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Loo Fung Ying (Ed.)
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Loo Fung Chiat (Ed.)

Essays on Issues in Music and its Function

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Loo Fung Ying, Mohd Nasir Hashim, Loo Fung Chiat (Eds.)

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PREFACE

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1 Variation of Malay Asli Music: There is no ‘Right or Wrong’
2 Indung Meets Sayang Dancers: Issues of Putting Folk Genres on Stage
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5 Issues in the Music and Choreography of Rhythmic Gymnastics

Loo Fung Ying
Mohd Nasir Hashim
Loo Fung Chiat

Editors
July 2012
Chapter 1

******** *******

Variation of Malay Asli Music
There is no ‘Right or Wrong’

Mohd Nasir Hashim

Abstract
One of the most ‘heated’ discussion amongst Malay music activists and Malay Asli music (Muzik Melayu Asli in Malaysian term) performers is without doubt portraying a performance that is the most original or most authentic. Controversial debates are commonplace and it is not unusual that those who pursue the matter end up ignoring the presence of the other in trying to defend who is ‘right.’ This phenomenon can even continue to beyond several generations. It is not uncommon that contemporary performers tend to question the ‘old style’ of presentation practised by their teachers or master; in fact what is even more disheartening is that this issue becomes unnecessarily prolonged. Based on this fact, this chapter presents a discourse summarising facts from literature review in addition to analysis of performances by able performers or activists who have achieved recognition, success and popularity within this field.
Variation of Malay Asli Music

The product of this analysis will be evaluated and presented but anonymity will be maintained. The conclusion of this paper will provide evidence and shed light to this matter in that all variations are of exceptional high quality and not any one of the styles can be regarded as being the most authentic as each of the variation occurs as a result of personal improvisation with influence from the accompanying music; the end result is a composition/performance that still maintains the Malay identity in Malay Asli music.

Introduction

Malay Asli music is a syncretic or hybrid music genre which is enriched with fine cultural qualities that portray a strong identity of the Malays; this includes the lifestyle and daily activities of the community. The music is a strong hybrid identity in terms of both harmony and melody. The somewhat melancholic melody utilises a lot of ornamentation in each song; the placement of harmony (chord progression) as well as the organised use of melodic and harmonic minor is also an important feature. All these portray a strong Malay identity.

These unique features do not end there but instead continue to flourish, resulting in a change in both the original melody and style of delivery. This often occurs or evolves in keeping with the time, location and circumstance in which the music activist or practitioner performs. As a result of this, there are several variations to any one particular song although the title may remain. This issue has attracted widespread attention from both music practitioners and researchers alike. Each of these individuals has their own opinion and interpretation in trying to decide which version or variation is authentic or original.

The creative process is not one begun and finished by a single individual; it is spread over many individuals and generations. And it never comes to an end as long as the tradition is alive (Herzog, 1950:1034).

It is evident from Herzog’s verse that change is inevitable; change occurs regardless of an individual’s opinion or perception of whether the change is desired
or wanted. Change is in fact a natural phenomenon and history is its evidence.

Identity and Variation in Malay Asli music

The changes and development of Malay Asli music is evident right from its beginning or time it originated. The inclusion of music instruments increased as did the number of repertoire. There were also an increasing number of performers resulting in more variation and interpretation of songs. These differences were more pronounced when the location and distance increased; this was further augmented when there was ‘assimilation’ of various cultures and ways of life. For example (see Fig. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5):

Figure 1.1 *Sri Kedah* as performed in Kedah (Lyrics evolve around a lady from Kedah)

Figure 1.2 *Sri Kedah* as performed in Johor (The composer who originates from Johor)

Figure 1.3 *Sri Kedah* as performed in Terengganu (This song is also found in Terengganu)

Figure 1.4 *Sri Kedah* as performed in Sarawak (A group of Sarawak musicians traveled and brought along the song with them to Sarawak, adapted from Sarabanun Marican)
Variation of Malay Asli Music

Figure 1.5 *Sri Kedah* as performed in Pekan Baru, Indonesia (The composer’s family originated from Pekan Baru, Indonesia)

The song *Sri Kedah* is just one (of more than a hundred) example of the many songs that I had studied which illustrates incredible transformation in just within a time frame of approximately 30 years.

Changes also occur more rapidly in the face of a ‘generation gap.’ For example:

- Sharifah Aini has been cited as performing the most authentic version of the song *Seri Mersing* (Berita Harian, 24th June 1987).
- Ramlah Ram has portrayed her own way of performance by using the *Ghazal* style. Faster version which inject North Indian/Hindustani style with *Tabla* and *harmonium*. (Senandung Asli Ramlah Ram, RTM, 1995)
- Despite the less favourable comments made by Sharifah Aini; Siti Nurhaliza has drawn exceptional interest and influence as reflected in the exponential and phenomenal sales of her recordings/CD (SRC Suria Records, 2008) which portrayed traditional Malay songs (excerpt of interview in entertainment programmes in TV3 Muzik-Muzik, 2009).
- In actual fact, veteran singer Saloma has recorded the song even much earlier than any of the above singers (Cathay Malay Film, *Keris*, directed by Salleh Ghani in 1961).

The question in mind is, why has the performance recorded by Sharifah Aini now regarded and labeled as being the most ‘authentic and original’ form, when in actual fact her recording is made much later than Saloma. Is it because those critiques were born and raised within the era of Sharifah Aini! Is it related to the
vast exposure given to Sharifah Aini? Or is it because the version performed by her is the version that is most popular of all times? Interestingly when Siti Nurhaliza’s version reached phenomenal sales, she was then labelled as music Melayu asli’s ambassador. Similarly, Ramlah Ram’s version provided a competitive edge to this race. By incorporating an extra Indian *Tabla* and *Harmonium*, played with a faster *Inang* style which is very much closer to the song of *Inang Cina*, this is the song amongst others that assimilates the various ethnicity in Malaysia. Thus, in our pursuit of ‘true’ originality, do we just ignore all of the aforementioned issues?

The same phenomenon is in fact depicted in music ensemble. An example of this is evident during the Malay Asli music competition at the national level (RTM, 2005). The Sri Perdana group comprising six professional musicians had shown exceptional talent in terms of performance and musicality. They did not however win the competition as the musician who played the ‘*gendang*’ did not perform in the ‘original or authentic *Inang*’ style according to one of the judges, Rahim Jantan. The latter is highly regarded then as being an icon in the world of Malay asli music as he had the skill and ability to perform numerous Malay Asli songs by heart through his violin rendition.

From my analysis later, there are actually seven variations of how the *gendang* is played in the *Inang* style (see Fig. 1.6). Two gendang players, Zainuddin and Sahimi from the Sri Perdana group were ‘penalised’ for combining the above two styles when in fact what was expected by Rahim Jantan was the style that I had attained during a recording in Medan, Indonesia (see Fadzlin’s version in Fig. 1.6). In addition to these, there are also four other styles of *gendangan* that is performed in Kelantan, Terengganu, Brunei and Pekan Baru, Indonesia.
It is evident here that the opinions are based on individuals who are seen as music icons or experts in their own ways albeit the fact that these opinions may actually be the result of ignorance or being firm of one’s own beliefs. This somewhat rigid and perhaps ‘autocratic’ view may be detrimental as it can hinder the interest of the younger generation to be more creative. Development and
progress may come to a halt if one is not willing to be open to new or external input which appears to ‘deviate’ from what is routinely accepted.

The development of Malay Asli music is not only restricted to the style of singing and music; the forms of ensemble has also evolved and undergone transformation with time. The number and position of instruments in use have also influenced the arrangement of music. For example:

- *Patah hati*, small ensemble version (*gendang, gong, accordion* and violin)
- *Patah hati*, full orchestra version
- *Patah hati*, electronic music version
- *Patah hati*, soundtrack version

It is interesting to note that the process of transformation has occurred historically as a result of colonial influence. In the early days, the instruments only comprised the *rebana asli* and *gong*, but with the influx of the Portuguese, the accordion was introduced and during the British colonization, the violin and flute were both incorporated.

In fact, these songs are not only performed by pop ensemble groups but in orchestral form. These examples illustrate how the music has evolved from being instrumental to beyond that with the incorporation of many new instruments. These changes should not be regarded as being Western in influence, but as a measure to draw interest from the younger generation and contemporary music arrangers alike as their level of creativity evolves, in addition to expanding the range of repertoire in keeping with current or contemporary interests. As mentioned previously, the evolution of music within Malaysia is not peculiar to music of the West, but also influenced by music from the neighbouring countries and even more so, music of our multi-ethnic society. All these have resulted in the creation of new compositions, for example:
Variation of Malay Asli Music

Figure 1.7 Main melody for *Inang Cina*

These songs are seen to portray elements from the Chinese society and culture (using the scale of pentatonic).

Figure 1.8 Main melody for *Empat Dara*

The lyrics of this song illustrates a story of four young ladies who wear costumes that are complementary to one another. The story line is based on a Hindustani film; the melody and its style is also not dissimilar to the Hindustani songs (*Inang dangdut*). The use of the tabla percussion reinforces the uniqueness of both the Malay and the Indian music identity (Neuman, 1977).

The change observed in musical culture may be initiated or engendered by contact between two or several impinging cultures, subcultures or cases within a culture (Kartomi, 1994: IX).
It is without doubt that the Chinese and Indian society had given rise to the multicultural nature of new repertoire and style to Malay Asli music (Hashim, 2001). Kartomi (1994) also agreed that such contact may result at least in minor adjustments within existing musical traditions or major effects such as creative transformation or syncretism, which occurs when cultures meet over a prolonged duration of contact. It may be assumed that, in general those societies which have been most exposed to external influences have experienced more rapid cultural change than isolated communities, in music as in other aspects of culture.

When cultures meet, there is merging. Whether seen as modernizing or spoiling, and even if the intent is preservation, there is a level of fusion (Su-Ling Chou, Danna Frangione, Yun-yu Wang, Er-dong Hu, 1997: 110)

The Needs of New Variation and Repertoire

Malay Asli songs such as Sri Siantang, Sri Kedah, Gunung Banang, Patah Hati or Sembawa Balik have been proclaimed as being ‘antique’ in terms of popularity and musicality. These songs are seen as ancient; yet, interestingly, it is this very same generation that reveres the song ‘La Maulai’ which is popularised by the artiste Siti Nurhaliza. This trend is seen as injecting new elements into strengthening the existing roots of Malay Asli music. As stated above, the process of evolution is a natural process that occurs to all forms of creative arts.

Nettl (see 1983: 345-354) also cites the example of Iran, where classical music was preserved for a time, and then allowed out again into the living, changing environment (almost like an endangered species of animal being bred in captivity, and then released again into the wild!). In keeping with the needs and interests of arrangers and listeners alike, the music has become even more popular. The music has in fact generated a new following and trend and has conquered the music scene and industry, penetrating even national song festivals and competitions.
changes in terms of original structure may be subtle as the music ‘transforms’ into a more contemporary form; having said that, if the composer is of knowledge, its original roots will not fray. Amongst these composers/arrangers include Pak Ngah, M Nasir, S Atan, Manan Ngah, Shiqal and many more; they are generally realistic in their approach and process of music evolution. The authenticity of Malay music is retained despite the incorporation of new musical elements. It is hardly surprising then that Zapin Hari Raya by Pak Ngah, Zapin Rindu Rinduan by Manan Ngah or Joget Sindir Pesan by S. Atan, are noticeably different as compared to other Joget or zapin songs before. The Malay elements are still embedded although the style and arrangement is different.

Maintaining the Malay melody in its original form, yet giving it a new style of arrangement is a positive move towards preserving the heritage of local music compositions. Both measures are necessary to ensure continuity of our local music culture which is rich in Malay music elements. External influence is inevitable when it comes to music; the birth of new compositions such as Zapin Cindai (performed by Siti Nurhaliza) should be well regarded as is the preservation of original musical scores of Zapin style.

What is regarded as Malay music now is actually the result of music that has evolved and developed from earlier days. Several pivotal factors have been identified: foreign colonisation and influence by foreign traders, not to mention the dominance of current multimedia; all these have eased the process of external influence. For example, the colonisation by the Portuguese in the 16th century was associated with the Joget style, the influx of Arabic traders during the height of the Malacca rulership brought about the zapin style, and the settlement of Indian and Chinese migrants influenced the style of Inang. Although all these have been accepted as Malay music, in actual fact a musical composition will undergo continuous evolutionary process which cannot be dictated within any particular
time frame.

Guignard (see 1991: 337-340) gives a good example of how traditional eastern music can be revitalised through collaborations with modern composers; she describes how the Japanese composer Takemitsu heard a traditional *satsumabiwa* player (Tsuruta Kinshi) on a film soundtrack and wanted to work with her on some future projects, a collaboration which inspired her to broaden her musical horizons and develop new ideas and techniques. As a result, other composers were also attracted, with the further consequence that new interest was generated in the Japanese traditional music.

The process of evolution occurs naturally. The same may be said of any culture associated with any one community; such changes are in fact only noticed when seen retrospectively. A Malay traditional song that has been given a contemporarised approach should be well received and not immediately criticised. As long as there is awareness and the changes are made within discipline, its authenticity should not be jeopardized. This is the very reason why Malay Asli music activists ought to be aware and knowledgeable of the various styles and arrangement of contemporary composers. Nettl (see 1983: 345-354), that the effect of cultural gray-out may be exaggerated, so that musical interaction has an overall benefit: generally more people have a broader musical experience, meaning that hybrids enrich our experience, while traditions have not necessarily disappeared. In keeping with this, in addition to upholding the various traditional Malay songs in its original forms, newer compositions which have evolved from traditional melodies should also receive due recognition. One possible drawback is that we currently lack versatile composers who are able to ‘transform’ traditional music into a seemingly appealing contemporary form. A composer who lacks knowledge or is ignorant to traditional music may not be able to create such compositions. As a result of this, the authenticity is lost and the true values of cultural identity are
not portrayed; the Malay elements will not manifest as a result. For a composition to be entrenched with history and cultural values/identity, the composition has to create based on knowledge and meaning. The current situation is that although traditional Malay music is often produced and recorded, such music lacks true Malay elements and identity; with no identifiable target, such compositions will not be able to withstand the test of time and will dwindle into obscurity. As the local saying goes, “itik mengajar anak berjalan betul dan lebih parah lagi bila tiung mengajuk manusia berkata-kata” (a mother duck teach her duckling how to waddle properly or even more ridiculous for a pigeon to mock mankind when it cannot even talk).

**Suggestions and Plan of Action**

The above is an illustration of the development of traditional music beginning with “pure” Malay Asli music till the creation of a new traditional melody which has occurred as a result of interaction among social, political and economic factors. The nature and new environment within each era has resulted in the evolution of Malay Asli music which is unique and yet interesting different as the music evolves in the different eras. Such processes may involve the way music is used (its functions) and attitudes towards it, or may take a specifically musical form. Thus there are changes in the repertoire, brought about by the introduction of new styles. Patricia Matusky (2004: 26) defines acculturated or syncretised music as music that "combines elements of folk and classical music of a given culture group with outside elements…found in both the urban and rural areas." In doing so, we should be aware of Nettl's views on how traditional music may be preserved, and make a concerted effort to ensure that only the best ways are implemented.

This very issue was in fact also voiced out by a legendary veteran artiste, the late P. Ramlee 41 years ago in his paper entitled ‘Cara-cara Meninggikan Mutu
According to S. Atan (a renown music composer and arranger), the idea to ‘contemporarise’ traditional melodies has become an effective way to reignite and recultivate the interests of the Malays towards their own music (Berita Harian, 10 Julai 2000). Using modern instruments such as the drum, keyboard, accordion and guitar simultaneously with the *tabla* and *gambus* amongst others have proven successful in producing music that is unique and pleasing to the ear. It is clear that such compositions are able to attract the interest and attention of both the young and old. This approach is proven to be successful as composers such as Pak Ngah, S Atan and M Nasir have managed to elevate local new artistes to exceptional popularity by merely using Malay asli music; amongst these singers include Siti Nurhaliza, Nurhaliza Idris, Aleycats, Herman Tino, Black Dog Bone among others.

In relation to this, local music composers have without doubt a part to play in developing traditional music by adopting the practice of ‘recycling’ as expressed by Dr. Mohd Taib Osman (1984: 23). Traditional music ought to be a part of their source of creativity and inspiration. Local composers can strive towards blending traditional melody with modern music in their compositions. This phenomenon is in fact not restricted to just the local music scene but occurs across the globe. This phenomenon has given rise to what is now known as ‘world music’ or ‘world beat’.
Conclusion

The world is becoming a single place, in which different institutions function as parts of one system and distant people share a common understanding of living together on one planet (Lechner and Boli, 2000).

The world of music has been subject to cross-cultural influences resulting in intriguing new forms and styles; music instruction has also been subject to change, especially through the establishment of western-influenced programmes. Performing musicians in the world today may well be the product of both tradition and change, reaping the benefit from a balance between the old and the new in the training they receive; in the future, school music instruction may be the primary opportunity for rekindling awareness of indigenous styles that have faded from public interest. The energy generated by the contact of different cultural traditions may be channeled into the production of new creative achievements, which might enrich the society that experiences it. This is similarly echoed by Frank J. Lechner and John Boli (2000).

Such an approach is increasingly urgent in the fast-paced, multicultural world of today, where musical fashions can slide in and out of favour at great speed. As we all interested in preserving something of Malay traditions, a question arises as to how any such traditions might survive. Nettl (see 1983: 347-354), believes that this may depend on the degree to which a society desires survival of its cultural tradition in an intact form. He explains this in terms of the energy (that is, time and effort) that a given society devotes to a particular activity, such as an art form: if new music evolves, then less energy is available for the old, and this may lead to a thinning-down of the repertoire. However he claims that no surviving race has completely abandoned its music as a direct result of western influence, although its repertoire may be altered or diminished. But survival can
take different forms. Nettl (ibid.) observes that musics may be preserved, almost as museum pieces, for use on special occasions; mentions the case of South Korea, where old musicians receive special status, and are designated national treasures. Interestingly, their music is preserved from change to a greater degree than it might have been in its natural habitat. This is precisely what needs to be addressed now so as to reignite and nurture the interest of the younger generation i.e. they need to be aware that the options are endless.

Change is inevitable within any community, what more change in terms of the cultural ‘needs’ of the society with regards to music. In reality, the Malaysian community, particularly the younger generation, are extremely fond of and are influenced by western music. This should not necessarily be perceived as a negative phenomenon or even be controlled/prevented by anyone. What is of more concern is the overwhelming obsession with western music to the extent that Malay Asli music is ignored or peripheralised. In Malaysia today the passion for modern music continues to grow rampantly but the survival of Malay Asli music is solely dependent on the efforts of isolated groups of senior musicians. There will surely be those who object or try to compete with external influences (namely western music), but change is inevitable within the field of the arts. Unless society itself takes direct steps or measures to prevent such influences from penetrating society, these changes are inevitable. If society does not continue to nurture and appreciate traditional arts, then its course would sadly be a natural death.
Variation of Malay Asli Music

References


Chapter 2

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Indung Meets Sayang Dancers

Issues of Putting Folk Genres on Stage

Chan Cheong Jan

Abstract

Led by Hamiah Haji Ahmad, the Indung performance group of the Bantal Village in Ulu Tembeling, Pahang, Malaysia has staged performances at National Park Resort, Universiti Malaya, Melaka and other places since 1990s. As the musical styles of this genre were determined by the nature of weeding work, attempts of staging Indung have brought problems of contextual change, which could also be viewed as contextual 'mismatch' or even contextual 'conflicts', where the performers' construct of Indung was frequently jeopardized while the audiences' mind were distanced and disconnected from the performance. I have observed and written about this issue in 2006 and 2009, highlighting the impact of folklorism on this genre and the appropriation done by the villagers in countering the disadvantage of their positions. In 21 July 2011, after a gap of more than ten years, Indung was staged again in Kuala Lumpur under
the 82 years old Hamiah Haji Ahmad at a cross cultural dance festival organized by the National Department for Culture and Arts. This time, Indung, performed by elder villagers, was placed between tap dance performances by the Sayang Dancers which consisted of young female dancers. Finally, the observation of this performance presents strong evidence of clash of aesthetic expectations and ritual requirements from the performers and the audience. A framework or model to effectively representing the work-dependent folk genre to the public is urgently needed to prevent further attempt to stage Indung without considering the unfulfilling sentiments of the villagers and the audience.

**Introduction**

My earlier writing (Chan, 2009) has explicated several issues surrounding Indung as a performance, from the viewpoint of what Indung means or could mean to the cultural bearers at the present time. Pondering upon the performance history of the Kampung Bantal performance group between 1970s until then, the singers have deliberately seized the performance opportunities to gain their voice as female, and, rural citizens. Despite being not particularly well received by the internal communities in Ulu Tembeling, Indung has been a vehicle, tool, or a soft weapon, for the aged women to put themselves in spotlight, and at the same time illuminating the folk identity of Kampung Bantal towards the external, larger communities in Malaysia. The journey of this performance group, however, has not always been smooth: the lime lights given were not necessary that of sincere appreciation. It came along with bitter episodes like exploitation by the organizer or the ‘middle man,’ conflict among the group members, as well as conflict with the surrounding family members in the village. Swimming through the challenges, the performers had even found their subversive way to voice their hearts without causing trouble: by incorporating subversive messages into their pantun (poem), which went unnoticed to the guests and audiences due to the extensive interjection.
Indung Meets Sayang Dancers

of local vocables in their singing phrases that would bar the comprehension of outsiders of what is being sung.

The reappearance of Bantal performance group on stage in Kuala Lumpur in July 2011, after a gap of 19 years, gives a sound reason to discuss again the issue of revitalization of Indung, and this time with the approach of outside in. Instead of probing the meaning of Indung to the performers, it is apt to focus on the impact of Indung to the spectators when it is staged in a concert. My main point of the paper is that the effect of work-dependant folk traditions would be jeopardized when there are staged in the same ways as for the more ‘autonomous,’ ‘greater,’ performance based tradition. In July 2011, Indung was staged side by side, or after and before to be precise, with tap dance performance by the Sayang Dancers. This provokes not a small disturbance in the academic minds in thinking of the future of cultural staging in this country.

Indung and the Performance Group at Bantal Village

Before the present observation is presented, it is necessary to give an overview of what has happened until now. When rice growing in Ulu Tembeling was yet being practised on the dry paddy field called huma instead of today’s wet field or sawah, women had to weed the field in groups for days after the young paddy had just grown. It was during that weeding that Indung songs were sung.¹²

The wet paddy fields in Ulu Tembeling today no longer require hand weeding. Indung was put up as a performance in as early as the 1970s, during the Sultan of Pahang State’s visit to Ulu Tembeling. In 1993, a minor revitalization project was carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Malaysia. Since then a group of old women in Bantal Village had continued singing Indung at a frequency of about two to five times a year until the present time, whenever there is a request for a performance.³
Upon the formation of a performing group that consists of around seven persons, the text of *Indung* was recalled and rearranged mainly by Hamiah Haji Ahmad (Mak Miah) and Wok Mak Alim (Mak Wok). The rest of the founding members of the group were also experienced singers who had been weeding during their younger days, including Mahani Mat Petah; Seripah Haji Ahmad; Jaharah; Juariah; Rebiah and others; with the average age of the performers being around 50 years old then (in the 1990s). The members of the group are however not fixed but changed from time to time.4

In the past twenty years, the Bantal performance group has performed mainly at celebration events held by local bodies such as the state government and the district office; this includes performances for National day; the Sultan’s anniversary at places like Kuantan, Kuala Tembeling, Batu Bun and Bantal Village itself.5 In 1993, Norazit Selat, who arrived at Bantal Village after his unsatisfactory field study of *Indung* in Ulu Dungun (personal interaction, Norasit Selat, 1999), brought the Bantal performance group to perform at Universiti Malaya, during the Pesta Minggu Kesenian Pahang [Pahang Performing Arts Festival] organised by the Za’ba residential college of the university. Mak Miah, Mak Wok and others recalled their excitement in participating in this event and also their sightseeing excursions in Kuala Lumpur. The Bantal performance group also participated in the *Pertandingan Pantun Kebangsaan* [National Pantun Competition] in Melaka 1994, as guest performers.

After the performance in Melaka in 1994, a schoolteacher teaching in Bantal Village documented *Indung* on his own and published a few articles in a local newspaper (Roselan Abdul Malek, 1995); and this was followed by my visit in 1996. There have been changes in the performers of the Bantal group since 1994, where many performers have stopped participating: some due to age, others due to human relationship problems. By 1999, when I carried out my fieldwork at Ulu
Tembeling, Mak Miah and Mak Wok were the only ones remaining from the original group. The *Indung* performance at Bantal Village nowadays has to recruit members for each performance, including those who are not familiar with the songs. From the villagers’ viewpoint, *Indung* has declined after 1994 and needs revitalisation (Personal interaction, Zaimi Ali, 1997) although from the government’s view the revitalisation is “in progress” at the time of 1996.

Despite years of performance history, all performances were allocated with a limited time; the longest performance was for half an hour for seven songs or so at University Malaya in 1993. The complete performance of 37 songs was carried out twice: in an audio recording session held at University Malaya on the day following the stage show in 1993; and the audiovisual recording carried out in Kampung Bantal in 1999 by Chan (2001). To the author’s knowledge, there has not been any large scale formal event of staging *Indung* between 1999 until 2011.6

**Description: On Stage**

Bantal performing group’s involvement in the event program called “Gerak 2011: Menyerlah Kreativiti” is yet a unique one from its performance history until now. Although *Indung* is requested more or less in the *folklorism* context, that is, to showcase its cultural identity; the event itself is not aimed at such. It is a program to show case dances organized under a thematic and trans-genre concept, which ambitiously included within it dances of various genres like the mek mulung, *ngajat lasan* of the Iban, tap dance, hip hop, dance theatre, and so on. *Indung*, is perhaps included as one of the ‘traditional’ dance in this mix genre event. It is now taken as a dance, and would be staged as a dance, in a performance based, not cultural based, event: Not as poem recitation as in the performance in Melaka in 1994, neither as cultural show that they have performed in the National Forest’s Park. In a way, this situation provides an opportunity for *Indung* to be transformed
into a more artistic stage genre, leaving its past that is heavily dependent on its cultural identity. As the event unfolds, however, it seemed that neither the organizer nor the performers were ready for the change.

Figure 2.1 Poster of the event Gerak 2011 in which Indung was presented as one of the ‘dance’ items
Auditorium DBKL was considerably filled with audience, of which many are young people, including students. Judging from the nature of the event, and also the absence of lay audience (meaning tourists, or unrelated public), it seems the majorities of audience are either supporters to a particular dance group or are related to the event in one way or another, or in some ways, dance enthusiasts.

In terms of the sequence of performance, Indung was sandwiched between tap dance items by the group called Sayang Dancer. Interestingly, when each time the hosts gave announcement to the next performance, it was done in a way that the subsequent two performance items were introduced together. Hence, when Indung performers walked into the stage, it was a situation where the tap dancers have just left the stage, and there were no announcement in between these two items.

The walking in of the Indung performers took longer time as required. While the six dancers were getting seated in a circle in the center of stage, Mak Miah, the solo singer, was escorted slowly in to the left end of the stage, preparing her text (written in a notebook) placed on a book stand. This process was accompanied by upbeat back ground music, probably to fill up the gap of waiting by the audience.

The entire performance of Indung lasted 8 minutes, presenting three songs which are Ambil Anak Indung, Burung Belatuk, and Sayang Salela. As the typical structure of response (jawab) by group and poem (pantun) by solo was being performed, two stanzas of poem (pantun) was sung for each song. The short duration for each song appeared odd at least to those who are familiar with the genre, but Mak Miah knew well about it. It has been a typical situation when Indung is staged. She was used to being briefed or foretold about the limitation of time by the organizer. She has had to face the fact that they would not get to sing Indung to their satisfaction on stage, as how they used to do it in the village. As a
work song, a song in Indung was to be repeated several times with new poem being sung to each repetition. Even when Indung was sung for sheer play without weeding, it would usually not end with two stanzas of pantun. It was too short to be fun, especially for the singers themselves.

When the spirit of Anak Indung was called upon in the first song Ambil Anak Indung, the singing structure was altered where the number of response was drastically reduced. The solo singing of one stanza (four lines, or two pair of phrases) of pantun was usually interjected by the group response of “Oh anak----in---dung,” in which response is sung after the first two lines of a stanza of solo phrase, creating a lively and responsive mood of call and response. In this performance, however, response was sung only after the entire stanza was completed by the soloist, where not only the total number of response was reduced until three times only for the entire song, but the time gap between one response and the other was lengthened, hence weakening the interactive mood of the play.

The performance of Indung stood out from the other dances in many ways. The appearance of aged women, somewhat not tuned to the urban culture of efficiency in stage performance, has brought upon the casual, informal village’s atmosphere to the auditorium. Musically, Indung is unaccompanied single part singing, with its rhythmic features closely tied to the gesture of weeding. The absence of the sound of instrument during Indung’s performance, coupled with the casualness of the gesture of the performers, contributed in a rather loose and empty sonic as well as visual moment during the eight minutes of performance.

What caught my, and perhaps also others’ attention was the response of the audience, which was remarkably unusual compared to that when other dances were performed. There had been continuous and persistent voice of wide yelling at various points of the performance, which at first maybe taken as voice of cheering, but later has become nothing but impolite, emotionally invasive and perhaps
insulting. Right at the point when the dancers walked into the stage, the yelling begins. It returned when the dancers performed the ending gesture of '<Ambil Anak Indung>'. When the dancers raised their knife (or known as kiut) and shouted, the crowd joined in to yell widely.

While the first song was performed without dancing, *Burung Belatuk* and *Timang Landak* are among the favourite songs for dance in Indung. As soon as the dance gestures began, the performers were again showered by yelling from the audience. The dance gesture was not well synchronized; the discrepancies in choreography were obvious. At this point, the audience began to clap along the dance, riding on the metrical rhythm of the tune. When it came to the solo singing of the poem, however, the hall turned into nothing more than a chat room. Clearly more than half of the audience began to ignore the show on stage. These inattentive behaviours of the audience continued until the end of the entire performance of *Indung*. 
Figure 2.2 The performance of Nat King Cole’s *Love* by Sayang Dancers
Figure 2.3 The Performance of *Indung* by Bantal Village Group (Bottom left: Mak Miah singing the solo stanzas; bottom right: the light on stage was turned off while one of the performers were trying to initiate the singing of the closure song for *Indung*)
After the unsynchronized ending of Timang Landak, the hosts announced a closure to the Indung performance. The performers, however, were slow to leave the stage. Not only that, Mak Seripah, one of the dancers, pulled the neighboring dancer to sit down again, as if they were going to sing another song. It was too late to do so then, as the stage crews had came in to escort them out from the stage. In the midst of these hazardous movements, it was heard of Mak Seripah’s voice singing the response phrase of Pulang Anak Indung, the song which is ritually obligated when the play of Indung ends. This singing voice soon stopped and all performers eventually left the stage. The stage was then taken over by the Sayang Dancers, a group of young female tap dancers, dancing Nat King Cole’s number LOVE, with their well choreographed, swift and lively performance.

**Description: Off Stage**

The performers were far from being relief after the performance. In fact, the four senior members who came from Bantal village were seemed in a hurry to gather at the changing room. Sitting on the floor in a circle, they began singing Pulang Anak Indung, with Mak Seripah taking the role as solo singer. Once the spirit of Anak Indung was called at the beginning of the performance, it is obligatory to perform the sending back of the spirit, of which failing to do so may bring disaster to the village. This ritual has been well kept by the performers, and it is a typical situation again that they were not allow the time to finish the performance properly on stage. In the past, the group has been singing Pulau Anak Indung in their accommodation room.

A small episode that happened after the singing of Pulang Anak Indung shed some lights on the true nature of Indung. Feeling relief after completing the ritual requirements, the villagers began to chat with visitors in the changing room. They soon turned into dancing and singing of another Indung song Sayang Salela,
demonstrating the dancing steps for that song. The voluntary play of *Indung* continued for the next 10 minutes, and some visitors joined in dancing. *Indung* became alive then: It was fun. As the villagers constantly use the term ‘main’ (play) to refer to participation of *Indung* instead of ‘nyanyi’ or ‘tari’, this small episode of casual play of *Indung* seemed to bring out a sharp message: that *Indung* is a play and is to be played, before it is sung, danced or performed. It is a genre that is participatory in nature. *Indung* is first and foremost, a game for the fun of the player, not a show to be watched and amused.

**Discussion: What is Staging and How Hostile it is to *Indung***

Staged subject is extraordinary. The content is selective. The dynamic flows outward, towards the audience. Time on stage is eternal. Tireless effort is poured in to preparation for the limited duration of time on stage. The effect of say one minute on stage impacts the spectators, as if that one minute is endlessly extended, value multiplied in the mind of the perceivers. There is a power exchange between those who are on stage and the audience. Whatever being staged becomes the centre of the collective awareness, it summons the attention of the audience. And for that limited time of performance, the visual and audio frame from the stage replace the sense of the audience, almost as if the stage has taken the authority to dictate what is true, right, and controls the emotion of the audience. In return, the audience is waiting to be served. The ones on stage is obliged to provide all that is to be heard and seen, and there must be sufficient changes in the content, packed concisely within the time frame. The content has to be intensive. The preparation has to be well ordered. The performance has to be appealing, and arresting enough to reward the undivided attention given by the audience.
Figure 2.4 Happening at back stage after the performance (Upper: performers singing *Pulang Anak Indung* to send the spirit of *Indung* back; lower: performers enjoying the play of *Indung* together with visitors)

When *Indung* meets Sayang dancers, she would find herself “like a deer running into a village” – looking at the competitors being so equipped, refined and
experienced with all that it needs to survive a stage performance. Young and beautiful ladies, dressed in smart and a little sexy attire; not only their choreography is extraordinary—one that is full of quick changes throughout that short period of show, but the facial expressions and postures were also extraordinary—constantly exaggerated outwardly so that they were effective to the audience. *Indung*, however, brings together with it a set of contextual apparatus, which she finds it hard to accommodate these apparatus into the stage setting.

*Indung* consumes time differently from a modern dance. It would be hard, and disgrace to call the spirit in such a hurry. Repetition is the engine. It must be allowed to take time to repeat, and be given an unrestricted time for her to gain space, for her to feel at home. The solo singer needs to secure her ground before she can sing, and further, to improvise the *pantun* according to the will of her heart. Whatever songs cherished, body movements enjoyed, they are for the contentment of the players, so they were not meant to be expressed outward to the audience.

Once *Indung* is on stage: Mak Miah simply wanted to play, to express, to continue practicing the tradition. She did not intend to be the *prima donna* of the moment: never did she want to summon the “undivided” attention of everyone. It is therefore natural that the *Indung* performance would leave such a centric stage with ample looseness and empty space in terms of audio and visual stimuli. The dancers have never thought of filling up the mind and perception of the audience, and neither do they know how to do so. Time is not eternal on stage for the *Indung* players. They may only be able to find their *Indung* if they are allowed to bring the ‘stage-based time concept’ to their community-based one, at least they need to sing more than two stanzas of poem for one song, without reducing the number of response-phrases. If, this is an assumption, they are allowed to take their time their way, a performance of three songs may take 12 to 15 minutes—to them is not a big
matter compared to 8 minutes, but to the organizer that would be luxurious or redundant, depending on the way one looks at it. The *Indung* players do not like to be pressured. They do not feel obliged to intensify the content, to increase the frequency of changes, to increase it attractions. They are not going for the efficient way that would fight for the value of every single minute and second on the stage, and to enlarge the impact of the limited time frame. They wanted the reverse, which is a more relaxed way to use time in their play. The consequence of *Indung* meets Sayang dancers is plain: that *Indung* will be seen out of place in the modern auditorium.

The Fundamental Heteronomy of *Indung*

Osamu Yamaguti did not discuss much when he raised the two types of nature of a music, namely *ji-ritsu teki ongaku* and *ta-ritsu teki ongaku* (Yamguti 2000:86). *Ji* means self, while *ritsu* rules or governance. *Ta* refers to other. *Ji-ritsu* nature of music means it is of self governance, while *ta-ritsu* means that which is ruled of governed by other. The equivalent to this pair of term in English would be the autonomous versus the heteronomous nature of music. While it is not a *either or* way of categorization but a spectrum between the two dichotomized ends, music that has strong autonomous nature is much independent as an art, has its own rules for its structures and substructures, and is more ready to be appreciated as music *itself*. Any staged art music, classical music, and theatre would have a strong autonomy in terms of the governance of its inner structure. In contrast, music that is more heteronomous in nature, is those that are determined extensively by extra-musical features, that are more dependent on the particular social context in which the music is used. Music for rituals, funerals, religion, lullabies, and work can be very dependent on its social context.
The term heteronomy is used in linguistic, where heteronomous language refers to a language that uses terms and words from other language, which its characters and identity is hard to define. The term heteronomy was used in the field of music composition as well, where heteronomy refers to a group of musical ideas or structure that are determined by the other music ideas or structures (Xenakis, 1992:111). In the field of jazz study, jazz was once described as heteronomy to classical, in which the jazz phrases were, like the case of heteronomous language, eclectically ‘borrowed’ from the Western classical music (Benson, 2006:453). It would be necessary that, when the term heteronomy is applied, the reference is made clear that we would know that a subject is heteronomy to ‘what.’

In coiling this term heteronomy to *Indung*, a music tradition is heteronomous not in the sense of that of the linguistic, composition and jazz, that it is governed not by the others of the same type (e.g. a language governed by other languages, a music governed by other musics), but by extra-musical factors. The music structure of *Indung* is determined by the nature of weeding in several but essential ways. First of all, the lyrical and seemingly free metric structure of majority of the *Indung* repertoire derives from that rhythm of the weeding work by hand using the knife. One could hardly be metrical and in consistent tempo if the weeding work is to be effective. As the songs were sung initially to facilitate a particular work, it does not warrant musical excitement through mere audition. The musical structure of *Indung*, its tempo, rhythm, its extension of syllabus, and so on, becomes sensible when one participates in playing it. It is understandable that audience would find it hard to enjoy the music when *Indung* is put on stage. If *Indung* is a kind of heteronomous music, it will not be able to stand alone on stage, in a concert hall, without bringing in the presence of the extra musical factor which governs it.
Conclusion: a Word to the Cultural Officers

I reiterate this phrase: “Indung is a play (game) and is to be played, before it is sung, danced or performed. It is a genre that is participatory in nature.” The anxiety, and eagerness to represent a traditional culture is to be tamed by careful thinking based on in depth understanding of the nature of the subject to be exhibited. I call for the recognition of the heteronomy nature of many of the local music traditions in our country, and that a special framework is needed in dealing with these musics. Revitalization of a music tradition does not mean simply create events to stage it, to perform it publicly: we need to be more resourceful than this. For the numerous musics that are determined by and inseparable with its social and cultural context, creative ways are needed to make them alive through a more participatory and experiential way, of which venue like drum circle session, community music session, and music education in school would be a much better place than the stage platform. In case when a heteronomous music is staged, the audience need to be prepared to appreciate the ‘counter stage’ music qualities: the repetition, the sense of time, and the extra-musical factors. This preparation is only possible if the audience are willing to learn something different and new to them.

At the same time, we should be more critical at how music culture is represented on stage. It is a natural cause that the veteran folk dancers and musicians have been skilfully but superficially altering the performance content so that it fits the demands of the stage; that the performance is more eye catching, filled with frequent changes, and more ‘entertaining’ to the extent that what is showed on stage is never what it claims it is- a folk dance of certain cultural community with implied “authenticity”. The so called Orang Ulu’s (an ethnic category of the natives in the Sarawak state) dance on stage, for example, where male and female dancers are performing simultaneously, is the outcome of effort of trying to pack more “dishes on the table” to feed the audience. It is alarming to the
organisers of cultural event that not all tourist and audience are as immature as to be satisfied by the superficial “stunts” delivered on stage. It is of the utmost irony when the local younger generations obtain their education of traditional music and dance through watching these altered versions of stage performances; which they always do. The promotion of a tradition has in turned ended up in killing it, and there is no surprise that many young people, local music students especially, think that local music traditions are monotonous.

Notes

1 The meaning of the word *Indung* remains unidentifiable among the villagers; the leader of the performance group Mak Miah admitted that she did not know what *Indung* is. However it seems most reasonable to interpret *Indung* as something similar to the spirit of rice as stated by Norazit Selat (Norazit, 1999).

2 Different villages in Ulu Tembeling may have different stories describing its origin, and the origin may have some relations to the cultural relationship between Ulu Tembeling and Ulu Dungun. *Dayang*, the court maid is commonly believed to have played an important role in promoting the oral tradition of *Indung*. The Bantal villagers believe in the existence of *Bukit Tujuh* and the role that as played by the spirits or *orang burnian*, especially the seven princesses, in dealing with their oral traditions. In any case, the Ulu Tembeling people believe that *Indung* was not the result of their own creativity, but it was rather introduced by outsider(s), may the outsider(s) be the spirits or other people coming from another place.

3 *Indung* is specifically found being practiced in the area of Ulu Tembeling and Ulu Dungun only. Mohd. Taib Osman (1977) first reported *Indung* in Ulu Tembeling in 1974, but *Indung* became known to the general public only in 1993 when the performance group was brought to perform at University Malaya. Literature that focuses on *Indung* include the paper presented at the Seminar of Traditional Folk Songs in 1999 by Norazit Selat (1999).
Mak Tut, and Azmi, for example, though not young, participated in the performances of the 1990s as fresh beginners. Four teenagers participated in *Indung* performance during my fieldwork in 1999.

The former minister of the Pahang State, Yahya Awang, whom the Bantal villagers are fond of by calling by the nickname of Pak’yah; contributed to the revitalisation of *Indung* in terms of arranging public performance events, and also in terms of motivating the performers by his presence at Bantal Village. According to Mak Miah, he suggested choreographing dance movements for some songs that were not for dance originally; and also limiting the shouting of “yuh!” from three times to one (personal interaction, Hamiah Haji Ahmad, 1999).

This was confirmed when the author visited the Bantal village and interviewed the *Indung* performers in 2007.
Indung Meets Sayang Dancers

References


Abstract
Since the marching band was first introduced in Malaysia during the British colonial period, there has been a progressively increased interest in marching bands in the country. Although bands range in style, the most commonly found bands in Malaysia are military bands or traditional parade units. The recent years however, has seen a rise in the number of marching show bands and drum corps units in Malaysia which integrate a theatrical performance expressed through music. Although the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and other organizations have made consistent efforts to organize competitions as an avenue for bands to showcase their abilities,
many issues have arisen due to the nature of the competition. The system in use then appeared to discourage creativity in performance and hence the development of bands in line with current trends of marching show bands and drum corps. This prompted the Malaysia Band Association to introduce a change in the judging system as well as to train judges with contemporary marching band techniques. The Drum Corps Europe (DCE) judging system was selected partly as this system is a means of encouraging new standards of creativity, artistry and excellence in design and performance while also providing a vehicle that will educate beginners to grow and evolve to the greatest level of their potential. After two years since its implementation for the National Band Competition, it is important to gauge if and how this new judging system is contributing towards the development of marching bands. The purpose of this study was to examine issues and challenges associated with the implementation of the DCE judging system in terms of improving the quality and standards of bands and to identify strategies for the development of marching bands in Malaysia.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data collection in this study. A survey questionnaire was distributed to band directors and band managers to elicit responses in three areas namely the assessment criteria, feedback system by judges and suggestions for future developments. Interviews were also conducted with selected individuals regarding the challenges of organizing competitions and strategies for the development of marching bands. Results indicate that band directors and managers generally accepted the DCE system in terms of the assessment criteria and competition rules. Via the issues and challenges identified, nine strategies are suggested for the continuous development of Malaysian high school marching bands.

Introduction

Marching bands exist in many forms throughout the world and there is a widespread of competitive circuits for marching bands. While differing opinions exist, many feel that competitions are a useful media for developing bands. Beach (cited in Austin, 1990) felt that the goal of competition was “not to win a prize but to pace one another on the road to excellence” and advocated using competition as a tool of educational progress. Competition in music is also thought to help
generate student interest, stimulate higher achievement levels, measure achievement in comparison to peers, and to prepare students for the real world (Austin, 1990).

Depending upon the region or country, competitions including the judging system used can take different forms. Among some of the judging systems used are a cumulative scoring system based on a maximum point value, a percentage system, categorization of score into score ranges, the use of a division rating system only with non-numerical score or the ranking of bands with no comparative musical score (Oakley, 1972). These competitions may use anything from two or more judges particularly in marching band competitions utilizing auxiliary unit judges, percussion judges, color guard judges and so forth (ibid.). Critiques are also given to bands in a competition in which it is increasingly common to see judges using audio recording to document their comments.

While there has been much research conducted on bands, few however, have focused on the educational and developmental aspects of competition in relation to the marching band, and specifically on attitudes of band directors and school administrators towards the judging philosophy, standards, and procedures used in a competition. Research on marching bands have focused on attitudes of directors and band members (e.g., Rogers, 1985), rehearsal and student performance (Adams, 1992; Smith, 1999), and overall competitive systems and processes (Frenz, 1988; Guegold, 1989; Oakley, 1972; Sullivan, 2003) and motivational factors.

Rogers (1985) conducted a study on the attitudes of high school band directors and principals towards marching band contests. Questionnaires were sent out to 421 randomly selected high schools from all 50 states in the United States of America. The study found that principals view marching band contests as a way to improve public relations for their schools. Meanwhile, band directors were found
to perceive marching band contests as a way for students to gain personal benefit in terms of self-discipline, responsibility and pride. The results of the study also show that band directors rated the musical benefits of marching band competitions lower than principals. Additional comments given by the two groups of respondents indicate that band directors were concerned about the overemphasis on competitions. Meanwhile, comments given by some principals included praise for the public relations value of marching band contests. Others question the educational benefits and also the expenses associated with traveling to competitions.

Another study on attitudes of band directors towards band competitions was conducted by Banister (1992). Her study aimed to determine the attitudes of band directors from selected schools in Ohio towards marching band and concert band competitions. Results from her survey show that band directors whose band participated in marching band and concert band competitions had a more positive outlook towards marching band competitions compared to those directors who participate solely in concert band contests. Results of the study also show that band directors believed participation in band competitions improves students’ musicianship, builds character, and helps to sustain a successful and viable instrumental music program.

Yahl (2009) conducted a study to determine the attitudes of high school band directors and students regarding the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) Large Group Adjudicated Events. Based on the data gathered from the survey, Yahl concluded that both directors and students agreed that Large Group Adjudicated Events are an important part of high school band programs. Both directors and students agree that making music and receiving comments from adjudicators are of higher importance than the ratings earned at a contest.
The marching band was first introduced in Malaysia during the British colonial period. Currently in Malaysia, the marching band is a co-curricular activity in schools which have the necessary means to establish and maintain a band. The recent years has seen a relatively significant development in marching band trends in Malaysia in terms of the types of bands that have emerged. Although the most commonly found bands in Malaysia are military bands or traditional parade units, the number of marching show bands and drum corps units which integrate a theatrical performance expressed through music has generally increased. There has been increased interest in marching bands due to the participation of various schools in marching band competitions. Efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia to organize annual band competitions. In these competitions, the format has typically been for each band to compete first at the country’s state level and subsequently upon winning, to represent their state at the national level marching band competition. Judges are appointed from the various music fraternities at both the state and national level. However, this system does not allow the best bands in the country to compete even though a particular band might be better than a winning band from another state.

The Ministry of Education, Malaysia and other organizations have made consistent efforts to organize band competitions as an avenue for bands to showcase their abilities. However, many issues have arisen due to the nature of the competition. The system in use then appeared to discourage creativity in performance and hence the development of bands in line with current trends of marching show bands and drum corps. This prompted the Malaysia Band Association to introduce a change in the judging system as well as to train judges with contemporary marching band techniques. The Drum Corps Europe (DCE) judging system was selected partly as this system is a means of encouraging new standards of creativity, artistry and excellence in design and performance while
also providing a vehicle that will educate beginners to grow and evolve to the
greatest level of their potential.

The DCE judging system was first introduced to the Malaysian band adjudicated event in the year 2009 during the inception of the Malaysia World Band Championship (MWBC). This was in part due to the dissatisfaction of two key people behind the efforts of introducing the DCE system of judging which were Zaharul L. Saidon and Zulkifli Ishak, the current President and Deputy President of the Malaysian Band Association respectively. Both felt that the judging system in use at that time seemed to discourage creativity in performance. Zaharul and Zulkifli realized the need to change the judging system as well as to introduce and train judges with contemporary marching band techniques (Zulkifli, personal communication, March 18, 2011). As the underlying philosophy of the Drum Corps Europe is the pursuit of high standards of achievement through competition, only the best bands get to compete at the national level.

The philosophy underpinning the new DCE judging system as stated in the Drum Corps Europe Competition Manual Version 9.0 (2011) is as follows:

This system is a means to encourage and reward new standards of creativity, artistry and excellence in design (Content) and performance (Achievement) while providing a vehicle that will educate beginners in such a way that they will grow to understand and evolve to the greatest level of their potential. The system acknowledges the joint efforts of designers, instructors and performers through understanding that excellence and artistry are displayed through the design and that those same designs are recognized and credited through the artistry of performance.

This system utilizes a method of subjective evaluation that rewards the achievement of positive qualities and offers continued encouragement to strive for greater achievement. This is a positive system rewarding successful efforts, and is
designed to encourage corps to develop, maintain and project their own styles. Therefore, DCE and its Certified Partners emphasize creativity, originality, taste, and excellence. Growth and creativity are to be rewarded (Drum Corps Europe Manual, 2011, p. 13).

The DCE judging system adjudicates the performance of a corps based on three different captions, namely: (i) Field Performance (ii) Ensemble (iii) General Effect. Each caption has a musical and a visual element to it. Judges for the Field performance evaluate the individual or small segment of a corps; judges for the Ensemble evaluate larger segments and the whole corps, while judges for the General Effect evaluate the musical and visual performance as a whole. All three captions are evaluated from two viewpoints: (i) Content i.e., what is written or designed, and ii) Achievement i.e., the way the performers display the content.

Following the training of a group of Malaysian judges (Bijl, 2010; Thomas, 2010), the DCE system was then implemented for the National Band Competition in 2010 and again in 2011. After two years since its implementation for the National Band Competition, it is important to gauge if and how this new judging system is contributing towards the development of marching bands. The purpose of this study was to examine the issues and challenges associated with the implementation of the DCE system to improve the quality and standards of bands and to provide strategies for the development of marching bands.

Method
Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data collection in this study. The first part of the data collection used a survey questionnaire which was a revised version of an earlier study by Shahanum and Zaharul (2011) conducted after the first year of having implemented the DCE judging system. There were three sections in the current questionnaire: Section A consisted of 16 questions
relating to the assessment criteria of the judging system, Section B consisted of 16 questions relating to the rules of the competition, and Section C consisted of 12 questions eliciting responses to suggestions for the future development of bands, including an open-ended question for band directors and band managers to provide their own suggestions for improving the quality of bands. Subjects were required to respond to each question using a 5-point Likert scale anchored by the terms Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

The questionnaire was distributed to 25 band directors and band managers whose bands had participated in the National Band Competition in 2010 and/or 2011. Ten band directors representing the Federal Territory, Northern, Southern, and East Malaysian zones responded to the questionnaire.

Interviews were also conducted with selected individuals involved in organizing band competitions and the development of marching bands. Respondents were Mr. Rashid bin Mean, Assistant Director of the Co-Curriculum Unit, Ministry of Education, Malaysia and Datuk Zulkiifli Ishak, Chief Executive Officer of ZI Production, as the organizing body of the national band competition. Questions asked were related to the challenges faced in organizing band competitions and developing bands as well as strategies being planned.

**Analysis**

**Questionnaire**

The results of the responses to the questionnaire items are shown in Table 1. Respondents are in agreement for most of the questions pertaining to the judging system being used for the band competition with means ranging from 4.2 to 5.0 for items 1 - 7, and 10 – 16. Questions to these items relate to the point system, commentary system and the implementation of the DCE judging system as a means for improving the quality of bands. Item 8 received the lowest mean of 2.0
whereby respondents did not agree with the use of field judges only for the final round of the competition. The mean rating for item 9 was 3.8 which indicate the respondents are inclined to agree that both local and international judges should be used for the competition.

The second section of the questionnaire consists of questions pertaining to the competition rules. A similar trend of results is seen in responses to the items in this section. Mean ratings ranging from 4.0 to 5.0 were indicated for items 2 – 5 and 8 – 15. Item 7 had a mean rating of 3.4 indicating that respondents were unsure about the order of performance for the finals being based on ranking from the lowest to highest marks obtained during the preliminaries. Both items 1 (division of bands into six zones) and 16 (penalty for errors) had mean ratings of 3.6. Item 6 had the lowest mean rating of 2.6 indicating that respondents did not agree that the competition was only open to government and government-aided schools.

The last section of the questionnaire required responses to suggestions for the future development of Malaysian high school bands. Except for item 12, respondents agreed with suggestions to create divisions according to the levels of the bands and to organize specific competitions for the various sections of the band such as the percussion section and the color guard section. With a mean of 3.0 for item 12, they were however, unsure about involving premier bands to compete in band competitions.

The questionnaire included an open-ended question in which respondents were requested to provide their own suggestions for the development of bands. The summary of responses is given below:

1. Equal opportunity should be given to all bands in the country, be it from government, government-aided or private schools to enter band competitions.
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There are several private schools with good bands that cannot enter band competitions due to the conditions set by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

2. The band is a uniformed body that needs high capital to establish and maintain. Many premier schools and day schools have bands that are immobile due to financial constraints and limited musical instruments. The system of sharing pitched percussion instruments among schools as practiced in Indonesia could be implemented in Malaysia and this can encourage knowledge sharing.

3. International judges should be brought in to judge the competitions.

4. Band competitions should be established at the primary school levels to create feeders for secondary school bands.

5. A strong management system is necessary to organize band competitions.

6. Bands should be categorized into divisions to give opportunities to inexperienced and young bands to compete. The categorization of divisions should be based on the size of the band and the number and type of instruments or sections available.

7. Judges need to have wide experience in their respective areas of judging and should have been coaches or have had direct experience in performances and activities related to the band.

8. Participation at the national level should be open to institutions of higher education, uniformed bodies, or statutory bodies to raise the level of performance and competition to be at par with that at the international level.

9. Media exposure is needed to attract attention and interest in bands and for general support. In view of the effort, time and cost involved in preparing a band for competition, it is discouraging to see only a handful of Malaysians who are able to witness the events.
10. Prizes should consider the time, cost and effort put into preparing for competition.

11. Bands that achieve international standing should be given the opportunity to participate in international performances, competitions, festivals or workshops for international exposure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section A Judging System</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Are you familiar with the DCE system?</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>ment at the preliminary rounds (zone) is based on 5 aspects: music – horn line (20 marks), music – sion line (20 marks), visual (20 marks), general effect – music (20 marks) and general effect – visual (20 marks).</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Performance assessment at the finals is based on 8 main aspects which are field music(10 marks), field percussion (10 marks), field visual (10 marks), ensemble visual (10 marks), ensemble music(10 marks), color guards (10 marks), general effect – music (20 marks) and general effect – visual (20 marks).</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>One judge assesses each main aspect.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>sessment of each aspect is divided into two (2) :ies which are content and achievement.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>sessment given by each judge categorizes the of a performance according to 5 boxes: Box 1 – 1-10 marks), Box 2 – Average (11-44 marks), – Good (45-74 marks), Box 4 – Excellent (75-94 , Box 5 – Superior (95-100 marks).</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>Field judges should be used in both the preliminary and the final rounds of the competition.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>Field judges should only be used in the finals.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>The finals should use the services of both local and international judges.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>give comments and critique in real time using a eorder during the course of the competition.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>Comments given by judges are focused on aspects of the performance which are important to the judging process.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>Comments given by the judges assist coaches in improving the quality of the program and performance.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>ents given by judges reflect an educational ch which shows appreciation for achievement and encourages creative effort.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>The judging system used is fair.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>The judging system used is transparent.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>The implementation of the DCE judging system is a mechanism for improving the quality of bands in Malaysia.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Developing Malaysian High School Marching Bands

#### Questions Category Mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section B</strong></td>
<td><strong>Competition Rules</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>The preliminary rounds of the competition are divided into six Zones: Southern Zone, Middle Zone, East Coast Zone, Northern Zone 1, Northern Zone 2 and East Malaysian Zone.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>The same panel of judges assesses the competition at every zone.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Of (10) best bands from the preliminary rounds will be in the finals.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>and should consist of a minimum of 40 members and a maximum of 120 members including color guards.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>The competition arena is 60 yards (54 meters) by 40 yards (34 meters).</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>Participation of bands in the competition is only open to government and government-aided schools.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>The order of performance at the finals is based on the ranking of scores obtained in the preliminary rounds from the lowest to the highest.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>Each performance should have a theme.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>Each band is free to creatively design a performance based on a chosen theme.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>and is given a maximum of 20 minutes on the field includes Entry, Set-up, Show, Take Down and Exit.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>The judged performance is not more than 12 minutes.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>Each competing team can freely use the musical instruments according to their creativity.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>The use of electrical music instruments is not allowed.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>Each performance that exceeds the maximum performance time will be given a 0.1 point penalty for every 3 seconds lapse.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>Boundary violations will receive a penalty of 0.1 point for each error made.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>Other violation of rules will incur a penalty of 2.5 points for each error.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shahanum Mohamad Shah and Zaharul Lailiddin Saidon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section C</td>
<td>Opinions to Suggestions for the Future Developments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>The Malaysian National Band Competition (Natcomp) should be divided into two (2) division, i.e., Division 1 and Division 2 according to the level of performance and achievement of the respective bands.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>on 1 is for bands that achieve a score of 60 and in the Malaysian National Band Competition mp) 2010 and 2011.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>on 2 is for bands that achieve a score of 59 and in the Malaysian National Band Competition mp) 2010 and 2011.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>that have never competed in the Malaysian al Band Competition (Natcomp) should be rized in Division 2.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Bands that have never competed in the National Band Competition (Natcomp) 2010 and 2011 can apply to compete in the Division 1 category for consideration by the organizers.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>establishment of the Division 2 category will encourage more bands to compete in the national competition.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>The cooperation between the Ministry of Education Malaysia, the Malaysia Band Association and ZI Production should continue.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>to improve the quality of bands in Malaysia, a competition for the percussion section which can the National Drumline Competition should be ed.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>In order to improve the quality of bands in Malaysia, a specific competition for color guards which can be called the National Color Guards Competition should be organized.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>should also be a specific competition for parade which perform marching band repertoire that can the National Parade Band Competition.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>the national band competition (Natcomp), tional band competitions such as the Malaysia Band Competition (MWBC) should also be ed.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>International band competitions should involve premier bands such as the Blue Devils and Cavalliers.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Mean Rating for Questionnaire Items
Interview

For the interview, the two respondents, Mr. Rashid bin Mean and Datuk Zulkifli Ishak identified the following issues and challenges in developing marching bands and organizing band competitions:

1. Lack of funding.
   Organising national and international level band competitions and related events (eg. Judges college) require large amounts of funding. However, getting sponsorship for such activities is not easy. Previous sponsors of the band competitions are withdrawing their funding while most companies are only willing to donate in the form of in-kind sponsorship rather than in monetary form.

2. Acceptance of local judges.
   Despite having a group of certified local judges and the availability of certified judges from Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, most band directors and managers are more confident with judges from Europe and the United States of America. As such, there is a need to develop the band directors’ and managers’ confidence in local judges. In addition, inviting international judges will incur higher cost, which will then increase the budget needed to organize band competitions.

3. Setbacks of the DCE judging system.
   The DCE philosophy and system, which encourages the freedom for creativity and innovative ideas, has its setbacks. Bands with strong financial support will have the advantage over bands with less support in terms of instruments, props, uniforms, and training. As a result, bands with limited funding may shy away from participating in competitions. With the contemporary Drum Corps show
concept, expensive costumes, hand props (flags, rifles, sabers etc), hiring the music and design staff will require more funds to stage a performance. Malaysia has very few good music arrangers, visual designers and instructors for bands. The desire to win competitions has prompted elite bands to hire foreign experts particularly from Indonesia and Thailand to design programs as well as to train their band members. While this exercise of importing experts may be considered a good strategy, it should be taken only as a short-term solution. There needs to be a systematic plan to train the locals for this purpose in the near future.

As the new judging system requires the same set of judges to adjudicate at all the different zones during preliminary rounds, this will not only incur additional cost but also create difficulty for judges who hold full time positions at their respective places of employment.


Many band managers and instructors lament on the issue of not getting enough support from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, school administrators, teachers, and parents in order to successfully maintain and sustain their bands. Malaysians in general are very much an exam-orientated society whereby studying and achieving good examination results are more important than co-curriculum activities. Music activities are often perceived as unimportant as it deviates students’ focus on examinations. As such, more understanding and support for band activities is greatly needed. Financial support is also important for the purchase and maintenance of instruments.
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Discussion

It can be seen that the music directors and managers who responded to the questionnaire generally agree with the implementation of the DCE judging system as a means of developing marching bands. Research has indicated that instrumental skills and musical achievement can be positively influenced in a competitive setting (Rickels, 2009; Temple, 1973). Assessment, even in competition, is a process that measures students’ growth (MENC, 2001). However, it is evident that more needs to be done to develop not only bands in Malaysia, but also the knowledge and expertise of band directors, band managers and judges. In view of the responses obtained from the subjects, the following strategies are suggested for the continuous development of Malaysian high school marching bands.

1. Conduct judges college

   Judges colleges need to be continually organized to train more local judges and to introduce the new judging philosophy and system to band directors and managers. More judges are needed particularly if the division system of separating bands according to levels is introduced in band competitions. The current set of certified local judges should also receive further training at an advanced level. As most former band members are more interested to adjudicate the music captions, training for visual judges is also needed. Technical officers of co-curricular activities from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia should be included in the judges college.

2. Review the judging system as necessary.

   As the current DCE judging system may not be wholly applicable to the Malaysian marching band competitions, the assessment system and rules of the competition could be reviewed and adapted to the Malaysian band scene as necessary.
3. Collaboration with the co-curricular division of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

The Malaysia Band Association and the organizing committee of the marching band competitions have to continue working closely with the relevant co-curricular division of the ministry. The association also needs to continue highlighting the issues and challenges faced by schools in trying to have a marching band as a co-curricular activity.

4. Continue to seek sponsorship.

As sponsorship is an inevitable part of organizing competitions, seeking sponsorship from government agencies and the public sectors have to be pursued and strategies to market the competitions need to be reviewed. Schools also have to do their respective fundraising to support their band programs.

5. Create educational opportunities for band members and band directors and managers.

In order to develop high school marching bands, band camps, workshops, clinics and seminars need to be organized for students to gain more knowledge and experience in their respective instruments and marching. These camps and/or workshops will be equally necessary for band directors and managers to add to their body of knowledge. The workshops should also introduce bands to contemporary band techniques.

In addition, it is also suggested that discussion sessions be held with band directors, band managers, judges, officials of the Ministry of Education and organizers to discuss pertinent issues related to the development of marching bands, including competitions and the judging system.
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Such workshops could also be an opportunity for networking among bands. This would encourage cooperation among bands as some band directors would like the opportunity to work and learn from better bands.

6. Organize more competitions.
   In view of the argument that competitions can help develop bands, it is suggested that more competitions including new competitions that consider the different sections of a band be held. These could include competitions for the color guard, drum line and pipe band sections. In addition, bands should be encouraged and assisted to participate in international competitions.

7. Increase the number and types of personnel needed for a marching band.
   In order to increase the number of band directors/instructors, drill designers, music arrangers in the future, band members should be encouraged to pursue studies in music at institutes of higher learning with strong band programs.

8. Encourage and assist in the establishment of community bands/drum lines groups/ pipe bands.

9. Promotion of band activities
   As with any activity, it is suggested that band activities be promoted in the press and television programs for maximum exposure to the general public. Parades and concerts could also be held if finances permit.

Conclusion
In order to develop Malaysian high school marching bands via competition, the issues and challenges discussed above needs to be addressed and changes made as necessary. More needs to be done to develop not only bands in Malaysia, but also the knowledge and expertise of band members, band directors, band managers and judges. It is also imperative that the various bodies such as the Malaysia Band Association, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and the organizing bodies of
band competitions work hand in hand towards the same goal of developing marching bands. While it may take time to examine the long-term benefits of implementing the DCE judging system, if the philosophy behind the system is understood, bands should look at the outcome of competitions as a mechanism to strive for greater achievement not only in terms of musical skills and knowledge, but also in terms of self-discipline, responsibility, pride, and character building (Banister, 1992; Rogers, 1985).
References


**Interviews**

Rashid bin Mean (personal communication, October 31, 2011)

Zulkifli Ishak (personal communication, March 18, 2011).
Chapter 4

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Empowering Student Experience through

Social Media

Sergio Camacho

Abstract
Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have reconfigured the lifestyle of a new generation of students who are no strangers to the always “ON” connected world. Although these platforms are largely perceived by them as channels to stay in touch with friends, they represent a growing opportunity for educators to provide an extended environment of blended learning that maximises the student experience. This study analyses the possibilities of Social Media as an educational tool, on a blended learning strategy, contextualizing the development of these platforms, their pedagogical implications, their implantation within the student community, and
their growing importance in their access to information and sources of knowledge, and thus becoming a determining factor in the shaping of the new generations.

This research shows how educational institutions are currently implementing the application of Social Media possibilities as an educational resource. In the current social scenario, Higher Education centres are not any longer the only, not even the main, source of information and learning for the new generation of students. They are accustomed to navigate and negotiate information independently through a multi-platform interconnected setting. Integrating such platforms to their educational experience will empower educators with a valuable tool for promoting a student centred environment in class. Facebook and Twitter, among others, have proved to be highly effective for sharing and updating teaching materials, developing collaborative works and academic research, opening new channels for feedback, counseling, and group and peer-evaluation, among many other possibilities. The aim of this study is to analyse their impact in the student community, and how the new Social Media trends condition their access to knowledge. Notwithstanding, the transfer of social media models to formal education is encountering a set of resistances among institutions, practitioners and learners that would require addressing before implementing a Social Media teaching and learning strategy. Developing strategies that maximise the possibilities of Social Media to enhance student experience would make a relevant impact in student learning, empowering them with the exposure to the necessary skills in a growingly connected world.

Introduction

The Dawn of Web 2.0. Informal Learning

In the second part of the first decade of the 21st century, the development of a series of interactive social media platforms\(^1\) rearranged the way users related to the Internet,\(^2\) from a read only setting to a ‘read/write’ one (Salavuo, 2008). This new ‘participatory web’\(^3\) allows a collaborative, active and interactive approach to the contents, favouring the interlinking of people (Bonzo and Parchoma, 2010:913), social intercommunication and peer-construction of knowledge (Simoes and Borges Gouveia, 2008). This new interactive experience was defined as the emergence of a new Internet, the so-called Web 2.0.\(^4\)
These new platforms have altered the way users access information, providing collaborative environments where information is shared and knowledge constructed. This reconfiguration has strong implications in Education, as it blurs the boundaries between formal and informal learning (Bonzo and Parchoma, 2010:917), favouring environments where the learning process is not tied down to the class setting any longer. Consequently, Higher Education institutions are now to face the challenge of both channelling informal learning and adapting formal learning to the new educational context.

The resistance of these institutions to the new models and the increasing role of online resources in students’ life lead to what Clark et al. (2009) define as ‘digital dissonance,’ a growing gap between the less relevant formal delivery from Academia and the increasingly present access to information through informal settings, such as social media (Trinder et al., 2008). In this new context, students are accustomed to navigate and negotiate information independently through a multi-platform interconnected setting and yet are ‘expected to submit to a pedagogic regime that is fundamentally premised on the transmission and testing of decontextualised knowledge and skills, and which is dominated by “old-generation” technologies (Web 1.0) underpinned by a radically different philosophy and a different set of affordances’, transferred in a unidirectional top-down setting (Trinder et al., 2008:4).

Towards a Facebook Generation
Arguably, such ‘digital dissonance’ is being stressed by the growing intergenerational gap between educators and learners, induced by their differential approach to information technologies. The current students accessing Higher Education grew up as digital-natives, as opposed to their digital-immigrants instructors, who had to learn how to use and relate to such technologies. In this
ever-changing information society, they have been subsequently called the Nintendo Generation, for their approach to entertainment, the Generation Y or the Millennials, for their disengagement with past dogmas, the Net Generation, for their reliance on the World Wide Wed for life practices, and the Google Generation, for their straight approach to information. The members of this new generation tend to show a distinct set of common characteristics that include solid multitasking capabilities, together with expectations of rapid interaction with information channels (thus low tolerance for delays), easiness in interactive settings, and an effective inclination towards knowledge construction (Simoes and Borges Gouveia, 2008).

These unique features are yet to be acknowledged by Academia, in order to align the academic programs with the requirements of the current professional setting, which growingly demands graduates empowered with a set of skills in accordance to the needs of this networked society. Unlike knowledge, which can be taught, skills have to be acquired and developed, leading to the manifest necessity of a reconfiguration of traditional teaching models and practices. Arguably, social media platforms could be perceived as valuable tools to develop these new skills.

Social Media in Education

Social Constructivism. The role of Social Media

According to Salavuo (2008), social media platforms are particularly suitable for education for their learner-centred nature (they offer a bottom-up approach, students are already familiar to such interfaces, and can exercise control over the customisation the environment, maintaining its ownership) and for their suitability for collaborative work (allowing personal profiles and multimedia environments, and instilling a sense of community/communities of practice).
Clark et al suggest that learners will favour a growing inclusion of Social Media in the formal context to support their learning (Clark et al., 2009). According to Salavuo (2008), research supports the view that blended learning approaches are more effective than straight face-to-face environments. However, Higher Education institutions have frequently approached online settings and Learning Management Systems as a supplement to traditional teaching practices, instead as valuable pedagogical aids.

The role of Social Media in student’s life, and its potential as an educational aid for the current generation practices should not be underestimated. According to US National School Board Association, NSBA (2007), American college students currently engage in Social Media platforms as much time as they spend watching TV. They use them both as a connection channel, to keep in touch with people they have already met in person, and as a social tool itself, profiling their identity and creating communities within the global platform. The educational opportunities of this setting are apparent. According to the NSBA (2007), close to a 60% of the college students interviewed already engage in educational discussions through Social Media, and more than a half discuss schoolwork. Close to a 12% upload music and podcasts created by them, and a 22% have posted their own videos online.

The use of Social Media platforms in an educational context is consistent with the traditional premises of Social Constructivism\(^8\) (Bonzo and Parchoma, 2010:912), and newer theories like Collective Intelligence, Authentic and Situated Learning, and Connectivism.\(^9\) According to Social Constructivism, learning best takes place within a socio-cultural context; the learning process requires an active participation by the learner, being previous experience capital when reinforcing new learning, and a social interaction and the negotiation within such learning environment are essential for individual knowledge construction (Bonzo and
Parchoma, 2010:912). All this characteristics easily align with the educational use of online social environments, where knowledge is acquired through direct social interaction.

Current research points out that social media platforms may equally promote both collaboration and active learning (Maloney, 2007), based around ‘interests and affinities not catered for in their immediate educational environment’ (Selwyn, 2009). In a collaborative learning environment, knowledge is not just acquired by the interaction of learners; it precisely consists in the interaction of those learners (Sthal, G. et al., 2006). In Teräs and Myllyla (2011:1017) words, ‘Social Media applications combined with authentic, inquiry-based learning seem to provide an effective and motivating environment for pre-service an in-service professional growth.’

The related concept of communities of practice was addressed by researcher Etienne Wenger, and is key for this study, as it reinforces the position of Social Media platforms as valuable educational tools. For him, these communities are ‘groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis’ (Wenger et al., 2002:4). This way, they are not passive elements, but participants in a social structure (Simoes and Borges Gouveia, 2008). Social Media favours the establishment of such communities of practice, articulating the participation in them through their interactive setting.

Social Media can help to expand and transfer learning beyond traditional environments. Otherwise, if informal and extended learning possibilities are ignored, there is a growing risk of traditional learning environments becoming irrelevant for students (Attwell, 2006).
Empowering Student Experience through Social Media

Even though the Social Media applications appear to be consistent with the prevalent pedagogical theories, and favoured by students, their use potentially unveils a set of resistances from the different educational stakeholders, which should be addressed before attempting a comprehensive Social Media implantation in Academia.

Resistance to Social Media in Higher Education

Allegedly, Higher Education has fallen behind in the implantation of Social Media platforms into their educational procedures, due to structural resistances. The potential sources of the conflict include the hierarchical structure of HE institutions, the difficulties in articulating accreditation and quality assurance in a social media setting, and the increasingly difficult conjugation of formal and informal learning (Bonzo and Parchoma, 2010:912).

Academic Institutions heavily depend on power structures and hierarchical relationships, basing the teaching practice on expert knowledge (see Ibid :914). This closed top-down structure clashes with the open and reciprocal horizontality of social media, where knowledge is not possessed, but created through sharing, and the motivation to be part of them is not imposed, but rather stimulated internally (Salavuo, 2008).

Accreditation, assessment and quality assurance propose another line of resistance to the implantation of social media models in HE. Begg et al. (2007) precisely pose the debate of social media in HE, not on how to use them, but how to assess them (Begg et al., 2007). Traditional examinations have customarily focused on the end-result, not the process (Salavuo, 2008). According to Lombardi (2007), Higher Education assessment tends to ignore researchers and pedagogues advice, focusing on evaluating easy-to-measure cognitive skills, such as remembering, understanding and applying, instead of complex skills such as analysing, evaluating and creating. For the sake of fairness, collaborative efforts
are often disregarded, where not forbidden (Simoes and Borges Gouveia, 2008); group assessment is avoided to favour individuality. Social Media collective construction of knowledge directly confronts most of Higher Education assessment procedures.

Quality assurance and accreditation are inherent to formal education; the former implies control and measurement, the latter requires consistency and standardisation. All these concepts clash with the collaborative, collective, fluid, heterogeneous, open, flexible and dynamic nature of social media platforms. Therefore, the biggest challenge for a Social Media approach to HE is formalising their learning approach, without uprooting them from their collaborative nature. Something that may be counterproductive, as it may weaken the model itself. In Bonzo and Parchoma’s words ‘Higher Education institutions want to harness tools that do not work when harnessed. By imposing a defined structure and regulations on social media, higher education institutions may counter the notion and value of social media’ (Bonzo and Parchoma 2010:917).

Copyright management also plays an important role in institutional resistance to Social Media. Higher Education institutions own their programmes and curricula, which becomes tangible assets and potential sources of revenue, through licensing and external validation of other institutions. On the other side, the ownership of online environments is participatory and is moved towards the users (Salavuo, 2008). Platforms, such as Facebook, include in their terms and conditions clauses that establish non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide licensed use of any content published in their sites. The difficulty to maintain a control over the ownership and copyright of the courses and materials once they are shared via Social Media platforms poses a threat to the established practices.
Furthermore, resistance to Social Media platforms can be encountered beyond the academic establishment. Arguably, there is a growing divergence between what students perceive as good practice and what they demand as a proper or serious educational one; even though they acknowledge Social Media platforms as valuable self-learning aids, they also show reluctance to the acceptance of Social Media as a valid setting for serious learning. According to Kvakik (2005), even though students favour the moderate use of technology in class, one-to-one personal interaction is considered one of the most valued situations in education.

Paradoxically, perpetuating the teacher-centric model of learning as a top-down transfer of knowledge, students appear to prefer a knowledgeable teacher to a skilled one. There is an apparent tendency towards demanding value for money; a lecturer is to be seen as an expert in his field (‘bearer’ of the knowledge), who passes some of that knowledge down to the students (‘receivers’). An approach where students are coached to their own learning, (lecturer as the ‘guide’ to knowledge) is confronted by the educational stakeholders (why should I pay if I did it on my own). Salavuo (2008) argued in this line that many students still expect a traditional top-down delivery, in order to receive accreditation and join the job market. This tendency may be more apparent in music education, where the master is traditionally respected (Salavuo, 2008).

Concurrently, there are also resistances from the practitioner’s point of view that need to be pondered. Technology immigrant teachers appear to be reluctant to adopt in class a media that consistently challenges their areas of confidence. According to Torp and Nevalainen (2010), the concept of ‘good teaching and learning’ by young practitioners is strongly influenced by their previous experience as learners (Teräsvirta and Myllylä 2011), often reproducing the way they were taught (Simões and Borges Gouveia, 2008). Potential inaccuracy, vandalism and
plagiarism issues (see Urbina, 2004) are argued by lecturers and students alike to disregard the use of collaborative information in class.

Conclusion

As this study argues, the use of Social Media platforms as an educational tool proposes a great opportunity, within a blended learning approach. However, the implementation of Social Media practices in class needs attention. Learning Management Systems and e-learning platforms have frequently been charged for being the direct transfer of the physical classroom to a virtual setting through technology, where not a straight copy of the traditional course materials and model to the internet (Weigel, 2006:55). As Herrington et al. (2010) highlight, teachers and institutions favour the replication of teacher-centred practices in the new media, including lectures, articles, class notes or even text books, and the use of traditional assessment methods, such as tests, exams or essays. The potential as a learning aid through role-play and virtual modelling of real-life practices is yet to be maximised.

There are lines of controversy that questions the real impact of Social Media platforms, such as Facebook, in an academic environment. There is a recurrent criticism on the use of Social Media in education without solid pedagogical foundation (Selwyn, 2009). It has been equally argued that the use of social media may discourage students from acquiring traditional skills, and that the new configuration of privacy, such as the anonymity of posting and the publicity of wall use, could misbalance the teacher-student relationship (Brabazon, 2007). A study by Karpinsky and Duberstein goes further, pointing out that students who spent more hours on Facebook spent less hours studying, and had, overall, worse results. Nonetheless, all these controversies are being outweighed by a growing
Empowering Student Experience through Social Media

corpus of research that defends the general positive impact of Social Media platform in the educational practices, in a blended learning strategy.

The use of Social Media platforms in education poses the student in the centre of the pedagogical act, as the owner of knowledge construction and acquisition. This represents both an opportunity, for efficiently transferring to the class environment a Social Constructivist approach to knowledge, and a challenge, as this approaches confronts the established structures of Higher Education.

The projections on Social Media in the close future expect a further implantation in the student community, in wider circles, including other stakeholders such as families and prospective employers. Extension of blended learning into the Social Media platform provides a media rich, vibrant and culturally accepted channel, to which today’s students are no strangers. Developing strategies that maximise the possibilities of Social Media to enhance student experience would make a relevant impact in student learning, empowering them with the exposure to the necessary skills in a growingly connected world.

Notes

1 Researcher Wendy Tapia (2010:8-10) defines Social Media as “web application tools that allow users to publish and broadcast content in order to open and invite participation in conversations”. For an extended discussion on the issue, see the section “Defining Social Media.”
2 This ‘social revolution,’ as defined by Online Education researcher Stephen Downes, included Wikipedia, YouTube and MySpace. The latter was soon to be displaced by the eruption of Facebook and Twitter. Others include Yahoo Answers
and Google+. (See Downes, 2011:179). For more information on his research, see www.downes.ca.

3 As defined by Bart Decrem, founder of the social-network browsing platform (see Bonzo and Parchoma 2010:913).

4 The term was popularised by Open Source software activist Tim O’Really, who organised the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004, defining its key feature as an ‘Architecture of Participation’; the service improves through the normal use of the application by the user (see O’Really, 2004).

5 Clark et al. (2009) consider the social media platforms as a determining factor in this blurring.

6 The difference between both is clearly articulated in Prensky (2002).

7 According to Trilling and Fadel, these skills include ‘1. Learning and innovation skills (critical thinking, problem solving, communications, collaboration, creativity and innovation) 2. Digital Literacy Skills (information, media and ICT literacy) 3. Career and Life Skills (flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, social and cross-cultural interaction, productivity, accountability, leadership and responsibility)’ (see B. Trilling and C. Fadel, 2009).

8 For the application of social constructivism to a e-learning environment, (see Bonzo and Parchoma 2010: 912; Zualkernan, 2006).

9 Connectivism differ of the almost homonymic classic Connectionism, being the former an analysis on how knowledge is disseminated and distributed through networks of people, and the latter an approach to distributed cognition at the individual level. (See Simoes and Borges Gouveia, 2008).

10 This way, instead of learning how to negotiate skills and knowledge, ‘the outcome is how to be neat, finish on time and follow instructions.’ (see Herrington et al., 2010).

11 Facebook Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.
Empowering Student Experience through Social Media

12 As illustrated by the Social Media and Web 2.0 survey, conducted in the International College of Music, Malaysia, 2011.

13 See Bates, 2008. According to Jonassen (1996), positive results shall not be achieved just by simply adding technology to previously existing activities and classroom teaching practices (see Simoes and Borges Gouveia, 2008).

14 Virtual roles often mimic real life ones. However, as Kapp (2010) notes, often the skills acquired in the virtual role are directly maintained in a real-life negotiation.

15 One of these underperforming platforms, Second Life, has been frequently used as a marketing tool for prospective students, or as a replica of classroom teaching, for e-learning. According to Teräs and Myllylää (2011), even though Second Life is not a Learning Management system per se, it has been often treated as such, replicating physical learning environments and student attendance to a virtual classroom.


References


Empowering Student Experience through Social Media


Sergio Camacho


Abstract
The study of music in sport has been categorized into two types: synchronous and asynchronous. Music is an important element providing an accompaniment to certain choreographed sports such as rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming, while it is also proven to produce an ergogenic effect in the athlete. This article examines the role of music by analysing more specifically musical elements and their usage in rhythmic gymnastics. Problems of music comprehension will be identified and discussed.
Introduction

In general, music can be regarded as an audio embellishment which enhances the ambience of an event, or which can be used to produce an ergogenic effect to enhance the performance of athletes (Karageorghis, 2010). Another serious function of music is to accompany sports routines which comprise choreographic elements, such as rhythmic gymnastics, synchronized swimming, figure skating, martial arts and so forth. For this category of sports, music is indispensable in any form of competition event and has a great influence on an individual routine.

Rhythmic gymnastics is an artistic sport; the gymnast’s bodily expression in communicating a theme, idea or story from the music is important (Palmer, 2003). It has a seventy-two year history and was created from the idea of merging music and dance in expressive performance. The idea of rhythmic gymnastics was first recognized and considered as a sport in the Soviet Union during the 1940s and its invention can be traced back to the idea of three prominent dancers and musicians: Jean-Georges Noverre (1722-1810), Francois Delsarte (1811-1871) and Rudolf Bode (1881), who believed in the function of dance as a medium in expressing oneself (Surhone, Timpledon & Marseken, 2010). This concept was further expanded by Peter Henry Ling’s ‘aesthetic gymnastics’ and Catherine Beecher’s ‘grace-without dancing.’ The idea of dancing alongside music is closely linked to Dalcroze’s Eurhythmics (or the Dalcroze method), developed by Emil Jacques-Dalcroze in the 1880s. In his study of music pedagogy the Swiss composer and music educator believed that rhythm, physical motion and bodily processes were three foundational base of musical expressivity (Seitz, 2010).

Rhythmic gymnastics was officially recognized in 1961 by the International Gymnastic Federation (FIG); the rhythmic sportive gymnastics (RSG) world championship began in 1963. In 1984, the Olympic Games included RSG as one of its events (Jastrjembskaia & Titov, 1999). Since the function of music is significant
in rhythmic gymnastics, the code of points (2009-2012) used in competition reveals that music accompaniment and choreography are evaluated under ‘artistry’, the two other categories being ‘difficulty’ and ‘execution.’

The techniques and agility of a gymnast are visually the contributing winning factors; however, the correlation between music and choreography completes the visual and auditory perspectives of the whole performance. Spectators in a competition may or may not focus on this issue, but from a musicological perspective we posit that the correlation between the music selected and the choreography deserves attention in scholarship. In addition, the factors affecting musical comprehension, musical effects and their uses should be discussed.

**Musical Effect and Rhythmic Gymnastics**

An extensive amount of studies in music psychology shows empirical results that music delivers both physical and psychological effects through studying various musical components, such as tonality, tempo, rhythm and so forth. In past studies, Hevner (1935) found that the tonality of music depicts a certain mood: music in a major mode is ‘happy’ while the reverse is true for music in a minor mode. Along the same lines, Schoen (1940) found that music affects mood change. In studies of tempo, Riber (1956), Weidenfeller and Zinny (1962) and Zinny and Weidenfeller (1963) reveal that fast music results in emotional excitement and activity, and the reverse is true for slow music. From a physiological aspect, Giles (1991) uses the term ‘entrainment’ in referring to a test result in which a person’s heart rate slows down in order to match the tempo of background music, while Bernardi et al. (2006) reveal that music with a fast tempo and simple rhythmic structure yields positive results in increasing blood pressure, ventilation and heart rate.
In the past, researchers such as Karageorghis et al. (1999), Hayakawa et al. (2000), Matesic and Comartie (2002) and Elliot and Orme (2005) have proven that music delivers effects in stamina and emotion. Also, there is an increased interest in studying music type and preference in sports activities (see Gfeller, 1988; Tenenbaum et al. 2004; McGuinness, 2009). The function and contribution of music in sports and its results in delivering ergogenic, psychological, psychophysical, and psychophysiological effects have been studied by scholars (Atkinson et al. 2004; Karageorghis et al. 2010; Szmedra & Bacharach, 1998). Besides, in the studies of Krumhansl & Schenck (1997) and Mitchel and Gallaher (2001), congruence between music and dance is evident where participants correlate movement and sound.

On the other hand, there is also a growing interest that discusses the use of music as a sonic background (see Fogelsanger and Adanador, 2006). The authors stated emphasise John Cage and Merce Cunningham’s theories in American modern dance in the 1950s. The idea came from the composer Henry Cowell, who asserts that dance should not be a slave to music (Miller, 2002). However, the authors also discussed the McGurk & McDonald Effect (1976), an important theory with the concept of ‘capture.’ In this concept, the perception of visual stimulus is affected by auditory stimulus.

A survey of past studies resulted in identification of two categories of musical function: synchronous and asynchronous music. According to Karageorghis et al. (2010:551), synchronous music has a character where ‘rhythmic and temporal aspects of music are used as a type of metronome that regulates movement patterns’. On the other hand, Terry et al. (2011:51) explain that asynchronous music takes the form of a ‘background simulation without conscious synchronization between movement patterns and musical tempo’.
Issues in Rhythmic Gymnastics

In our study, we studied video clips of gold medal-winning performances by rhythmic gymnasts from Olympic and Commonwealth Games and selected four to highlight. In our analysis, we found that the use of music differs for these individuals, their choreographers and trainers. Table 5.1 shows the differences between the four gold-medallists, looking at congruence between music and movement.

Synchronous or Asynchronous

According to our observation, a synchronous used of music is found in the performances of the first and fourth of the gymnasts selected. From the perspective of a musician, the identification of the beginning and end of a phrase of the chosen music clearly matched the movement of the gymnasts. Furthermore, the character of the music and the mood expressed by the gymnasts, for example, the slower, gentle gesture of passing the ball from the left to the right hand matched the slow pace of the melodic figure. The harmony and tonality of the music was also reflected in the gymnasts’ facial expressions. Therefore, the choreography and presentation of both gymnasts conformed to the theory formed by Riber (1956), Weidenfeller and Zinny (1962) and Zinny and Weidenfeller (1963), that the tempo of music affects activity. On the other hand, the gymnasts’ expression following the harmony of the music reflects Hevner’s (1935) result.

It is clear that a background music approach is used in the choreography of the second and third gymnasts. Instead of correlating dance movement to suit musical characteristics, the gymnasts’ movements, such as continuing fast-paced movement during a calm musical passage or pausing during a continuous melodic phrase, presented an asynchronous use of music. Although there is a sufficient amount of writing about methods of matching choreographed movement to certain
musical elements such as dynamics, rhythm, harmony and so forth (see Humphrey, 1987; Denis, 1925; and Little, 1975), the performances of the second and third gymnasts show independent dance that, according to our perception, could be performed to different music, unlike the first and fourth gymnasts, whose choreographed movement was set to the chosen music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gymnast</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Apparatus</th>
<th>Congruence between character of music and gymnast’s movement</th>
<th>Incongruence between character of music and gymnast’s movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>Movement followed the start and end of phrase</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arm movement characterized the flow of music</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Movement and facial expression matched the changes of harmony in music</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slow movements complemented the slow tempo of the selected music</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>Facial expression showed the mood of the</td>
<td>Jumps occurred during a phrase of linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Music and Choreography of Rhythmic Gymnastics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Music Character</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slow movements complemented the slow tempo of the selected music</td>
<td>Movement did not match the beginning and ending of musical phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Action paused during a phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>Delivered facial expression to communicate with the music.</td>
<td>Jumps occurred during a phrase of linear character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Movement did not match the beginning and ending of musical phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Action paused during a phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.4</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>Movement started and ended according to the phrase.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The throwing and catching of the clubs complemented the musical phrases.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1 Analytical description of four selected performances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pauses in movement</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pause congruent with the music (for example, pause happened during a longer note duration)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of music by the second and third gymnasts reflects later theories in dance that were discussed by Fogelsanger and Adanador (2006). The function reflects a postmodern approach where movement is no longer tied down to specific characteristics and components of music. However, the trend of using music asynchronously may not necessary be applied to gymnasts of recent years, as we have also observed other videos of gymnasts in recent Olympic and Commonwealth Games that reflects the synchronous use of music.

Therefore, the factors that affect musical function, whether used synchronously and asynchronously in a gymnast’s choreography, should be discussed.

**Interpretation and Factors Affecting the Use of Music in Gymnastics**

In our study, we found that that the function of music in a gymnast’s choreography results in a few issues: interpretation and musical background of the choreographer, gymnast, and viewers result in differing perceptions. Two levels of musical function were identified: firstly, the initial function of music, that is, as an audio medium in a choreographer and gymnast’s work; secondly, the resulting performance delivers differing interpretations of how music is used because of the different levels of musical background of the performing gymnasts, jury, and
audience, who may include musicians, gymnasts or participants with no experience in either music or gymnastics (see Figure 5.1).

At the first level, the musical function in preparation of rhythmic gymnastics routine is determined by the choreographer and gymnast, resulting in an audio-visual performance. Music is chosen by a gymnast or her coach, or both, in preparation for choreography. The selected music may not be particularly made for the gymnast’s choreography, and if this is the case, the original intention of the composer may or may not be neglected.

For example, the choreographer will either design movements to match certain musical components (such as rhythm, melodic phrase, harmony and so forth) in a synchronous way, or in a free-mode that may not be a detail-to-detail (movement to music) match in an asynchronous use. The choreographer’s idea is based on her own interpretation, which may or may not reveal a true understanding of the composer’s intention. When the choreography is passed to the gymnast, the gymnast has her own interpretation following what is instructed. Both the gymnast and her choreographer may or may not be conscious of the way of music is used, whether synchronously or asynchronously.

At the second level, musical function is determined by the viewers, who include other gymnasts, the judging panels, and the audience, who may or may not have a background in gymnastic or music, and who could also include musicians or even the composer him or herself. These having different musical backgrounds, constituted a complex body. This complex body—audience—forms different interpretations of how music functions in a rhythmic gymnastics performance. Furthermore, the perception of whether it is synchronous or asynchronous may differ from one party to another. For example, movement thought to be synchronous by a gymnasts and her choreographer may be asynchronous to another choreographer, a musician, other gymnasts or viewers.
Figure 5.1 Two levels of musical function in rhythmic gymnastics
In addition, choreography that is asynchronous to particular viewers, that conforms to theories such as those of Cowell, may be synchronous to the choreographer. Therefore, differing interpretations of musical function by viewers of different musical backgrounds may result in a few possible answers:

1) the music is used synchronously
2) the music is used asynchronously
3) the music is an embellishment to the gymnast (not important)
4) no attention is paid to the music at all, only to the gymnast’s acrobatic performance

The above discussion closely resonates with an important theory by Karageorghis *et al.* (1999), in which the authors delineate two factors that become the determining points if music functions as a stimulus: 1) the internal factor: the athlete’s musicality and rhythmic response to music; 2) the external factor: the cultural background of the athlete that affects his or her interpretation of the music. Therefore, in the second level of determining musical function, the theory of Karageorghis *et al.* applies to all viewers. In addition, the external factor highlighted by Karageorghis *et al.* resonates with the much-debated theory of whether music is ‘a universal language’ or a ‘culturally specific activity’ (Miller and Shahriari, 2009:3). According to Miller and Shahriari (*ibid.*), music is not affixed as are grammar and meaning in language, and therefore, the varied musical experiences of particular individuals due to their environment result in different interpretations of music and understanding. Therefore, the function of music in the performance of rhythmic gymnastics is no longer static, but rather open-ended.

**Conclusion**

The function of music in rhythmic gymnastics underlies an open-ended phenomenon in musical interpretation and usage. Although the original intention of
rhythmic gymnastics came from merging expression between music and movement, the development of aesthetics, interpretation and a postmodernist view in both music and dance have contributed new interpretations and musical functions. Music may be an accompaniment to a gymnast, but, its function is left to be determined by the viewers. From a musical perspective, we conclude that music background, musicality, and understanding of musical elements are still important factors in contributing to a more coherent and congruent audio-visual performance. Especially, further research should be carried out testing perception from the perspectives of gymnasts, musician, and audience, with the objective of proving that the function of music is an important medium to enhance a gymnast’s movements, rather than an asynchronous background accompaniment.


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