the use of micropolyphony, the harmonic language is relatively traditional. Rising woodwind figures with lively phrases in woodwinds allow the strings to climb up steadily with higher and quicker shapes. The continuous semiquaver line recommences in the marimba, supported by the vibraphone, which then continues into more material in glockenspiel (Example 5).

Ex. 5: Lively, rising woodwind figures with strings, marimba, vibraphone and glockenspiel

This musical score, titled "Ex. 5: Lively, rising woodwind figures with strings, marimba, vibraphone and glockenspiel", is a full orchestral score. It begins at measure 37 and spans 24 measures. The woodwind section (Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon) features intricate, rising sixteenth-note patterns, often marked with accents and dynamic markings like *ff* and *p*. The brass section (Horn in F, Trumpet in Bb, Trombone, Tuba) provides harmonic support with sustained notes and dynamic markings such as *f* and *ff*. The percussion section includes Timpani, Wood Blocks, Glockenspiel, Marimba, and Vibraphone, with the Glockenspiel and Vibraphone playing rhythmic patterns. The string section (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass) plays a steady accompaniment, often using *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *div.* (divisi) techniques. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The overall mood is lively and rhythmic.

Senja began as controlled and refined, yet simple accompaniment figures, whose short, sudden outbursts from the orchestra, are the primitive force behind its first movement. From the start, *Senja's* expressive range is anticipated to be much broader, and in quieter episodes reveals a multiple range of orchestral colour

The progression of the first movement is of spirit and spontaneity. It boasts of quite a broad stylistic ground within short periods. It features quite a few loud climaxes, which lends a sense of expressive urgency.

II. Second movement

The beginning of the second movement of this orchestral piece uses aleatoric material especially in the woodwinds and piano. These instruments are playing repeated pitches at a fast speed for as long as indicated. However, there is no indication to maintain synchronization with other instruments. The pitches between the piano and woodwinds are inversions of each other. In this movement, I have allowed spaces for the piece to breathe while there is a regular presence of a harmonic background in the strings and brass sections. To maintain a connection with the main theme, the brass section (trumpets and trombones) play accompanying quaver and crotchet harmonies, similar to the ones in the first movement (Example 6).

Ex. 6: Use of aleatoric material, breathing spaces for the music

The musical score is for the second movement, starting at measure 76. It includes the following instruments and parts:

- Flute:** Plays a rapid, repeated-note pattern starting at measure 76, marked *pppp* *poco a poco cresc.* A box highlights the first few measures. Later, it plays a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Clarinet in Bb:** Remains silent until measure 84, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Bass Clarinet in Bb:** Plays a rapid, repeated-note pattern starting at measure 76, marked *pppp* *poco a poco cresc.* A box highlights the first few measures. Later, it plays a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Bassoon:** Plays a rapid, repeated-note pattern starting at measure 76, marked *pppp* *poco a poco cresc.* A box highlights the first few measures. Later, it plays a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Trumpet in Bb:** Remains silent until measure 84, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *pp*.
- Trombone:** Remains silent until measure 84, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *mp* and *pp*.
- Glockenspiel:** Plays a rapid, repeated-note pattern starting at measure 76, marked *pppp* *poco a poco cresc.* A box highlights the first few measures. Later, it plays a melodic line with dynamics *f*, *pp*, and *p*.
- Piano:** Plays a rapid, repeated-note pattern starting at measure 76, marked *pp* *secco, poco a poco cresc.* A box highlights the first few measures. Later, it plays a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *pp*.
- Harp:** Plays a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *pp*.
- Violin I:** Remains silent until measure 84, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *pp*.
- Violin II:** Remains silent until measure 84, then plays a melodic line with dynamics *pp* and *pp*.
- Viola:** Plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *pp*, and *pp*.
- Violoncello:** Plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *pp*, and *pp*.
- Contrabass:** Plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *pp*, and *pp*.

Tempo and performance instructions:

- Repeat fast and freely, always lightly
- $\text{♩} = 42$ Dolce, gentle flow always

This central, slow section displays a tendency to use extreme registers simultaneously to create an entirely different atmosphere. Rhythm is replaced by timbre as the dominant feature. A disembodied effect is produced by juxtaposing a series of brief gestures on the strings as they play *divisi* chords with sustained trills against occasional glissandos on the violas and cellos. The piano, percussion and harp have been used to provide soft *tremolandos* followed by shimmering lines in the background (Example 7). All the parts are decorative in the instruments. Here, I was inspired by the widely spread textures of Kaija Saariaho, in many ways a disciple of Ligeti's 60's period, who proclaims, "I don't believe in austerity, but I do in purity."³⁸

³⁸ Julian Anderson, & Kaija Saariaho, *Seductive Solitary*. Julian Anderson Introduces the Work of Kaija Saariaho, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 133, No. 1798, (London, Musical Times Publications Ltd., 1992), 616.

contrasting material. The technical possibilities of the piano have been used to produce a link between the rhythmic and textual aspects of *Senja's* creative imagination, and as a result, the main feature of the second movement is fluidity instead of rigid gesture.

A flowing, wispy and delicate soundworld is what is aimed for in the second movement of *Senja*. The harmony is rather less focused and intentionally somewhat ambiguous, combined with processes of timbral transformation involving different instruments of the orchestra. The distinction between movements is the form and material of each and every one of them and not so much concerning the harmonic material. Dazzling brightness, textural surfaces, and encroaching shadows are some of the musical displays in this second movement, which is a result of the fusion between texture and timbre. Texture does not only define coordination of parts but it also refers to qualities of sound, involving timbre, density, and register.³⁹ Therefore, the fusion or the union between texture and timbre can never really be separated and defined independently. Generally timbre is used to describe the characteristic of a sound or single instrumental colour, whereas texture refers to varied combinations up to the full conglomeration of instruments. Upon realising this, to achieve a state of fusion and between texture and timbre in the second movement of this string quartet requires a method of instrumental blending.

The technique of instrumental blending (such as soft tones on the flute and harmonics on the strings), and by using the complete range of timbres, creates a suitable reflection of the dreamlike, almost mystical atmosphere of *Senja*. The orchestra is shimmering with delicate timbres. The sustained, murmuring orchestral sonority gives a certain cool shade of colour. Intricate and complex sometimes are the close dialogues between instruments, one imitating the other's material. These instruments blend into a continuous sound world of a general expressive sweep, with a very poetic atmosphere. Individual instrumental sounds gradually emerge as subtle and resonant timbral extensions of slowly shifting textures. The second movement continues to pursue a lonely expression in a suspended sense of time. Brooding

³⁹ Jonathan De Souza. Texture. *The Oxford handbook of Critical Concepts in Music Theory*, (UK, Oxford University Press, 2015).

melancholy, soft and whispering, chillingly atmospheric strings evoke imagery of the movement's elegiac content. Distributed in the woodwinds is a rich and bass-centred sonority and dense textures (Example 8).

Ex. 8: Woodwinds in the second movement

89

repeat fast and freely, always lightly

Flute I
pp

Flute II
pp

Oboe I
pp

Oboe II
pp

Clarinet in B \flat I
pp

Clarinet in B \flat II
pp

Bass Clarinet in B \flat
pp

Bassoon
pp

mf > pp < mf

pp < f

Outwardly, a freer, more subtle and undefined musical language is achieved. At first everything seems directionless, freely floating and unstable. However, eventually, slowly, more rhythmic and percussive definition is injected. Clear-cut structures and obvious forms are nevertheless mainly avoided to create contrast against the first and third movements.

III. Third movement

Senja's third movement features a soloistic melodic gesture played by the oboe. The gesture is traditionally inspired, as a melodic quotation of *Nobat* music. This melody is dark and smoky, with auxiliary notes above and below (Example 9). After a fleeting of gestures in the second movement, it seems that in the third movement, the instruments of the orchestra are returning for a more exciting progression towards an outburst. There will always seem to be a wrestling match between dissolution into nothingness and assertive gestures. *Senja's* third and final

movement is a sort of a timbral experiment, exploring aspects of the orchestra's capacity for pure sound. The third movement delivers clarity of expression and specific changes of effects ranging from hints of micropolyphonic voices and percussive rustling to lyrical melodic passages. The expressions and timbral qualities present are subtle and have a spontaneous and natural element to them. It achieves an outward simplicity rather than it overwhelms with numerous instrumental effects. From the beginning of the third movement, the oboe's solo melody, with exposed drums beneath has set a tone of reflective character.

Ex. 9: Oboe's dark soloistic melodic gesture

109 $\text{♩} = 64$ Exotic, moderately slow

Flute I *ppp*

Flute II *ppp*

Oboe I *mf*

Oboe II

Clarinet in Bb I *ppp*

Clarinet in Bb II *ppp*

Bass Clarinet in Bb *ppp*

Bassoon *ppp*

Timpani *mf*

Bongo Conga *mp* with sticks

$\text{♩} = 64$ Exotic, moderately slow

Within bars 116 and 120 distant pianissimo chords from the piano indicate a new direction to follow. The diminution in volume is matched by a change in timbre. An upward scale figure returns in a mix of triplets and semiquavers. This continues with increasing softness. A subtle buzzing of lush, shimmering micropolyphony by the woodwinds and brass blurs the edges and the sounds all but disappear. Blooming harmonies as textures fan out from pitches – *Lontano* was the inspiration here. These large washes of modulating timbres are both subtle and mannered (Example 10).

Ex. 10: A subtle, shimmering micropolyphony in woodwinds and brass

The image displays a musical score for Example 10, featuring woodwinds and brass. The score is written in 4/4 time and begins at measure 119. The instruments listed are Flute I, Flute II, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb I, Clarinet in Bb II, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Horn in F I, Horn in F II, Trumpet in Bb I, Trumpet in Bb II, Trombone I, and Piano. The woodwinds and brass parts are characterized by intricate, shimmering micropolyphony, with many notes beamed together and marked with triplets and quintuplets. The piano part provides a harmonic and rhythmic foundation, often using triplets and quintuplets. Dynamics include *ppp*, *pp*, and *ff*. Performance instructions such as *con sord.* (con sordina) are present for the brass instruments. The score is divided into three measures, with the piano part showing a clear progression of chords and textures.

Bar 140, with a new tempo marking and new time signature, marks the entrance of a violin solo part, replacing the oboe. Its soloistic melody is different from the oboe in terms of its patterns, sequence, and articulative gestures. The solo violin is fully supported now by the strings and wind sections playing in general micropolyphony (Example 11), leading into bar 151, which is a micro section in the third movement during which the orchestra picks up its momentum. At bars 155-163, the orchestra is on the move with more energetic material. The interplay between darkness against light rises to the foreground. Ecstatic repeated semiquaver patterns in glockenspiel and marimba are in parallel with appoggiaturas in strings, and ends with a flourishing ascending pattern in piano, vibraphone, and glockenspiel (Example 12).

Ex. 11: Solo violin supported by strings and winds in micropolyphony

♩ = 80

140

Flute I *ppp*

Flute II *ppp*

Clarinet in B♭ I *ppp*

Clarinet in B♭ II *ppp*

Violin *pppp*

Violin I *pppp*

Violin II *pppp*

Viola *pppp*

Violoncello *pppp*

Contrabass *p*

solo
gli atri

Fl. *pp*

Fl. *pp*

Cl. *ppp*

Cl. *ppp*

Vln. *tr*

Vln. I *pppp*

Vln. II *pppp*

Vla. *pppp*

Vc. *pppp*

Cb. *pppp*

diminuendo poco a poco *pppp*

Melismatic violin-figuration against harmonics and tremolos in high string lines form a gentle progression towards the close of the work. The final section has sustained notes in brass and lower woodwinds playing the main theme, tied into one another before coming to a final close on a long decrescendo semibreve.

Conclusion

The Western tradition of homophonic and polyphonic music generally emphasises the importance of pitch and duration. For *Senja*, I have not deliberately ignored these traditional concepts, yet I am inclined to question their domination when composing more texturally-oriented music.

I am putting forward in *Senja* the basic elements of timbre and time, in some ways similar to Schoenberg's experiment in *Klangfarbenmelodie*, which emphasized timbre rather than pitch as the object of interest. *Senja* represents for me definitely a change from thinking in terms of pitch and duration to thinking in terms of events in time that consist of timbral metamorphosis, large shifts in pattern and rhythm, the choreography of the musical gestures, space, and rhythmic curves. It is a work of bright, complex, and often stark timbres that fill up sonic spaces, in which time has slowed.

The quality I tried to create was that like a hovering fog waiting, and finally settling in. The constituent sounds of *Senja* move between timbres, from nothingness to pitch, from winds to strings, single tone to tremolo, octave transpositions, sweet to strong, each moment growing as music is stretched and pulled. With a mixture of some brief sound bursts, *Senja* is a large timbral splash of sound, an exploration of vivid colours and lively spatial techniques showcasing the metamorphosis of timbre.

It is an experience of sounds trying to communicate without words. It is a dark and moody 'vision poem' that leaves the listener deeply moved. What I mean as a 'vision poem' is a vision of sound that demands attention. This music is broad and evocative with colourful orchestration, contrasts of mood, and climaxes.

CHAPTER 8

JOURNEY

For 10 instruments

2014

Journey was written at the end of 2014 and I consider it as the piece that marks a new milestone in my musical journey, hence the title, Journey. The form of Journey is divided into fast – slow - fast sections. The first section combines two different octatonic scales (half-step, whole-step, half-step) and (whole-step, half-step, whole-step). It can be observed that the pitch relations in the whole of Journey and the resultant pitch groupings are the outcome of reference from the octatonic base.

For the composition of Journey, I also took a rather intuitive approach towards it instead of my more methodical approach with my other compositions before. My use of octatonicism as a counterpart in relation to the use of all the other pitches is simply extending my expression towards new and ambiguous sonorities. I intend to a certain extent to create a pitch structure which is more free, but nevertheless defined within its parameter. The ability to transform the pitch structure is therefore in the end reflecting a personal expression into Journey's composition.

The beginning of the piece is already established by strong rhythmic gestures first appearing in the strings. Journey begins with a few bars introducing an ostinato-like repeated rhythmic figure, repeated exactly, while pitch content changes continuously. This will eventually suggest the relationships of continuity and variety of the whole piece extensively. The string parts are organized in three-bar groups of repeated rhythmic figures. Each string line is having different pitch content, which changes continuously (Example 1). This technique of rhythmic gesture ensures the aggressive drive of the piece as a whole. The particular rhythmical gesture always appears without any accompanying melodies. Combinations of several dialogues between other instruments then follow after this in the first section.

Ex. 1: Repeated rhythmic figures with changing pitch content

The musical score is for three instruments: Violin I, Violin II, and Viola. It is in 3/4 time and marked with a tempo of ♩=108 con fuoco. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score consists of three measures. In each measure, the instruments play a rhythmic figure of eighth notes. The dynamics are: Measure 1: Violin I (f), Violin II (f), Viola (f); Measure 2: Violin I (p), Violin II (p), Viola (mf); Measure 3: Violin I (f), Violin II (f), Viola (f). The pitch content changes from measure to measure, with some notes being tied across measures.

Octatonicism is not consistently obvious at the musical surface of Journey. The obscurity of octatonic collections is achieved by octatonic reference such as building up semitone and tritone relations within an octatonic context. By doing so, I still can create form, musical connections and flow throughout Journey without strictly following its octatonic boundaries. The drifting nature of pitch relations of Journey between octatonic and total chromatic saturation is a means towards creating unification of contradicting pitch ramifications.

More generally in terms of harmony, harmonic continuity and harmonic progressiveness in octatonic writing is often found to be static and inactive. Merging octatonicism with chromaticism (or interference notes, as I may call it), was the path I used to overcome this situation. Therefore, Journey's harmonic content is derived from octatonic collections, but inserted with manipulations of intervals. The main harmony consists of a combination of fifth, tritone and second intervals (minor or Major 2nd). These intervals are then and may be manipulated by inversions. For example in bars 9, 75, 129, and 140 (Example 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d). Sometimes polychords are used, as in bars 75-80 (Example 3).

Ex. 2a: Bar 9 (G,D,F#,G#,B)

Musical score for Ex. 2a, Bar 9, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The bar number 9 is indicated at the top left. The dynamics are *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notes are: Violin I (G4), Violin II (F#4), Viola (D4), Violoncello (B3), and Double Bass (B2). The notes are connected by a slur, and the dynamics change from *p* to *mf* across the bar.

Ex. 2b: Bar 75 (D,E,F#,F,G,Bb,B)

In C

$\text{♩} = 56$ slowly

Flute *f*

Clarinet in B \flat *f*

Horn in F *f*

Trumpet in B \flat *f*

Piano *mf*

Violin I *f*

Violin II *f*

Viola *f*

Violoncello *f*

Double Bass *f*

Ex. 2c: Bar 125 (E,D,C#Bb,F#)

In C

125

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Horn in F

Trumpet in Bb

Piano

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

pp

senza sord.

pp

pp

Red.

Ex. 2d: Bar 140 (Ab,B,F,A,Gb)

In C

139

Flute

Clarinet in B \flat

Horn in F

Trumpet in B \flat

Piano

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

f *ff* *fff*

Ex. 3: Polychords (bars 75-80)

♩=56 slowly

75

Piano *mf*

Violin I *f*

Violin II *f*

Viola *f*

Violoncello *f*

Double Bass *f*

Ped.

Ped.

sul tasto

ppp *mf*

sul tasto

ppp *mf*

sul tasto

ppp *mf*

The slow section, which is more lyrical in character, begins at bar 85. And the coda is moderately fast and similar to the first section of the piece.

In describing the character of Journey's music, it is mostly surrounded by higher, chromatic figuration, which are then supported by sustained octatonic sonorities at the lower and middle registers. The two slower movements in the middle section looks to be calmer and the more extended moments, where the mood is relaxed.

To maintain a strong sense of connection, there is a collection of events in conjunction with a strong harmonic continuity. But what is most striking about this piece is actually the way in which it is written for ensemble, and its textures. The solution towards Journey's textural density is created by combining a variety of soloistic roles. So the piano functions, as often as not, as accompanist to individual members of the ensemble – the violin, flute and clarinet being only the most prominent among them. When writing for ensemble pieces like Journey, what naturally becomes the focus of the compositional process is the issue of textural density. The most prominent feature of Journey are the instances of conflict between thick textures with bare octaves generated by contrasting registers.

Solo instruments in the ensemble for Journey are now assigned into different functions, and act in turns like a solo part. Therefore, the outcome seems like the different instruments may produce a soloistic flavour, similar to a concertante situation, as well as function together as an ensemble.

Regarding texture, the instrumental textures are given variety by adjusting the instrumental layers moving in similarity and dissimilarity. At other times, the constructions of textures are also made up of layers of simple repetitive figures. For example, a dark and dense cluster in the low strings is accompanied by bits of woodwind ornamentation, while above, the upper strings in *divisi*, play parallel fifths, whereas in the background throughout the piece, other figures, whether more complex or relatively simple, simultaneously sound to create shifting densities. To create a complex cluster, pitches are added gradually. Form, structure and direction are determined through shifting Journey's centre of gravity (pitch centre) from the middle

to the end. The changes in the centre of gravity are made by the occasional change of pedal points and intertwined passages.

Conclusion

In Journey, gradually increasing and decreasing rhythmic activity determine its phrasing and structure. As the piece develops, more variety of rhythms is added. To create a sense of constant movement and subtle play with time, there are passages where the solo instrument or ensemble speeds up or slows down in contrast to one another. Therefore, by overlaying somewhat separate musical rhythms, Journey plays on the listener's sense of time in interesting ways.

What I have found important in maintaining unity in Journey is the use of the recurring pitch classes and pitch-class groupings from within an octatonic collection, which then combine to form larger relations. The constant drifting soundworlds of octatonicism and chromaticism dissolve their boundaries. A balance of structure, sonority, and textural opposites are what give Journey its meaningful expression.

CHAPTER 9

SAYUP

For 11 instruments

2015

‘Segala yang dihasrat tapi tak didapat adalah nikmat yang paling padat.’

Everything the heart desires when lost, hopeless, discouraged is the greatest grace.

- A. Samad Said

The form in *Sayup* is never defined by clear-cut boundaries, which can be seen or be recalled but rather reflects a situation where I feel at all times an affinity to the text, and secure in its vicinity of meaning. As the music in *Sayup* originates from the actual aphorism, above, its form therefore attempts to extend this verbal meaning into music. In composing music after a text, even for a brief decisive statement or a decorative poem, most of the time I try to add densities and include different angles of approach towards its multivalent meanings. The phrase or statement of expression above is highly spiritual. In terms of music, the selected phrase is suitable both for its metaphoric meaning and also for providing an initial dramatic framework. To approach such an intuitive expression, I made a choice to put forward an array of definitive gestures, which would expand through some straightforward effective lines to transport the text into a musical form of expression. For this time around, I envision *Sayup* as an expressive work portraying despair and disappointment, but at the same time an underlying powerful message about faith and believe.

These words, whose meaning is a point of inspiration for *Sayup*, are evidently powerful but not very easily expressed and interpreted. Translating the words' implications of humility and acceptance, soft and slender accompaniments coming from the strings along with soft high notes coming from the flute and woodwinds seemed most appropriate. To further heighten the contrasts of timbre and add to the atmosphere, reverberations from the bassoon and double bass create darker colours to the undertone of *Sayup* (Example 1). Decorative lines are an important feature in

Sayup, used to highlight its lyrical character. Interspersed with occasional textural bursts, these decorative lines are an important figurative addition (Example 2).

Ex. 1: Contrasts of timbre: dark colours from double bass and bassoon, soft and slender woodwinds and strings

Musical score for Example 1, showing woodwinds and strings. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The instruments and their parts are:

- Flute:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*.
- Oboe:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *p*, *pp*, *p*.
- Clarinet in Bb:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *p*, *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *mp*, *mf* (triplets).
- Bassoon:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*.
- Violin:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *ppp*, *p*, *p*, *pp*. Includes *con sord.* marking.
- Viola:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *ppp*, *p*, *p*, *pp*. Includes *con sord.* marking.
- Violoncello:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *ppp*, *p*, *p*, *pp*. Includes *con sord.* marking.
- Double Bass:** Starts at measure 7. Dynamics: *pp*. Includes *pizz. l.v.* marking.

Ex. 2: Decorative melodic lines and energetic figures



The clear consistency of this work and its coherent presentation to the audience resides in its simple and distinctive ideas, which attempt to keep a stream of

interesting and captivating sounds from the ensemble filling out the depth of meaning as well as the affect reflected in the words. My personal response towards this saying, which I find intensely metaphoric, points me in a direction in which is naturally logical to produce a strong dramatic continuity in its music, which is to portray desolation and a longing feeling.

Such dramatic continuity in this composition for *Sayup*, based on the heart's *desire*, does not call for angularity or harshness. Instead I have opted for what I smoother textures that reflect inner feelings. Forceful disconnections are not prevalent although there are points of rhythmic changes for instance, the run of septuplets before a point of destination at certain important points of arrival (Example 3). Articulation effects (trills, *tremolandi*, etc.) especially from the strings, woodwinds, and pitched percussions also determine the textures of the music (Example 4). These articulative effects make for a subtle and rolling texture of continuous colours moving and changing from one to another, but again, with the intention of showing heart's desire moving, as if alive, in the music.

Ex. 4: Textural effects through articulation in percussion and strings

♩ = 72 Expressive

49 change to vib. trem. dim., con ped. simile

The musical score consists of seven staves. The top staff is Percussion, with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *mf*, and *p*. The Violin staff has dynamics *pp*, *mp*, and *mf*. The Viola staff has dynamics *pp*, *mp*, *mf*, and *espress.*. The Violoncello staff has dynamics *ppp*, *p*, *p*, *mf*, and *espress.*. The Double Bass staff has dynamics *mf*, *mf*, and *f*. The Percussion staff (bottom) has dynamics *f legato*, *p legato*, *mf*, *f*, and *mf secco*. The Violin staff (bottom) has dynamics *pp*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. The Viola staff (bottom) has dynamics *mf*, *pp*, *pp*, and *mf*. The Violoncello staff (bottom) has dynamics *p*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. The Double Bass staff (bottom) has dynamics *f*, *mf*, and *pp*.

In *Sayup*, dynamic continuity is treated with importance. The work begins from the desolation described in the text, towards a livelier and more positive ambience and finally rests at a calmer state of mind. Supporting them is the use of contrasting pitch sets, where a certain interaction exists between chromatic and diatonic. With chromatic set reflecting loss and desolation, and the diatonic the heart's consequent movement towards clarity, the chromatic language convey a sense of growing intensity and richness and in contrast is the diatonic pitches. Directive continuity and unity are achieved through the interactions of pitches from the diatonic pitch set along with the chromatic shapes, which never quite go away.

The music in *Sayup* is scored giving importance to each of its own instrumental parts, although sometimes the score uses the whole of the ensemble as a collective interaction. *Sayup* manages to project certain images even out of simple note-patterns, thus producing rich melodic embroidery within different textures. Here I might refer to one of John Warnaby comments on Ligeti's Piano Concerto:

Ligeti is not averse to melody, but his main fascination has always been with the accidental appearance of melodic figures, rather than with their structural potential. There is more emphasis on harmony, but rhythm and texture predominate.⁴⁰

To elaborate the treatment similar to Ligeti's Piano Concerto, I have extended this principle to an ensemble instead. These patterns, which began as simple note-patterns, tend to develop and reinforce itself into a theme as it repeats, which then connect the whole work together.

There is a section in this piece where opposite ends of the register are used at the same time to create a contrasting atmosphere (Example 5). Simultaneous contrasting registers create a stark contrast in colours, but at the same time create a vacant space for the next musical moment to happen. Meanwhile at other instances, where there are long-held notes, a series of brief gestures on the woodwind or sometimes the string allows for greater continuity in gesture and dynamicity.

⁴⁰ John Warnaby, Ligeti's Piano Concerto, *Tempo New Series, No. 163*, (U.K., Cambridge University Press, 1987). 48.

Ex. 5: Contrasting registers creating stark colours

♩ = 72 Broadly

63

Flute *p*

Oboe *mf*

Clarinet in Bb *mf*

Bassoon *mf*

Horn in F *pp*

Trumpet in Bb *pp* *p* *mp espress.* *p*

Percussion *f* change to glock. *pp* *p* *pp* l.v. *gliss.* *gliss.*

Violin *pp* non vib., quasi harmonic *f* *mf*

Viola *pp* non vib., quasi harmonic *f* *mf*

Violoncello *pp* non vib., quasi harmonic *f* *mf*

Double Bass *p* *mf*

Fl. *f* *mf* *f*

Ob. *f* *mf* *f*

Cl. *f* *mf* *f*

Bsn. *f* *mf* *f*

Hn. *mf* *f*

Tpt. *mf* *f*

Perc. change to vib. *mf* *p* *mf*

Vln. *mf* *f*

Vla. *mf* *f*

Vc. *f*

Db. *mf*

There is a sense of expansiveness, a physical and temporal experience of spaciousness and motion without any structurally active movements here. Furthermore, there isn't clearly a dramatic moment in the Western sense, where actually instead the notes are carefully paced on unhurried changes and well-timed returns in a more decorative way. The sense of chord progressions is achieved through an aural experience of varying density of chordal structures where sometimes it is broad like and at other times narrow. *Sayup* is not so much vertically articulated, rather it is more horizontally experienced with its intricate melodic inflections.

Temporal flexibility in *Sayup* is created through changes in tempo, *ritardandos*, *accelerandos*, and *fermatas*. Besides that, an audience may be able to perceive metric divisions because in *Sayup* I have used ambiguous metres and pulse as a way of achieving a more refined and fluid style of composition. There are long well balanced lines with phrases that are very flexible rhythmically and can be ornamented. I was specifically intending to let *Sayup* grow naturally and let it shape up into an open-ended form, which is more relevant to the literary form I was referring to earlier. However, the challenge throughout composing *Sayup* was maintaining its individualistic sound world over a certain span of time.

***Sayup* - Winner of NME New Music Ensemble call for works 2015/2016**

Before beginning to compose *Sayup*, I realized that it was not going to be a symphonic work, and as there was a call for new works for the New Music Ensemble 2015/2016 season, the idea of *Sayup* was ideal for this. Essentially *Sayup* was going to be a sonorous work, concentrating on lower brass and woodwind, supported by pitched percussion and resonant strings. Nevertheless, there is present a melodic dimension to *Sayup*. The melos or melodic theme of the flute is highly resonant. The primary melodic statement remains a basic necessity towards *Sayup*. To start on a new ensemble piece, I decided for it to also have a strong sense of recurring motives to enhance its musical cohesion.

There is also an emphasis on harmony. Despite a recognizable theme for the flute in its opening, there is no hint of tonality. According to John Warnaby, Wolfgang Rihm has argued before, "There is no such thing as tonality, only

harmony.”⁴¹ The concentration on intervallic structures is clear whereby the intervals are more important than any scale. There are also flashes of chromatic clusters, a kind of improvisation on certain Bartok usages. Small intervals, especially in seconds or minor thirds, examine the relationships of three or more pitches within a very narrow intervallic range. Another important reminder of Bartok’s composition, which is present in *Sayup* is the major-minor chord, which is actually a result of two intertwined thirds. These major-minor chords serve a dual function as having melodic and harmonic relationships. Sometimes in *Sayup*, cadence-like closure sections are found involving intervallic constellation of a fifth and a tritone.

In the middle section of *Sayup*, a brooding atmosphere is achieved through the clarinet and cello lower registers with double bass, followed by the introduction of drones and pedal points, which fall out on top and below each other within the winds and brass. Unexpected decorative lines in the high strings then pierce all these through. The progress of the piece is driven by a gradually increasing momentum, achieved through the fluidity of the ensemble writing, rather than through clearly regularized rhythms. Nevertheless, rapid figurations in the foreground create an illusion of speed leading the music on. In reality, the basic pulse of the music does not change. There are no programmatic elements, but the dialogue between the instruments of the ensemble gives the work a narrative structure in keeping with an agreeable form.

As mentioned earlier, there are recurring events to generate drama or tension. Repetitive elements for the ensemble, and a form of rhythmic modulation ensure that the opening section evolves into a more dynamic passage. *Sayup* chooses to be more seductive and less aggressive in its sound world hence, the combination of wind and string instruments with glockenspiel and vibraphone. A subtle sorrow using glissando flutes with its uncomplicated ascending and descending figures manages to be formally distant and somewhat energetic, yet at the same time personal and lamenting. *Sayup* is a combination of twisting passages leading into improvisational-like, intense passages. Contrary to being static and impersonal, *Sayup* appears to be more interestingly melodic than usual in my works, along with a cooler atmosphere.

⁴¹ John Warnaby, Wolfgang Rihm's Recent Music, *Tempo New Series*, No. 213 (U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17.

Loud woodwind scales and fast-articulated brass notes accompanied by percussive accents by glockenspiels add an element of playfulness and fast tempo. Very fast up and down runs in woodwinds and strings are exciting alongside runs, trills, and dramatic leaps from others in the ensemble. In the midst of it all, instruments individually take turns to emerge from a slow background of clear, orderly harmonies and textures. Speaking of texture, I observe *Sayup* as having orchestral textures despite its realization as a one-per-part ensemble, which owes to its particular ensemble writing style envisaging a larger volume of sound.

Conclusion

Sayup, the title, in English brings the meaning of something fairly visible or fairly audible, a far away feeling, or desolation. Thus, the title of the piece, its inspiring aphorism, and the music written in response to this brings about its form and collective expression.

The rhythmic feel of *Sayup* is meant to be like a breezy drive. *Sayup* communicates fluently and confidently without being overbearing. It features the flute heavily, opening with unaccompanied, slow, desolate textures and a soulful melody, which immediately portrays its inspiration coming from a line of text of similar meaning.

CHAPTER 10

WAHYU

Mezzo-soprano and ensemble (flute, clarinet in B flat, alto saxophone, cello, double bass)

2016

I had always been thinking of composing for voice, but I did not always have a strong motivation to steer towards that direction. Mainly because I was not completely familiar with the nature and character of voice, especially considering the different classifications and ranges of voices, overwhelms me to choose a particular range to compose for. However, towards the end of 2015, Dr. Michael Ellison offered me the opportunity to compose a vocal piece for contralto. Noa Frenkel was to perform this piece along with Ensemble Variances.

Composing for a female voice was, I thought a suitable start for me to write a vocal composition and work with the human voice for the first time. After the initial attempt of composing *Wahyu*, due to Noa's other performance commitments and also to the nature of my vocal composition, it was decided that *Wahyu* was more preferable for a mezzo-soprano voice. Therefore, a new vocalist was identified, Florence Pettet, a vocal student from the University of Bristol, who agreed to perform *Wahyu*, and compositional work was continued.

Text and Music

Choosing a text was the first most important step towards determining the character and direction of my new vocal composition. At the beginning, before starting to compose this piece, I looked at different poems as closely and meticulously as part of my compositional process, considering the ways in which words may enter and pass through music. As I discovered, each poem is just like a piece of music, having its own structural entity and its own measures of continuity. I began reading much poetry and poems out aloud to recognize and feel the rhythmic pace, pattern and structure of the words and also to identify the cadences of phrasings. In the end, I finally made my choice. *Wahyu*'s text comes from a poetry, "*Bahasa Terindah*" by

Dato' A. Samad Said, who is the national laureate of Malaysia. His poems are immersed in contexts of human nature and human issues, integrity, courage and humility. The poetry, "*Bahasa Terindah*" pictures the night Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) receives the first revelation from Allah through the angel, *Jibrail* (Gabriel), at the Cave of Hira' in the mountain of Jabal al-Nour, in Saudi Arabia. Hence, the title of my vocal piece *Wahyu*, which means revelation.

One other reason behind choosing "*Bahasa Terindah*" as text for *Wahyu* was because of its compact, 16-line poetic structure, which I felt was not too huge for me to compose music for. Due to the poetry's connection to religious history and its poignant message, the musical part, I anticipated, would be interspersed with the vocal part, bringing the mood and context of the text into a nuanced musical setting. My approach to writing for voice is based upon the hypothesis that there is always an unmistakable connection between lyrical and musical structures in every vocal composition. How this relationship could be of equivalence or not, I predicted may present a tension between the two. According to Lotman, poetry is the most semantically charged of all means of verbal communication.⁴² I seem to agree with this statement, as I believe poetry can be as much powerful and emotionally transferred to any reader or listener who are open to receive such beautiful, direct, inspiring and sometimes metaphorical words. It is very fair to say that the poetic structure of my chosen text largely determined my musical process in the composition of *Wahyu*. Contrariwise, it is also hoped that *Wahyu's* music may interpret Samad Said's poetry better than any verbal interpretation.

Here I shall provide a word-by-word English translation of this poetry, for analytical purposes.

⁴² Iurri Lotman, *Analysis of the Poetic Text*, ed. and trans. by D. Barton Johnson, (Ann Arbor, Ardis Publishers, 1976), 271-273.

Transliterated Bahasa Melayu text	Word-by-word English translation
Yang diucap dalam bahasa terindah, Jawapan yang bertanya didengar nabi, Antara kagum dan khusuk setiap ayatnya,	That being said, in the most beautiful, The prophet's questions are answered, Heard in awe and solemn eloquence,
Lereng gunung menjadi amat sunyi, Suara sajak tegas bergema,	The slope becomes very quiet, As a stern poetic voice echoes,
Disampai arah berkias maksud serentak, Tapi jelas intinya,	The allegorical meaning conveyed but simultaneously, the deeper meaning is obvious,
Tidak sedetik pun Allah menghindar, Atau mencemuh nabi disisi segala didoa, Dipenuhi segala yang dipinta tulus dan, Penuh baraqah,	Not a second God avoids, Or ridicules the prayer of the Prophet, Fulfills all requested sincere and, Full of baraqah,
Yatim ia tak berlindung, Tidakkah tersedia juga bumbung baginya.	When orphan he did not see, Is not there always a roof above him.
Awal begitu bergantung, Kini tidakkah merdeka, Bebas hidupnya.	Early so dependent, Now independent, Living free.

Similar to the poetry, there are a few layers of musical structure present in *Wahyu*. The mezzo-soprano part, following the 16-line layout of Samad Said's poetry, consists of two sections, with the first section in three phrases, followed by the second section, also in three phrases. These three phrases in each section are divided into smaller 2/3line smaller phrases, as highlighted above. Following the poetry's natural metric-syntactic pauses and continuation of words from one line to the next, I have divided the poetry thus presenting the text as follows. At the same time the text's

meaning as a whole phrase determined the selection of different phrase sections of *Wahyu*.

Dina Lentsner mentions that texts and music are separate systems.⁴³ But the layout of Samad Said's poetry, its shape and text pattern, makes out an obvious division of lines semantically shaped. Thus, this multiple structural idea sets up the basic organization of *Wahyu's* music. Upon realizing I had two different elements working together in the creation of *Wahyu*, I decided to achieve a balance between music and text in *Wahyu* so that one element will enhance the other. The result is that the outcome of *Wahyu's* composed music is at a considerable degree determined by the sound and speech rhythms of the Malay text. It might be surmised then that choice of a different language might determine a different musical result, as explained by Peter Eotvos in his interview about his 'Three Sisters' with Rachel Beckles Willson,

I've composed music for several languages, and they have always been influential because I hear languages like instruments: they have their own particular tone and timbre. One has more buzz, another has less. That's a basic given, to which I can shape the music. And I work with the noises, the buzzes, in the language too – each language has made me write a different music.⁴⁴

In terms of a vocal performance, the Malay language is particularly suitable for singing. Just like the Italian language, the vowels are open and the consonants are clear and strong like sh-, c- and hard j-. In addition, the language is versatile in all range of voices as it has dark and bright colours, therefore it can be sung in low and high passages. As a result, the language of *Wahyu* strongly influenced the resonance of this piece as a whole.

Upon determining the main features of this piece, I began researching into vocal music written in the 20th and 21st century. Vocal works by Gyorgy Kurtag (*Kafka Fragments and Scenes from a Novel*), Kaija Saariaho (*L'Amour de Loin*) and

⁴³ Dina Lentsner, Musico-Poetic Analysis of the Fragment from Scenes from a Novel, op.19, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae T. 43, Fasc. 3/4* (Hungary: Akademiai Kiado, 2002), 331.

⁴⁴ Rachel Beckles Willson and Peter Eotvos, Peter Eotvos in Conversation about 'Three Sisters', *Tempo New Series, No. 220* (UK, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12.

Osvaldo Golijov became my sources of study. Kurtag became my prime model for writing voice with ensemble, as it is well known that Kurtag's vocal compositions dominate his musical repertoire. Kurtag had been constantly inspired by the literature and poetics, especially by Russian 19th and 20th century poets.

Although Kurtag never wrote any music theatre pieces, his music is described as having 'dramatic' qualities and, as Paul Griffiths wrote, his song cycles are actually 'camouflaged operas'.⁴⁵ *Scenes from a Novel*, for instance is a kind of a drama presentation, which explains the term 'camouflaged opera'. Prof. Alan E. Williams wrote,

Obviously there is a difference between 'drama' and 'theatricality' in music, drama being conventionally detected by analogy in works of an otherwise 'abstract' nature – the concerto form, for example – and 'theatricality' giving the sense of physical gesture on stage as well as having the potentially pejorative connotation which Csengery says Kurtag takes from the word 'stage'.⁴⁶

While not an overt concern, it is easier to seek the theatrical qualities rather than the dramatic qualities in Kurtag's music. As mentioned earlier, there was always present in Kurtag's music an inclination of theatrical, exaggerated gestures. Besides his musical aspect, there was also a question of theatrical aspect of his music, especially in his later works. Kurtag did not necessarily write music theatre but 'theatre of music'⁴⁷ as Alan Williams coined the term.

Finding and discovering Kurtag's theatrical qualities in his vocal music such as *Scenes from a Novel* and the *Kafka Fragments* opened up new insights of writing for voice and ensemble for my next three pieces for voice, even though I will not be using theatrical physical gestures for the performers this time. The dramatic and theatrical qualities will instead be fed into the compositional process and the way the music is approached and written, in a way new for this portfolio.

⁴⁵ Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After*, (UK, Oxford University Press, 2011), 283.

⁴⁶ Alan E. Williams, Music Theatre and Presence in Some Works of Gyorgy Kurtag, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae T. 43, Fasc. 3/4* (Hungary, Akademiai Kiado, 2002), 360.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Performance with Ensemble Variances

Before *Wahyu's* first performance at Bristol, there was a composers' workshop on Feb 27, with the performance later on the same day. During the workshop, there were some comments from the performers regarding mainly on the dynamics of the piece and the balance of sound of the different parts. The performers questioned the projection and the intended volume of sound from the different instruments during the workshop. I realized this situation with dynamics were important because it closely relates to the expression indications of the different sections in the piece.

For instance, in bar 10 onwards, the flautist had questions about everyone's dynamics, where flute says they are too loud especially on her upper registers. I checked on the score and saw bar 10 marked as '*Intense*' and the dynamics for bar 10 were *p* and *mp* for vocal and winds, and strings were in *pp*. Therefore, while the flautist was correct in explaining that they were too loud according to the dynamics written on the score, I however decided to change the dynamics to loud, *forte* and *mezzo forte* to match the intense expression of this section (Example 1).

since changed the balance of dynamics between all vocal and instrumental parts to create a more balanced and accurate sound from this vocal piece.

Ex. 2: Change of dynamic markings for mezzo-soprano

The musical score for Ex. 2 is written in 4/4 time and consists of six staves. The instruments and their dynamic markings are as follows:

- Flute:** Starts at measure 8 with a dynamic of *p*, then *mf*, and *p*. It features a *poco accel.* marking. Dynamics in the second measure are *mp*, *mf*, and *mf*.
- Clarinet in Bb:** Starts with *p*, then *mf*, and *p*. Dynamics in the second measure are *mp*, *mf*, and *f*.
- Alto Saxophone:** Starts with *mf*, then *p*, and *mp*. Dynamics in the second measure are *mp*, *mp*, and *p*.
- Mezzo-soprano:** Starts with *mf*, then *poco accel.*, and *mf*. The lyrics are "a yat nya" and "Le".
- Violoncello:** Starts with *p*, then *mf*, and *pizz.*
- Double Bass:** Starts with *p*, then *mf*, and *pizz.*

Ex. 3: Change of dynamic markings for cello

39

Flute *mp* *mp*

Clarinet in Bb *mf*

Alto Saxophone

Mezzo-soprano *f*
Ya tim ia tak ber lin dung ti dak ka ter se di a ju ga bum bung ba gi nya

Violoncello *mp* *mp*

Double Bass *mp* *mp*

Fl. *mf*

Cl. *mp* *mf*

Alto Sax. *mp* *mf*

M.-S.

Vc. *f* *mp espress.* *f*

Db. *mf* *mp* *mf*

During the workshop, the bass and the cellos had to watch out for the irregular rhythms like the ones at bar 51 (Example 4). But, fortunately no alterations were needed for any rhythms or groupings of notes for any other parts of the ensemble.

Ex. 4: Correction of irregular rhythmic notations for cello and double bass

51

♩=60 A Tempo, Brighter

Mezzo-soprano *f*
A wal be gi tu ber gan tung ki ni be bas kah mer de ka... Be bas hi dup

♩=60 A Tempo, Brighter

Violoncello *pp* *p* *sempre* *mp* *mf*

Double Bass *pp* *p* *sempre* *mp* *mf*

Bars 4-6 require a quasi-whispering effect from the mezzo-soprano. I realized I was not able to explain and describe to her in real time (being in Malaysia at the time of the reading) how much whisper or how much speech-like I required her to project. But since the workshop and performance, I have decided I prefer a less talking but more of the whispering effect, where the words come out as more breathy and just wind (Example 5).

Ex. 5: More specific vocal instructions for mezzo-soprano

4

quasi-whisper, more wind
pp

Mezzo-soprano

Ja wa pan yang ber ta nya di de ngar Na bi

Violoncello

mp *p* 3

Double Bass

p

There was also just one notational doubt in the vocal part at bar 31. The notes were originally written as D flat, D flat, B natural, B flat. But to create a more precise and visually ease the sight-reading of the vocalist, I have changed the note spellings to D flat, D flat, C flat, B flat (Example 6). Other performance improvements were identified such as having the cello be more relaxed and free flowing at bars 43 and 44 instead of too hard and dramatic (Example 7). And strings should remain calm at bars 36-37 (Example 8).

Ex. 6: Change of note spellings for mezzo-soprano

31

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Alto Saxophone

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

Double Bass

lah meng hin dar

A

Ex. 7: New expression marking for cello part

43

Violoncello

Double Bass

mp espress.

mp dolce

f

Ex. 8: New expression marking for strings

35

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Alto Saxophone

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

Double Bass

di do a di pe nu hi se ga la yang di pin ta tu lus dan pe nuh ba ra kah

mp *p*

mf

p *pp*

mf

pp dolce *mf* *arco*

pp *mf*

mp *p dolce* *mf*

Noa Frenkel was in attendance during the workshop, which really helped the singer, who had no coaching whatsoever of singing this piece beforehand. They communicated all the time, and this really helped the performance of this vocal piece. Noa was aware of the character of *Wahyu*, and the importance of communicating towards the audience, whereby she mentioned the piece, the words, it is like telling a story.

Conclusion

My first vocal composition, *Wahyu*, has made me learnt the many considerations a composer has to give attention to before turning text into music. It is obviously unavoidable to not associate music with text, especially in a vocal music setting, and always naturally, we tend to describe music with word meanings. As described by Dina Lentsner once more,

Musical ideas always have certain semantics, but our understanding of it is a matter of our own interpretation.⁴⁸

Artistic expression has a multitude of possible avenues; poetry, music, and the visual arts, to begin with. A. Samad Said's artistic output of poetic expression through "*Bahasa Terindah*" has transferred into my own means of musical expression, *Wahyu*. It is hoped in its own way, that *Wahyu* might even be considered as more descriptive, characteristic, and expressive of the text than the text itself.

⁴⁸ Dina Lentsner, *Musico-Poetic Analysis*. 332.

CHAPTER 11

MENAMBAT RAKIT

Mezzo Soprano with ensemble (flute, horn in F, vibraphone, cello)

2016

Transliterated Bahasa Melayu text	Word-by-word English translation
Sesudah demikian lama dicintai, sukarlah dilupakan.	After being loved for so long, it is difficult to forget,
Inti pengalaman, kepedihan; akar kerinduan keresahan...	The experience, pain, roots of longing, despair..
Memang begitu banyak diperlukan kekuatan, kepangkalan batin, rakit ditambatkan bara kenangan dikuatkan	Courage is needed in so many places back to the soul, the raft is tied onto the embers of memories grows stronger
Akhirnya, tak terduga, kekuatan membuak sendiri, dan disedari, semua takkan sampai, ke dasar inti.	Finally, unexpectedly, courage floods over again, upon realizing, all shall not reach, the depths of meaning.
Tiada lagilah bezanya, sama ada hilangnya kemudian atau tenggelamnya sekarang.	There is no difference perhaps, If it is lost later or it sinks now.
Tiada juga bezanya , jika ia langsung tak datang atau tiba-tiba terkorban	There is no difference either, If it never comes or perishes suddenly
Kepiluan yang berlanjutan akhirnya, ditenterami keyakinan,	Desolation that continues, finally, consoled by confidence,

betapa dielak pun takdir tetap terbuka pintunya bertanya: manusia, engkau ini sebenar- benarnya siapa...	however we avoid fate the doors will always open asking: o, humans, who are you truly...
---	---

Menambat Rakit describes a person's struggle, acceptance, and courage overcoming adversity or feelings of gloom. It sends the message of understanding the concept of fate, where it does not entirely matter whether we gain a lot now or later, or even if we lose some now or later, as our fate has been pre-determined and always will be. Therefore, what's most important is the quality of a person that will eventually distinguish the successful and the failed ones.

As discussed in the chapter before, inflections of human speech will naturally shape the form and essence of this music. In *Menambat Rakit*, I am concentrating upon melody over harmony. As with the other two of my voice compositions, *Menambat Rakit* is centred on the human voice and the voice's integrity against the powers of music from the ensemble. This expressive physical voice is an abstract statement of the composer's sense of voice.

The ensemble's music for *Menambat Rakit* captures and operates in its contemporary idiom, while instruments strive to impersonate the lyrical and expressive qualities of the voice. The voice quality of a mezzo-soprano is again chosen for *Menambat Rakit*, for its warm and melodious singing tone. Their voice has a warm low range and an agile high register. They can sing long legato phrases with elegance and sustain top notes with ease. Due to their full voice and bright timbre, mezzo-sopranos usually display deep emotion and passion in their singing. Along with the ability for dramatization, their beautiful and soothing sound was again exactly what I needed.

Lyricism, warmth and colour are the objectives of the music written for *Menambat Rakit*. In my opinion, *Menambat Rakit's* instrumental choice of flute, horn, vibraphone and cello complements the lyrical and warm character of this vocal piece. Inevitably, these are all melodic instruments in which are best at playing melodies,

but with a deep lower range. The colours coming through these instruments coincide well within the poetry's different layers of meaning and gradation of emotions as it refers to the nature of love, self-deception, inspiration and illusion, and human relationships. I intended the range of expression between beautiful, lyrical episodes and passages involving dialogues between the cello and flute, and horn and vibraphone (rehearsal mark A) (Example 1); or witty rhythmic passages falling through the mezzo-soprano, vibraphone and cello *pizzicato* (rehearsal mark B) to create that flexibility of style (Example 2).

Ex. 1: Expressive, lyrical dialogues between cello and flute, and, horn and vibraphone

A Tenderly ♩ = 64

Flute

Horn in F

Vibraphone

Violoncello

Fl.

Hn.

Vib.

Vc.

Fl.

Hn.

Vib.

Vc.

Fl.

Hn.

Vib.

Vc.

Ex.2: Rhythmic passage falling through mezzo-soprano, vibraphone, and cello

27

Flute

Horn in F

Vibraphone

Mezzo-soprano

Violoncello

ke pe di han a kar ke rin du an ke re sa han

ke re sa

pizz. nat.

p mp pp ppp

The sorrowful section at Rehearsal mark C is thinnest in texture. Interlocking pizzicato cello strings and short figurative rhythms in vibraphone accompany the mezzo-soprano. The horn then plays a 4-note pattern softly after this into the section at Rehearsal mark D.

At first the flute's melody exists in the foreground of Rehearsal mark D, however as it progresses, the cello's growing presence with its long rising notes overcomes with expressiveness and persistency that erupts together with the flute (Example 3) into *risoluto*, at Rehearsal E.

Ex. 3: Cello's growing passage erupts with flute

The musical score for Example 3 consists of five staves. The top staff is for Flute, starting at measure 45 with a tempo of 54-60 and a dynamic of *p*. It features a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *mp*, and a performance instruction of *dolcissimo*. The second staff is for Horn in F, with a *legato* instruction. The third staff is for Vibraphone, starting with a *p* dynamic. The fourth staff is for Mezzo-soprano, which is mostly silent. The fifth staff is for Violoncello, starting with a *ppp* dynamic and featuring triplet rhythms. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, *mf*, and *mp*, as well as performance instructions like *accel.* and *legato*.

Rehearsal E is a highly dramatic moment for Menambat Rakit, “*Akhirnya tak diduga kekuatan membuak sendiri...*” which means ‘finally, unexpectedly, courage floods over again’. The vocal line is rhythmically static with fairly high notes in the mezzo-soprano range with skips and leaps. The vocal’s melodic line is written out in in triplet quaver rhythms, which are then followed similarly by horn and cello (Example 4).

Ex. 4: Mezzo-soprano in triplet quaver rhythms in climax Rehearsal mark E

E Risoluto ♩ = 64

54

Flute *mf* *mp* < *mf* *p* *mp*

Horn in F *mf* *p* *mp*

Vibraphone *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp* *mp* < *mf* *p*

Mezzo-soprano **E** Risoluto ♩ = 64 *f*

Ak hir nya tak ter du ga ke ku a tan mem bu ak sen di ri o oh dan di se da ri se mu a

Violoncello **E** Risoluto arco ♩ = 64 *mp* < *mf* *p* < *mp* *p* *mp* 6 6 7 7

Fl. *mf* *p* *f* *mp* < *mf*

Hn. *mf* *pp* *p*

Vib. *mp*

M-S. tak kan sam pai ke da sar in ti a ha oh ha

Vc. *mf* *pp* *f* *mf* *p*

Fl. *ppp*

Hn. *ppp* *p*

Vib. *ppp* *p*

M-S.

Vc. *mp* *ppp* *p* *mp* 5

The music consists of linear melodic runs, and also in contrast, repeated notes towards the end at section F, which are equally expressive. Thinner streams of sound

travel towards the end of the piece as the texture also gradually thins out. The cello will then play a soloistic passage similar to the first vocal theme at the beginning, followed by the whispered words of the vocalist and later by the rest of the ensemble above the cello bringing *Menambat Rakit* to a close.

Conclusion

The treatment of blending and separating the instruments in the ensemble and utilizing the complete ranges of timbres is an appropriate annotation on the contemplative, almost still atmosphere of the work in general. Seemingly like a gigantic metaphor, *Menambat Rakit* cannot be defined into a single meaning. *Menambat Rakit* is also looking ahead for a premiere performance in Malaysia near the end of 2018.

CHAPTER 12

PROSA AIR MATA

Baritone with ensemble (flute, clarinet in B flat, piano, violin, cello, double bass)

2016

Transliterated Bahasa Melayu text	Word-by-word English translation
Bahawasanya air mata tiadalah ia memilih tempat untuk jatuh... tidak pula memilih waktu untuk menitis...	Tears neither do they choose a place to fall... nor will they choose a time to drop...
Air mata adalah kepunyaan bersyarikat... dipunyai oleh orang-orang melarat yang tinggal di dangau-dangau yang buruk	Tears are owned by corporations owned by the impoverished living in small broken down huts
oleh tukang sabit yang masuk ke padang yang luas dan ke tebing yang curam,	(Tears) are owned by the man with the sickle who enters the wide field and goes on to the steep edge,
dan juga oleh penghuni-penghuni gedung-gedung yang permai dan istana-istana yang indah.	and also (tears are owned) by occupants of lovely buildings and beautiful palaces.
Bahkan di situ lebih banyak orang menelan ratap dan memulas tangis.	Even there, more people swallow their laments and wring their tears.
Luka di jiwa yang mereka hidapkan, dilingkung oleh tembok dinding yang tebal dan tinggi, sehingga yang kelihatan oleh orang luar atau yang mereka ketahui hanya senyuman saja, padahal senyum itu penuh dengan kepahitan	The wounded soul that is suffering, is circled by the thick and high walls until, what is seen and known by the outsiders are only their smiles. whereas that smile is full of bitterness

While writing music for *Air Mata*, I came across a world-renowned artist born in China, Xu Bing who lived in the United States, but now residing in Beijing. A conceptual artist, but not a poet, Xu Bing is known for his artwork and installations revolving around language, words, and text. He is famously known for his unique technique, ‘Square Word Calligraphy’, that is to write slightly altered letters of an English word into a shape resembling Chinese characters, where the latter is a character system based on a square (*hanzi*). At first glance it appears to be Chinese characters, but in fact it is a new way of transcribing English. By fusing written English and Chinese, Xu Bing had created a hybrid calligraphy that merges art from two distinct cultures.

The driving reason behind the creation of Xu Bing’s work is to demystify calligraphy. Chinese calligraphy is looked upon in wonder and also when it comes down to language, as humans we have brought upon us a self-notion of a distance between systems of language. Attracted by this conception, Xu Bing sought to create a work that would expose Chinese calligraphy in a new light and also delightfully reward audiences when they discover they can decode the text (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Figure 1 is calligraphy of the nursery rhyme, ‘Little Bo Peep’ and Figure 2 is a poem ‘Spring Dawn’ (Chun Xiao), by Meng Hao Ran, a Chinese poet during the Tang dynasty. Unsuccessful in his official career, Meng Hao Ran mainly lived in and wrote about his birthplace, which is now Hubei province in China.

Fig. 1: One of Xu Bing's 'Square Word Calligraphy', *Little Bo Peep*

*“Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep
and cannot tell where to find them
Leave them alone
and they will come home
and bring their tails behind them”*

Photograph removed due to permissions issue

Fig. 2: Xu Bing's 'Square Word Calligraphy', *Spring Dawn*

*"I scarcely know it was dawn, so sound was the sleep of spring.
Everywhere there was birdsong.
All night long was the sound of wind and rain.
How many flowers have fallen to the ground?"*

Photograph removed due to permissions issue

Through Xu Bing's creative and innovative idea in his 'Square Word Calligraphy', I realized like in visual arts, music consists of different layers, and that these different layers of perception ultimately shape humans' understanding of music and its revelation. On the surface, Xu Bing has written in what initially looks like Chinese characters but after seeing under its surface would only then we realize we are actually looking at familiar English words represented differently. Therefore, *Prosa Air Mata* seeks to show the different layers of perception and receptiveness of how humans might relate to understand music. At first this piece looks like a conventional Western composition but in fact it is using Malay sound influences in its body.

Malay Theme, Western Idiom

This assertion of tradition and cultural identity brought about the intent of having a Malay theme highlighted into an otherwise non-traditional Malay or non-traditional eastern music idiom. A Malay source of text was chosen, as it is the most direct way of instigating the Malay identity. The contradicting elements of both text and music deepen and its anticipated musical result becomes even more curiously attractive. Of course the complete text of the poem inspired the creation of *Prosa Air Mata*.

Puisi Melayu is a traditional Malay art form (Osman, 1987) and has endured the path of modernization and still striving through the creative works of its poets such as the late Dato' Dr. Usman Awang (1929-2001), Malaysia's National Laureate. However, in a pursuit for *puisi Melayu* to achieve more successful acclaim internationally and to prove its flexibility and longevity, the music composition of *Prosa Air Mata* is put on a different platform. This will showcase the *puisi Melayu* in a different form of music composition with instrumentation not from the Malay culture. A juxtaposition of Malay text with Western contemporary music is also an innovative way to start expanding the resources of Malay literature.

Performance of *Prosa Air Mata* by *Ensemble Variances*

A specially commissioned work, *Prosa Air Mata* received its world premiere performance at Bristol, United Kingdom by *Ensemble Variances* (France) and baritone Tom Niesser (United Kingdom) on the 29th of November 2016. *Prosa Air Mata's* composition is scored for baritone, flute, clarinet in B flat, piano, violin, violoncello and double bass. The musicians are French, the baritone is from United Kingdom including the conductor, Dr. Neal Farwell also from United Kingdom.

Prosa Air Mata refers to the pentatonic scale (Example 1). Although as the piece progresses the pentatonic relationship dissolves and assimilates again in the music and operations of voice especially pentatonic arpeggios could be heard passing through the instruments although these arpeggios are sometimes altered into diminished intervals moving upwards or downwards. Varying melodic uses of a short

motive first presented and extensively developed as melodic voicings also appear in Major 3rd below or Perfect 5th above thus adding much to the colour and texture of this piece. The explosive passages in the beginning of *Prosa Air Mata* are more pronounced than in my previous vocal works (Example 1), as are the rhythmic elements of its musical language.

Ex. 1: Explosive beginning of *Prosa Air Mata*, pentatonic derived

A ♩ = 60

Flute
Clarinet in Bb
Baritone
Piano
Violin
Violoncello
Double Bass



5

Fl.
Cl.
Bar.
Pno.
Vln.
Vc.
Db.

The music and the voice depend upon one another, and the more it becomes to be heard in terms of ideal sound and expression. *Prosa Air Mata* discovers the voiceless language of music at the same time as the voice expresses the meanings of the words. The essence of its music lies in its voice and music relationship. However, to gain interpolations between calmness and outbursts, parallelism and dovetailing, a disturbance in the relationship is emphasized through the nature of the baritone, who is mostly calm and subdued but interrupted by the instruments, who are more aggressive (Example 2).

There is expressive intensity and abundance of surface detail happening in *Prosa Air Mata* with diverse stylistic and technical devices. The harmonic structures create richness in colour by coalescing in polychords and conveys the importance of timbre as an important mode of expression. (Example 3). In harmonic textures, density is built upon intervallic layers, for example a Major 3rd below the original line (Example 4).

Ex. 3: In bar 82 - D, E, G, B (right hand); E flat, G, B flat, C (left hand)

Musical notation for Example 3, showing piano accompaniment in bar 82. The right hand plays a chord of D, E, G, B, and the left hand plays a chord of E flat, G, B flat, C. The notation is in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings of *pp*.

Ex. 4: In bars 15 – 16, piano layering

Musical notation for Example 4, showing piano layering in bars 15 and 16. The notation features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings of *ppp* and *p*. The notation is in 4/4 time.

Conclusion

The coexistence of instrumental music, and the voice in the context of multiple dimensions of creative resources allows me to create with this music, an almost natural continuity between these diverse elements. *Prosa Air Mata* presents an exploration of sounds, motives, rigid structures, and an ambiguous beat. With this text I was able to develop its pictorial possibilities and they are explored in the music.

This composition also intends to show that *puisi Melayu* could be lifted to another level of performance and artistic value. *Puisi Melayu* compositions can be performed in international concert halls to an international audience, and even be performed by international musicians, which fortunately has been done recently.

Puisi Melayu and its authors deserve an international platform to highlight their existence and to promote its longevity in the literary, music and arts world. Malay inspired or a Malay sound world identity is less represented in the contemporary music world and an abundance of traditional and local sources and materials are actually available for artists to create from. The Malay identity idea could be put forward and its lifespan could be extended as long as there are creative efforts to present them in a developed form or which have a degree of relevance in the society.

In terms of artistic value, as discovered through the effort of composing for poetry, the arising relationship from the combination of music and text is so effective artistically and the expressive content becomes even more descriptive, engaging and discernable, compared to just one of the art form functioning, as the voice (text) and music now depend on one another. The text of the poetry has become more expressively engaging than the text itself, although the text was originally the source for musical exploration and compositional possibilities.

The reception before and after the performance by musicians and audience were very well received and very encouraging as the musicians were engaged into executing new ideas and open towards entering new territories especially for the vocalist. The performance of *Prosa Air Mata* in Bristol by international musicians

shows the relevance, success, acceptability and a promising future for Malay art if put in accord with other contemporary art forms, while still maintaining its integrity and aesthetics.

CHAPTER 13

TEKAD

Caklempong, Orchestra and Choir (SATB)

2018

Real-life situations often inspire artists and art forms they create like theatre, visual arts and music, of course. Musical text implemented in music composition has enabled music to grow out of or co-exist within broader art and life-situations, for example in secular or sacred rites where music is used as an element of ritual. Ceremonies considered important in human civilisations also have given rise to music.

But at other times, the general function of music has turned around completely and music has instead created practices, routines and formalities to go with it, for example, the phenomenon of the public concert. The musical experience of listeners (concert-goers) somewhat visual, emotional and physical, are affected to take shape within the minds of the audience through musical performances, which acts to overwhelm, stimulate, provoke, or subdue its listeners.

Berio has a unique view regarding musical evolution and tradition amongst composers, musicians and audience today:

In order to get a true sense of musical evolution, we must detach ourselves from a linear and irreversible view of historical time.' The immense 'library of musical knowledge' we have at our disposal invites us to suspend or to confound our chronologies, is unable to offer coherence, has no before or after.⁴⁹

With this statement, Berio does not intentionally mean returning to neither neoclassicism nor postmodernism. Instead, he is relating the possibility of looking into the future by rediscovering the past as a route towards the future, by remembering the future as though it had already been inscribed in history. Berio encourages composers and musicians to draw out of the work its future, creating a

⁴⁹ Earle, *Remembering the Future*, 286.

sustainable piece of music, meaning a work withstanding the future. In order to achieve this, in his compositional quest, Berio states his belief of projecting the unseen, or concealed,

The composer must continue to question (music) relentlessly in all of its aspects, in all the folds of its tireless body and of its endlessly generous soul. The somewhere else is the critic's problem.⁵⁰

Drawn towards Berio's attitude towards his compositions, I have made each of the works in this portfolio project an emotional sentiment. I hope that it will stimulate a correspondingly direct emotional response in the listener. It is a measure of the richness of the possibilities inherent in Western art music, that when combined with external influences and inflections, the music can still succeed admirably in this regard and that works still using mainly Western instruments can each reveal such diverse forms and appearances.

Close to three years have elapsed between *Suite for Winds* and *Prosa Air Mata*, and almost seven years in my journey of producing this composition portfolio. In that time, a shift occurred in my representation of music. The earlier work presents a view of music as divisive and frustrating, and the latter suggests music's power to unify and delight. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that, communication now is easier and more rewarding than it was a few years ago--for what I have gained in being able to relate to different cultures and situations is the result of being exposed and also inquisitive towards influences both familiar or foreign.

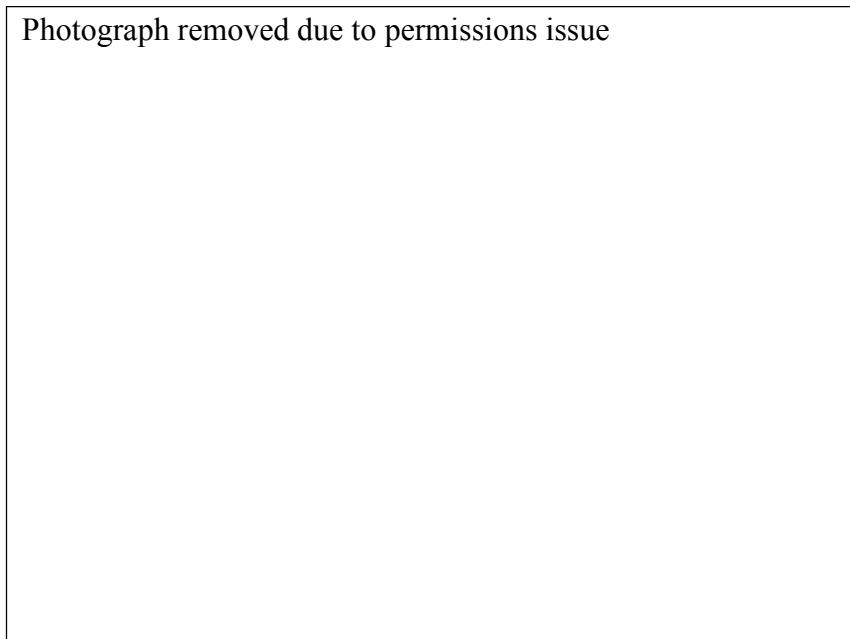
Tekad for orchestra and choir is the culmination of this portfolio, a coming together of all knowledge and experiences so far gathered along the way in producing an intercultural representation of music works from Asian, Malay composer's point of view. The initial aims of this compositional portfolio research included, though were not limited to, integrating the musical style and sound of Malay music. This was first with notes, and then through text (Malay literature), and finally, in *Tekad*, at last

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 287.

incorporating Malay traditional instruments in my second orchestral composition of this portfolio.

Caklempong

Fig. 1: *Caklempong* ensemble

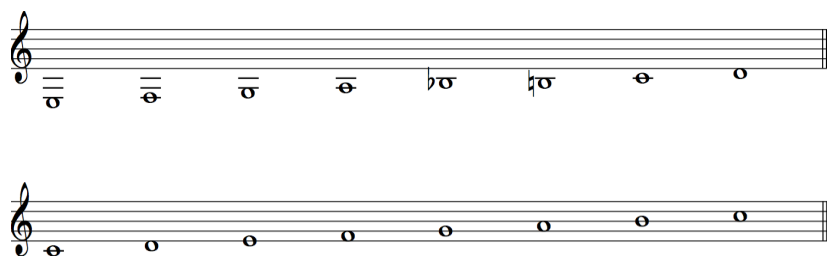
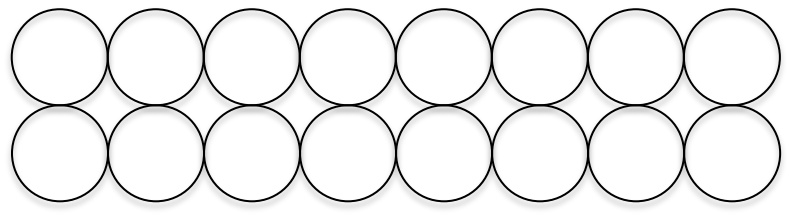
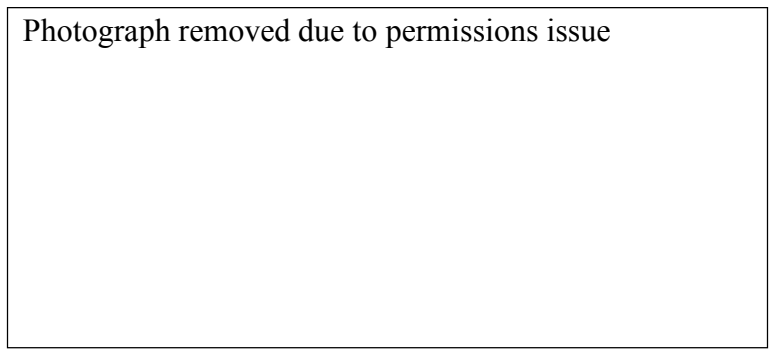


Caklempong or sometimes called as *Talimpung* is a type of traditional music of the Malay community in Malaysia of Minangkabau descent, coming from West Sumatra, Indonesia.⁵¹ It usually accompanies a *silat* performance or Malay traditional dances such as *tarian lilin* (candle dance) and *tarian piring* (plate dance). Because of its fast and joyous music, it is often performed during royal coronations and also during weddings for merriment. A traditional Malay instrument, *Caklempong*, consists of small gongs made of brass and copper, which are hit with wooden mallets wrapped with string. These small knobbed gongs are then arranged in one or two rows according to assigned pitches in ascending order. Traditional *Caklempong* musicians used to read *Caklempong* music using numbers. However these modern times, *Caklempong* players are also able to read conventional music notation.

⁵¹ Rahbeni Mutaal Hadi, *Caklempong: Sejarah dan Perkembangan Muzik, Jilid 1*, (Kuala Lumpur, Penerbit ASWARA, 2013).

A traditional set of *Caklempong* consists of *Gereteh*, *Tingkah*, *Sauwa*, traditional drums such as *gendang sarunai*, *rebana* and *aduak*; and gong.⁵² In *Caklempong* music, the *caklempong* plays songs which are highly rhythmic in nature, including active interlocking rhythms. Most *caklempong* performers describe that *caklempong* actually does not play *lagu* (songs) but instead it plays *rentak* (rhythms), and these rhythms form the basis of the music. The instruments used to play melodies in *Caklempong* are *gereteh bangsi*, and *saluang*. The *tingkah* acts as the harmony and rhythm maker. *Sauwa* fills in the middle and lower ranges of the music. Together, the *tingkah*, *sauwa* and *gendang* (drum) play the role of accompaniment.

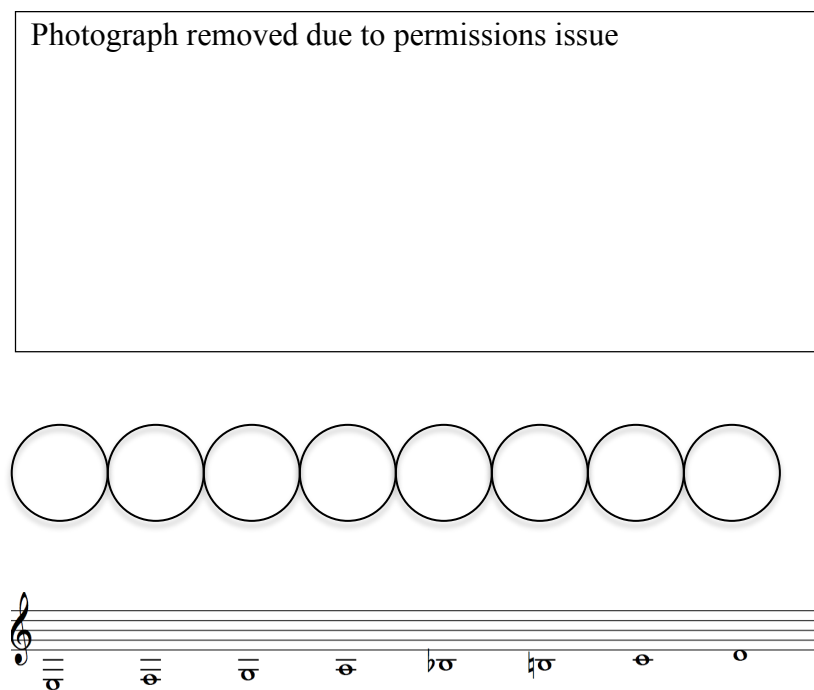
Fig. 2: *Gereteh*



⁵² Rahbeni Mutaal Hadi, *Caklempong: Teknik Bermain, Kaedah & Gaya, Jilid 3*, (Kuala Lumpur, Penerbit ASWARA, 2013).

The *Gereteh* (Figure 2) consists of 16 small knobbed gongs in two rows with 8 gongs in a row. Often ensembles arrange the *gereteh* knobbed gongs beginning from the note E3, F3, G3, A3, Bb(3), B3, C4, and D4 at the top row followed by middle C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, and C5 in the bottom row. However, there are also *Caklempong* ensembles having two *gereteh* players with *Gereteh 1* and *Gereteh 2*. When this happens both *gereteh* only consist of 8 gongs each arranged in the diatonic C Major scale. *Gereteh 2* will begin from C4 and *Gereteh 1* will begin from C3. To some *Caklempong* ensembles, it is preferable to have two sets of *gereteh* so the second *gereteh* can play the countermelody.

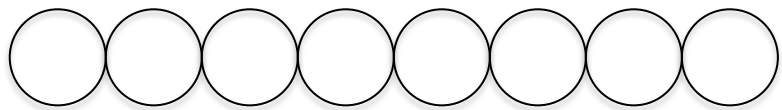
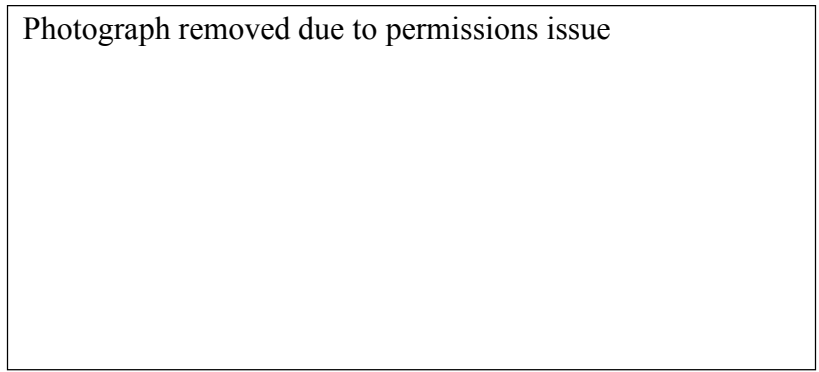
Fig. 3: *Tingkah* – providing rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment



The *tingkah* (Figure 3) consists of 8 small knobbed gongs beginning from the note E3, F3, G3, A3, Bb(3), B3, C4 and D4. The function of the *tingkah* is to control the tempo and rhythms along with the *gendang* (drum) beats. The playing of the *tingkah* is more improvisary. *Tingkah* in English means interlocking so, its name appropriately describes its function in *Caklempong* music.

Sauwa (Figure 4) also has 8 knobbed gongs and looks very much the same as the *tingkah*. Its 8 small gongs have the same notes as the *tingkah*. However, *Caklempong* ensembles that have two *gereteh* players, will have the *sauwa* sounding an octave lower from the *tingkah*. *Sauwa* usually plays in ostinato rhythms or repeated rhythms and its pitches move according to the chord progressions.

Fig. 4: *Sauwa* – providing rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment



Musical notations for the *tingkah* and *sauwa* are not provided to the players, instead they are only given chord symbols. *Tingkah* and *sauwa* provide the rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment of the music. Therefore, *tingkah* and *sauwa* will play in broken chords or in harmony (chords of 2). The players of *tingkah* and *sauwa* will know which rhythmic patterns to play and which rhythms are appropriate to the music before performing. The common interlocking rhythm patterns of the *gereteh*, *tingkah* and *sauwa* playing together are shown below (Example 1).

Ex. 1: Common interlocking rhythm patterns of the *gereteh*, *tingkah*, and *sauwa* playing together



The *rebana* (Figure 5) lays out the basic rhythmic patterns for non-pitched drums, and the *gendang sarunai* (Figure 6) plays interlocking rhythms to this. The lead *gendang* drums all play an important role of controlling tempo and also add rhythmic excitement during improvisational sections of the *caklempong*. An example of the combination of interlocking rhythm patterns of the *caklempong* is shown below (Example 2).

Fig. 5: *Rebana*

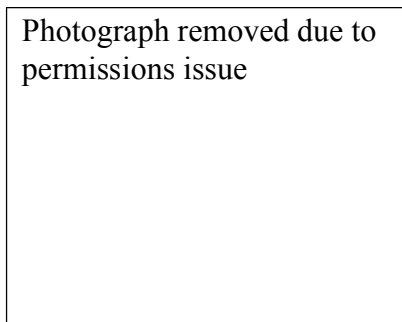
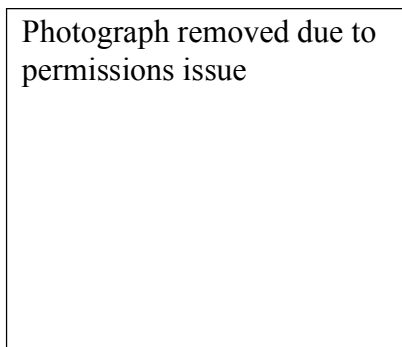


Fig. 6: *Gendang sarunai* and *aduak*

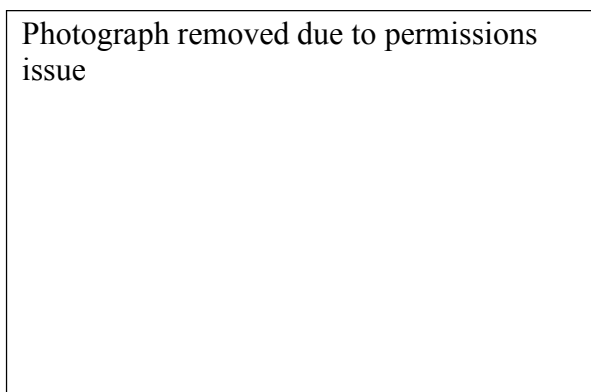


Ex.2: Combination of interlocking rhythm patterns of the *caklempong* (*gereteh*, *tingkah*, and *sauwa* with *rebana*, *gendang sarunai*, and *aduak*)

The image shows a musical score for six instruments in 4/4 time. The instruments are Gereteh, Tingkah, Sauwa, Rebana, Gendang Sarunai, and Aduak. The score consists of six staves. Gereteh, Tingkah, and Sauwa are written in treble clef. Rebana, Gendang Sarunai, and Aduak are written in bass clef. The score shows interlocking rhythmic patterns for each instrument.

Today, during performance, the contemporary *Caklempong* ensemble may include other musical instruments as well, such as traditional woodwind instruments like *saluang*, *bangsi*, or *pupuik* (Figure 7); accordion, violin, flute, guitar or electric keyboard.

Fig. 7: *Saluang*



Composing *Tekad*

Tekad is the final composition for this portfolio. It is the largest orchestral work here, which integrates instruments from the traditional Malay *Caklempong*; *gereteh*, *tingkah*, and *rebana* into the ensemble. The *caklempong* instruments here in *Tekad* are treated just the same as all the other orchestral instruments. Meaning, the *caklempong* plays its role as an orchestral instrument in creating textures, sonority and sounds in the orchestra while bringing a Malay sound character into *Tekad's* music. There aren't any quotations of Malay traditional or folk songs in *Tekad* but instead I will introduce nuances of the Malay sound world through instruments of *Caklempong*.

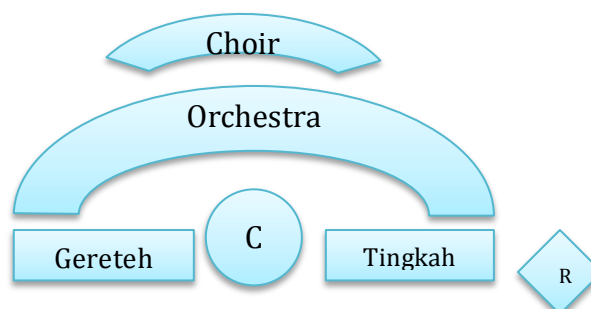
The meaning of *Tekad* is 'determination'. Therefore this composition portrays the spirit of strength and determination, which summarizes my compositional journey thus far during completion of this portfolio. Previously, with my other three compositions for voice; *Wahyu*, *Menambat Rakit*, and *Prosa Air Mata*; I had used three poems from two Malay poets of Malaysia. For my last large work for orchestra and choir, I decided to write my own words for my own music. This decision I feel is appropriate and expressively fulfills the emotional content of *Tekad* thus making it carry more personal resonances and eventually I hope *Tekad* fulfills its musical destiny and will be performed in Malaysia.

Bahasa Melayu text	English translation
Tiba masa aku tekad	It is time for determination
Tiba masa aku tekad	It is time for determination
Tabah aku sabar	I am steadfast, patient
Kini jiwa ragaku cekal	Now my soul is strong
Aku kini sudah lari jauh	I have run
Sangat jauh	Very far
Dengan rasa gusar hiba	With a sense of despair
Aku tetap tegap berdiri	I am still standing

Ku masih lagi sama	I am still the same
Tabah usahaku untukmu	I work hard for you
Aku berdoa	I pray
Oh tekad!	Oh determination!
Janjiku berjuang	My promise to fight
Oh tekad!	Oh determination!
Janjiku berjuang	My promise to fight
Oh tekad untukmu!	Oh I am determined for you!
Ini merupakan perjuangan masa depanku (Tegap berdiri tabah usahaku)	This is my struggle for the future (My stand is strong my effort is strong)
Andai berusaha pasti berjaya (Aku berdoa)	If you want to succeed (I pray)
Ku percaya kuatkan genggamamu	I believe and strengthen my grasp
Tiba masa aku tekad!	It is time for determination!
Tiba masa aku tekad!	It is time for determination!

Tekad is written for *caklempong* and orchestra, therefore, the *caklempong* (*gereteh* and *tingkah*) will be placed in front of the orchestra slightly to the left and right of the conductor as illustrated below (Figure 8).

Fig. 8:



Tekad begins moderately slow and pensive, with whispering dialogues between woodwinds and soft brass (Figure 9), leading into the majestic rehearsal mark B where we hear the *caklempong* and voices for the first time. *Gereteh* and *tingkah* are joined here with marimba and vibraphone in *staccato* semiquavers, which then echoes into the strings (Figure 10):

Fig. 9: The beginning of *Tekad*

The image displays a page of a musical score for the beginning of the piece 'Tekad' by Cornelis Mohamad Rizal. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Clarinet in Bb 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn in F 1 & 2, Trumpet in Bb 1 & 2, and Trombone 1 & 2. The tempo is marked 'Pensive' and the time signature is 4/4. The score shows the initial entries of the woodwinds and soft brass instruments, with dynamic markings such as ppp, p, and pp. The rehearsal mark 'A' is indicated at the beginning of the score.

Fig. 10: *Gereteh, tingkah*, marimba, vibraphone, and strings

The image displays a musical score for rehearsal C, featuring a variety of instruments and voices. The score is organized into systems. The top system includes the Rebana (II), Oboe (Obr.), and Triangle (Ting.). The second system includes Marimba (Mar.), Vibraphone (Vib.), and the vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The vocal parts have lyrics: "Ti ba ma sa a a ku to kad". The string section (Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello (Vcl.), and Double Bass (Db.)) is shown in the bottom system. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *f*, and *p*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The music is written in a key signature with one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

The music of rehearsal C is not too fast in tempo but its character is more like a traditional slow dance with animated rhythms in the string section and supported by the rhythms of the *rebana*. Here, the first oboe's melodic part makes its entrance with counter melodies below it. Flute then takes over the melodic line just before soprano and alto voices enter. After that in bar 72, tenor and bass voices join in. From bar 78 onwards, voices in SATB sing together in thirds and fifths with soprano and alto at a higher octave than tenor and bass for the remainder of this section.

Fig. 11: Oboe's melodic entrance

Figure 11 shows a musical score for an Oboe's melodic entrance. The score is for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, Clarinet 1 and 2, Bassoon 1 and 2, and strings. The tempo is marked 'Mystical dance-like' with a metronome marking of 68. The Oboe 1 part begins with a melodic line marked 'mp dolce' and 'p'. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is labeled 'Full Score' and 'C'.

Fig. 12: Rebana rhythms, entrance of soprano and alto voices

Figure 12 shows a musical score for the entrance of soprano and alto voices. The score includes parts for Rebana, German Horn, Trumpet, Maracas, Vibraphone, Soprano, and Alto. The tempo is marked 'Mystical dance-like' with a metronome marking of 68. The Rebana part features a rhythmic pattern. The Soprano and Alto parts enter with the lyrics 'Ta-bah a a a ku sa-bar ki -'. The score is labeled 'C'.

Fig. 13: Animated string rhythms

Figure 13 shows a musical score for animated string rhythms. The score includes parts for Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The tempo is marked 'Mystical dance-like' with a metronome marking of 68. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is labeled 'C'.

There is a certain kind of energy building up in Section D from bar 92 with woodwinds becoming suddenly active in quaver triplets–infectious–until this rhythmic energy spreads onto the brass and strings. This active energy prepares for the *con spirito* entrance of the voices in SATB ‘*Oh tekad janjiku...*’ at bar 107. The brass section and woodwinds support the proclamation of the voices with strong, held notes while strings below play firm repeated triplets, and finishing off with a rapid, ascending flourish of high woodwinds.

Fig. 14: Quaver triplets in woodwinds and brass

This musical score excerpt features woodwinds and brass instruments. The woodwinds include Oboe 1 and 2, Clarinet 1 and 2, Bassoon 1 and 2, Horn 1 and 2, and Trumpet 1 and 2. The brass section includes Trombone 1. The score shows quaver triplets in various parts, with dynamic markings such as *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *f*. Performance instructions like 'bouche' and 'con sord.' are present. The music is written in a common time signature.

Fig. 15: Quaver triplets in strings and entrance of SATB voices, ‘*Oh tekad janjiku...*’

This musical score excerpt shows the SATB vocal ensemble and the string section. The vocal parts are Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The string section includes Violin I and II, Viola, Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The SATB voices enter with the lyrics 'Oh te kad jan ji ku ber ju ang oh te kad jan ji ku ber ju ang' in a *f con spirito* dynamic. The strings play quaver triplets, with dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. The score is in common time.

Fig. 16: Flourish in high woodwinds

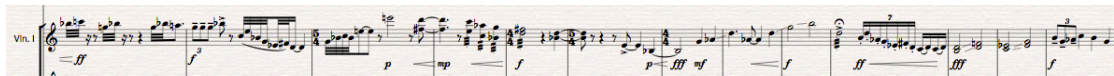
The image displays a musical score for high woodwinds, consisting of eight staves. The notation is complex, featuring rapid sixteenth-note passages with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *mp*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, and *rit.* (ritardando). The score is divided into two measures by a vertical bar line. The first measure contains the dense, fast woodwind flourishes, while the second measure shows a more sparse texture with sustained notes and rests. The woodwinds are arranged in a standard orchestral order from top to bottom: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, and Tuba/Euphonium.

Unexpectedly, but for me very intuitively, a violin solo comes in for the entire rehearsal E. This breaks off the density of the music but somehow is not disrupting the flow and drama of the music. The violin solo is expressive in nature with quadruple and triple stops, *glissandos*, *tremolos* and fast notes from high to low, becoming an important expressive section. This section also creates a spaciousness in the texture, and increases expectancy for the next section.

Fig. 17: Violin solo; quadruple and triple stops



Fig. 18: Violin solo; glissandos and fast notes



Woodwinds mark the beginning of Rehearsal F. Flute, oboes, and clarinets are running and falling into one another, stopping just as the *rebana* comes in, as if to cue the voices, now with tenor and bass as leading melodies and soprano and alto as counter melodies, in a more contrapuntal style. Just before the voices finish, the brass section carries on the counterpoint melodies by themselves.

Fig. 19: Beginning of section F; woodwinds falling into one another



Fig. 20: *Rebana* enters, with SATB voices in counterpoint style

The musical score for Figure 20 shows a multi-staff arrangement. At the top, there are four staves for the *Rebana* (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) voices, which are playing a rhythmic pattern. Below these are staves for Violins (Vln.), Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.) voices. The vocal parts include lyrics in Indonesian. The lyrics for the Soprano part are: "Te - gao ber - di - ri ta - bah u - sa - ha - ku u u u A - ku ber - do - a A - ku ber - do -". The lyrics for the Alto part are: "Te - gao ber - di - ri ta - bah u - sa - ha - ku u u Ber - do - a A - ku ber - do -". The lyrics for the Tenor part are: "I - ni me - ru - pa - kan per - ju - a - ngan ma - sa - da - pan ku An - dai ber - u - sa - ha pas - ti ber - ja - ya ku per - ca - ya ku - at kan geng - ga - man...". The lyrics for the Bass part are: "I - ni a - da lah per - ju - a - ngan ma - sa - ha - da - pan An - dai ber - u - sa - ha pas - ti ber - ja - ya ku per - ca - ya geng - ga - man...".

Without any stops or pauses, the final section, beginning at rehearsal mark G starts with bassoons and cellos playing in rhythmically continuous dotted quavers and ties, within mostly alternating time signatures of 3/4 and 4/4. The full string section then joins them, and the entire orchestra moves onto the most festive and joyous section of the piece with *caklempong* and percussions becoming lively and playful. Even the voice parts are now in shorter quaver rhythm patterns. The *gereteh* and *tingkah* interlocking rhythms here could be compared to the interlocking character of the original *caklempong* rhythms as shown in earlier examples. Bars 189 until 242 display a lively musical conversation between voices with *caklempong* and percussion.

Fig. 21: Bassoon in changing metres

The musical score for Figure 21 shows four staves for woodwinds: Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinet 2 (Cl. 2), Bassoon 1 (Bsn. 1), and Bassoon 2 (Bsn. 2). The Clarinet parts are in treble clef and show dynamic markings of *pp* and *mf*. The Bassoon parts are in bass clef and show dynamic markings of *mf*. The score illustrates complex rhythmic patterns and changes in time signature, with the bassoon parts playing a continuous rhythmic accompaniment.

Fig. 22: Double bass and string section in changing metres

This musical score features five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts are marked 'arco' and 'mf'. The Vc. part is marked 'f'. The Db. part is marked 'pizz.' and 'mf'. The score consists of 12 measures, with a change in metre indicated by a double bar line and a new time signature.

Fig. 23: Most festive and joyful section with *caklempong* with percussions, and strings

This musical score includes a variety of instruments: Flute II (Flt. II), Clarinet (Clar.), Trumpet (Trp.), Mellophone (Melo.), Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello (Vc.), Double Bass (Db.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Percussion part is marked 'Festive and Joyful = 108' and 'pizz.'. The Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Vc. parts are marked 'pizz.' and 'mf'. The Db. part is marked 'arco' and 'mf'. The score consists of 12 measures, with a change in metre indicated by a double bar line and a new time signature.

Fig. 24: Gereteh and tingkah interlocking rhythms with percussion, bars 189-242

The image shows a musical score for four parts: Ger (Gitar), Ting (Tingkah), Mar (Maracas), and Vb. (Vibraphone). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of 14 measures. The Ger part features a steady eighth-note pattern. The Ting part has a similar eighth-note pattern with some rests. The Mar part consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Vb. part has a pattern of eighth notes with some rests. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

The *rebana* beats rhythms loudly as bassoons and double basses gradually rumble into full support by woodwinds, trumpets and timpani. Strings carry on long held notes while full activity is still in woodwinds especially a melodic idea briefly emerges in flutes, oboes and clarinets. The active interlocking rhythms of *caklempong* and percussion are heard again through the voices but this time with woodwinds and brass above. ‘*Tiba masa aku tekad...*’ repeats in all voices firmly and determinedly with the full support of the orchestra towards a resolute finish.

Fig. 25: Active woodwinds with a brief melodic idea in flutes, oboes, and clarinets

The image shows a musical score for woodwinds and brass. The parts include Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob. 1, Ob. 2, Cl. 1, Cl. 2, Bsn. 1, Bsn. 2, Hrn. 1, Hrn. 2, Tpt. 1, and Tpt. 2. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of 14 measures. The woodwinds (flutes, oboes, and clarinets) play a melodic line that starts in measure 10 and continues through measure 14. The brass (bassoons, horns, trumpets) and timpani play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

Fig. 26: Loud *rebana* beats

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Tmp. (Timpani) and Reb. (Rebana). The score is in 3/4 time and consists of 14 measures. The Tmp. part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Reb. part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat.

Fig. 27: Caklempong and percussion interlocking rhythms with voices ‘*Tiba masa aku tekad...*’

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Tiba masa aku tekad...'. The score is arranged in a system with multiple staves. At the top, there are staves for 'Reb.' (Rebana), 'Ger.' (Gendang), 'Ting.' (Tingit), and 'Mar.' (Maracas), which provide the rhythmic accompaniment. Below these are staves for 'Vib.' (Vibraphone), 'S.' (Soprano), 'A.' (Alto), 'T.' (Tenor), and 'B.' (Bass). The vocal parts include lyrics in Indonesian: 'Ti ba ma sa... a a ku te kad Ti ba ma sa...'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f can spirito* and *p*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The notation is in Western staff notation with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

Notational devices in Tekad

Despite being an immediately recognizable Malay traditional instrument, *caklempong* is treated the same as any conventional instrument of the orchestra for *Tekad*. Being a percussive instrument, *caklempong* is most easily transculturally transferable and will work well with the orchestra. Its clear bright sounds in the higher register and slightly mellow lower register will manage to be heard through the full orchestral sounds. Since it does not act as an improvisatory instrument but rather as an orchestral instrument, therefore, given the instrument, any percussionist would be able to perform on the *caklempong* by reading the notation given. As shown in previous examples earlier in this chapter, *caklempong* uses conventional Western musical notation. Traditional *caklempong* players used to play using numbers but towards modern times, they have become able to read conventional music notation. As such, *Tekad* is not an orchestration or a rearrangement of Malay folk or traditional tune, rather it is an entirely new contemporary music composed for *caklempong* and orchestra.

Caklempong manages well as a melodic instrument as well as a rhythmically harmonic instrument. Not much music has been written for *caklempong* and orchestra compared to gamelan and orchestra – an area extensively explored by Colin McPhee⁵³, and later, composers such as Michael Tenzer.⁵⁴ This is one reason I have chosen to feature *caklempong* in *Tekad*.

Conclusion

Before the integration of *caklempong* into *Tekad*'s music, despite my Malay influences I relied on solely on conventional Western instruments to create suggestions of non-Western sonorities. However, in *Tekad*, I have taken this challenge one step further by including a *caklempong* ensemble, consisting of one *Gereteh* and one *Tingkah* within a Western orchestra. In my previous orchestral work, *Senja*, even though it finds inspiration in Malay *Randai* music, the resultant orchestral sound remains closer to Western compositional and orchestration techniques. *Tekad*'s characteristic vigorous interlocking rhythms, especially in the percussive sections are inspired by the interlocking rhythms of Malay traditional music of *Caklempong*, integrating elements of Malay *Caklempong* music within Western musical concepts. Specifically for *Tekad*, the treatment of the "Malaysian" identity in its music is either by incorporating local instruments in a Western orchestra, literally simulating sounds of traditional instruments, or integrating Malay traditional rhythms of the *caklempong*.

Overall, *Tekad*'s scoring aims for large, surging instrumental colours. *Tekad*'s composition music is clearly, structured with every section clearly marked by a specific musical event, in contrast to other orchestral compositions in this portfolio, which are set on a loose scheme, that often furthermore demonstrate a certain degree of indeterminacy.

⁵³ Colin McPhee, *A House In Bali [Illustrated Edition]*, (USA, Tannenberg Publishing, 2015).

⁵⁴ Michael Tenzer. & I Made Moja, *Balinese Gamelan Music: (Downloadable Audio Included)*, (USA, Tuttle Publishing, 2013).

At times, *Tekad* tends to lean towards experimentation on different ethnic elements through adaptation and integration, and following cultural and personal intuition. Despite all these, there is always an effort to strike a balance between Eastern and Western elements, and *Tekad* overcomes the limitations in creating a piece of music based solely on the character of a traditional Malay instrument.

CHAPTER 14

Reflections and Conclusion

With modernisation in all aspects of life, cultural exchanges between East and West has never been easier and continues to develop even more since the 20th century, thus providing unlimited resources and information for musical creativity and innovation. Without barriers, composers from Saariaho to Dai Fujikura are now writing music whose aesthetics can be understood and embraced globally, internationally, and interculturally. Composers are now more inclined to not only reflect one's own culture but instead to embody intercultural elements. This goes in agreement with J.H. Kwabena's explanation of interculturalism as the process of identifying with or sharing in the heritage of other cultures with a view to broadening one's cultural horizon or one's capacity to understand and appreciate differences in modes of expression.⁵⁵ This kind of influence is evident in the works of this composition portfolio and its research aims as stated from the first chapter. In its search for fresh sonorities, a unique and personal sound world stemmed from a personal approach and reaction towards the music and sounds of Malay music, these intercultural works are highlighting the Malay culture through a musical sense of connection and communication between Malay traditional music and the Western musical systems.

The previous 13 chapters have traced my compositional development, and movement from works inspired by timbre and gesture to the works using Malay traditional musical characteristics ranging from rhythms to concepts and practices, Malay texts, and Malay traditional instrument, which are integrated into various Western-based musical genres in which Western and non-Western elements are organically fused into an aesthetic whole.

On the whole, the music of this composition portfolio can be classified into two categories, i.e., compositions with influences of Malaysian traditional music, and

⁵⁵ Trevor Wiggins & J.H. Kwabena Nketia, An Interview with J. H. Kwabena Nketia: Perspectives on Tradition and Modernity. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 14(1), (UK, Taylor and Francis, 2005), 57-81. Retrieved on 24 August 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184501>.

compositions with influences of Malay literature (text). While the music of, *A Piece for String Quartet*, *Senja*, and *Tekad*, belong to the first category, the music of *Neither, nor, but here...*, *Sayup*, *Wahyu*, *Menambat Rakit*, and *Prosa Air Mata*, belong to the second, reflecting Malay text and literature musically and representing it through music. *Tekad*'s music however belongs to both categories, bringing together Malay traditional instrument and Malay text into a new Malay music compositional work. As evident in my recent works, and it is becoming a general trend, is my exploration of Malay musical and cultural and identity.

In describing the trajectory of the works in this portfolio, my earlier compositions— *Klibat* and *Klibat II*, and *Neither, nor, but here...* - began as explorations of musical gestures. Later on, to broaden my musical language, I began to start writing with ideas of having a group of pitches, which are then manipulated into the pieces, and meanwhile, the determined pitch collections also act as harmonic materials of the music. This occurs in the pieces, *A Piece for String Quartet* and *Journey*. Works such as *Senja* and *Sayup* were written during my time of discovering Ligeti's micropolyphony compositions and his ideas on textural density.

My later compositions, which are *Wahyu*, *Menambat Rakit*, and *Prosa Air Mata*, are moving more and more towards incorporation of specific Malay elements, first with texts, where all the three mentioned above involve text from Malay poetry. And finally *Tekad* for orchestra carries on with the incorporation of Malay elements with the inclusion of the Malay traditional instrument, *caklempong*, into the musical composition.

As a result, this composition portfolio is a sincere reflection of my personal journey of finding a voice as a composer born in Malaysia, but engaged with European music my whole musical life, and adjusting my compositional approach through these 11 pieces, rather than each newer composition being an improvement of the composition before.

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