

RIANG RIA BIOLA: Creating and Evaluating a Violin Repertoire Book of Malaysian Folksongs

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Abstract

This article will discuss the creation of a repertoire book for beginner-to-intermediate level violin that uses Malaysian folksongs. The book comes with an accompanying compact disc (CD). The article will also present the findings of a research project that trialed the book to ascertain the effectiveness of the book, testing whether the use of folksongs assisted in student learning, exploring the Kodály tenant that traditional folksongs are the 'native tongue' of the beginner student, thus assisting the student to more readily relate to it, and learn more naturally.

Keywords: *Malaysian, folksong, Riang Ria Biola, violin instruction, Kodály, Instrumental.*

Why another violin repertoire book? For four reasons: firstly, our research did not uncover an instructional violin book that included Malaysian folksongs in their repertoire. Secondly, to present the Malaysian culture with a repertoire book that approaches the quality of other similar books. Thirdly, to test the hypothesis that by harnessing the folksongs of the culture, accelerated learning outcomes might occur and fourthly, to re-introduce Malaysian folksongs to young people who may not be aware of their folk song heritage.

Within the Arts, the "rise of monolithic global music culture strongly influenced by Western music" (Jorgensen, 1997, p.62) has so worried some people that they have attempted to "preserve their respective heritages in the face of what they see as a pervasive Western influence" (ibid. p.64). Tutors of Malaysian students in instrumental music know full well the constant presence of influences other than Malaysian, and what a big impact, good and not so good, Western colonization has had on its culture (Abdullah, 2003, p.7). The current texts and method books used for violin instruction all come from cultures other than Malaysia and these externally generated products hold the largest presence in the market place. The authors thought to compliment these texts with a repertoire book that offered the tutor an opportunity to create a balance and to utilize Malaysian folksongs as part of the student's learning experience.

Another facet of the research was to ensure that the repertoire of the book be guided by effective music instructional methodology so that each song was presented in a technically developmental order. Thus the selection and order of the folksongs used in the book were arrived at after consideration and alignment with guiding philosophies, instructional methodology and the practical teaching experience of the authors.

The main philosophies and methods considered were the Hungarian 'Kodály' method and philosophy, and the Russian 'Grigoryan' method. The Kodály approach stresses the importance of utilizing the native traditional folksongs as the starting point in music education. The argument being that the traditional folksong is the 'native tongue' (Choksy, 1999, p.6), the 'known language' of the student. Malaysia has many dialects and ethnic groups as well as the Orang Asli, the original people, and in an attempt to represent this diversity the authors chose eleven common domain Malay folksongs that have been popularised across the nation through books like the Pendidikan Muzik KBSR series by C. H. Lee (2004), as well as one Tamil song, one Chinese and one Orang Asli melody from Sarawak.

Statement of Problem

The authors' research established that there was a need for a beginner-to-intermediate violin repertoire book that utilizes Malaysian folksongs. Until this research, there has been no specific Malaysian text or book that uses traditional Malaysian folksongs to supplement the instruction of students of the violin. The authors noticed this gap in the literature and saw the possibility of creating a product that would service the Malaysian population more accurately than texts that were originally written for, and come from, other cultures.

Even at the early instructional level of music education, the current texts in use are those that come from overseas. Students wanting to study the violin will inevitably play the musical works of other cultures. The authors agreed with Kodály that "a good folk song is a perfect masterpiece in itself" (Patseas, 2005) and that Malaysian folksongs, if arranged musically and artfully, could stand beside the works of the folksongs of any culture. Patseas (2005) explains that Kodály believed,

“that as one first learns and speaks a mother tongue and through that one later approaches the other languages, the same way one should first formulate a Musical Mother Tongue. He believed for example, that for the Hungarians this tongue consisted of Hungarian folk songs. He pointed out that the best connection between music and language exists in folk songs. He declared that "a good folk song is a perfect masterpiece in itself" (p.1).

Research Objectives

There were two main objectives in this research:

1. To create a Malaysian specific violin repertoire book and CD that would supplement existing method texts, and reinforce traditional Malaysian culture by making the student aware of their folksong heritage.
2. To trial the book and CD with teachers and tutors to evaluate its effectiveness and to garner their impression of how the students responded to the Malaysian repertoire.

The Nature of the Study

As previously stated, the main purpose of the project was to create a supplementary book and to then examine the effectiveness of the product, to ascertain and identify how far the students had absorbed the knowledge of musical concepts and if there was any evidence of accelerated learning. There was the desire to know if the piano accompaniment or CD assisted in the learning process: Did it facilitate practice and learning? Did the students recognise their musical heritage? Did the book introduce to the students folk music of their own culture that they were not aware of? The answers to these questions are given in the second half of this article and in the conclusions. The trial respondents consisted of violin teachers and tutors who taught beginner or elementary grade students in schools as well as in private studios.

Definition of Methods

Choksy (1999) describes the 'Kodály' method as,

“an approach to teaching the skills of music literacy to young children. Its sequence is a child-developmental one, based on the normal musical progression of children from the minor third, through the notes of the pentaton, to the full scales of the major and minor modes.” (p.23)

The method stresses the use of traditional folksongs from the student's cultural heritage, as Capitanio (2003) says,

“ The study of folksongs is vital in Kodály’s plan for music education, and each country that has adopted Kodály’s principles has had to gather and classify music of its own. Kodály believed that every nationality has a wealth of folk music that can be used to teach the basic elements of music” (p.4)

The Grigoryan method is a complete method for the step-by-step instruction of beginner to intermediate students of the violin. In the preface of the book Grigoryan (1986) says, "The teacher should work on the development of the holistic musical and technical progress of the student right from the beginning."

Though the repertoire book is not a method book, the authors wanted it to align with the Kodály method and other instrumental method books currently in use. The Kodály method was used as a support for the justification of the use of folksongs from the cultures of Malaysia, and the Grigoryan was used to guide the project researchers in the technical development and general standard of the *Riang Ria Biola* book. These methods are discussed in the next section.

Literature Review

In a review of literature, the authors considered the method books of Bruce Pearson’s (1993) *Standard of Excellence*; Anderson and Frost’s (2008) *All for Strings*; Frost’s (2006) *Artistry in Strings* and the aforementioned Grigoryan. The repertoire books reviewed were John O’Reilly’s (1995) *Strictly Classic*, and Frost’s (1983) *Especially for Strings*. The researchers reviewed the band method book *Standard of Excellence*, though it is not a string method book, as a point of reference because it is both a method book and a book with repertoire in it, and because of its extensive usage, even though it is now twenty years old, and because it can be used in both group and individual tuition.

Generally, across the literature, a method book consists of introductory exercises and scales, interspersed with simple folk tunes, or well-known repertoire that has been simplified to the students’ ability. Some books were like *Riang Ria Biola* in that they majored in the repertoire with only a few exercises to compliment the songs. For example, Frost (1983) says,

“*Especially for Strings* was written to supplement a beginning string method with interesting program material. This folio contains ... pieces in a variety of keys, styles, and tempos appropriate for the young string players” (p.2).

Only three method books that we located provided a compact disk of recorded accompaniment to assist in student learning and home practice. These were the aforementioned *Standard of Excellence* book (Pearson, 1993) who encouraged his students to “spend time practicing both alone and with the *Standard of Excellence* recorded accompaniment”, *Artistry in Strings* (Frost, 2006) and *Essential Elements 2000 for Strings* (Gillespie, 2002). Some of the books include diagrams and photos of fingerboards and fingering charts, such as the *All for Strings* and *Grigoryan* method books; however, it was beyond our current ability to include photos and fingering charts in this book. Across the books analyzed only one folksong from the Asian region was identified (Pearson, 1993), the authors did not find a single Malaysian folksong.

Related Approaches and Methods

During the early 1900s, Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály, appalled by the low musical literacy and ignorance of the musical heritage of students entering the Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, identified the need for better music education in Hungary. He proposed a methodology that has been refined and developed by music education specialists to the place where today it is recognized as the foremost effective early method of music tuition (Choksy, 1999).

The method is named after its inventor and is called the Kodály method. Lois Choksy (1999) says that it is not a method at all but rather “... a life-permeating philosophy of education of which only the pedagogical

principles may be said to have method.”(p.6). Kodály stated that “... as a child possesses a mother-tongue – the language spoken in his [or her] home – he [she] also possesses a musical mother-tongue in the folk music [of his/her culture]. It is through this musical mother-tongue that the skills and concepts necessary to musical literacy should be taught” (ibid.).

Another aspect of the Kodály method is the use of rhythm derived from the folksongs and natural rhythms of childhood play so that the crotchet represents the walking pace of the child and quavers running steps (Choksy, 1981, p.26). This means that these divisions of the beat are used first rather than the introduction of semibreves and minims.

Theories

There were two main overarching theories used in this project. The Kodály philosophy applied to the Grigoryan method of violin instruction, and the theory of music. The former was the guiding pedagogical theory that determined the selection of the folksongs and the developmental order of the placement of the songs within the book.

The primary theory was Western music theory. This is the application and manipulation of the musical elements of harmony, melody, rhythm, structure, texture, counterpoint, mood, performance characteristics, tempo, meter and dynamics. The application of this theory in this research was a blend of Western tertiary harmony with pentatonic melodic influences. The rhythms were mostly dictated by the folksongs, though some were influenced by the accompaniment. Here the authors acknowledge the ethno-musicological expertise of Mr. Nizam Attan who answered the authors many queries about accompaniment and context. The structure usually followed the existing structure of the folksongs and as such was predominantly binary. The texture was mostly homophonic, though the folksong from Sarawak, *Kajat Petuyang*, employed some rudimentary polyphony and this was further developed for the book with the creation of a two-part canonic counterpoint (see Figure 2). The mood, tempo, meter and dynamics mostly followed the original songs.

Methodology

The methodologies employed in this research were qualitative and quantitative. The study was qualitative in terms of the creation of the book and in the musical arrangements of the repertoire; it was quantitative in the trialing of the book with selected tutors and students (see participants below for demographic) and in the collection and analysis of the data related to the trial period.

The Malay songs used in the book were sourced from the *Pendidikan Muzik* series (Lee, 2004). The Tamil Indian song and the Orang Asli song were sourced from the public domain of YouTube, and the Chinese song courtesy of Dr. Colleen Wong. The song selection process and their arrangements is discussed after the findings.

The Evaluation

The research team sought responses from specialist music educators who trialed the product, and completed a report/questionnaire after the trial period. Since the main focus of the project was the development of the book and CD this aspect of the research sought to evaluate the effectiveness and the appreciation of the folksongs in the book, and developmental grading of the songs; concepts and the technical parts of playing the violin, and the effectiveness of the piano accompaniment and CD.

Participants

This study was conducted on violin teachers or tutors of differing ethnicities throughout the states of Malaysia. Thirty teachers or tutors were approached to participate in this study, thirteen returned the questionnaire (n = 13) giving a response of 43%. This aspect of the research for the book was quantitative in the responses of the music educators who trialed the book and completed a report/questionnaire after the trial period. They also (through their experience with other resources) compared the book with other texts currently in use across Malaysia. It was quantitative in the data that was compiled and analyzed to evaluate the product. To proceed with the study, the researchers obtained the consent of the teachers themselves or the authorities of the music schools. The authors stated the information about the purpose of the research and how it was to be conducted and asked for the respondents to participate.

Participant Recruitment

The research team contacted the respondents directly, by phone and through mail and email, describing the process of the study. The respondents consisted of private violin tutors, private school violin tutors who taught individual students; and government school music teachers who taught string instruments in ensembles during music classes; In this way the study covered individual one-to-one lessons as well as group lessons. The majority of these students were secondary aged school students.

The research team distributed the research package, which consisted of the *Riang Ria Biola* repertoire book, the violin part booklet, and the CD along with a questionnaire and a stamped return envelope. If the respondents required further detailed explanations they were encouraged to contact the authors via phone calls or e-mails.

Instrument

A questionnaire was constructed to seek and evaluate the effectiveness and the appreciation of the product and its employment of Malaysian folksongs. Questions were built upon the technical difficulties or skills, aesthetic appreciation, and the ability to play with or without accompaniment as well as student aesthetic responses to the repertoire itself.

The instrument consisted of two sections: 1) closed format, which comprised 16 questions; and 2) open format, which comprised two questions. The closed format used a Likert 4-point scale while the open format asked for short and extended responses. Two questions in the closed format were divided into sub-questions, which required respondents to use the Likert scale. The results were studied and analyzed using the mean (see Figure 1) to measure the effectiveness of the overall product.

Procedures

Design. The main purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of the book and to identify how far the students had grown in their knowledge of musical concepts using the book and CD. The study utilized a quantitative design as designated in Figure 1 below:

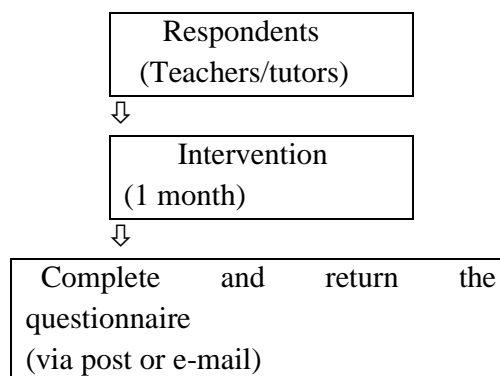


Figure 1. Showing the qualitative design.

Respondents, working in their respective schools or studios were required to teach their students to play the folksongs, either individually or in groups, for the duration of one month. The tutor and the students' capabilities determined the total of songs learnt in the trial period, after which the respondents were required to complete the questionnaire and return it the researchers.

Data Collection.

Returned questionnaires were analyzed in simple quantitative form using the mean score and also through short responses. The results are presented as data analysis, where each item is examined and transposed into numerical form to represent the mean values of 1 to 4.

Data Analysis.

Descriptive statistics were used to measure the effectiveness of the book; the technique used; piano accompaniment; and skills involved. Descriptive statistics indicated general tendencies in the data (mean, mode, median) (Creswell, 2008). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), descriptive statistics transforms a set of numbers or observations into indices that describe or characterize the data. The data is then used to summarize, organize, and reduce large numbers of observations.

The research team used the mean value to indicate the level of respondents' replies, and adding all the figures and multiplying them by the number of respondents calculated this mean. The use of these statistics is the most fundamental way to summarize data and is crucial in interpreting the results of this quantitative aspect of the research.

The Research Questions.

The research questions were

1. Was it possible to create a compilation of traditional Malaysian folksongs into an instructional repertoire book?
2. Was it possible to evaluate the selected repertoire with the Kodaly tenant that 'mother tongue' folksongs did assist in learning?
3. Would the inclusion of a CD of exemplar performances and accompaniment tracks also assist students?

Findings

This section discusses the findings of the research which were positive with a mean of 3.23 out of 4. The participant tutors (n = 13) conducted their teaching sessions for 4 weeks and were required to complete and return the questionnaire within a month of the end of the trial. From this data, the researchers were able to identify the progress of the students, measuring how far they had advanced in their knowledge of musical concepts and determining the effectiveness of the book and CD.

Analysis of the Questionnaire

The analysis section of questions and statements were divided into two: Section 1 – closed format, and Section 2 – open format. The closed questions needed only the number of the descriptor that most accurately represented the respondent’s conclusions. An opportunity for deeper responses was provided in the open questions, which required a written response, which could be brief or extensive.

Section 1 consisted of general questions relating to the overall product and the questions presented were measured using a 4-point Likert scale where the respondents had to state a position to support or not support the questions.

- 1 – Strongly disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Agree
- 4 – Strongly Agree

The researchers intentionally used a 4-point scale to force the respondents into a positive or negative response. The first seven questions measured the effectiveness and the aesthetic appreciation of the folksongs in the repertoire. Questions 8 and 9 evaluated the developmental grading of the songs and the concepts and the technique of playing the violin. Questions 10 to 16 assessed the efficacy of the piano accompaniment and CD. The results were analyzed using the mean to describe the responses of all participants to the items on the instrument (Creswell, 2008). Figure 2 indicates how 2.5 is the mean of a 4-point scale.

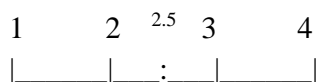


Figure 2 Showing how 2.5 is the mean of a 4-point scale

Adding up all the responses and dividing them by the number of respondents arrived at the mean for each question. For example 12 respondents give a response of 3 which is then added up to 36, this is then divided by 12 to give a mean of 3.

The responses to the questions, which demonstrated a higher figure than the mean, determined the validity of the respective approaches. A mean of 2.5 and above indicated that the respondents agreed that the book achieved its intended goal, a mean lower than 2.5 registered a negative outcome.

Table I.
Closed format questions.

Question No.	Item	Mean
1.	The book is effective in teaching early violin.	3.33

2.	The students learnt more quickly using this book.	2.83
3.	The students recognized the folk music.	3
4.	Whether the students recognized the songs or not, the use of Malaysian folk music assisted in the learning.	3.33
5.	The students enjoyed the folk music more than other non-Malaysian material.	2.66
6.	The use of Malaysian folk music stimulated the student to practice more.	2.83
7.	The choice of folk music generally represents Malaysian music that the students know.	3
	TOTAL	2.99

Table 1 clearly shows that all responses came in above the mean (2.5) revealing that the respondents agree that the book is effective and practical in teaching early violin, and that the students recognized the folk music, and that the folk music assisted in the learning.

Table II.

Evaluating the developmental grading of the songs.

Question No.	Items	Mean
8.	The developmental grading of the songs is appropriate in terms of the following:	
i).	Key-signatures	3.5
ii).	Rhythm	3.5
iii).	Fingering	3.66
iv).	Bowing	3.33
v).	Articulation	3.5
vi).	Dynamics	3.66
	Total	3.5

Question 8 gauged the developmental grading of the songs and their order in the book. The high mean of 3.5 demonstrated that the respondents more than agree that the music was appropriately placed in a rising gradient of technicality.

Table III

Evaluating assisted student learning.

Question No.	Items	Mean
9.	The use of Malaysian folk music assisted in student learning in terms of:	
i).	Rhythm	3.5
ii).	Intonation	3.33
iii).	Finger fluency	3.33

iv).	Tempo fluency	3
v).	Memorization	3.66
vi).	Articulation	3.16
vii).	Phrasing	3.66
viii).	Bow division	3.16
	TOTAL	3.35

Question 9 surveyed whether the use of folksongs as presented in this book assisted in student learning across eight sections, which covered musical concepts and playing technique. The positive mean of 3.35 illustrates that the respondents agreed on all terms that the repertoire and supporting exercises assisted in student learning.

Table IV.
Evaluating the accompaniment.

Question No.	Items	Mean
10.	The piano accompaniment is suitable.	2.83
11.	The use of accompaniment assisted in student learning.	3.33
12.	The students practiced more because they had a CD accompaniment.	3
13.	The students played with greater precision because they had to play to accompaniment.	3.5
14.	The backing CD is suitable.	2.83
15.	You would use this book again in the future.	3.33
16.	You would recommend it to another teacher.	3
	TOTAL	3.11

Questions 10 to 16 examined the competence of the piano accompaniment and CD and the mean of 3.11 indicated a most positive response to these inquiries.

Question 17 indicated that the majority of respondents used this book on cohorts of 1 to 10 students. Question 18 addressed the ethnic demographics of the student participants who were Malay, Chinese and students from Sabah and Sarawak.

Table V.
Overall mean value.

Items	Mean
Questions 1-7	2.99
Question 8	3.5
Question 9	3.35
Questions 10-16	3.11

Overall Mean value	3.23
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The results of this section of the questionnaire gave a total mean value of 3.23, which demonstrated that the respondents affirmed that students had absorbed the knowledge of musical concepts, and accelerated learning did occur because of the use of Malaysian folksongs.

Open Format

This section consisted of only two open-ended questions. According to Creswell (2008), using open-ended questions allows the respondent to best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings (p.225). In question 19, respondents were encouraged to add further comments other than the recognition of the songs assisted in student learning. The only comment received was, “to reduce the tempo in the accompaniment part”.

The final question was to ask the respondents to comment on any other aspects regarding the entire process. Some of the comments were received by respondents were,

- 1) “The book is a good start for beginners, but the piano accompaniment should be simplified”
- 2) “To add useful exercises before learning the folk music, and to add missing bar-lines”
- 3) “The book has a good collection of Malaysian folksongs, but students were not so familiar with them because of the lack of exposure to the local folksongs”
- 4) “To add fingerings to certain parts of the pieces”.

Discussion

The main aim of the study was to create the book and CD and then to trial the product. The researchers wanted to ascertain whether the book would be effective in assisting in the musical education of Malaysian violin students through the use of Malaysian folksongs. The gathered information clearly indicates that the book is effective in teaching early violin players, that it assisted students to learn at an accelerated rate, and that the selection of folksongs was appropriate and assisted in learning.

Song Selection and Examples

Representative folksongs were compiled and then ordered to align with the Kodály and Grigoryan methods (See Table VI in the Appendices). Eleven of the songs were sourced from the *Pendidikan Muzik* series (Lee, 2004), one song came from the Indian tradition, one from the Chinese and one from the Orang Asli. Some songs were simplified to ensure the over-arching methodology was adhered to. These simplifications were usually to do with rhythmical elements that did not interfere with the melodic contour of the song, but brought the song into the realm of playability for the student. Figure 3 shows how the opening stanza from the folksong *Geylang Si Paku Geylang* was simplified.

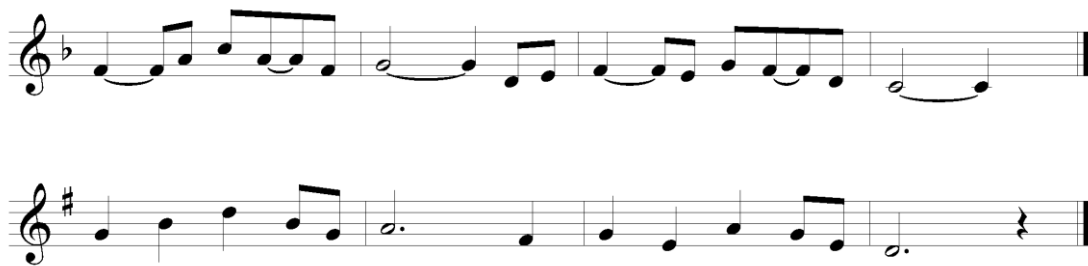


Figure 3. Showing the alterations to a folksong to simplify the rhythm. The anacrusis has been omitted.

Some songs were re-arranged to bring out the hidden contrapuntal potential of its original performance mode. This particularly applied to the song *Kajat Petuyang*, which comes from Sarawak and was originally performed on the Sape (a guitar-like folk-instrument of Borneo, Sarawak and Sabah).

12. Kajat Petuyang

In a beat of two $\text{♩} = 52$

Figure 4. The A section melody in unison violins.

In the recorded performance (Noel, 2010) the musician improvises a partial re-statement of the A section theme against the B section theme (see Figure 5). We thought to fully develop this polyphonic potential so as to show the artistic and intellectual musicianship of the original performer.

Figure 5. The B section melody in violin 2 with the A section melody in violin 1.

Another example of re-arranging was the song *Ke Ren Lai*, which is developed in the book to introduce the student to the polyphonic effects of the simultaneous renditions of the melody in ‘inversion’ (the intervals

are performed upside-down to the original folksong) as well as in the original, see Figure 6. This arrangement, the last and most advanced in the book, also introduces the student to modulation.

Figure 6 shows two systems of musical notation. The first system, starting at measure 21, includes a violin part in the treble clef and piano accompaniment in both treble and bass clefs. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, Am, C, Am, C, Gsus4, and G7. Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*. The second system, starting at measure 26, continues the piano accompaniment with a *rall.* marking and chords: C, G, F, G7, Am/G, G7, C/G, G7, and C. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of low, high, high, low, low tones.

Figure 6. Showing the inversion of the melody in the violin with the original in the piano treble clef.

The songs required piano accompaniment that reflected the Malaysian culture whilst adhering to the tenants of Western music theory. Figure 7 is an example of this, where the piano accompaniment emulates the ‘Inang’ rhythm of low, high, high, low, low tones.

Figure 7 shows a piano accompaniment for measures 13-17. It consists of a treble clef staff and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The treble staff has a melody with a *p* dynamic. The grand staff provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line. Chords are indicated above the treble staff: Em, Am, G, and D. The rhythm is characterized by a sequence of low, high, high, low, low tones.

Figure 7. Showing the ‘Inang’ rhythm in the piano accompaniment.

The separate lift-out ‘part-book’ has exercises and scales pertinent to each folksong, (see Figure 8). This part-book was created as a ‘lift-out’ booklet within the main text to allow the student to read and play from the part-book whilst the teacher played the piano from the main text.

1. Lenggang Kangkung

Moderato ♩ = 104

The figure displays a musical score for the folk song 'Lenggang Kangkung'. It begins with a tempo marking of 'Moderato' and a metronome setting of 104. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a rest, followed by a series of notes including quarter and eighth notes, with dynamic markings like 'mp' and 'V' (crescendo). Below the main melody, there are three exercises. The first exercise is a simple scale-like pattern with fingerings 0, 1, 2, 0, 2. The second exercise is a more complex rhythmic pattern with fingerings 0 and 2, and includes the instruction 'Hold first and second fingers down.' The third exercise is another rhythmic pattern. The entire score is presented on a white background with black musical notation.

Figure 8. Showing folksong from ‘part-book’ with supporting exercises.

Addressing the suggestions for improvement made by the respondents, the author’s deemed there was no need “to reduce the tempo in the accompaniment part” as the tutor could do this at the piano during the lesson.

The criticism that “the piano accompaniment should be simplified” was a serious one, as all the piano accompaniments, were specifically created to be playable by a semi-competent third-to-fourth grade pianist. Further to that, chords were placed above the accompaniment to allow for those pianists who struggle with reading notation, but who can improvise off the chords, and this also allows players to simplify their playing if they wish. Therefore the author’s are inclined to think that this negative comment is a reflection on the musicianship of this particular respondent.

The suggestion “to add useful exercises before learning the folk music, and to add missing bar-lines” baffled the author’s because the part-book contains relevant exercises (see figure 8) for each song, and we could not find the missing bar-lines referred to by the respondent.

The response that “students were not so familiar with them because of the lack of exposure to the local folksongs” supports one of the justifications in the opening introduction of this article namely to ‘possibly re-introduce Malaysian folksongs to young people who may not be aware of their folk song heritage’. Finally the

suggestion to “add fingerings to certain parts of the pieces” was thought to be irrelevant because, as can be seen in figure 8, the supporting exercises give the correct fingering for each song.

Limitations

The study only focused on the responses of violin teachers/tutors in private practice and government schools in Malaysia. Therefore generalizations cannot be made about other teachers or string instruments in Malaysia.

Another limitation of the study was that the respondents were required to complete and return the questionnaires after only one month of intervention. Respondents had limited time to expose individual students to a cross-section of the repertoire in the book within that period.

Conclusions

The main aim of this project was to create the repertoire book *Riang Ria Biola* and to ascertain whether the book would be effective in assisting in the musical education of beginner-to-intermediate Malaysian violin students through the use of Malaysian folksongs. The trialing of the book found it to be effective in teaching and that there was evidence of accelerated learning that was consistent with the tenants of the Kodály philosophy of using the traditional folksongs of a culture when teaching music. Apart from some criticisms the majority of respondents found that the piano accompaniment and CD did assist the learning process and did facilitate practice and learning. The Malay students tended to recognize their musical heritage, but the students of Chinese and other minority ethnicities tended to not recognize the folksongs. The book has been created and is currently being considered by an international publisher.

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APPENDICES

Table VI

Showing the graded and developmental order of the repertoire in the book.

Song	Key	String	Fingers	Rhythm	Exercises	Dynamics/expressions
1	D Major	D and A	1 and 2	Crotchets and Quavers	1 st and 2 nd fingers on A and D string	<i>mp</i>

2	E Minor Natural scale	D	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	Crotchets and Quavers	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th fingers	<i>p</i>
3	C Major	First part on A, D and G strings Second part on G, D, A and E	First part uses 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd Second part uses open strings	Crotchets and Quavers Minims	1 st , 2 nd and third fingers on A, D and G strings	<i>p</i>
4	E Minor Natural scale	D and A with one B note on G string	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd half-step between 2 nd and 3 rd	Minims, Crotchets and Quavers		<i>mf, f, p</i>
5	G Major	D and A	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	Crotchets, Quavers and Minims	On D and A string using 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th fingers	<i>mp</i>
6	D major	G, D and A	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	Crotchets and Minims	Extended D major scale and arpeggios	<i>f</i>
7	F major	D, A, E	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th Half step between open string and 1 st finger, 3 rd and 4 th finger	Crotchets, Quavers Dotted Crotchets Tied Minims		<i>mp, mp, p staccato crescendo</i>
8	G major	D, A	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd and 4 th	Dotted Minims, Crotchets and Quavers	G major scale and arpeggio	<i>mf, f crescendo, diminuendo</i>
9	A major	D, A	1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th	Crotchets, Quavers Against triplet Quavers in Piano part		<i>mf, p</i>
10	A major	D, A, E	1st, 2nd, and 4th	Quavers, dotted Crotchets,		<i>p, mp, sp crescendo, diminuendo</i>

				tied minims and semibreves		<i>ritenuto, a tempo</i>
11	F major	D, A	1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th	6/8 time signature Crotchets and Quavers	Triplets, Staccato And three notes Slurred	<i>mp, mf</i> Three notes slurred
12	Bb	1st part- A, E 2nd part- G, D, A	1st, 2nd, 3rd	Crotchets, Quavers	Quavers, Two notes Slurred, Staccato	<i>p, mp, mf</i> Two notes slurred <i>staccato marcato</i>
13	C major	G, D, A, E	1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th	Crotchets, minims		<i>mp, mf, f</i> Two and four notes slurred <i>crescendo, diminuendo rallentando accent</i>