

**PAPER PRESENTED AT THE
PERFORMANCE STUDIES NETWORK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
14-17 July 2011**

CHALLENGES FACED BY PERFORMERS OF CROSS CULTURAL MUSIC

by

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Abstract

Western art music conventions and the institutionalisation of oral traditions in musical training in higher education have transformed the way in which music is created, interpreted, performed and enjoyed. Composers and performers are exploring new ways of creating and expressing music by combining different musical traditions and collaborating with musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds. This paper examines the challenges faced by performers of music written for a combination of Western instruments and non-Western instruments. Emergent themes from the study relate to (i) new musical genres that may be grouped by instrumentation, musical style and performance practice traditions, (ii) the significance of socio-cultural relationships in musical engagement and (iii) challenges in the rehearsal and performance of cross cultural works due to different types of tuning and notation systems as well as problems associated with overall cohesive sound and the lack of interpretive precedent.

Keywords: Cross cultural music, performance challenges, traditional instruments, Malaysian music

Introduction and Aims

Western art music conventions and the institutionalisation of oral traditions in musical training have transformed the way in which music is created, performed and appreciated. Widespread internet access and the advancement in mobile technology have enabled audio-visual experience of diverse musical genres and styles. The widening opportunities for higher education in music, especially in the Far East and the Asia–Pacific regions have encouraged composers and performers to explore new ways of creating and expressing music by combining varied musical traditions. Further, the transmigration of people across the globe has fuelled collaborations among musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds. As Clarke (2002:185) remarks, ‘Listeners are exposed to a greater number and variety of musical performances today than at any other time in human history’.

Intercultural music activities have intensified in the closing decades of the twentieth century (CIMACC 2011). The composition and performance of cross cultural music have become increasingly complex as cultures interact and merge. Arguably, one of the main challenges in creating cross cultural music is to successfully bridge the gap between the oral traditions of non-Western music making and the use of notation in Western music making. Philip Bohiman, in *Rethinking Music* (Cook & Everist, 2001:28) says:

‘Music may be ontologically dependent on time, but time is ontologically dependent on music ... music emerges in different ways from its notated traces. Its identity assumes varied forms, whose controversial ontologies lie in the hands of those

performing that identity into existence...music notation serves as a recognition that music cannot be adequately notated. Something changes during the course of oral tradition and performance, and the sounds that notes represent recuperate as much of that sound as possible' (p.28)

Reading music notation and ear playing are two skills often cast as opposite approaches to music making but evidence suggests that they actually are related (Ockelford, 2007; Woody & Lehman 2010; McPherson & Gabrielsson, 2002; Gordon, 2003). However, providing students with ample ear playing experience prior to introducing them to notation has yet to become the norm in formal Western classical instrumental teaching and the reverse is true in non-Western traditional instrumental teaching. Tzanetakis et al. (2006) posited that Western music, with its notion of a composition as a well-defined work is differentiated from non-Western music where the boundaries between composition, improvisation and performance are more blurred and factors of cultural context are considered. Musical knowledge acquired from formal and informal learning strategies play a significant role in understanding cognition (Folkestad, 2006 ; Green, 2001). Hence, when performers of these two 'schools' of approach meet in a cross cultural musical exchange new challenges will arise. Compositional and interpretive complexities brought about by such unions have engendered unique performance challenges of which research is lacking.

This paper examines the challenges faced by performers of music written for a combination of Western instruments and non-Western instruments such as the *gamelan*, *gendang*, *gu*, *tabla* (percussion instruments); *gambus*, *mandolin*, *sitar*, *sape* (plucked instruments), *rebab*, *erhu* (bowed instruments) and *serunai*, *seruling*, *dizi* (wind instruments). It categorised the various types of cross cultural music played, compared the experiences of Western and non-Western trained players and delineated the difficulties encountered. Four main research questions were poised, namely:

- What are the different types of cross cultural music performed and what socio-musicological associations may be made between Western and non-Western trained musicians?
- What are the main differences in rehearsing and interpreting cross cultural music as compared to Western music?
- What roles do composers play in charting the compositional and performance direction of cross cultural music?
- What musical issues arise in attempting to meld tuning, tone and temperament in cross cultural instrumentation?

Situating the study

This two-year study (2009-2011) was conducted in Malaysia, a nation noted for its cultural and musical diversity due to its Malay, Chinese, Indian and aboriginal populace. A new generation of Malaysians seeking to find a national and cultural identity has fuelled the creation and performance of cross cultural music. International music festivals and symposiums are regularly organised by public institutions of higher learning, seven of which offer undergraduate and postgraduate music programmes (MQR2011), The Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture has also established a Malaysian Traditional Orchestra with an aim to fuse various ethnic instruments in a Western-style orchestral

formation (MTO 2010). Additionally, the National Academy of Culture, Arts and Heritage (ASWARA 2010) has been entrusted with the task of promoting cultural heritage through higher education in the fields of music, dance, theatre, film and television. Many members of its music faculty are highly experienced practitioners of traditional music whilst others are Western-trained musicians. The composition and performance of cross cultural music feature in the graduation portfolios of undergraduate music programmes. Such a vibrant scenario acts as a catalyst for cross cultural musical fermentation that is unique to the region thus providing an ideal platform for situating this study.

Theoretical Framework: Metatheorising

The theoretical framework of this study is premised on the principles of metatheory. Specifically, it draws elements from ethnography and grounded theory. Metatheorising is essentially the engagement in a systematic study of the underlying structures of sociological theory through an integrated paradigm of research methodologies (Ritzer 1988). Ritzer suggests three main purposes of metatheorising, namely, (i) as a systematic method of understanding, evaluating, criticising and improving extant theories, (ii) as a basis for creating new theory and (iii) providing researchers with useful overarching theoretical perspectives. Metatheory integrates a set of social paradigms conceptualised in multi-levels of social analysis. It involves the analysis of materials in a continuum of subjective-objective elements that are viewed concurrently and interactively within microscopic and macroscopic systems of social organisation (Alexander et.al., 1987).

The macro level ranges from positions and populations (that is, constructs of a society and the structural properties of social systems) to the cultures and societies in world systems. The micro level can range from psychological phenomena (such as characteristics, action, behaviour, practices, subjectivity-objectivity) to a study of individuals or patterns of action and interaction amongst select social groups (Ritzer, 1991).

In this study, the macro structures refer to wider socio-cultural implications when interpreting aspects of cross cultural musical performance and group collaboration (Sawyer, 2007). It seeks to understand relationships between culture, ethnicity and musical preferences (Ross, 2006). It attempts to draw relationships between race and the types of musical instruments played to levels of formal and informal musical training within the context of cross cultural music performance.

The micro domain, on the other hand, relates to the examination of minute musical elements such as melody, pitch, rhythm and tone in relation to musical output and performance practice. It attempts to understand how performers deal with differing concepts of time, notation, oral-aural traditions, training and musical interpretation in cross cultural musical endeavours. It draws ideas from intercultural musicology where the study of musical collaborations between performers from different musical backgrounds and training take on a new meaning. It is argued that the effective performance of cross cultural works transcends differences in ethnicity, culture and musical tastes, further encouraging the creation of new repertoire that is wholly unique and transnational.

Engaging in ethnographic practice

As a methodology, ethnography aims to answer central anthropological questions concerning the lives of people as they interact with one another, thus creating a link between culture and behavior and/or how cultural processes develop over time. It involves an extensive description of the details of social life or cultural phenomena that are specific to particular cases. In order to answer the research questions and gather research materials, ethnographers (sometimes called fieldworkers) often live among the people they are

studying, or at least spend a considerable amount of time with them. It is a field of naturalistic inquiry associated with symbolic interactionism (Athens, 2010). Ethnographers engage in active participant observation in attempting to seek insider perspective or 'native' points of view (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

In this study the 'natives' are the practitioners of traditional music and performers of cross cultural music. As people and cultures are incredibly complex, ethnography helps make sense of this complexity. It opens a window into the lives of 'others' and allows an analysis of patterns of behavior in the real world context that can be understood rationally, emotionally and intuitively as well as spiritually, particularly in instances where music making is associated with ritualistic practice and socio-cultural heritage (example, healing rituals using the *rebab* in Kelantan). It reveals the ways in which musical practices shape a communities' perception of who they are, thus providing insights into how people define their musicality within and outside their community.

Grounded theory

In applying grounded theory, an inductive approach to theory building was adopted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Developed from the data, theory and meanings were derived from the specific to the more general without losing sight of what makes the subject of a study unique. The method of study was essentially based on three elements, namely (i) concepts, (ii) categories and (iii) propositions, with concepts being the key element of analysis. Grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to derive and develop a theory about a phenomenon. In this study, key elements were identified through multiple methods of data collection and relationships were analysed (Bryant and Charmaz, 2010).

Method

Data in this study was derived, analysed and triangulated from three ways, namely, (i) interviews, (ii) questionnaires and (iii) participant observations.

Interviews were conducted with eight performers (n=8) who had experience in playing cross cultural music, four of whom were traditional music practitioners and the other four Western trained musicians.

Questionnaires were completed by twenty (n=20) final year Diploma in Music students, all of whom had three years of performing cross-cultural music.

Insights were drawn from participant observations at three significant events, namely, (i) an international music festival organised by Goethe Institute, where cross cultural music was performed and discussed (KL Contemporary Music Festival, 2009), (ii) a meeting of ten composers and arrangers to create cross cultural works for the newly established Malaysian Traditional Orchestra and (iii) a recording session of traditional musical instruments. The flexibility of participant observation, characterised by levels of participation from observer status to the role of a complete participant was adopted (Spradley, 1980).

Outcomes of data analysed from the above mentioned sources follow.

Views of Performance Lecturers

Views were solicited from eight highly skilled performers through Interview sessions. Four of the performers were traditional music practitioners specialising in Malay percussion, *rebab*, *qazheng* and *tabla* respectively (TMP1-4). The other four were Western trained performance

lecturers, specialising in piano, bass guitar, flute and voice (WTP1-4). All had experience in playing cross cultural music. The semi-structured interview questions focused on

- (i) what cross cultural music meant to them and the types of cross cultural music played
- (ii) how different was it when rehearsing cross cultural music compared to Western music
- (iii) what were the technical, musical and interpretive difficulties faced.

The following represent extracts of some salient comments in response to the questions posed.

Table 1 : Comments by Traditional Music Performers

Traditional Music Performers	Some Salient Comments
TMP 1	<i>'I get more recognition when I'm abroad! I play a lot of cross cultural music, not just east and west, but east and east... Because I also play 'gendang' [Malay drums] with popular musicians in big shows, some traditionalists don't regard me as a 'pure' traditional music practitioner... so I've become very mindful of what is 'authentic' and what is new or 'creative' in what I do... I am now writing down the music in both mnemonic and Western rhythmic notation as it's easier for the students to recognise the patterns... Unless we train the students to be more versatile, it will be difficult for them to earn a living purely playing traditional music so there's always this tension between keeping traditional playing techniques and moving on'</i>
TMP 2	<i>'The main problem with using the rebab with Western instrumentation is that the tuning and pitching of the strings are not standardised, each rebab player follows the tradition of his village in all manners of playing and 'imitating-accompanying' the vocalist ..I was taught by my father in Kelantan, watching and listening to him play...'kinaesthetic fingering sense must first be mastered', my father said. 'Lessons' included imitating short melodic figures again and again, memorising each phrase until the embellishments ('bercembur', 'bunga bunga') of the melody are mastered...Correct bowing techniques was a prerequisite to good rebab tone and pitching, all learnt by intricate listening, memorising and reproducing...The rebab is the closest instrument to the human voice, that's why it's so effective as ritual music'</i>
TML 3	<i>I follow the graded syllabus offered by the Central Conservatory of Music, from China when I teach the Quzheng... it's much like the ABRSM system of learning scales, three pieces, aural and sight-reading, from levels 1-9. Students under 18 yr. must memorise their pieces. It is also written in Western notation, although most of us still prefer the 'numbering' system... there's more flexibility in interpretation and articulation... I play cross cultural music and the first thing I do is to change the notes into numbers...ha ha... Once we hear it during the rehearsal, we traditional players can remember when to come in, usually it's not very difficult. Such music sometimes works, sometimes it doesn't. Cross cultural ensembles usually comprise Western and Malay instruments, Western and Chinese, or Western and Indian instruments...unless when it's the Malaysian Traditional Orchestra where it's all mixed up like 'rojak'!</i>
TMP 4	<i>'Tabla is not just for Indian musicians! I suppose it's because of the 'bol's used in talas and how our society associate ethnicity with respective traditional musical instruments. Western music is a sign of modernisation...it's slowly changing with the younger generation listening to cross cultural pop music. Unlike India, we in Malaysia do not have the North-South musical 'tensions', playing styles tend to be more flexible, many of us perform in India, to show that we are also acknowledged as experts in our musical homeland'</i>

Table 2 : Comments by Western Trained Music Performers

Western Trained Performers	Some Salient Comments
WTP 1	<i>'I think the trick to a successful cross cultural work is to get the rhythm right, then you've got the audience on your side! I play jazz piano with various ethnic instruments and it's quite effective. The melody will follow nicely. It can be written in lead sheet and each player can improvise quite easily. Cross cultural music works very well in popular music'</i>
WTP 2	<i>'The problem is the tuning and temperament, it's so different. It usually takes longer to rehearse, usually the traditional players don't read music, and they get embarrassed but once they listen to the tune, they can pick it up very quickly and remember what to do... many of them are learning to read Western music notation'</i>
WTP 3	<i>'I play flute...in cross cultural music the composers will write in sections, so it's not really a 'cross' but looks good on stage! The main problem is the pitching, sometimes it doesn't match and can sound awful. I am studying the differences between playing techniques in the Western flute and the dizi [Chinese flute], some composers are writing for them, it's quite interesting but tricky to teach'</i>
WTP 4	<i>'I sing and also play the gamelan. We have had the bass guitar drums, percussion, voices and gamelan in some theatre works- performed publically and it has been quite successful with full house! We usually don't read, our artistic director knows that some in the group are formally trained while others are self-taught, she insists that everyone memorises the work from the beginning. There isn't really a 'genre' of cross cultural music, so to speak'</i>

Feedback from performers indicated that cross cultural music has become a part of their performing repertoire. Malay traditional musicians were aware of the need to modernise and at the same time maintain the authenticity of traditional music as part of their cultural roots. The western trained musicians, on the other hand, were less 'tradition bound'. The types of cross cultural music played did not belong to a particular 'genre' but may be classified under the general categories of new music, contemporary music and traditional music. New cross cultural music tended to be more fully notated compared to the other two forms of music played.

Additionally, Western classical trained composers tended to write cross cultural serious music using traditional instruments for its effects and 'tone-flavours'. They tended to be notated utilising contemporary music techniques such as quarter tones, vibratos, dynamic contrasts and tone colouring. Contemporary styles included jazz and pop idioms utilising instruments such as the *tabla*, gamelan and a rhythm section and may, as such, be classified as 'east-west' fusion music. Some works were written as lead sheets while others were fully scored. Interestingly, a genre which I term as 'new traditional music' has emerged where performers created cross cultural works from folk tunes, utilising traditional instruments from different non-western cultures. Other types of cross cultural music performed included performance-art music and 'West-end' styled music. The following table categorises the types of cross cultural music played.

Table 3 Types of Cross Cultural Music Performed

Instrumentation	Genre
Malay Traditional Instruments & Western instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Music – fully notated or partially notated in Western notation and cipher/mnemonic notation) • Contemporary (Commercial) Music - pop, jazz, rock, fusion styles, written in lead sheets and arranged for ensemble/orchestra. • Performance Art Music -partially notated, performed with traditional dance/theatre, scripted. • 'West-End' style musical theatre - partially notated, popular music with selection of traditional instruments, scripted
Chinese Traditional Instruments & Western instruments	
Indian Traditional Instruments & Western Instruments	
Fusion of Malay, Chinese & Indian Instruments & Western instruments	
Fusion of Malay, Chinese & Indian Instruments	
Traditional Instruments from Sabah / Sarawak fused with Traditional and Western instruments	
Electronic Computer Generated Music & Sound Samples of Traditional Instruments	

Overall the performers seemed positive about playing cross cultural music, being fully aware of the differences in timbre and textures of the instruments. Works were rehearsed at length with the composer and in many instances, the composer / arranger was also a performer in the group, therefore enabling spontaneous changes to the score where needed. This 'hands-on' approach to cross cultural music making augers well for repertoire development.

Voices of the new generation

Feedback was received from twenty final year diploma in music students from an institution of higher learning. These students had received training in traditional music performance and have had three years of playing cross cultural music in the course of their studies. Additionally, they had participated in music productions organised by the National Theatre (*Istana Budaya*). The questionnaire incorporated questions relating to (i) the significance of music notation, (ii) the levels of difficulty in playing cross cultural music compared to non-Western music, (iii) the time taken to rehearse cross cultural music, (iv) their music learning experience, (v) whether cross cultural music was in vogue, (vi) whether traditional or Western trained performers were better at playing cross cultural music and (vii) the importance of the conductor in the performance of cross cultural music. The outcomes are summarised as follows.

Issues relating to Notation

13 respondents (65%) felt that the main problem was a lack of notation in cross cultural music. Interestingly all 20 respondents (100%) felt that cross-cultural music can be notated. 14 (70%) believed that the composer should fully notate cross-cultural music whilst 6 (30%) felt it was not necessary to do so.

Issues of Performance

15 respondents (75%) believed that many performers did not really know how to play cross cultural music well. There was a divided response as to the degree of difficulty and ease of playing cross cultural music. 11 (55%) felt that cross cultural music was 'easy to play' and 9 (45%) responded that that it was 'hard to play'. Interestingly, 19 (95%) responded that it took a longer time to rehearse cross cultural music. 17 (85%) respondents felt that they had to memorise the melody/tune most of the time.

Issues on learning experience

Although the respondents had nearly three years of experience in playing cross cultural music in an educational environment, 15 (75%) of them responded that there was no syllabus for learning cross cultural music. There was divided opinion as to whether cross cultural music could actually be taught with only 9 (45%) respondents believing that cross cultural music was in fact difficult to teach. 14 (70%) felt that not many musicians knew how to properly teach cross cultural music performance.

Old fashion or in vogue

All the 20 (100%) respondents disagreed with the statement that 'cross-cultural music was not really effective'. Quite surprisingly, 19 (95%) were of the opinion that cross cultural music was in fact was 'very fashionable'. Such responses reflect the growing revival in playing traditional instruments, once thought of as being 'old fashioned', by a younger generation of Western trained musicians.

Who writes/plays better cross cultural music?

On seeking perception as to 'who wrote better' cross-cultural music, 13 (65%) respondents believed that Western trained composers were better writers of such music while 7 (35%) believed otherwise. However, 16 (80%) respondents felt that traditional players were better performers of cross cultural music.

Significance of a conductor

17 (85%) felt that the conductor played a very important role in cross cultural music performance. This is an interesting response suggesting the need of a leader in 'neutral' position, directing and possibly 'solving' musical problems as it unfolds.

Defining 'cross cultural' music

In addition, several students responded to the open ended part of the questionnaire where they were asked to explain 'cross cultural music to a foreign visitor'. The following were some of the definitions:

- 'An intertwining relationship of styles of music with a diversity of expressions'
- 'It is the fusion of two different cultures, of different races, of different educational backgrounds and eras'
- 'Traditional music combined with contemporary music'
- 'A mixture of traditional elements put into modern music'
- 'It is the traditional music of a country made contemporary'
- 'Old folk songs that have been modernised'

Views from Outside

Participant observation at the KL Contemporary Music Festival (2009) afforded insights into views of composers and performers involved in cross cultural music composition and performance. The festival was organised by SEGI University College and supported by the Goethe Institute, with participation by German composers and performers such as Dieter Mark, Moritz Eggert and Ensemble Mosaik. I also had the opportunity to speak with one of the players in Ensemble Muzaik after their performance, who remarked:

'I really enjoy playing the cross cultural works, especially those with Chinese and Western instrumentation...I notice that they are scenic and picturesque, yet intense ...Zen-like ... the techniques used are mainly Western, written in new music notation

but because the tones of traditional instruments are so different, the resultant textures are unique'

In conjunction with the festival was an Asian Composer's Conference with speakers from Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. Highlights of the event included Dieter Mack's talk on 'Composing in a bi-cultural environment- a European composer and the gamelan experience, and while Jonas Baes addressed the question, 'How is the creation of music potent as a vehicle for social change, especially in Asia?'

Listening to the composers, I began to feel that the term 'cross cultural' music seemed increasingly difficult to define. A simplistic view would be to argue from the point of instrumentation, that being, as long as the work comprises Western and non-Western instruments, the work is deemed 'cross-cultural' – but is it? And what about compositions of traditional instruments from different cultures without the inclusion of Western instruments - surely, this too must be regarded as 'cross-cultural' music?

Observing a panel discussion entitled 'what is our identity in a multi-cultural environment?', there seemed to be a common thread among Asian cross cultural composers in finding their individual voices which illustrated their social, cultural and musical identities in new music language. Such musical directions will undoubtedly have an impact on the future generation of performers and performing groups.

'Standardizing' ethnic instruments

In an effort to create new repertoire for the Malaysian Traditional Orchestra (MTO), a meeting with composers was initiated by the orchestra's management. Other than rearrangements of popular songs and folk tunes, new repertoire written by Malaysian composers was needed ostensibly to depict nationality, cultural diversity and unity through music.

During the discussions, several questions brought up by composers pertain to uncertainties/issues regarding:

- (i) what exactly were the 'families' of instruments that make up the Malaysian Traditional Orchestra?
- (ii) what was the desired instrumentation of new pieces commissioned for this orchestra?
- (iii) what were the ranges of the traditional instruments?
- (iv) what do the individual instruments actually sound like?
- (v) what kinds of sounds and articulations can they produce?

In response to the composers' queries, a list of instruments was presented and some members of the group identified instruments that 'reflected the multi-cultural make-up of the country'. Instruments selected for the creation of new compositions were to be based on Western orchestral formation, namely, strings (divided into plucked and bowed instruments), winds, brass and percussion sections. The resultant list, strangely (and perhaps wilfully), resembled the ethnic composition and political prowess of the nation.

To aid the composers, a guideline to writing music for the different types of traditional instruments was mooted. Selected traditional instruments would be recorded to depict their range, tone quality, scales and articulation possibilities. The larger object of the exercise was to eventually 'standardize' the tuning of selected traditional instruments in order that effective orchestral and ensemble music could be written for them. Participants were informed that all the traditional players 'have been trained to read notes' hence the music may be written in

Western musical notation. The following table categorises the different types of instruments of the MTO for which music was to be written.

Table 4 Composing for a Cross Cultural Orchestra

INSTRUMENTS	MALAY	CHINESE	INDIAN	SABAH/ SARAWAK	WESTERN
Winds	Seruling (1) Bansuri (1) Serunai Kedah (2) Serunai Kelantan (1)	Dizi (1) Suona (1)			
Percussion: Pitched	Bonang (1 unit: B flat pentatonic) Sarun peking (1) Sarun barung 1 Sarun demong 1 Kempul (1 set) Gong Agung (1) Gong Suwukan (1) Greteh (2 units chromatic) * Gambang (1 unit: B flat pentatonic) Angklung (1 set chromatic)				
Unpitched	Rebana Ubi (Sets) Jidor Kompang Maruas Rebana Melayu asli ibu & anak (1 each) Gendang Panjang ibu & anak (1 each) Kesi (1)		Tabla (1)	Gong Sabah (4 units)	Timpani Bass Drum Drum Set Bar Chimes Tamborine Shaker
Plucked	Cak (3) Cuk (3) Gambus (3)	Mandolin (1) Zhongruan (2) YangQin (1)	Sitar (2)	Sape (1)	
Bowed	Rebab (1)	Gaohu(1) Erhu(1) Zhong Hu(1)			ViolonCello Double Bass

From the table, one can conclude that the majority of instruments belong to Malay traditional music. This is balanced by string instruments of the Chinese orchestra. The Indian instruments are represented by the iconic *tabla* and *sitar*. The *sape* and gongs represent instruments from East Malaysia. This make-up appears to coincide with the socio-political position of the peoples of Malaysia, lead by the Malays with the Chinese, Indians, Sabahans and Sarawakians playing secondary roles in the nation's socio-cultural development and political decision making. Western instruments are limited to lower string instruments and a few percussion instruments. However, it must be said that the intention of the MTO is to galvanise traditional instruments found in Malaysia onto the world stage through the performance of new repertoire written for this unique orchestra.

Recording performers

In an attempt to resolve the many questions poised by the attending composers, the orchestra management agreed to record selected traditional instruments, complete with guidelines on the compositional and tonal possibilities of the various instruments. The project was likened to Benjamin Britten's 'Guide to the Symphony Orchestra' with scales, ranges, articulation and short musical repertoire recorded for each instrument. The researcher was invited to attend the recording sessions and to provide feedback. Leading traditional music practitioners who were members of the MTO participated in the recording sessions.

Whilst the recording of individual pieces of repertoire went smoothly, several challenges were encountered during the recording sessions when traditional instrumentalists were asked to play 'Western-like' scales in legato and staccato from the lowest to the highest ranges and in different dynamic levels from 'piano' to 'forte'. The session demonstrated that many of the traditional instruments such as the *rebab* (3-string lute) and *serunai* (Malay oboe), had very different temperaments, tuning systems and tone qualities that were unique to themselves. It was clearly evident that any attempts to 'standardise' the tuning systems of these traditional instruments to equal temperament was both futile and 'unmusical'. A decision was arrived to record the performers, 'as is', so that the craft of the traditional players (and the natural orientation of the tones and temperaments) would not be compromised. The outcome of the exercise was a useful CD, complete with visual recordings of the performers in action, thus serving the purpose of the exercise in aiding compositional direction.

Outcomes of the study

Data analysed from one source was checked against another to provide plausible answers to the research questions. The views of performers were compared with those of students. Feedback from performers and composers acquired during participant observation sessions were matched against descriptive comments and questionnaire outcomes. The outcomes of the study are summarised as follows:

(i) Types of cross cultural music played

Cross cultural works may be grouped by (i) instrumentation (ii) musical style and (iii) cultural affiliation and performance practice traditions. It has proven difficult to define cross-cultural music as a particular 'genre' of music and equally difficult to deliberate its 'authenticity'. Types of cross cultural music played may be divided into new (art) music, contemporary (commercial) music, performance art music (includes traditional dance/theatre) and popular music theatre.

(ii) Socio-musicological relationships

There was still a close relationship between ethnicity and the types of traditional instruments played, highlighting the significance of socio-cultural upbringing in musical engagement and methods of training (formal-informal; Western-non-Western). On the other hand, the learning and performance of Western music appeared to transcend traditional cultural affiliations. Traditional music practitioners still acquired their art through informal learning and by listening rather than by reading. Those engaged as educationists view cross cultural music as a means of keeping traditional music 'alive' with the younger generation. They were open to the idea of 'standardizing' traditional instruments to promote its learning.

A new generation of composers and performers schooled in both traditional and Western music have emerged suggesting an increasing repertoire of new cross cultural music. These developments are fuelled by formal musical training in both Western and traditional music provided by the National Academy of Culture Arts and Heritage, activities of the Malaysian Traditional Orchestra, the intermingle of global musicians and the participation of performers and composers at international symposiums and festivals of new music, encouraged and funded by both the private and public sectors.

(iii) Challenges in the rehearsal and performance of new cross cultural music

Performers reported that it took a longer time to rehearse cross cultural works due to the diverse practice traditions of the players, different systems of notation used, varied tuning systems and problems associated with overall cohesive sound. Practice sessions included issues in (a) resolving temperament (equal and unequal), (b) pitching (A=440 vs no standardised tuning system) and (c) new playing contexts (concert hall vs community music). Performers also found the technique of playing together and the lack of interpretive precedence challenging.

(iv) Composers and Performance Directions

Performers valued the input of composers. Western trained musicians wanted more playing directions and specific notation whereas traditional players were comfortable at relying on their aural memory and improvise / embellish at the point of performance as a means of 'creative contribution', in keeping with traditional practice and training. Some Western trained musicians seemed impatient with 'non-readers'. Oral-trained traditional players preferred to 'convert' music notation back into cipher/mnemonic notation.

Way forward and concluding remarks

As a result of this study, I was increasingly interested to find out *why* cross-cultural performance challenges occurred. Was this attributed to the way the music was written or the way by which performers of Western and non-Western learnt and retrieved music? Perhaps as an outcome of 'metatheorising', I hypothesized that there must be some relation to episodic and procedural memory during the process of brain imaging and retrieval during the act of performance (Schacter et.al 2005, Le Doux 2003, Squire 1987, Rink 2010).

I embarked on an interdisciplinary study to compare the effects of cognitive-affective music learning strategies of violinists and *rebab* players by examining their brainwave patterns through electroencephalography (EEG), the outcomes of which may further add to the understanding of challenges faced by performers of cross cultural music.

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