

THE ROLES OF THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION

BY
JOHN LAH BOH YONG

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John Lah Boh Yong

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Chairman: Camille M. Smith.
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This study examines music education in Malaysia. It traces its historical roots from the Eighteenth Century to the present, and illustrates the roles the Malaysian government and private sectors play in the development of music education. It further examines the influence of Western music on contemporary curriculum practices.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Value of the Study

This study illustrates the role of the various Malaysian government organizations in shaping public school music education. The study also includes the recent progress developed by the private sectors in assisting the Malaysian government to make music education more affordable and accessible among the public.

The Malaysian government plays an active role, initiating policies in music education; the private sectors follow and implement the policies in their educational system. The joint effort of both parties enables music education to become a more essential area of study, rather than a leisure activity.

This study focuses on the past and recent developments achieved by both the Malaysian government and private sectors that make Malaysia able to fulfill its Vision 2020 as a developing country.

Need for the Study

Throughout the development of music education in Malaysia, the country experienced a series of transformations in its implementation of educational policies and reforms and a rapidly booming economic growth during the process of privatization. As one of the leading nations in ASEAN and Southeast Asia, both the Malaysian government and private sectors' efforts deserve a place of prominence in the discussion of music in this study. This study demonstrates how the government can work closely with

the private sectors to promote the concepts of music education in a multi-plural and racial society.

CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The History of Malaysia

Peninsular Malaysia, formerly known as the Federation of Malaya, became an independent sovereign nation on August 31, 1957. On that day, the Malayan Federation became independent under an Alliance government headed by the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) leader Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister. Malaysia was later established formally on September 16, 1963, through the union of the federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah.¹ On August 9, 1965, Singapore left Malaysia to become an independent country.²

Historically, Malaysia had continuous interaction with traders from China and India. During the early centuries A.D., Indian contact with the Peninsula was mainly confined to trade visits. It was through these encounters that North Malaya was drawn into the complex of "Indianized" Kingdoms established in Southeast Asia in the fourth century. The centralized position in Asia and abundant resources of produces and spices had attracted sailors, traders, settlers and rulers from various parts of Asia for several thousand years.³

¹ Officially, Malaysia still celebrates its Independence Day on August 31st every year.

² Europa Publications Limited, "Malaysia," in *Europa World Year Book*, Vol.11 (Old Woking: Gresham Press, 1998).

³ Craig A. Lockard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 209.

There seems to have been a desire to extend Chinese prestige in other parts of Asia by offering protection against Siam. It is probable that the Chinese government wished to investigate the use of sea routes⁴ as an alternative to the overland route to the West, especially for merchants importing luxuries and spices. The influence of the Chinese and Indians was especially strong during the rule of Prince Parameswara⁵ in the kingdom of Malacca. During his reign, the trade of Malacca benefited greatly from the oversea traders from China and India who used Malacca as a trading port.⁶ The important economic and political influence of Malacca also enhanced the spread of both the Malay language and Islam, which gradually became the main religion in the Malay region.⁷

The spice trade in the Malay archipelagos eventually attracted Portuguese, Dutch and British to monopolize the territory as their colonies. In the sixteenth century, the Westerners participated in the spice business in the region and gradually planned for a strategy to conquer the region.

The history of colonization in Malaysia started with the Portuguese invasion in 1511 and ended in 1957 when the Federation of Malaya became an independent nation from the British. As defined by Naimah Ishak in his dissertation, “Colonization and Higher Education: The Impact of Participation in Western Universities on Malaysian Graduates Who have Returned to their Academic and Professional Lives”:

Colonialism refers to capture and control of one country by another country through political domination, economic exploitation and religious proselytism. It represents subjugation of the colonies to the colonizer in the dynamics of superiority-inferiority and oppressor-oppressed; through the colonizer's

⁴ China was the leading nation in the maritime navigation in Asia during that century.

⁵ Parameswara was the prince from Palembang, on the island of Sumatra, who fled to Malacca to establish his kingdom.

⁶ N. J. Ryan, *A History of Malaysia and Singapore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 20.

⁷ Lockard, 209.

educational, judiciary, government, banking systems and even though use of the colonizer's language⁸

In the sixteenth century, Europeans began arriving in the region, bringing political and economic influence. The Portuguese were the pioneers.⁹ In 1511, Malacca Kingdom was invaded through Malacca Strait by the Portuguese led by Naval Commander Alfonso Albuquerque.¹⁰ One of the main goals of the conquest was acquiring a share of the spice trade, especially nutmeg, and cloves mainly from Maluku. The Portuguese venture provoked religious as well as economic and political opposition.

The Dutch, whose goal was to control trade of the Malay Archipelago, took further steps against the Portuguese and against the independent Sultanates. The Dutch captured Malacca in 1641, bringing a period of prosperity for Johore in the South. Johore retained a prestige derived from its past history, but it did not exert control over states on the Peninsula. Although the control of the Dutch was limited, their presence tended to restrict the advance of the Siamese into the Peninsula. The Dutch established only commercial and contractual connections with the Peninsular States, concentrating particularly on the tin mines in Perak State.

The invasion of the British into the region was due to the security of their growing Empire in India and of their expanding tea trade with China. Moreover, Britain's colonization from 1874-1957 was made possible by internal dissensions and the felt need for a countervailing power to the Siamese and Dutch. British desire for protection in

⁸ Naimah Ishak, "Colonization and Higher Education: The Impact of Participation in Western Universities on Malaysian Graduates Who Have Returned to Their Academic and Professional Lives." (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, December 2000), 5

⁹ Lockard, 209.

¹⁰ Nicholas Tarling, *Nations and States in Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 12.

return for trading security led first to the opening of two trading ports, Penang and Singapore, which diverted trading focus from the Malacca.¹¹ In the 1870's, as demand for Malayan resources increased in the industrializing West, the British began intervening in the turbulent politics of the Malay States, establishing indirect control.

The capture of Peninsular Malaya did not occur at one time, but in several stages and periods. In 1786, the British acquired Penang Island from the Sultan of Kedah. The founding of Penang in 1786 by Sir Francis Light marked the British penetration of Tanah Melayu, and in 1795-6, Malacca was conquered. In the 1870's, the British Government authorized intervention in several Malay States on the West Coast of the Peninsula and the first Straits Settlement (Singapore, Malacca and Penang) was formed in 1826. The central geographical position of these states served as a base for Britain's subsequent conquest of Tanah Melayu, and thus Great Britain eventually had its opportunity to invade the Malay Peninsula officially in 1874, after the political incidents in Perak.¹² The invasion resulted in the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874. An important clause set forth in the Pangkor Treaty was that

The Sultan received and provided a suitable residence for the British officer, to be called Resident, who shall be asked and acted to his court, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and customs.¹³

¹¹ Yogesh Atal, "Malaysia," in *Dynamics of Nation-Building*, ed. Vincent Lowes Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 1984), 112-3.

¹²B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1982).

¹³ S. Maaruf, *Malay Ideas on Development: From Feudal Lord to Capitalist* (Kuala Lumpur: Times Book International, 1988), 44-5.

The northern states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Terengganu, previously ruled by the Siamese, were handed to British in 1909 after a mutual political agreement.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the Brookes family established its power in Sarawak as an autocratic state for a hundred years, while neighboring Sabah belonged to the British East India Company as a commercial location.¹⁵

Economically, the Peninsula had been increasingly drawn into a relationship with the rest of the world. The tin of Perak State and the marine produce of the Johore Archipelago had been important to the trade with China. Culturally, the settlements particularly in Singapore played a prominent role on the Peninsula as an important commercial trading port.¹⁶ They were sources for the spread of European culture in the Nineteenth Century, with the mission at Malacca and the Keasberry School at Singapore. During the British colonization, the settlements were both home for Chinese immigrants and also stopovers for the Chinese and the Indians who worked in the mining and agricultural sectors.¹⁷

The Geographical Position of Malaysia

Situated in Southeast Asia, north of the Equator, Malaysia claims a total area of 330,434 squared kilometers.¹⁸

¹⁴ Rahimah Haji Ahmad, Norjannah Ismail and T. Marimuthu, "Interface of Education with Employment and Leisure in the Context of Alternative Futures: Malaysia," in *Education and Polity 5*, eds. UNESCO (Bangkok: UNESCO Principal Regional Office, 1987), 4.

¹⁵ Lockard, 210.

¹⁶ Until today, Singapore is still the busiest and most important commercial and trading port in Southeast Asia.

¹⁷ Tarling, 17.

¹⁸ Tourist Development Corporation Malaysia (TDC), *Malaysia: A General Guide* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1988).

Malaysia's geographical position is the most important factor to take into account if one is to understand its past and even its present and future.¹⁹ Because of its position in Southeast Asia, Malaysia is not landlocked but is wide open to the outside world. Malaysia politically links the Southeast Asia mainland with the archipelago, and is characterized by geographical position.²⁰

Peninsular Malaysia is separated from the states of Sarawak and Sabah on Borneo Island by a distance of 530 kilometers of the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia consists of eleven states, extending from the Asian continent to Thailand as its neighboring country, and is almost entirely surrounded by the Sea of Malacca and South China Sea. Sarawak and Sabah (East Malaysia) share the territories with Brunei and Indonesian Kalimantan on Borneo Island. The total land mass is 329,749 squared kilometers, larger than the state of New Mexico.²¹ The physical make up of both Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia is generally one of coastal plains and interior with jungle-covered mountains. The climate is categorized as equatorial.

The Demographic Position of Malaysia

The earliest proof and oldest artifact of human habitation in Malaysia was found in the Niah Cave in Miri, Sarawak. A human skull estimated to be 35,000 year old²² was found as the evidence. Throughout the history of Malaysia, there are generally three ethnic groups as Malays (47 percent), Chinese (24 percent), Indigenous (11 percent), Indians (7 percent), and other races (11 percent). The overall estimated population in the year of 2000 was 23.3 million.

¹⁹ Ryan, 2.

²⁰ Lockard, 209.

²¹ U.S Department of State (2002); available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2777.htm>: internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

²² Ryan, 1.

First, Malays were believed to be the original descendents from Deutro-Malay settlers. The Deutro-Malays basically were Mongoloid, the same race as the first immigrants from Yunan, China (Proto-Malays). They had a reasonably high standard material culture and they had acquired the knowledge of metal. They scattered from the Peninsula to the islands of the Malay archipelagos. The final wave of immigrants, together with the Deutro-Malays, later formed the Malay population of the Peninsula.²³ Evidently, these people preferred not to be nomads and were established in villages. Malays were less involved in the modern economy and maintained a more conservative social life style, but their lives were improved by several economic policies.²⁴

Second, during the early Ming Dynasty, a series of missions visited Tibet, Java, Siam, Bengal and the Malay Peninsula. The Chinese Government accepted Parameswara's request to protect the Malacca Sultanate. As a result, in 1403, a Chinese fleet led by an admiral arrived at Malacca from China.²⁵ Among the series of visits from China, perhaps Cheng Ho made the most prominent and frequent visits to Malacca. Traders and immigrants from China flocked to Malacca because trade became the main enterprise of Malacca. Inter-racial marriages between the Malays and Chinese were not uncommon during the Era of Parameswara. The second main group of Chinese was believed to have made the political exodus to Malacca during the rule of Manchu Regime. They left China with their skills and they became mainly agricultural sector workers and tin miners during the booming period of British colonized Malaya. The Chinese soon became the primary force in commerce and dwelt mainly in the urban

²³ Ibid., 6.

²⁴ Lockard, 210.

²⁵ China was the leading maritime navigator in the region of Asia during that time.

area.²⁶ Chinese immigration continued until the global depression of the 1930s when there was an excess of departures over arrivals. The Alien Ordinance of 1933 drastically curtailed the immigration of adult Chinese males.

Third, about 2500 B.C., the inhabitants of the Peninsula whom the early Indian traders and voyagers encountered had originally entered the Peninsula from the North. These people were the Proto-Malays, who moved south from Yunan, China into a long series of migration.²⁷ Between 2500 B.C. and 1500 B.C., they moved farther south through the Peninsula and on to the Malay archipelagos.²⁸ In terms of livelihood, they could cultivate the land and begin farming by means of shifting cultivation. Various indigenous peoples of Malay stock, predominantly non-Islam in religion, lived in the mountains as the Orang Asli,²⁹ and in Sabah (the Kadazans being the major group) and in Sarawak (the Ibans being the most numerous of the various Dayak people). Musically, initial descendents of animistic Proto and Deutro-Malays formed the earliest groups performing music for rituals, worship and leisure.³⁰

Fourth, during the early centuries A.D., Indian contact with the Peninsula was largely due to trade visits. Later, certain areas, especially the northern state of Kedah, were made suitable for Indian permanent trading settlements. The Indians introduced their culture and religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) to the region. Similarly, the later group of Indians came to Malaya because of the employment opportunities offered at the

²⁶ Lockard, 210.

²⁷ Ryan, 4.

²⁸ Ryan., 5.

²⁹ Orang Asli are literally the indigenous people in the rural and the remote areas in Malaysia.

³⁰ Salehuddin Haji Mohd Salleh, "Traditional Music in Malaysia: Its Promotion and Development," in *Forum Papers*, ed. E. E. Joseph (Singapore: National Arts Council of Singapore, 1994), 25.

rubber plantations. Indian immigration was largely a response to the labor requirement of the expanding rubber industry. By 1921, Indians constituted 70 percent of the estate population and 15 percent of the total population. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the pre-independence Government of India imposed a ban on the further immigration of unskilled laborers.

The early outside music influences came from India at least one thousand years ago.³¹ Indian musical influence began when their monks and priest brought among others, their arts and literature. They introduced shadow play.³² A performance of Ramayana, and Mahabharata, to the Malay performing arts; and they introduced to the Malay-traditional music and their musical instruments for example, cylindrical drums and the "Serunai Shawm."³³

Malaysia has been termed the archetype of the "plural society". Generally, the Malays represent the dominant ethnic group and are largely involved in the government bureaucracy and rural agriculture. With slightly half of the population, Malays dominate politics and bureaucracy, although most Malays remain concentrated in the rural areas. The Chinese and Indians are descendents of the migrants who arrived in the mid Nineteenth Century to work in the colonial economy. With a little over a third of the population, the Chinese generally monopolize commerce and the urban economy. The indigenous people have played a major socio-political role. Last, the Indians, about a

³¹ James Chopyak, "Music in Modern Malaysia: A Survey of the Music Affecting the Development of Malaysian Popular Music," in *Asian Music* 18, No.4 (Kuala Lumpur: Asian Music Publishing, 1987), 111.

³² Shadow play is a theater art in which the shadows of the puppets are projected on the screen to describe a local legend.

³³ Salleh, 26.

tenth of the population, live mainly in the urban area, but also in agricultural and rural areas.³⁴ The Indians were dominant in the rubber estates and the railway department.³⁵

The Socio-Economic Conditions in Malaysia

Since independence in 1963, the Malaysian Government has implemented aggressive social and economic development programs. Five development plans have been launched, beginning with the First Malaysian Plan (1965-1970). In the past, emphasis on agricultural and rural development had strengthened the economic position of the country. As the world's leading producers of rubber, tin and palm oil, Malaysia viewed population growth as a positive factor, facilitating rapid socio-economic development. On the other hand, to deal with important social and economic problems, recent major policy goals of the Malaysian government have been directed toward eradicating poverty and narrowing the economic and social gap between the ethnic groups.

Another major government plan is Vision 2020 in which the Government vows to produce a highly industrialized and technologically advanced country by the year of 2020. According to the information reported by the U.S. Department of State, Malaysia has been successfully developed from a commodity-based to a manufacturing nation.³⁶ Today the Government of Malaysia seeks to make the leap to a knowledge-based economy. At independence, Malaysia inherited an economy dominated by two commodities-rubber and tin. In the forty years following independence, Malaysia's economic record became one of Asia's best. Benefiting from manageable population size,

³⁴ Lockard, 215.

³⁵ Andaya and Andaya, 1.

³⁶ U. S. Department of State, internet.

abundant natural resources, and entrepreneurial talent, Malaysia generally enjoyed a prosperous economy from 1963 into the 1990's, leading some observers to group it among the Asian "Little Tigers." High annual per capita GNP enabled Malaysia by 1985 to surpass nations like Portugal and Hungary. Consequently, major achievements such as the mega constructions of Cyberjaya, Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur Tower, and PETRONAS Twin Towers were recently added to the landmarks of Malaysia on the world map. Cyberjaya boasts to be the hub of Super Multi-Media Corridor to the world; Putrajaya is the newest administrative center for government bureaucracy and also the residence of the Prime Minister; Kuala Lumpur Tower serves as satellite center for communication and broadcasting; and PETRONAS Twin Towers claims to be the world's tallest office tower. Recent developments have shown that Malaysia has turned its direction from the basic agricultural society to an industrialized and a high-tech nation.

The Educational System in Malaysia

At one time or another, the Portuguese, Dutch, Siamese, Japanese and British occupied or controlled what is now called Malaysia. Chinese and Indians who had come into the country as laborers in the mid-Eighteenth Century subsequently adopted Malaysia as their homelands. The British, however, were the most influential group and set the pattern in Malaysia for many institutions of government and education.

English education dates back to the establishment of the Penang Free School in 1816. The first free school was founded by Rev. R. S. Hutchings. He wanted English to be taught to those who wished to seek employment in government and commercial activities.³⁷ Rosanani Binti Hashim, a researcher on Malaysian education, calls Malaysian

³⁷ K. G. Tregonning, *The British in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press 1965), 71.

education free because it was open to all children regardless of their races, creed, or color.³⁸ The Raffles Institution in Singapore was built in 1823, and the first government English school, later known as the Clifford School, educated the sons of the Malay ruling class. During that period, the London Missionary Society established Schools in the Malay States to promote Christianity.³⁹ According to William Milne, a Scholar associated with the London Missionary Society, the aim of these missions was to combine the diffusion of general knowledge with the promotion of Christianity. The London Missionary Society was the pioneer of educational missions in Malaya, working in the colony from 1815 to 1847, at which time it left permanently for China.⁴⁰ Malay college was established in 1905 to train sons of Malay nobility for government services. The demand for English education grew, but the percentage of Malay children (15%) enrolled by 1936 remained low compared to the Chinese (50%) and Tamils (28%). After the period of colonization of the land, education in Malaysia was still patterned after the British model in structure, governance, language, and even curriculum.⁴¹

One of the earliest forms of education in Malaysia was undoubtedly semiformal religious education directed by the religious hierarchy for the sons of the Sultans and the aristocracy. Religious education taught mainly the Quran, the holy scripture of Muslims, and was later emphasized as the basis for formal education in the Malay language.⁴²

³⁸ Rosnani Binti Hashim, "Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practices" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida 1994), 78.

³⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Alatas, *Western Concept of Knowledge* (Kuala Lumpur: Times Educational Publishing, 1977).

⁴⁰ Hashim, 39.

⁴¹ P. G. Altbach, *Comparative Higher Education: Knowledge, the University and Development* (Greenwich, CT: Ablex Publication Corporation, 1998).

⁴² Robert W. Jr. McMeekin, *Educational Planning and Expenditure Decisions in Developing Countries with a Malaysian Case Study* (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1975), 143.

Before the independence of Malaya, Malay-medium schools were the Pondok (hut) schools and the Islamic religious Madrasah schools. The Pondok schools organized around a particularly Ulamak (Islamic religious scholar) and taught Islam as well as academic and vocational subjects. The Madrasah schools followed a set of curriculum and used Arabic as the language of instruction in an effort to preserve the Islamic identity of Malay society. Government sponsored Malay-medium schools began in the Nineteenth Century. In 1903, the focus of Malay vernacular education shifted to a study of Malay culture and emphasis was placed on Malay literature printed in Rumi (Latin character) rather than Jawi (Arabic). The foundation of Malay education was the learning of the Quran and traditional Malay education was mainly the transmission of Quranic teaching.⁴³ Kelantan was the only state that was successful in both religious and secular education.⁴⁴ Because Kelantan was one of the Unfederated Malay States (others included Johore, Kedah, Terengganu and Perlis) that were of no interest to the colonial government, that government did not impose any educational policy. Hence Kelantan had the option of initiating its own curriculum and the kind of education and training that best benefited its own people.⁴⁵ As for Malay aristocracy and traditional elite, they were given an English education as well as training in government administration, in accord with the British political and economic needs.

⁴³ Ishak, 93.

⁴⁴ K. K. Kim, *Malay Society: Transformation and Democratization* (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publication, 1991), 161.

⁴⁵ Ishak, 94.

Early Chinese education was organized by the localized Chinese community and was oriented toward the China homeland. Early Chinese education was mainly funded by voluntary contributions, donations and fees paid by the Chinese community. Financial assistance to Chinese schools was first made in 1974 and was prolonged until most Chinese education was either partially or completely assisted in the 1960s.⁴⁶ Kuo Yi (common or national language in China) was adopted by the Chinese community in Malaya to be used as instruction in primary schools. Confucian classics were taught as the core of a curriculum that was influenced greatly by Chinese politics and intellectual trends emphasizing subjects such as geography, history, culture, and current events of China. Little emphasis about their own country of current residence was taught. Curriculum content was about their immigrants' mother country, the medium of instruction was their mother tongue, and the teachers were even imported from their motherland.⁴⁷ During the 1920-30's, Chinese laborers were phased out of the mining industry, changed to other occupations and began to consider Federated Malay States as their home. The British government wanted to influence Chinese education by providing teacher training education and recognizing Kuo Yi as the medium of instruction.⁴⁸

Initially, education for Indian children was provided by missionaries in school at the agricultural estates in Penang, Malacca and Singapore. The colonial government encouraged the education of Indians by opening in 1870 Tamil-language schools in Perak and Negeri Sembilan. Texts were imported from India and instruction was offered

⁴⁶ McMeekin, 143.

⁴⁷ Abu Zahari, *Perkembangan Pendidikan Di Malaysia Sebelum Merdeka Hingga Ke Zaman Sesudah Merdeka* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti SDN. BHD., 1980).

⁴⁸ Curriculum Development Center, *National Education Philosophy* (Kuala Lumpur: Curriculum Development Center Publishing, 1989), 4.

primarily in Tamil. Emphasis was on India's history, culture and geography, with little about the country in which the students now lived. In 1937, the colonial government began training Tamil teachers. After World War II, the curriculum was revised to include Malayan oriented materials and focused on practical skills for employment. Through the 1940's, rural Tamil-medium primary schools continued to be maintained by estate owners, missionaries and committee of local residents. Meanwhile, schools in urban areas were supervised by the government. Schooling beyond the primary level had to be continued in English-language schools.

During the colonial rule of the British, English education provided the opportunities for all ethnic groups to continue their education beyond primary schools to bridge the gap between the four various ethnic groups who could share a common curriculum and language. Post-secondary education opened up with the establishment of the Federal Trade School in 1931 and the agricultural College at Serdang, Selangor and a technical school.⁴⁹ During the pre-independence period, several political leaders representing three various vernacular schools voiced their opinions about the principles of education as follows;

- Multicultural schools are essential for the education of the future citizens of a united Malayan Nation,
- There are two official languages, Malay, and English; and both must be taught,
- There must be a single system of education and a common content in the teaching in all schools.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Andaya and Andaya. 1982.

⁵⁰ Federation of Malaya, "About Education Policy" in Parliament Paper No.67 (Kuala Lumpur: Malayan Government, 1954), 8.

After independence, Malaysia began building a nation in which all the ethnic groups could be identified. As it is stated by the constitution of Malaysia since its

Declaration of Independence:

Education is the responsibility of the Federal Government and Parliament is the legislative authority... The right to educate is one of the fundamental liberties, as is the right of the religious groups to maintain their sectional schools... All pupils have equal treatments.⁵¹

Parliament's enactment in 1957 of the Education Ordinance stated that Bahasa Malaysia was made a common national language and culture of the different ethnic groups in the country. The Federation of Malaya prior to independence did not have an overall educational policy or a national standardized curriculum. By 1955, the pre-independence government felt the need for a national unified educational policy, and a committee was set up under the chairmanship of the then Minister of Education, Tun Abdul Razak.

As reported by Dato Abdul Razak bin Hussain, the head of the committee of Education, the goals were a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole, satisfying the needs and promoting their cultural, social, economic and political developments as a nation, with a view to making Malay the national language of the country while at the same time preserving and sustaining the growth of two language and culture of other communities living in the country.⁵² The objectives of education perceived as important at that time were as follows:

- To bring together the children of all races under the national educational system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction;

⁵¹ Embassy of Malaysia, *The Role of Government in Adminstrating the National Educational System* (Washington D.C.: Embassy of Malaysia, 1976).

⁵² Dato Abdul Razak Bin Hussain, *Malaysian Education Committee's Report* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Government Press, 1956), 1.

- To forge a common Malayan outlook through a common syllabus for all schools so that whatever language then use, all pupils will follow the same curriculum;
- To enable all children between six and seven year of age to find places in primary schools.

According to the statement published by the Curriculum Development Center, a departmental branch of Ministry of Education in Malaysia:

Education in Malaysia is an on going effect toward further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonies, based on firm belief in God. Our efforts are focused towards creating Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being and able to contribute to the harmony and prosperity of the family, the society, and the nation at large.⁵³

The Music Education in Malaysia

Music in the eyes of the Malaysians during the colonial era was considered to be from Western culture and not the local traditional music.

The definition of music is different in the Asian sense, especially in a multi-religious nation such as Malaysia. Music has never been a part of an Asian tradition. It has always been Western in concept and practice.⁵⁴ Furthermore, music education was seldom considered a specialized sub-discipline of music study.⁵⁵

Music education began in the missionary schools, where singing in the school choir was introduced. Later development included the establishment of marching bands and ensembles of woodwinds such as recorders.⁵⁶ Commonly, music is recognized as a peripheral subject in Malaysian schools because, in general, there is insufficient

⁵³ Curriculum Development Center. 1.

⁵⁴ Mohd Nazri Ahmad, "The Status of Music Education in Malaysia: Implication for Future Growth and Development" (Master thesis, Northwestern University, August 1977), 13.

⁵⁵ Johami Abdullah, *Pendidikan Muzik Semasa* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 1993), 2.

⁵⁶ Patricia Marie Ooi, "A Description and Comparison of Two Prominent Keyboard Music Education Systems and Their Implications for Music Education in Malaysia" (Master thesis, University of Miami, 1999), 10.

awareness of the importance of music in the aesthetic development of the child.⁵⁷ Cultural interaction among the ancient Malay Archipelago included Malaysia, Indonesia, parts of Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines. The influence of musical instruments and structures from the Middle East, India, and China, and the process of colonization from Portugal and the British were the origins of the Malay traditional music.⁵⁸

In the very first English schools, built in Malaya in the 1800s, music was offered only as a curricular subject and was part of the formal curriculum.⁵⁹ Common musical activities in schools included choir, brass band, and choral speaking (group performances of English poems). Singing of English folksongs and children's songs also occurred in English classes as a means of teaching the English language. Each school had at least one teacher who could play the keyboard or who had a Western music background. Many popular and patriotic songs were written by the British composers who did not consider local influence.⁶⁰ According to Abdullah, music classes were broadcast by Radio Malaysia in the 1950's.⁶¹ School children would gather in the school hall to listen to these lessons. Only schools in the city, however, were privileged to receive this benefit. The use of small percussion instruments, the recorder, and the military brass band were only available in the cities.⁶²

⁵⁷ Ministry of Education, *Elementary Music Syllabus* (Kuala Lumpur: Literacy Agency, 1972), 1.

⁵⁸ Salleh, 25.

⁵⁹ Abdullah, 6.

⁶⁰ Ramona Tahir, "Musical Experience from an Islamic Perspective: Implications for Music Education in Malaysia" (Ph.D diss., Northwestern University, 1996), 23.

⁶¹ Abdullah, 6.

⁶² Tahir, 24.

Primary school curriculum is viewed as a crucial milestone in the history of Malaysian music education. Every Malaysian child, irrespective of social-economic background, now has the opportunity to learn music as a matter of right rather than privilege.⁶³

Malay schools conducted their music lessons in Quranic recitation assisted by the singing of the *Nasyid* (generic Malay term for Islamic religious songs).⁶⁴ The late and noted ethnomusicologist Lois Ibsen al Faruqi has described Quran recitation as cantillation that is combined with improvised monophonic melody and *parlando rubato* style.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the Chinese school children learned their folksongs of Chinese origin and the Indian children learned their Tamil cultural and religious songs.⁶⁶ Music taught in schools before and after independence was the singing of the British patriotic songs. Courses offered at the Malayan Teachers Training College in England and Malaya, and later Malaysia followed the similar curriculum from the English Training Colleges. Music lectures were British.⁶⁷ Music was not the core of the academic in curriculum vernacular schools; Ahmad explained this as a lack of experienced music teachers with background in music education and also because Malaysia followed a teaching curriculum similar to that of the British which lacked specific goal and direction.⁶⁸ During 1960-63, as the Canadian Colombo plan adviser to Sarawak, Dr. Gloria M. Smith

⁶³ Abdullah, 12.

⁶⁴ Ivy Yeong-Tsuey Yap, "An Examination of the Kodaly Music Education: Applications for the Cross-Cultural Learners" (Master Thesis, Central Washington University, 1992), 45.

⁶⁵ Abdullah, 6.

⁶⁶ Yap, 44.

⁶⁷ Ahmad, 14.

⁶⁸ Ahmad, 13.

listed four general aims and objectives of the music course in Malaysia:

- To nourish and develop the love of music which is natural in all children,
- Music exists as a human need. It is a wholesome activity, and increases the joy of living,
- Music is a valuable form of intellectual activity. It develops craftsmanship, attention to detail, and the spirit of the artist in the striving for perfection for its own sake,
- Every pupil has arrived at a conception of music as one of the beautiful and fine things of his life.

On the other hand, Dr. Smith also explained that the music teacher should enjoy music himself and must be enthusiastic to encourage students in interacting with music; must possess the sense of intonation; and must be familiar with musical notation and sight-singing for further progressive study⁶⁹

It was in the 1970s that Malay schools began music classes for their students. The music syllabi included singing in Nasyid (singing of Islamic religious songs), Kingiran (pop group with guitar), and Anklung ensemble (bamboo instrument ensemble). At the same time, in Chinese vernacular schools choir, percussion ensembles, and brass band had long been popular. The Chinese schools taught music using Solfage and organized Chinese orchestras. The situation of music in the Indian schools was however poorly operated and music was only officially introduced after 1983 when the primary school curriculum was begun.⁷⁰ The formal inclusion of music in Malaysian schools occurred when music became an optional subject for the Lower Certificate Examination (L.C.E) in 1972. The examination syllabus consisted mostly of classical Western art music.⁷¹ The

⁶⁹ Gloria M. Smith, ed., *The Full Teaching Syllabus for Junior Secondary Schools* (Sarawak: Borneo Literature Bureau, 1964), 3.

⁷⁰ Tahir, 24.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

music situation at the teacher training level improved with the introduction of the integrated Teacher Training Program in 1973. Under this program, four separate music courses are offered as follows:

- MUSIC I: A first year basic course of one hour a week for all student teachers.
- MUSIC II: A second year basic course of two hours a week for all student teachers in the early childhood courses, including exposure to pre-school work.
- MUSIC III: A second year course of three hours a week for specially selected student teachers doing the early childhood course, to prepare them for teaching music in primary classes with exposure to pre-school work.
- Music IV: A second year optional course of five hours a week for student teachers doing Early Adolescent Course to prepare them to teach music in upper primary and lower secondary classes.

Music I and II are the enrichment courses designed for all student teachers without further advancement; examinations are offered for Music III and IV.⁷² All training colleges in Malaysia offer music I and II but the specialist Teachers Training Institute at Kuala Lumpur has been given the responsibility of training music teachers. The Specialist Teachers Training Institute was also directed to start a one-year in-service course in music for trained teachers who had some previous knowledge of music. The in-service program was initiated in 1971. By the end of 1977, about 110 music teachers had completed their courses. Each of these teachers becomes an itinerant music teacher teaching in at least four primary or secondary schools.⁷³

In 1970, two teams of music committees were formed under the aegis of the Ministry of Education with the task of drawing up syllabi and guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools. The members of the committees were made up of professional

⁷² Ahmad, 14-5.

⁷³ Ahmad, 15.

musicians, music lecturers, teachers from the various medium schools, and representatives from the Ministry of Education. By the end of 1972, both syllabi and guidelines were ready for printing. These became officially sanctioned for the music curriculum in the public schools.

In 1979, the Malaysian Cabinet issued the directive that music would become a mandatory subject for all students in the primary schools. The Curriculum Department Center of the Ministry of Education was given the task of establishing a curriculum for music for Primary One to Primary Three. A pilot test was conducted and the curriculum was implemented in 1983. A second stage of the curriculum was later supplemented to Primary Four through Six.⁷⁴

Music is also offered as examination subject at different levels. The Junior High Examination uses the music syllabus prepared by the local examination syndicate. Both the High School and Senior High School Examination use both syllabi were prepared by Cambridge University Overseas Examination Syndicate in collaboration with the local Examination Authority. The Senior High Music diploma is recognized as a prerequisite by British universities and music conservatories.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Tahir, 26.

⁷⁵ Ahmad, 16.

CHAPTER 3
THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY-MAKING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PUBLIC EDUCATION

A Unified Educational System

The Federation of Malaya prior to its independence did not have an overall educational policy or a national standardized curriculum. By 1955, the pre-independence government felt the need for a national education policy and a committee was set up under the chairmanship of the then Minister of Education, Tun Abdul Razak. His report concluded that needs were as follows:

A national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole and which will satisfy the needs and promote their cultural, social, economic, and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention to make Malay the national language of the country while preserving and sustaining the growth of two languages and cultures of other communities living in the country.¹

Since its Declaration of Independence, Malaysia has been playing the key role in the implementation of music programs at its learning institutions. Within the government's bureaucratic administration, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, and Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism are the most prominent and active departments in policy-making and promotion of music education. Malaysia has a rich multi-ethnic culture in which music is one of the influential components. A national identity needs to be established in order to find the common ground and meanwhile, to unify the different cultural backgrounds of the ethnic races.

¹ Education Committee of Malaysia, *Report of the Committee* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1956), 1.

For the improved unity of the nation, the Malaysian government has found that it is necessary to implement certain nation-building policies-especially in education, culture, economy, and politic, so that the differences between the diversified ethnic groups may be rectified. One of the principal characteristics of the Malaysian education system is its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual makeup. Since its independence and even before, Malaysia has had four separate educational streams at the primary level, one for each of the major ethnic communities: Malays, Chinese, Indians and an English language stream. Until independence secondary education was provided only in English in the public schools and Chinese in private schools supported by the Chinese community. A few of the most important policy implementations and changes will be examined and discussed chronologically in order to identify the suggestions and improvements that have proven important to the development of Western music education in Malaysia.

Late in 1970, the Education Planning and Research Division of Malaysia's Ministry of Education sponsored a large sample survey of upper secondary schools. The survey was administrated by Harold, S. Beebout, a Fulbright Fellowship recipient doing research in Malaysia. The purpose of the research was to examine the relationships between educational inputs, background, or environmental factors affecting the upper secondary schools, and a dependent performance variable based upon changes in test scores of the two-year upper secondary cycle.² Beebout successfully demonstrated that there are production function relationships between educational inputs and academic educational policy. He states that these concerned (1) the efficiency of the school input mix, (2) equity in the provision of school inputs, and (3) economic factors that affect the

² Robert W. Jr. McMeekin, *Educational Planning and Expediure Decidion in Developing Countries: With Malaysia Case Study* (New York: Praeger Publisher Inc., 1975). 157.

relationship.³ In this chapter, I will discuss the educational policies that affect the development of the learning institutions in Malaysia.

Policy Changes after 1970s

A few notable changes occurred in the education policy after the 1970's. After the independence, the Malaysian government developed a new educational policy based on the Razak Report (1956) and Rahman Talib Report (1960). The task of the assigned committee was to plan for a unified educational system that promoted the Malaysian identity; the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the language of instruction, aided by restructured public service examinations, teacher training programs and the teaching service structure.⁴ A policy change made in 1969 called for the progressive elimination of the English language stream, beginning with the first grade in 1969 and proceeding by one grade each year through the secondary level. This means that the only secondary education available will soon be in Bahasa Malaysia. Elimination of the English language stream was ordered following serious racial disturbances in 1969, better known as "May, Thirteen" in 1969. The tragic racial incident that occurred created instability in the educational system. To the Chinese and Indians, who were accustomed to the English language system, the policy appeared to favor the Bumiputra. The policy was necessary, however to integrate the different races with the unified national language, Bahasa Malaysia.⁵

³ Harold S. Beebout, "The Production Surface for Academic Achievement: An Dissertation Study of Malaysian Secondary Education" Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1972), 197.

⁴ T. Neville Postlethwaite and R. Murray Thomas, eds., *Schooling in the ASEAN Region* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), 107.

⁵ McMeekin, 107.

In 1972, National Vernacular Schools and the National-Type English Schools were combined, with the Malay language as the language of instruction.⁶ In 1977 the national religious secondary school for selected students based on high achievement in the primary school evaluation examination was introduced. In 1979, the Malaysian Cabinet Committee recommended that all Muslims students be required to sit for Islamic Religious Knowledge in National Examinations.⁷

In 1980, the Report of the Cabinet Committee accepted by Parliament emphasized that education and training should be accessible to all, a Malaysian-oriented curriculum should be developed, and basic education with emphasis upon the 3R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) at the primary level should be introduced with emphasis on science and technology in education as a whole.

In 1983, the implementation of the New Primary School Curriculum was carried out, emphasizing the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic and the Malay language. In 1987, National Education Policy was formulated to create Malaysian citizens who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a belief in and devotion to God. Furthermore, it was that same year that the Ministry of Education's name was changed from Kementerian Pelajaran (Ministry of Academic) to Kementerian Pendidikan. (Ministry of Education). As a matter of fact, the change of the official name more appropriately and correctly describes the job description of the department. In 1989, the Integrated Curriculum for secondary schools

⁶ Rosnani Binti Hashim "Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice" (Ph.d diss., University of Florida, 1994), 17-8.

⁷ Cabinet Committee, Review of the Implementation of Education Policy (Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1984).

was launched, emphasizing the growth of a balanced personality, the integration of "Universal Values", and greater usage of Malay language across the curriculum.

Under the new laws passed by the Ministry of Education in 1995, pre-school education is part of the national education system; provisions are made for the monitoring of private education; improved technical and polytechnic education are provided, emphasis is given to the basic education of the three R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic); and emphasis is also given to spiritual education and required disciplinary elements.⁸

The Implementation of National Economic Policy (NEP)

National Economic Policy (NEP) was announced in 1970 and proclaimed that national unity is the overriding objective of the country. Statistics consistently revealed that the household incomes of Malays, particularly in the rural areas, lagged considerably behind those of Chinese. At the same time, Tamil estate workers and many indigenous people often lived in poverty and there were some impoverished Chinese as well.⁹ A stage has been reached in the nation's economic and social development where greater emphasis must be placed on social integration and more equitable distribution of income and opportunities for national unity and progress.

NEP's main objectives are clear and precise to achieve national unity by eradicating the predominantly parity between the predominantly Malay Bumiputra and predominantly Chinese Non-Bumiputra.¹⁰

⁸ Malaysian Ministry of Education (2002); available from <http://www.moe.gov/English/kpm/glimpse.htm>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

⁹ Craig A. Loachard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 230.

¹⁰ E.T. Gomez and K.S. Jomo *Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics Patronage and Profits* (New York: Cambridge University, 1999) 24.

The NEP aimed to restructure the wealth among the three major races, particularly in creating a Malay business community and achieving thirty percents ownership for Bumiputra¹¹ in the private sector, with non-Malays owning forty percent and foreign investors thirty percent by 1990.¹² The NEP alarmed many Chinese, and critics charge that the NEP mainly transfers Chinese wealth to politically connected Malay entrepreneurs while fostering a culture of mediocrity. Yet the policy promised for the first time to substantially restructure socio-economic patterns deeply rooted in history, especially during the period of colonization.

In higher education, recommendations were made to rectify ethnic imbalances in public universities of Malaysia. These include reducing ethnic profiling the higher education, admission of Malay students into facilities with lower number of Malays, helping Malay students in remote areas, revising admission exemption for Bumiputra, and creating financial assistance for Malay students.¹³ In line with the NEP, one of the steps taken by the government was to promote educational priority for the Malays. One of the affirmative actions taken by the government was known as "positive discrimination." It was implemented to facilitate equity and access in education to the Malays so that they can enhance their reputation in the commercial sectors.¹⁴ The aim of NEP for higher education is to meet the new human resource needs of the country,

¹¹ Bumiputra generally consists of Malays and other indigenous races, with Malays cover a larger population.

¹² Loackard, 230.

¹³ Naimah Ishak, "Colonization and Higher Education: The Impact of Participation in Western Universities on Malaysian Graduates Who Have Returned to Their Academic and Professional Lives" (Ph.D diss., University of Oregon, December 2000), 127.

¹⁴ Molly N.N. Lee *Private Higher Education in Malaysia* (Penang: School of Educational Studies Press of Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1999), 197.

especially in the industrial and commercial sector. Higher education is expected to provide greater impetus for economic growth.¹⁵

The Implementation of Look East Policy

In 1981 Malaysia's Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, announced the initiative to learn from the experiences of Japan and South Korea in the nation-building of Malaysia. He considered the secret of Japanese success and its remarkable development and progress to lie in its labor ethics, morale, and management skills. He felt a program enabling young Malaysians to learn in Japan would contribute to the success of socio-economic conditions in the country. This initiative is well known as "Look East Policy." The Look East Policy stressed emulation of Japan while also encouraging Malaysians to adopt their work ethic. The new strategy of economic reform included free enterprise and an expanding state sector.¹⁶ The policy encouraged cooperation with Asian businesses in preference to those from North America or Europe. As a result, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese firms were avidly courted to bid on construction projects and to otherwise join in Malaysian ventures. Enthusiasm for Asian cooperation was prompted by a backlash against Western influence in Asia and the desire to include Asian market to Malaysia's manufacturing sectors.¹⁷

For this mission Malaysia decided to send a delegation of students abroad to Japan, to study not only academics and technical knowledge but also to learn the labor ethic and discipline of the Japanese. The plan consisted of two parts. First, Malaysian

¹⁵ Tapingkae, ed., *Higher Education and Economic Growth in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Regional Institute of Higher Education, 1976).

¹⁶ Lockard, 229.

¹⁷ Drew O. McDaniel, *Broadcasting in the Malay World: Radio, Television, and Video in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore* (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1992), 181.

students would be dispatched to Japanese universities and institute of technologies. Second, trainees would be dispatched to Japanese industrialized sectors and training institutes.

These two plans have been totally funded by the Government of Malaysia and, in exchange, the Government of Japan sends Japanese teachers to Malaysia to train students.

Generally, the Look East Policy is made up of six programs:

- Academic Education Program,
- Technical Education Program,
- Japanese Language Program for Malaysian Teachers,
- Industrial and Technical (In-Plant) Training Program,
- Short Term Training for Malaysian Executives, and
- Business Management Training and Attachment Program with Japanese Companies.¹⁸

The Implementation of Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020)

Since the early 1980s the Malaysian government, led by Prime Minister Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamd has emphasized development, modernization, and industrialization as national economic targets.¹⁹ In February 1991, a speech entitled “Malaysia: The Way Forward” was delivered by Prime Minister Mahathir during the launching of Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020):

Malaysia should be developed not only in the economic sense. It must be a nation that is fully developed along all the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically, and culturally. We must be fully developed in terms of national unity and social cohesion, in terms of social justice, political

¹⁸ Embassy of Japan at Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.embjapan.org.my>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

¹⁹ Gomez and Jomo, 169.

stability, our system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride, and confidence.²⁰

The objectives of Vision 2020 were outlined as follows:

- A united, peaceful and harmonious Malaysian nation,
- A psychologically liberated, secured, confident, respected, and robust society committed to excellence,
- A mature, consensual and exemplary society,
- A fully moral, and ethical society with citizens strongly imbued with spiritual values and highest ethical standards,
- A culturally, ethically, and religiously diverse, liberally tolerant, and unified society,
- A scientific, progressive, innovative, and forward looking society,
- A caring society with a family-oriented welfare system,
- An economically just society with inter-ethnic economic parity and,
- A full competitive, dynamic, robust, resilient, and prosperous economy.

More important, Vision 2020 proposes a “fully developed country” status by the year 2020 and aims for a more competitive, business oriented, self-sufficient, diversified, adaptive, technologically advanced, and entrepreneurial environment with a strong industrialized background, a society equipped with a strong work ethic, and emphasis on quality of life.²¹

In higher education, Vision 2020 actually propelled the enrollment at the degree, diploma, and certificate levels. To meet the manpower requirements of a rapidly growing economy, enrollment in the degree and diploma programs increased from 131,725 in

²⁰ Adapted from the original speech by the Prime Minister for the official announcement of the Vision 2020.

²¹ Ishak, 133.

1996 to 190,188 in 1998.²² While it is important to be sensitive to Vision 2020, universities in Malaysia exist not only to transmit knowledge but also to be more creative in order to meet social, industrial, and political needs. According to the 1991 UNESCO report, higher education also contributes to national and economic development, preservation, and transmission of cultural heritage and protection of the physical environment.²³

The Implementation of National Culture Policy

Under Dr. Mahathir's regime during the 1980's, the federal government devised a National Culture Policy to mold a unified culture in a multi-ethnic society. But the policy has been much criticized, especially by the non-Malays who consider it discriminatory. It is used mostly to prohibit artistic developments considered undesirable. A government effort to revive a more overtly Malay orientation was widely derided and has had little success. And Malay critics argue that the government has actually done little to preserve the rapidly disappearing traditional arts. The policy is aided by the fact that the major National Front political parties (known as Barisan Nasional (BN)) directly or indirectly control nearly all the mass media, including the major newspapers and all radio and television. Many Non-Bumiputra have resisted or resented government attempts such as increasing emphasis on Malay language in education and public life to build national unity and identity. Yet unlike during the colonial era, more Non-Bumiputra have become

²² Ibid., 140.

²³ UNESCO, *Trends and Issues Facing Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific* (New South Wales: University of New England, Australia, 1999).

fluent in Bahasa Malaysia (National Language), the medium of instruction in most secondary schools; English declined to a lesser importance.²⁴

²⁴ Lockard, 239-40.

CHAPTER 4
THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION, INFORMATION, AND ARTS,
CULTURE, AND TOURISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC MUSIC
EDUCATION

The Role of the Ministry of Education in Music Education

Education, used in a broad sense, is a lifelong process which begins and stops when one's life is ended. It is a process which takes place in a variety of settings: the schools; the families; the religious groups, in personal interchange and experience; through formal, informal and non-formal channels.¹

Under the administration of the Ministry of Education, the educational system has two levels, the federal and state. At the federal level, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the implementation of education policy and the administration of the entire educational system. The Minister of Education is responsible for making decisions on policy matters either singly or in consultation with his Cabinet members. The Minister is assisted by the Deputy and Political Secretary. The chief executive officer in the Ministry is the Secretary-General, who is directly responsible to the Minister and is in charge of the administrative functions of the Ministry. In addition, there are two major operating divisions in the Ministry of Education. First is the Administrative Division, consisting of the divisions of Finance and Accounts, Development and Supply, Scholarships and Training, Establishment and Services, Administration, Higher Education, and External Affairs. Second is the Professional Division consisting of divisions of Educational Planning and Research, Schools, Education Media Service,

¹ UNESCO, *Futures and Education*, (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, November 1983), 2-8.

Teacher Training, Federal Inspectorate of Schools, Examination Syndicate, Technical and Vocational Education, Curriculum Development Center, Registration (Schools and Teachers), and Islamic Religious Schools. At the state level, the state Director of Education is the executive head through whom the Ministry of Education operates. He implements the Government's educational policy in his state and performs administrative functions relating to registration, examinations, finance, scholarship, and staffing. He is also responsible for the proper management of all schools. The staff in a State Education Office consists of education officers, organizers, assistant organizers on the professional side, and a number of other executives, clerical, and lower staff personnel.

Educational planning is planned at two levels. At the national level, it establishes parts of the overall economic planning headed by the National Development Planning Committee. At the ministry level, it is coordinated by the Educational Planning and Research Division.² Among all the departments and divisions, it is important to describe the establishment and functions of the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) as it is the policymaker and pacesetter of the national curriculum for all public schools.

The Establishment and Functions of Curriculum Development Center (CDC)

The Curriculum Development Center (CDC) became an operating agency in January 1973, and acquired the status of a full-fledged division of the Ministry of Education in May 1974. Its establishment was the culmination of over a decade of effort in curriculum development undertaken by the Ministry of Education. The functions of CDC include curricular research, educational experimentation, evaluation, testing, training, development, and the implementation of curricular changes for the improvement

² Postlethwaite and Thomas, 120.

of the quality of education in Malaysian schools. Since its inception, CDC continually conceptualizes the tasks in the development of a strategy for effective and meaningful curricular improvement in the country. CDC evidently provides not only the impetus for concerted action and commitment by the government in terms of the increase in the number of curriculum programs, but also indicates clearly the need to set up an institution with the corresponding infrastructure to fully implement the policies launched previously.³ In short, the CDC is responsible for bringing the Malaysian curricula up-to-date and to ensure that it meets the changing needs of the Malaysian society. Increasingly CDC is viewed as more than the development of subject syllabi, teacher guides, and student textbooks. The need to improve the quality of teaching practices and effectiveness in student learning has recently been receiving greater attention from the Center, prompted by the Ministry of Education.

Malaysian Public Education

As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Education had its name changed from Ministry of Academic in 1979. Consequently, the Ministry of Education plays the most vital and crucial role in the development of the music education in Malaysia. Since its independence, the ministry has made its objectives clear and precise:

- To achieve quality manpower for national development,
- To achieve democratization of education, and
- To inculcate positive values.

Under the scheme of the Ministry of Education, there are four levels of national education: first, the primary level; second, the secondary level, third, post-secondary level, and fourth, tertiary education. The structure of education follows a pattern

³ UNESCO, 7.

originated from the British: six years of primary schooling (Primary 1 to 6) followed by three years of lower secondary education (Form 1 to 3), two years of upper secondary (Form 4 to 5), two years of post-secondary (Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth) and three to four years of higher education.⁴ A major policy change was made in 1966, extending open and free education from Primary One to Form Three. Beyond Form Three, the system branches into various specialized streams, generally categorized as science or art stream. The great majority of students remain in the arts and sciences streams of general education, hoping to gain admission to the university or at least to higher level specialized schools such as polytechnic or training college.

University education has grown very rapidly since independence. The University of Malaya, which established its principal seat in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, has grown to full capacity enrollment of about 9,000. The university of Penang, founded in 1968, has achieved the status of a full higher education institution. The former Agricultural College at Serdang is being upgraded to prepare not only middle-level agricultural technicians but also to provide full university education in agriculture and related specialties. Most schools are either government-sponsored or government-aided schools. These schools receive financial aid as well as their supply of teachers from the Ministry of Education. There are an increasing number of private schools providing education at all levels, from kindergarten to college level.

Primary School System

Primary education lasts for six years and is free to all races regardless of color, and creed. All primary schools use a common content syllabus and seek to develop the

⁴ McMeekin, 144-5.

basic skills in communication; civic competencies; moral, aesthetic and spiritual values; physical, intellectual and emotional development; and scientific knowledge, attitudes and skills.⁵ The curriculum for primary school is standardized, prescribed, developed and constantly reviewed by the Curriculum Development Center of the Ministry of Education.⁶ This is to ensure that all students will follow the same course content reflecting a Malaysian outlook. Primary schools are divided into three streams according to the language of instruction. Those in which Bahasa Malaysia is the language of instruction are called national schools. The schools in which the language of instruction is either Chinese or Tamil are referred to as national type schools.

In all streams, the national curriculum is followed, but the hours of instruction vary, especially in the language area. Approximately, 60 percent of the children attend classes in Malay medium schools, 32 percent in Chinese medium schools, and 8 percent in Tamil medium schools.⁷ Each school conducts its own evaluation of students. Tests are administered regularly according to the decisions of the principals. In addition, centralized assessments are conducted annually for all students through Primary 6. The test is used to determine the level of the student's achievement and to determine the remedial activities required before the students may enter a secondary school.

Nationwide, Standard Five Assessment Examination was introduced in 1967 to assess students' achievement at the end of the fifth grade of primary school in the key

⁵ Malaysian Ministry of Education, *National System of Education in Malaysia* [typewritten draft] (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Education, 1979), 4.

⁶ Joann Bye Stedman, *Malaysia: A Study of the Educational System of Malaysia and a Guide to the Academic Placement of Students in Educational Institutions of the United States* (Washington D.C.: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions, 1986), 8.

⁷ Stedman, 8.

subjects of the language of instruction and the second language, mathematics, science, geography, and history. Promotion from year to year in primary school is automatic. However, several reforms in the examination system had been taking place during the 1990's. The Standard Five Assessment Examination was changed to Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) or Primary School Achievement Examination in order to evaluate the cognitive achievements of the students at the end of primary education (Standard Six). The main objective of the reformed examination is to evaluate the basic learning skills of the primary school children and also their ability in the Bahasa Malaysia as the national language, second language if the students belong to the Chinese and Tamil national type of Primary schools, mathematics, and science. All the subjects covered are listed in the Kurrikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR) or Integrated Curricula for Primary Schools. The grading distribution system ranges from A to E: A (excellent), B (Good), C (Fair), D (Weak), and E (Poor).⁸

Lower and Upper Secondary School System

Secondary school education is also under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and is patterned after the British system of education. The aims are to raise the level of general education of the people, to fully develop the human resources of the nation and to supply the manpower requirements of the rapidly growing economy of Malaysia. The secondary school system is divided into two parts: lower secondary (Form One to Form Three) and upper secondary (Form Four to Form Five). After six years of primary education, children are automatically promoted to secondary schools. Bahasa Malaysia is the medium of instruction in public secondary schools and English is a

⁸ Ministry of Education of Malaysia (2002); available from http://www.moe.gov.my/~lp/upsr_lpm.htm; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

required second language. Removed or transition classes are offered to the students who previously have Chinese or Tamil as the medium of instruction in their primary schools. The Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP), equivalent to Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) was introduced in 1960 for Form Three students. It is a standardized external public examination that is set by the Ministry of Education Examination Syndicate.

To earn the full certificate, the students must sit for a minimum of six and a maximum of eight subjects at one sitting. The subjects cover agricultural science, art, design, craft, Islamic religious knowledge, Christian religious knowledge, commerce, geography, history, home science, industrial arts, integrated science, language, mathematics, modern mathematics, music, and technical drawing. The certificate is a minimum qualification for some types of employment and for entrance to higher education.⁹ Only those students with a Grade A Certificate (receiving an aggregate of 34 points or less on the five best subject exams taken) are allowed to continue on in Form Four in academic secondary schools. Students with Grade B or C certificates (receiving aggregate of more than 34 points for the five best subject exams) continue in vocational training schools. Students who pass the SRP are selected to continue their education at the upper secondary level. They are placed into a science or art stream depending on the aggregate scores of their SRP. The upper secondary school examinations are patterned after British Ordinary Level Exams. Successful candidates are awarded the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) The MCE or SPM is an external, competitive, standardized public examination and is prepared and administered by the Ministry of Education Examination Syndicate. Students who are planning to leave

⁹ Stedman, 14

schools and enter the work force usually leave after this exam. The subjects offered in the SPM include Bahasa Malaysia, a compulsory subject, general language, general religion, mathematics, sciences, arts and crafts which include music, and the technical and commercial arts. To earn a full SPM certificate, students must sit for a minimum of six and a maximum of nine subjects with Credit in Bahasa Malaysia. Recent examination reforms during the 1990's have required students to take the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) or Lower Secondary School Evaluation Examination.

PMR is characterized as the centralized national exam with the evaluation of the academic subjects as the most important element in the lower secondary education. All candidates of PMR have least six years of Primary education and another three years of Lower Secondary Education. Candidates from Chinese and Tamil national type schools are required to have an additional year of transition class after they complete the six years of Primary Education.

The examined subjects and distribution of grades of PMR are very similar to UPSR's. However, PMR decides the kind of academic streams, whether science or art, if the students get the better aggregated results. After the reformed examination system, passing Bahasa Malaysia with Grade A is compulsory for all students to receive the full certificate of SPM. The result of SPM naturally determines the kind of scholarship for which students are going to apply and the schools to which they will be admitted. SPM covers a wider variety of subjects, including the seven major subjects of Bahasa Malaysia, English, Islamic Education, Moral Knowledge, History, Mathematics, and Science. Minor subjects consist of English literature, Malay Literature, Geography, Art Education, Foreign Languages, Music Education, Agricultural Science, Commerce,

Principles of Accounting, Basic Economics, Home Science, Mechanical Drawings, Electronic and Mechanical Engineering, Design, Information Technology, Physics, Chemistry, Sport Science, Islamic Knowledge, Bible Knowledge, Machine Repair and Maintenance, Geometry Drawings, Construction Engineering, Catering Technology, Automobile Maintenance, Childhood Development, Horticulture and Landscape, Pastry and Bakery Learning, Beauty Consultation, Catering Technology, Air-Conditioning, Tailoring, Food Science, and Gardening. The distribution of grade report is as 1A, 2A (Excellent), 3B, 4B, 5C, 6C (Merit), and 7D, 8E (Pass).¹⁰

Post-Secondary School System

Students successfully completing SPM exams were originally admitted to Form Six for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate. However, when Bahasa Malaysia became the language of instruction, the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination was administered in Bahasa Malaysia and was called the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM). Until 1981, the Higher School Examinations were conducted by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate. Since 1982, the STPM has been administered by the Malaysian Examination Council, which is under the Ministry of Education but is separated from the Malaysian Examination Syndicate. Grades for the STPM are based on both paper grades and subject grades. The subjects cover accounting, applied mathematics, art, biology, chemistry, divinity, economics, foreign languages, geography, geometry, history, music, physics, pure mathematics and statistics. Furthermore the subsidiary subjects cover additional chemistry, physics, art, biology, British Government, economics, foreign language, general paper, geography, history,

¹⁰ Ministry of Education of Malaysia (2002); available from http://www2.moe.gov.my/~lp/spm_ipm.htm; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

music mathematics and statistics. A paper is the individual sub-section of an examination. Papers are not weighted equally; each paper is given a score from 1 (high) through 9 (low). Passing the right papers within the set of papers is important to the overall or subject grade. In order to earn the full certificate, the students must pass the General Paper and one of the following sets of examinations: 1. Three principal subjects, 2. Two principal subjects and two subsidiary subjects, and 3. Two principal subjects with a certain standard and one subsidiary subject. The general paper is reported only as full pass or fail.

Tertiary Education

As education becomes increasingly international in character, Malaysian universities are becoming more contemporary in outlook. Each university has developed its own competitive strengths, positioning itself as a center of selective excellence. Courses and programs are demand-driven and sensitive to changes in the global environment. In an effort to meet the ethnic admissions targets in the universities, some Malaysian universities have developed one and two year pre-university programs called Matrikulasi or simply matriculation programs, designated to prepare Bumiputra students to enter the university. The programs vary in content and sometimes in regulation but generally follow a similar pattern.

The Malaysian public universities all have three governing bodies: a court, a council, and a senate. The court is the formal legislative body and meets once a year to receive the annual report of the university from the vice chancellor who is the chief executive and principal academic officer of the university, the report of the audited accounts, and new statutes enacted during the year. The Council, which meets monthly, is

the executive body of the university that rules on all matters of the university except academic affairs. The senate of the university meets once a month to consider the academic affairs of the institution. It is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and comprises the Deans of Faculties, Institutes, Directors of Centers, Heads of Departments, Chairmen of Divisions and academic representatives.

Entrance requirements for the universities vary from university to university. Some universities take into account the current ethnic enrollment target and some require the MCE results. Applications for degree programs are processed through a centralized admission office of the Ministry of Education, known as Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU). The registrar of each of the universities sits on a committee that advises the Ministry of Education on admission policy guidelines administered by UPU. The current affirmative action program after the implementation of New Economic Policy is designed to raise the socio-economic levels of the Bumiputra students and to establish quotas for each ethnic group in the university system. The entrance requirements for each university generally require the STPM or successful completion of their own matriculation program for entrance. The language of instruction at the universities is mixed. National policy dictated that the language of instruction in all of the universities was to be Bahasa Malaysia beginning in 1983. However the reality is constrained by the problem of supply and demand.¹¹ All universities have been directed to structure their degree program on the four-year model. While some universities have been authorized to grant graduate degree programs for a number of years, the graduate academic programs have been actively developed in recent years. The distribution of the grade classification is rewarded on the

¹¹ Stedman, 59.

following schemes: First Class, Second Class-Upper Division, Second Class-Lower Division, Third Class, General or Pass. The Third Class and General or Pass degrees are not usually acceptable for entrance to graduate schools.

Teacher Training Colleges

Prior to 1956, full time teacher training for Malay primary schools was available at Sultan Idris Training College in Tanjung Malim, in the state of Perak, and in Malay Women's Training College in Malacca. Teachers from various vernacular primary and secondary schools were also trained by a system of weekend training at normal Training Classes or Teachers Preparatory Classes. Some teachers were trained at two teacher-training colleges in the United Kingdom. A small number of teachers for upper-secondary classes in the English-medium schools received their teacher training education at Raffles College, Singapore.¹²

The system of training during the period 1956-70 showed a gradual transition towards the national identity as contained in the Tun Razak report. The purposes of the teachers' training colleges are to allow teachers who have graduated from these schools to have comparable qualifications and to serve in all government assisted schools, irrespective of the medium of language.

Since 1964, institutions for secondary training have been organized on the basis of specific fields of study. For the better training of music teachers in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education has established Music Teacher Training Colleges throughout the country. The most important training center for musicians has been located at Specialist Teachers' Training Institute (STTI). It was officiated by then Minister of Education

¹² Postlethwaite and Thomas, 135.

Abdul Rahman Talib on June 8 1960. STTI offers training courses to teachers who are dealing with special subjects such as music, physical education, English, Mathematics, Malay, home science, arts, counseling, special aid education, Chinese, and religion, from primary to secondary schools. The STTI in Kuala Lumpur conducted a one-year supplementary course for qualified teachers in various subjects normally not offered at the university level.¹³ In 1966, STTI was formally renamed Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas (MPIK) or Special Education Teachers' Institute. In the 1990's, joint education training programs are linked between the Malaysian government and the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. As a result, several diploma and degree programs are well established.

Music Education in the Public School System

In the new primary school curriculum, the academic components include:

- Basic Communicative Skills, (Language and Mathematics)
- Man and the Environment, (Science and Social studies) and
- Self-Development. (Art, Music, and Physical Education)

The aim of including music as part of the components is to allow students to develop an interest in and appreciation for music, songs, and dances of the Malaysian culture. Specifically, Western music is taught to enable students to recognize and read musical notes and terminologies and later, to compose melodies according to their levels of creativity.

Meanwhile, the core of the lower and upper secondary national schools is emphasized-Malay and English language, Islamic education or moral education, mathematics, science, history, geography, physical education, art education, living skills

¹³ Ibid., 135.

and foreign language. In short, the integrated curriculum emphasizes the integration of universal values in all subjects.¹⁴ Statistically, the distribution of time allocated to music lesson decreases gradually from the primary schools to secondary schools as more diversified subjects are introduced at the secondary level. As successful entrance examinations are required for the promotion to the next level in secondary education, more students dedicate their time mainly on the core subjects of the examination. Music is generally not considered a core subject by most teachers, but instead an elective subject.

Even though general music lessons are compulsory in the primary schools, most secondary schools do not offer any music lessons during regular class hours. Music clubs, ensembles and other music activities often meet during regular school hours so that students with musical interests can pursue their learning. However, the activities after school are not coordinated and integrated as compulsory course for students.

By the time music students reach post-secondary school and university levels, music is considered the major area of study for their future career and profession. Unlike the United States, music appreciation is not popularized and commonly accepted as an academic subject in the area of humanities in the Malaysian higher learning institutions. For example, attempts have been made at Universiti Malaya to offer any students taking co-curriculum credits general music classes like beginner guitar, beginner violin, dance troupe, choir, and ethnic instruments such as erhu, tifa, (Chinese origin) sitar, tabla, (Indian origin) gamelan, and keroncong (Malay Origin). Since music is better grouped as

¹⁴ Hashim, 288.

a specialized subject in the tertiary education in Malaysia, several public universities that offer a music degree will be discussed next.

Universiti Malaya (UM)

On October 8th 1949, Universiti Malaya (UM) was founded in Singapore as the premier university in the country. UM has a unique history that can be traced to the colonial days of the Federation of Malaya. In 1960, the government of two territories, Malaya and Singapore, indicated their desire to change the status of the original branch university to the national institution. With the passing legislation came in 1961, the university at Kuala Lumpur, Malaya was officially established on January 1 1962.

Since its establishment, UM has grown to become a reputable institution of higher learning in ASEAN and Asia. The 1999 statistics showed that there were 25,000 students enrolled for the first degree, higher degree, certificate, and diploma.¹⁵ Presently, the university caters to 16.6 percent of those within the tertiary education age group. On the other hand, UM was the first government university to be privatized. Changes have been made in its system of governance and organization since its privatization. Organizational changes include replacement of the university council by a university board of directors, reduction of the number of senate members, abolishment of the university court, and delegation of powers to senior officers in the appointment of specific categories of staff. Privatization has also enabled the university to set up companies, participate in equities, and commercialize research findings through joint ventures and collaboration.

The music degree programs--including Bachelor, Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees are offered by the Cultural Center. This Center began its humble

¹⁵ Malaysian Education Promotion Council, *Education in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Education Promotion Council Press, 1998), 90.

history by first establishing a dance troupe to perform mainly the Malay cultural and traditional dance throughout the country and internationally. Music group lessons in gamelan, keroncong, (Malay origin), Chinese orchestral instruments, and Indian instruments and western instruments such as pianos, violins, and guitars were later introduced as co-curricular subjects.

The incursion of the degree program in music at the Cultural Center is only a recent phenomenon. A lot of degree program applicants were previously music teachers at both primary and secondary schools who wanted to enhance their musical knowledge and teaching experiences. The requirements of the Bachelor of Performing Arts include a six-semester study program in three major disciplines: music, dramatic arts, and visual design. The Master of Performing Arts has only been offered since November 1999. Its first of semester study covers core theoretical subjects, while the second semester subjects prepare candidates for research into their respective interest areas: music, drama, dance, visual design, and arts management. The Doctor of Philosophy degree program also covers the same areas of discipline mentioned earlier for Bachelor and Master degrees. The main requirement for this program is research toward a thesis or dissertation. The Cultural Center program curriculum offers PELAKON, the acronym for Pentas Lakon Universiti Malaya, literally as UM's Acting Stage. It was founded in 1982 and is presently a very active group comprised of students and staff. Founding member, Associate Professor Said Halim has been the chief advisor since its establishment. Reputation-wise, PELAKON has won awards at the national level theater festival known as Pekan Teater Kebansaan. The Cultural Center Orchestra (CCO), conducted by Dr.

Hashim, consists of fifty-six members who perform for concerts and special occasions such as convocation.¹⁶

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) was formerly known as Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, literally the Agriculture University of Malaysia. It ranks as one of the oldest and biggest universities in the country, located at Serdang, in the state of Selangor. UPM started as a traditional agricultural university focusing on undergraduate education and research in agriculture and related fields. Its roots go back to May 21 1931 when the school of agriculture was officially announced and opened on a twenty acre site in Serdang. The main objective was to train future officers of the Malaysia's Department of Agriculture. On June 23 1947, its status was elevated from school to college. In 1971, the college merged with the Faculty of Agriculture, Universiti of Malaya to form Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM) with three pioneer faculties: agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, and animal science. The first degree students graduated in 1973. In the early 1980's, UPM expanded its scope by including science and technology to meet domestic and global markets and gradually also included arts and social sciences and information technology. The turning point for the university occurred in 1994 when it took the bold step of shedding its agricultural image to become a highly technological institution that encompasses a bigger spectrum of fields of study. The official change of its name to Universiti Putra Malaysia on April 3 1997 signified the university's new commitment to become the leading center of excellence in the region.

¹⁶ Universiti Malaya (2002);available from <http://www.cc.um.edu.my/budaya/facility/html>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

The music degree program at UPM has currently expanded from Bachelor to Master degrees that are offered by the Faculty of Human Ecology's Music Department known as Universiti Conservatoire (UC). In the undergraduate programs, three majors are offered: Music Technology, Music Education, and Music Performance. All three programs take a minimum of three years to complete and consist of core module courses, specialization modules, and electives. The graduate programs are research-based, and specialization areas are offered such as musicology, composition, early music education, music education in schools, instrumental pedagogy, music synthesis, digital audio and musical acoustics.¹⁷

Since its establishment of the music programs, Universiti Conservatoire has had several outstanding research publications by Minni Ang and S. S. Wong in "Computer Music Playback Quality: Digital Audio Reproduction Versus Synthesized Sound," Cheong Jan Chan in "Malay Folk Songs in Ulu Tembeling: Its Potential for A Comprehensive Study," and Ai Ling Liew in "Towards An Effective Approach to Violin Teaching in a Group Environment for Young Children with Reference to the KPSM Violin Project."

Approaching the technological age of the Twentieth-First Century, UC has added several specialized facilities, including Multimedia and Internet Laboratory, Music Technology and MIDI Laboratory, Digital Recording Studio, Percussion Laboratory, Gamelan Laboratory, Piano Laboratory, Music Education Laboratory and Music Library. The faculty members of UC also provide consultation in music curriculum development, musical arrangement, new compositions and orchestration, music book and sheet

¹⁷ Universiti Putra Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.music.upm.edu.my>; internet, (accessed 11.May 2002)

publications, multimedia and web site consultancy and development, and they offer courses and seminars custom-made for specific demands. In fact, UC hosted the First International Music Technology Conference in Southeast Asia, abbreviated as MusTech Asia' 2000. It was held from March 16 to 18, 2000 at the Mines Beach Resort Hotel, Serdang. The UC was able not only to pioneer this regional event, but also the study of music technology in Southeast Asia. The conference had attracted participants from all over the world from Argentina, England, Japan, Singapore, U. S. A., and Malaysia itself.

Since its inception, one of main goals of the UC has been to establish a professional and high quality orchestra that consists primarily of students. The Universiti Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra was set up in July 1996, with the pioneer batch of music undergraduate students. The orchestra debuted on April 5 1997. The orchestra's repertoire is primarily comprised of classical Western art music from the different style periods. Its current conductor, Professor Zakhid Khaknazarov, was former conductor of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Orchestras, National Orchestra of Uzbekistan, and several other celebrated orchestras in Europe. The orchestra currently has two performing groups, the Symphony Orchestra, which is the department's main orchestra, and the Sinfonia, which is the department's training orchestra.

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UTM)

The history of Universiti Teknologi MARA started in 1956 with the formation of Dewan Latehan Rida, an experimental center offering student preparatory courses for rural youths whose medium of instruction was English.¹⁸ RIDA is the acronym for the Rural and Industrial Development Authority, established in 1950 to assist and train rural

¹⁸ Universiti Teknologi MARA (2002); available from <http://www.uitm.edu.my/index.html>; Internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

indigenous people to improve their economic status and provide commercial training. Dewan Latehan RIDA began its operations in November 1956. The program includes courses affiliated with the London Chamber of Commerce. In 1960, Dewan Latehan included a few more programs, stenography, secretary, (affiliated with Cambridge Overseas School Certificate), and accountancy (affiliated with Australian Society of Accountants).

At the Bumiputra Economic Congress held June 5 to 7, 1965, new proposals were debated concerning the effectiveness of the activities conducted by RIDA. The official name was changed to MARA, known as Majlis Amanah Rakyat Act and passed by the Parliament after the congress. Under the new administration, Maktab MARA became the most active unit under the MARA. In 1966, Maktab MARA began running its course for the Diploma in Business Studies affiliated with Ealing Technical College of London. As a result, Maktab MARA became its external examiner to guarantee the standing of the diploma.

On October 14 1967, Maktab MARA relocated to Shah Alam in the state of Selangor for further expansion, and had its name promoted from Maktab (Training Center) to Institut (Institute). On June 1976, Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM) was placed under the Ministry of Education instead of RIDA. On August 26th 1999 Prime Minister, Mahathir announced ITM was going to be called University Teknologi MARA. The main objective of UTM has remained the same: to improve and safeguard the socio-economic conditions of Bumiputra. UTM has consistently developed and introduced active measures that ensure access for all Bumiputra who wish to enter higher learning

institutions at the lowest possible cost. UTM's music department is part of the faculty of performing arts.¹⁹

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

The Universiti Sains Malaysia has an extraordinary history of finding its ideal location for its campus. The campus was relocated three times in search of an ideal place for future expansion and development.

The Universiti Sains Malaysia was first initiated by the Penang State Legislative Council in 1962 and was built at Sungai Ara. The opening ceremony was officiated by the first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj on August 7 1967. In 1969, the college was renamed as the University of Penang to accommodate a growth in the student population. A loan from the Ministry of Education enabled the university to change its venue to the Malayan Teachers' Training College at Bukit Gelugor. The university finally resided its permanent campus on five hundred-acre coastal land at Minden in 1971.

USM has been developing and expanding its academic program since its establishment. It has a student population of approximately 20,000, comprised of both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Its variety of fields, particularly in research, is outstanding and prominent. As its most recent achievement, USM became the only winner of the Asian Innovation Award (Anugerah Inovasi Asia) from Malaysia. Since its inception, USM has implemented a higher education system as opposed to the traditional faculty system. Under the new revolutionary system, the faculty of each school could decide the needs of a more focused degree in a chosen field of study; and at the same

¹⁹ Malaysian Education Promotion Council, 101-2.

time students are given the opportunity to explore other areas of study offered by another school.²⁰

The undergraduate music program especially promotes its emphasis on the subjects of "Music of Asia, Africa and the Pacific" and "Music of Malaysia." "The Music of Asia, Africa and Pacific" introduces the students to the music of Asian, African and Pacific societies. These structured courses includes study and analysis of style, forms and musical structure and selected societies; compositions of music cultures based on various musical concepts such as rhythm, mode, scale, tuning system, structure, and form; and the context of ritual and the relationship between music and language. "Music of Malaysia" examines the traditional music of Malaysia such as Wayang Kulit, Mak Yong, Gamelan; some ethnic instruments from Sarawak and Sabah, urban music such as the music of Bangsawan (for example Joget, Inang, Dondang Sayang) and of the Malay orchestra; and current popular music.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) is one on the most recent universities established by the Ministry of Education. It is the first public university built in East Malaysia, in the state of Sarawak. The university was incorporated on December 24 1992. The first group of students was enrolled in July, 1993, with the ideal location at Kota Samarahan near the capital city, Kuching.²¹ Its undergraduate programs have been designed to prepare students to meet the needs of society and industry. The core courses at UNIMAS incorporate technology and management to prepare the graduates to adapt to

²⁰ Universiti Sains Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.usm.my/en/gen-view-all.asp> ; Internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

²¹ Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (2002); available from <http://www.unimas.my/en/welcome.htm> ; Internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

their future work place. A strong statement comes from the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts' Music Department: "History has proved that music and song, movement and dance, acting and recital play an important part in the cultural life of the world over."

This department has committed to two programs: its Drama and Theater Program, and its Music Program. The Drama and Theater program offers specialization in acting, directing, dance, and scenography. Drama and Theater is a field that is rapidly expanding in the service industry. Presently more than three hundred companies produce drama, television programs and films in Malaysia. The professional theater is growing in both the quality of its presentations and into its reception in society. Students at UNIMAS are trained to become scriptwriters, actors, directors, designers, and composers.

The Music Program is divided into three streams of specialization: vocal, instrument and ensemble, music education, and music technology. The music curriculum is continuously revised to meet the challenge of the future and to fulfill the demands of the international market. Graduates are given the opportunity to be involved in the public and private sectors, as performing musicians in national and privatized orchestras and as managers of organizations in areas related to music.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

Universiti Malaysia Sabah is the second university established by the Ministry of Education in East Malaysia, and the very first in the state of Sabah. UTM was established on November 24, 1994 by the act of the Parliament. The university first started with three schools--School of Science and Technology, School of Business and Economics and School of Social Sciences. In mid-1995, other schools were added: School of Engineering and Information Technology, School of Education and Social Development, School of

Psychology and Social Work, School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, School of International Tropical Forestry, School of Art Studies, and two research institutes—the Tropical Biology and Conservation Institute and the Borneo Marine Research Institute. In January 1999, UMS established its branch campus in the Federal Territory of Labuan where an international branch campus was set up. The branch campus specializes in International and Off-Shore Business and in Finance and Multimedia Technology. The main campus, consisting of nine hundred and ninety-nine acres of land, located at Kota Kinabalu, was officiated open by the current Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, on September 19 2000. The School of Art Studies offers a music program that includes classical Western Art Music, Western Popular Music, Malay Traditional and Ethnic Music, and Contemporary Music. The music program provides up-to-date music technology subjects such as sound synthesis, computer sampling, music business management and recording.²²

The Role of the Ministry of Information in Music Education

The impact of the mass media-recording, radio, television, cinema, and cheap prints upon students has been recognized by music educators. Many Children entering the first grade today are pretty sophisticated specimens, in a musical as well as in a general way, especially owing to T.V. watching.²³

Malaysian Government's Ministry of Information is divided into five branches. First, the National Film Department-Film Industry began in Malaysia in the 1930's with the making of Malay films. After six decades, it is now a significant industry with a wide range of activities and has its role in the development of the country's economy. Official

²² Universiti Malaysia Sabah (2002); available from <http://www.ums.edu.my/pps/konten> ; Internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

²³ Charles Seeger, "World Music in American Schools: A Challenge To Be Met," *Music Educator Journal*, (October 1972): 111.

films and documentaries are being produced by Filem Negara Malaysia to record the Malaysian history and heritage. The National Film Department produces almost 150 films annually reporting governmental activities and programs, through features, documentaries and trailers.

Second, the Broadcasting Department-Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) is the body responsible for national broadcasting. RTM provides both entertainment and information about government's program and activities.

Third, the Information Department-also known as Jabatan Perkhidmatan Penerangan Malaysia-is responsible for ensuring that the philosophy, vision and policy of the government is known and supported by the people. The Information Department has four main divisions: field, civic and community services, press and liason, publication and visual production.²⁴

Fourth, since its inception in 1981, Perbadanan Kemajuan Filem Nasional Malaysia (FINAS) or the National Film Development Organization, has grown from a small federal agency of twelve employees to its present staff of one hundred and twenty persons. Over the years, FINAS has established an additional two branches--The Film Training Program and the FINASPOST-Post Production House.²⁵

Last, BERNAMA, the Malaysian National News Agency, a statutory body, was set up by an act of Parliament in 1967 and began its operation in May 1968. BERNAMA's role as a source of reliable and current news is well known among local and international media including government agencies, corporations, universities and

²⁴ Vincent Lowe, "Malaysia," In Dynamics of Nation-Building, ed. Yogesh Atal (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific), 136.

²⁵ FINAS Malaysia (2002); available from <http://61.32.133/finas/sejarah.htm> ; Internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

individuals. BERNAMA continually conducts research to upgrade the quality of its products and services in which include real-time financial information, real-time news, an electronic library, dissemination of press releases, event management, photo, and video footage.²⁶

The Ministry of Information plans and coordinates the information dissemination activities of the government. It is responsible for evaluating, regulating, and monitoring the electronic and broadcasting activities in the country.²⁷ The role of RTM is particularly important in music education because of its ability to reach the children through music.

The history of radio in Malaya began in the year of 1921 when an electrical engineer from the Johore Government, A. L. Birch, brought the first radio set into the country. He then established the Johore Wireless Association and commenced broadcasting through 300-meter waves. This was followed by the establishment of the same association in Penang and the Malayan Wireless Association in Kuala Lumpur.²⁸

On April 1, 1946, the Department of Broadcasting was established in Singapore. In the early 50s, broadcasting activities in Malaya were operated from a temporary studio in Kuala Lumpur, and in 1956 were moved to the Federal House. It was here that broadcasting in Malaysia grew with the establishment of several stations throughout the country, including East Malaysia. Commercial advertisements were aired for the first time on radio in 1960. It was another milestone for the broadcasting industry when television services were introduced on December, 28, 1963 from the studio at Dewan

²⁶ BERNAMA (2002); available from <http://www.bernama.com/history.htm> ; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

²⁷ Telekom My Library (2002); available from <http://www.mylib.com.my/public/ent/ent.htm> ; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

²⁸ Radio Television Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.rtm.net.my> ; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

Tunku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Ampang. Broadcast operations then moved their office to the Angkasapuri Complex where it began its telecast on October 6, 1969.

Radio and Television were merged under the Ministry of Information. It was in the Angkasapuri Complex that rapid development in broadcasting for both radio and television began. Today, Malaysians enjoy listening to six public radio channels twenty hours a day in Malay, English, Mandarin, and Tamil. Television Malaysia started its early morning telecast on March 1, 1994. TV 1, the primary channel, TV 2, the golden channel, are the two public television channels, with other private channels such as TV 3 and NTV 7 joining the broadcasting business. In addition, cable TV, ASTRO was introduced as recently as the end of 2000s to enable the television audiences to receive close to one hundred channels internationally. RTM's radio and television production consists of six separate specialized units as: Development and Agricultural Services, Public Affairs, Religious Affairs, Sports, Drama, and Entertainment. These divisions broadcast both radio and television shows in various languages to aide programs acquired from external sources.²⁹ On the other hand, the instructional radio service began to serve the education sector after World War II. The early broadcasts from headquarters in Kuala Lumpur concentrated on radio courses for primary schools, although they were gradually extended to secondary schools in the 1960s. The Ministries of Information and Education cooperated in the production of the programs. This arrangement continued until 1970 when the entire effort was transferred to the Ministry of Education.

All educational broadcasting is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Education's Educational Media Service (EMS). Educational programs are broadcast four

²⁹ Drew O. McDaniel, *Broadcasting in the Malay World: Radio, Television, and Video in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore* (Norwood, New Jersey,: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1992), 119.

days a week in four different primary languages over three channels. Approximately ten hours are transmitted every day. At the secondary education level, all courses are based on the curriculum. Because Malaysian schools operate on two different periods (schools are divided into morning and afternoon sessions), educational programs are also divided into two time slots.³⁰ Educational radio programs include topics such as Islamic religion, Malay literature, music, and English grammar. Instructional television started in 1972 and is managed by the EMS. It is oriented more toward higher primary and lower secondary subjects. To enhance the efforts of the teachers in the classrooms, the EMS, incorporating the Education Television Service (ETV), the audio-visual aids program, and the radio service, were to be further extended during the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) to provide a wider coverage of the national schools.³¹

RTM evidently plays a part in music education as a messenger of the Malaysian government. Information and communication technologies enable children to be exposed to the education system through the broadcasting media. Since music is an interactive process between the teachers and the students or among the students themselves, it needs a friendly classroom atmosphere to encourage active involvement in the learning process. The Ministry has the vital responsibility of introducing music to the students in the daily curriculum in the form of performance, music appreciation, participation, and activities during the class period.

³⁰ McDaniel, 131.

³¹ Postlethwaite and Thomas, 142.

The Role of the Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Tourism in Music Education

The Istana Budaya (National Theater)

It was in 1964 that the Ministry of Information in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism (then called Ministry of Culture and Social Welfare) submitted a proposal to build the National Cultural Center of Malaysia. It was to be sited in Lembah Pantai, between the Malaysian Broadcasting Center and University of Malaya. In addition, the National Cultural Center was proposed to incorporate other components such as the National History Museum, National Art Gallery, National Planetarium, National Theater, and Cultural Shopping and Restaurant Center.³² In 1972, the National Cultural Troupe was established as an amateur body affiliated with the purview of the Promotion of Arts Section, Culture Division, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. The troupe focused its activities on the development of the art of dancing and traditional music. The home of the National Cultural Troupe was relocated one year later from its temporary activity center at Wisma Keramat to its permanent residency at the National Cultural Complex at Tun Ismail Road. The dance troupe was renamed a branch of Istana Budaya (National Theater) under the administration of Kumpulan Budaya Negara (KBN) which is a division under the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism Malaysia.

It was in 1994 that KBN assumed an organizational form and became known as Panggung Negara, or literally the National Theater. This institution embodied the spirit and philosophy of Malaysian performing arts and flourished and proved destined for higher international achievements. Ultimately, the Panggung Negara was officially declared by the Prime Minister, Mahathir and named Istana Negara on September 15,

³² Istana Budaya Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.istanabudaya.gov.my/profile/history.htm> ; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

1999.³³ The Youth Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1982 and was elevated to the National Symphony Orchestra and began functioning as a professional body in 1993. The National Choir was formed in 1992.

The latest achievement has been the completion in 1998 of the National Theater's auditorium known as Panggung Sari at Tun Razak Road, accommodating any drama, plays, musical, recital, concert, opera and special functions. The Auditorium takes pride as the first theater in Asia with sophisticated stage mechanisms for theater performance and production. It is proudly positioned as one of the top ten sophisticated theaters in the world and at par with the Royal Albert Hall in London. The building costs two hundred and ten million Malaysian Ringgit, which is equivalent to fifty-two and a half million U.S dollars. Its architectural design was based on a blend of the various aspects of the Malay culture. The exterior roof is modeled after the Malay's traditional moon kite known as Wau Bulan, and the staircases leading to the grand entrance are depicted as the staircases of a traditional Malay Malacca House.³⁴ The auditorium has a seating of more than a thousand, with eight hundred and twenty at the Stalls on the first floor, three hundred and twenty-two at the Grand Circle on the second floor. Furthermore, its orchestra pit can seat an audience of ninety-eight people when the need arises. The building is facilitated with a box office, a ballet studio, a costume studio, thirty dressing rooms complete with toilets, shower, wardrobe and closed circuit TV equipments, plus offices of touring theater companies.

³³ Istana Budaya Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.istanabudaya.gov.my/profile/index.htm>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

³⁴ Istana Budaya Malaysia (2002); available from <http://www.istanabudaya.gov.my/profile/arc.htm>; internet, (accessed 2002).

The National Theater plays a key role in introducing the various ethnic music, dance and drama to its people. Since its inception, it has offered not only traditional and cultural music but also western art music. The National Symphony Orchestra and National Choir are the most recent establishments in the area of Western Classical Music. Concerts are organized regularly by both Orkestra Symphony Kebangsaan (National Symphony Orchestra, NSO) and National Choir (NC) for the general public. Unlike private music organizations, both NSO and NC belong wholly to the National Cultural Center and are comprised of mainly of local residents who show musical talent and enthusiasm.

The National Symphony Orchestra (NSO)

In the case of NSO, most orchestra members are full-time musicians. The orchestra is part of the National Cultural Group, which is under the Production Unit. In the case of NC, The NSO has assisted the National Theater in producing high quality classical music for the community. The diversity of culture in the country has dramatically contributed to the personal and musical growth of NSO since its inception in 1993. Internationally, NSO maintains a diplomatic relationship with all Embassies, High Commissions, Corporate Companies, and Foundations in Malaysia by catering to the needs for superb entertainment. Several concert performances of NSO include internationally acclaimed conductors and soloists and who have brought new challenges for the orchestra to a higher level of performance experience. The orchestra is particularly interested in extending its activities in the field of music education. In 1998, the Music Unit launched the Youth Symphony Orchestra along with the Youth Choir as an avenue for youth to improve their musical and singing potentials. Their works constantly

encourages young talents to participate more actively in its educational program. Children are offered tickets at a lower price with parents and orchestral camps and seminars are organized for children during the school holidays to cultivate musical interest.

The National Choir (NC)

The National Choir (NC) was founded in May 1991 under the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism. It was initiated by the Ministry for a purpose of establishing an internationally acclaimed choir to represent the country's culture. The choir started with only ten children between the ages of twelve and sixteen years old. The original group represented Malaysia in the Second World Children's Choir Festival held in Nagoya, Japan in August 1991. Currently, the choir is made up of eighty members from different age groups. The National Choir is comprised of three main groups: the Children Choir, the Consort, and the Main Choir. Its repertoire includes Western classical music from different style periods, traditional local and international folk songs, popular music and songs from musicals. The choir performs in several languages including English, German, Italian, French, Mandarin, Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia. It not only holds concerts locally but also internationally. Concerts have been held at the ASEAN Children's Choir Concerts in Quezon City, the Philippines, and Phoenix, U.S.A., and Singapore respectively.³⁵ Furthermore, the choir gives joint concerts with Selangor Philharmonic Choir, the National Symphony Orchestra, and Penang State Symphony Chorus. This choir, under the direction of the Australian conductor, Roland Peelman has performed Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana."

³⁵ Sabah Tourism (2002); available from <http://www.sabahtourist.com> ; internet, (accessed 2002).

Composers Forum of ASEAN

Internationally, the National Theater has been an active participant in the Composers Forum on Traditional Music, a project initiated by the Philippines in 1989 on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Information (COC) that coordinates all arts and information projects of the ASEAN Secretariat. The aim of the forum is to provide interaction and exchange between composers, ethnomusicologists, and traditional musicians by bringing them together in a two-week residential program located at a different ASEAN country³⁶ each time. Consequently, composers experience the rich variety of traditional music and incorporate it into their compositions. The Composers Forum purposely does not include Western music in order to provide an exclusive environment for ASEAN composers to work within the parameters of the musical cultures of ASEAN.³⁷

Musically, the Istana Negara represents the Malaysian government by presenting its music to the world. It strikes a balanced repertoire by including both Malaysian traditional music and Western classical music, and introduces them to its audience locally and internationally. The three main ethnic groups of Malaysia definitely help the country create a variety of well-blended cultural and traditional music as well as Western art music.

³⁶ ASEAN countries are referred to the nations in Southeast Asia and Indo-China and regions.

³⁷ Salehuddin Haji Mohd Salleh, "Traditional Music in Malaysia: Its Promotion and Development," In Forum Papers, ed. E.E. Peters (Singapore: National Arts Council of Singapore, June 1994), 1.

CHAPTER 5
THE ROLE OF PRIVATE EXTERNAL MUSIC EXAMINATION BOARDS IN
MUSIC EDUCATION.

The Emergence of Private Music Examination Boards in Malaysia

A large number of Malaysian public schools only have general music courses for children in the primary schools, and music is not compulsory in the secondary schools. In fact, it was only in 1983, that formal music education was begun as a required curriculum in all primary schools.¹ Since most public schools in Malaysia do not provide any instrument rental or music ensembles, most parents have to enroll their children in commercial music centers if they show any interest in music. Dr. Tahir points out eight weaknesses in the present public schools' music program:

- Lack of training among music teachers,
- Lack of musical talent of some of the music teachers,
- Limited quality of the music curriculum,
- The requirement that music teachers follow the curriculum strictly,
- Lack of resources for repair,
- The community 's lack of acceptance of music,
- Lack of agreement about basic matters of music education, and
- Lack of cohesiveness.²

Commercial music centers have flourished, especially in the urban areas of Malaysia where learning a musical instrument is considered a family heritage and an aesthetic art. Commercial music centers offer music lessons in most popular instruments

¹ Ivy Yeong-Tsuey Yap, "An Examination of the Kodaly Music Education: Applications for the Cross-Cultural Learners" (Master thesis, Central Washington University, 1992), 41.

² Johami Abdullah, Music Education in Malaysia: An Overview (Kuala Lumpur: Music Department of Specialist Teachers' Training College, 1990), 13.

such as piano and guitar; and are affiliated with one of the foreign examination boards, mainly from Great Britain, Japan or Australia. Currently, among the competing overseas affiliated music examination boards in Malaysia the Australia Music Examination Board, Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), Guildhall School of Music (London), Trinity College of Music (London), Yamaha Music Education System (YMES), Technics Academy, and Kawai Music School. Deserving primary consideration are the roles of the two most important overseas music examination boards--Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) from England and Yamaha Music Education System (JMES) from Japan.

The Role of Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) in Malaysia's Music education

The History of ABRSM

The Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) was established in 1889, consisting of four major leading music conservatories--the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in the United Kingdom.³ According to a report given by Rudolph Sabor, at the time of writing in 1986 ABRSM calls upon 517 examiners, Guildhall 86, Trinity 70, and London College 96. ABRSM covers the greatest volume of music examinations in the United Kingdom. ABRSM has the international reputation of being the leading provider of graded music examinations, with the

³ Patricia Marie Ooi, "A Description and Comparison of Two Prominent Keyboard Music Education Systems and their Implications for Music Education in Malaysia" (Master thesis, University of Miami, May 1999), 30.

examination grades recognized as "international benchmark", understood by a majority of music teachers and music colleges in over eighty countries worldwide.⁴

The goals and aims of the ABRSM are to promote the development of musical enjoyment and to enhance the quality of teaching.⁵ ABRSM has over one hundred years experience in providing music examination syllabi; and its system of graded music examinations are offered in over thirty instruments, vocal, music theory, and practical musicianship. Exams are conducted in over eighty countries worldwide, with an estimated 500,000 candidates taking the examinations annually. The ABRSM operating network covers several countries in the continents of Africa, North and South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe.⁶) In Malaysia, ABRSM is among the earliest institutions that offered systematic music examination syllabus.

The Assessment and Examination Unit of the Ministry of Education bears the major responsibility for organizing the music examinations of ABRSM nationwide.⁷ According to Robert Morris, chief executive of ABRSM, the first ABRSM music examination in Malaysia was held in 1984, with John Sterling as the first appointed examiner, and examinations were conducted only in Penang and Kuala Lumpur. Currently, there are more than forty centers in Malaysia with an estimated thirty examiners conducting the examinations annually.⁸ The ABRSM examination panel is comprised of over five hundred appointed honorable members, many of whom are

⁴Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (2002); available from <http://www.abrsm.ac.uk/libretto/may02/news/html>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (2002); available from <http://www.abrsm.ac.uk/teachers.html>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

⁷ Ooi, 31.

⁸ ABRSM internet, teachers.

outstanding music professionals from the performing and teaching areas in the United Kingdom.⁹

The Curricula of ABRSM

The examination curricula of ABRSM provide music candidates with a comprehensive scope of study by incorporating performance, music theory, and musicianship. Among all instrumental examinations, piano is the most popular chosen instrument. Most music teachers utilizing the ABRSM system are mainly self-employed. While the system allows music teachers some degree of flexibility in their teaching approach, ABRSM also provides opportunities for teacher development through its organization of music education seminars. Seminars concerning the changes and updating of examination syllabi are regularly organized for teachers locally. The examination syllabi incorporate the evaluation of music performance, music theory, and musicianship. The evaluation of music performance consists of the performance of three pieces (20 percent each), scales and arpeggios (14 percent), aural tests (12 percent), and sight-reading (14 percent). The levels are divided into Distinction (90-100 percent), Merit (80-89 percent), Pass (66-79 percent) and Fail (0-65 percent). In the case of music performance, an appointed ABRSM examiner evaluates and provides written comments and scores on the evaluation form. The practical examination is graded from level one to eight. Instrumental examinations cover piano, bowed strings, brasses, woodwinds, harpsichord, organ, guitar, harp, percussion and voice. Apart from solo graded examinations, ABRSM also offers practical examinations for piano duet and instrumental ensembles.

⁹ Ooi, 40.

Syllabi for Music Performance: Pieces

While deciding on the choices of the pieces from the required repertoire, wise teachers agree with their students on a judicious choice of pieces. The teachers suggest three different pieces that present a challenge both technically and musically.¹⁰ The objectives and requirements of the pieces are, first, the technical progress which results from study and mastery; second, the opportunity of impressing the examiner with a faultless performance; and lastly, the contrasting moods of the pieces. Well before the examination date, the candidates should be able to play with some degree of confidence and ease, so that they can concentrate on the music's quality, convincing the examiner that they have found and are able to convey the mood and the meaning of each of their pieces.

Scales and Arpeggios

As stated by Ruldolph Sabor in his book, "How to Do Well in Music Exams,"

Young musicians cannot be expected to realize, but have every right to know that practically every piece of music contains scales and arpeggios, and that the purpose and indeed the beauty of growing up on a diet of scales and arpeggios lies in its prolific effect on further effort. The teachers are advised to point out such passages in music by various composers and demonstrate how a great deal of repetitive work can be cut short by scrupulous attention to this section of the syllabus. Teachers might mention that there are only a few scales to be learned, but once made perfect they need hardly be practiced again when encountered in real situation.¹¹

The importance of playing scales and arpeggios is always overlooked by most music students and teachers as they are not the most impressive and attractive part of the examination package. However, Sabor has made it clear that scales and arpeggios as they eventually are utilized are the souls to the content of the pieces. Scales and arpeggios are

¹⁰ Sabor, 117.

¹¹ Sabor, 119.

required to be even and fluent. There should be little hesitation in responding to the examiner's request, and in the higher grades, the speed should be enterprising and commanding but not extreme.

Aural Tests

Aural tests devised by the four major examination bodies investigate a candidate's sense of time, pitch and rhythm, musical memory, powers of concentration, and speed of reaction. Ideally, aural training should be practiced before the student's first lesson with his or her teacher. It is strange that the key to musical appreciation and its performance that opens the door to all music has been landed with the cheerless name tag, "Aural Training." According to Sabor, the author of "How to Do Well in Music Exams" the person with poor listening powers lives with a massive handicap, the equivalent to the color blind in a picture gallery.¹²

Sight-Reading

As for requirements, accuracy of notes is less important here than obtaining glimpses of the kind of music one tackles. As the student's familiarity with the repertoire grows, the skill in coping with the music will increase, with a corresponding decrease in the number of errors. Sight-reading really provides constant opportunities for browsing. Teachers should tell students to keep strict time, however slow; go for rhythmic accuracy even at the expense of note accuracy; never ever stop to repeat anything at all. Once the student has formed the habit of regular browsing, he or she is bound to grow in confidence and expertise.

¹² Sabor, 120.

Theory of Music

The examinations for theory of music cover Grades One to Eight. On the other hand, all instrumental candidates are required to have passed Grade Five examinations for theory of music before they can proceed to any higher instrumental examination. ABRSM really insists that all students should have passed Theory Grade Five before they can take any of the practical exams Grade Six to Grade Eight. The curriculum of the theory of music consists of keys and key signature, time and time signatures, notation and rests, musical signs, terms and abbreviations, intervals, scales, forms, ornaments, chords, cadences, harmonization, transposing, modulation, figured bass, established composers and their standard works.¹³ The passing marks for theory of music exams are 66 percent. The theory of music is its grammar. All students are encouraged to learn the rules and they will begin to speak the language.

Yamaha Music Education System (YMES)

The History of YMES

For the very first time, young children were invited to participate in the trial music lessons organized by Yamaha Music Schools in the Ginza district of Tokyo in 1954. However, it was in 1959 that the first official Yamaha Music School was begun and the curriculum was changed from organ to the teaching fundamentals of music.¹⁴ Twelve years later, the Yamaha Music Foundation (YMF) was founded under the authorization of the Ministry of Education in Japan. YMF is in charge of the development and enhancement of the Yamaha Music Education System (YMES): the training and

¹³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁴ Ooi, 44.

monitoring of Yamaha teachers internationally, the organization of music popularization, activities on an international basis, and music publication and production. The YMES is at the moment operated in over forty countries throughout North and South America, Southeast Asia, Australasia, and Europe. A 1999's statistic showed that YMES had a student population of about 200,000 worldwide.¹⁵

Yamaha Music Malaysia (YMM) was founded by Mr. Yo Kiang Beng in 1974. Since 1974, YMES has been carried out in the intensive network of Yamaha Music schools nationwide. YMM has nine branches and ninety dealer companies. Its headquarters are located at Kuala Lumpur to coordinate and oversee the maintenance and the networking of the companies. YMM is the sole distributor of all Yamaha musical instruments and also the publication of a variety of music books.¹⁶ YMES is only operated in the Yamaha Music Schools where the music teachers are trained totally for the specific music courses. Music courses offered include individual and group lessons for students from age four through adults. The courses are designed and developed according to specific age groups.

The Teaching Concepts of YMES

Throughout the courses, five learning concepts are followed closely by the Yamaha music teachers:

- "Timely education" stresses the importance of designing a curriculum that is compatible with the age group,
- "Ears First" emphasizes the effectiveness of aural training and that training of the aural senses should precede other aspects of music making,

¹⁵ Yamaha Music Foundation, *Creating Music for Tomorrow* (Tokyo: Yamaha Music Foundation Publication, 1999)

¹⁶ Ooi, 45.

- "Keyboard as a learning tool" outlines the effectiveness of the keyboard in teaching children the fundamentals of music,
- "Sequential layering of skills" deals with the process of teaching the children through imitation, patterning, repetition, and expansion, and
- "Group Learning" promotes musical learning, and allows for creativity.¹⁷

Courses Offered by YMES

The Junior Music Course (JMC) is particularly invested with the five concepts of musical learning mentioned above. It is designed for pre-school children between the ages of four and six. The course consists of a two-year program and it is conducted in a group setting of ten to twelve children with the involvement of parents during the class hour. JMC is made up of four different levels, with each level taking about six months and it takes two years to complete the four levels. Children who complete JMC requirements can continue their music education in the extension courses: the Junior Extension and Advanced Courses. These advanced levels take another four to six years of music education. At these levels, children continue their group lessons and are required to take individual music lessons to address performance development.

Recommended graduates of JMC undergo a music audition and successful candidates proceed to the Junior Special Advanced Course (JSAC) instead of going through the usual extension course route. During the course of JSAC, the scope of learning is broader than the extension courses, with higher musical expectations in performance and composition skills. In these YMES courses, keyboard, especially organ, is used as the major learning instrument. Later, children in the YMES can select a major instrument.¹⁸ The YMES curricula include lyric singing, rhythm stepping, keyboard

¹⁷ Ooi, 46.

¹⁸ Ooi, 47.

harmony with transposition, sight-singing, notation, music appreciation, creativity, and ensemble playing.

An outstanding characteristics of YMES teaching methods is the process of learning which in which includes four consecutive steps:

- Perception (Listening),
- Verbalization (Singing),
- Actualization (Playing and performing), and
- Comprehension (Understanding).¹⁹

The Graded Examinations of YMES

YMES offers Yamaha Graded Examinations in the forms of Achievement Tests for beginners (level 13-10), the lower Grade Examination (level 9-6), and the Higher Grade Examination (level 5-3) for professional levels. In the Yamaha examination system, Level Nine is the initial grade and Level One is the highest grade of achievement. These examinations are available for piano, electronic organ, and guitar. Honorary awards (level 1 and 2) are awarded to students with excellent performance achievement.²⁰

YMM has assisted the Malaysian Government in the encouragement of mass music literacy in the nation. Some of obligated responsibilities include the training of the public school music teachers through various training workshops, incorporating the use of pianicas (a smaller model of portable piano operated by blowing air through the mouth piece) and recorders, and providing assistance in setting up the drum corps and marching bands for the public schools. One of these projects has been the development of the four-

¹⁹ Ibid., 48.

²⁰ Ibid., 49.

year electronic keyboard curriculum in collaboration with the Institute of Technology in Malaysia.²¹

Even though differences exist between ABRSM and YMES, both examination boards contribute to the enrichment of the music education program in Malaysia. Both boards are responsible for introducing Western art music to the people of Malaysia and play an important role in assisting the Ministry of Education. Music was part of education introduced into Malaysia by both ABRSM and YMES. Both systems are the main forces in upgrading the performance skills of music students. The examination achievement of both systems actually represents the entrance ticket to the next professional level. Students are allowed to use the examination results as the pre-requisite to the level of music major. In fact, both ABRSM and YMES systems are so popular that most public and private universities and colleges require music degree applicants to pass certain professional levels before they can be admitted to the institutions.

In addition to the benefits of music education, both ABRSM and YMES assist the Malaysian government by organizing concerts and other musical activities to elevate the level of music awareness among the Malaysian people. ABRSM, with the collaboration of the British Council, consistently holds concerts and instrumental competitions, especially in the area of Klang Valley, at Kuala Lumpur. YMES organizes annual Yamaha Organ Competitions to search for musical talent and genius among music students. Even though these agencies are not part of the Malaysian government, they are important factors in the development of public music education.

²¹ Ooi, 59.

CHAPTER 6
THE ROLE OF PRIVATE COLLEGES AND INSTITUTIONS IN MUSIC
EDUCATION

Government's Policies Toward Private Education

Private education sector is defined as comprising all educational institutions that were privately founded and where some significant proportion of decision-making responsibility remains in private hands, even though government may provide substantial resources and control.¹

Since 1995, Malaysia's Ministry of Education has successfully pushed through six pieces of legislation to position Malaysia as a regional education hub:

- The Education Act 1996,
- National Council on Higher Education Institutions Act 1996,
- Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996,
- National Accreditation Board Act 1996,
- Universities Colleges (Amendment) Act 1996, and
- National Education Fund Board Act 1997.

The National Council on Higher Education Institutions Act 1996, the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996, and the National Accreditation Board Act 1996 have all directly affected the development of private higher education in Malaysia. National Council on Higher Education Institutions Act 1996 reflects the government's intention to have in place a unified administrative organization to oversee both the public and private education sectors, and also to ensure greater coordination of the higher educational system. The main responsibility of the National Council is to plan, formulate, and determine national policies and strategies for the development of higher education.

¹ Estelle James, "Public Policies Toward Private Education: An International Comparison," In *International Journal of Educational Research* 15, no.4 (1991): 360.

The Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 defines the government's regulatory control over all private education institutions. Under this act, approval must be obtained from the Ministry of Education before private institutions can be set up or any program can be offered to students. All private colleges with the presence of Bumiputra² are required to include compulsory subjects such as Malaysian Studies, Islamic Studies, and Moral Studies. All private colleges must also conduct their courses in the national language, with some allowed in English as a medium of instruction if approved by the Ministry of Education. Finally, the National Accreditation Board Act 1997 establishes an accreditation board to formulate education policies on the quality control of courses in various degree programs. This board also provides an evaluation mechanism and quality assurance for accredited programs in the private colleges.³

The History of Private Education

Private education is no longer a new phenomenon in the Malaysia educational scene. Its humble beginnings took the forms of tuitions centers, independent Chinese schools, commercial colleges, and second chance schools. Today private education is made available at every educational level. According to Molly Lee, Associated Professor of Education at Universiti Sains Malaysia, the historical development of private education of Malaysia is closely related to educational reforms in the national school systems.⁴ In the 1960's, the attrition rates in the national school system were high due to the fact that the system was selective. Students who failed their public examinations had

² Bumiputra is referred to the native people of Malaysia; it includes both the Malay and the indigenous races.

³ Molly N.N. Lee, *Private Higher Education in Malaysia* (Penang: University Sains Malaysia Press, 1999), 13-5.

⁴ Lee, 1.

to continue their education in private institutions, better known as "second chance schools" that offered them optional solutions. Besides these second chance schools, there were also private colleges that offered commercial studies and courses, especially in accounting and business management that were affiliated with overseas higher learning institutions. During the 1970's, dropouts from national schools dwindled as the school system strove toward universal secondary education. The private schools changed their direction to the provision of pre-university courses, while selection for entrances to Sixth Form (Post-Secondary Education) in the government schools continued to be very competitive. Commercial, semi-professional and professional programs continued to be popular as the structure of Malaysia's economy began to shift from agricultural sectors to manufacturing and service sectors. Moreover, the process of democracy in secondary education resulted in an increasing demand for higher education in the late 1970's. The 1980's and 1990's observed a significant progress in private education, especially at the post secondary levels.⁵

The Twinning Program

One of the most attractive packages offered by the private higher education sectors is the Twinning Program. Its concept involves a mutual agreement between a local private institution and one or a consortium of foreign universities to run the Twinning Program initially in the local college, to be followed in the overseas university for the final part of the program.⁶ The foreign university decides on the curriculum, evaluation, and institutional standard of the program. Agreements often specify

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ Lee, 9.

conditions related to accreditation, course equivalency, curricula, responsibilities, qualifications and requirements of academic staff, admission criteria, and educational amenities. Under the Twinning Program, every qualifying student is guaranteed a place in the foreign university upon successful completion of the course requirements taken at the local institution. The student can transfer to the agreed university for the next level.

Generally, each student has to spend two years at the local institution and another two years at the foreign university, better known as the "2+2 program." Under the revised policy, the number of year at the local institution has been increased to three years or better known as 3+1 program. This new program saves the cost of living expenses at the oversea institution. Upon completion of both segments, a degree is conferred by the foreign university.

The Twinning Program offers not only a cheaper route to obtain a foreign degree but also allows local higher learning institutions to share in a part of the tertiary education business. Factors such as field of study, location and reputation of the foreign university, number of years, and duration of the study can all contribute to the final cost of the Twinning Program. A student utilizing the Twinning Program can save about four thousand to ten thousand U.S. dollars a year.⁷ The average tuition fee for a guaranteed credit transfer program is only approximately forty percent of the tuition fee for the Twinning Program, due to the fact that there is no franchise fee charged by the foreign institution. Furthermore, the cost of the administration is cut to a minimum by the foreign university.

⁷ Lee, 13.

Since the inception of the Twinning Program, foreign universities from the United Kingdom, Australia and United States have been active leaders interested in this innovative idea in higher education. Popular degree programs such as business, management, accounting, finance, engineering, computer science, information technology, and medicine were included from the beginning of the Twinning Program. It was later that other programs such as fine arts, psychology, languages, and music were included to cover a wider range of academic degree programs. Traditionally, music is not a popular degree program, but rather a teaching training program. As a result, many students only aim for music as an educational career but not a professional ideal in the Malaysian society.

Several private colleges in Malaysia that offer music degree programs particularly in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur deserve consideration.

Sedaya College

Sedaya College, formerly known as the Canadian Institute of Computer Science was founded in 1986 at Petaling Jaya in the state of Selangor. The college took up its own permanent residency at Cheras, Kuala Lumpur in 1998. Sedaya College opened another branch at Sibu in East Malaysia. The college currently has a student population of two thousand with one hundred and forty-five academic staff, twenty percent of the students are international students. The College offers a 3+0 program⁸ that enables students to study all three years at its college and obtain their degrees from a foreign university in the United Kingdom without leaving Malaysia. It offers a second 2+1 or 2+2 twinning program that requires students to complete two years of higher education at its college

⁸ In Malaysian education system, 3+0 refers to number of years the students have to spend locally plus internationally to complete the required courses.

and to take the remaining at the foreign universities. This program has been tremendously successful with the linked agreement with the universities in the United States. All programs allow students to study general subjects at Sedaya College before applying to transfer credits to universities in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Students complete the remainder of their area of specialization at universities abroad. Since the inception of the music program in 1990, Sedaya College's Faculty of Music and Performing Arts offers a twinning degree program with the following: Western Illinois University, West Virginia University, and the State University of New York at New Paltz in the United States; the University of Newcastle in Australia; and Middlesex University in Britain. The diploma in music is also offered locally with a choice of specialization in classical, modern music studies, and audio production.⁹

Over the years, Sedaya's music programs have mainly been classically oriented, training musicians to become well versed in all areas of Western art music. Upon completion of the degree program, students are qualified to be music merchandisers, broadcast engineers, audio engineers, music producers, jingle writers, and composers. Sedaya College was the first private college to establish music as a degree program. The majority of students who have transferred to other foreign universities to complete their music degree have graduated as music teachers, and as music therapists and lecturers in Malaysia, Singapore and the United States. Sixty-five percent of its transferred students pursue their masters and twenty-seven percents complete their doctoral degrees.

⁹ Sedaya College (2002); available from <http://www.sedaya.edu.my/music/index/html>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

International College of Music (ICOM)

International College of Music was established in November 1995 in Kuala Lumpur and it is the premier private music college to provide music students with a complete learning experience in the fields of contemporary music, professional song writing and music technology. Since its establishment, ICOM has been affiliated with Berklee School of Music at Boston, U.S.A. ICOM offers a three-year program for diploma students in the areas of performance, arranging, music synthesis, and music production and engineering. The performance majors receive extensive theoretical and practical training, focusing on style analysis, private instrumental instruction, and ensembles. The arranging majors learn concepts related to instrumentation, orchestration, music technology and composition in a variety of musical genres and styles. The music technology major covers the musical aspects of production as well as the principles of sound engineering, real-time performance synthesis, studio and audio design and production techniques. The curriculum also offers traditional and folk instruments of Malaysia so that students will have a better knowledge of their musical history and culture. ICOM owns a 150-seat concert hall, several acoustically designed private practice rooms, a recording studio, a computer and synthesizer laboratory, an ear training laboratory, a comprehensive music library, and a campus bookstore.

Yamaha Academy of Arts and Music

Yamaha Academy for Arts and Music is a branch of the Yamaha Music Malaysia (YMM) that emphasizes higher education in music. It was established for students to pursue a career specifically in music.¹⁰ The academy provides advanced music education

¹⁰ Yamaha Music School (2002); available from <http://www.yamahamusic.com.my/Arts/artsmain.html>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

leading to a music diploma in the areas of performance, music management and administration, music marketing and consultation, arrangement, music production and jazz. The diploma program offers two years of courses locally. Then students can receive under the Twinning Program further training in performance, music and art management at Middlesex University in Wales, for one year. The students can also choose Monash University in Perth, Australia to specialize in performance, composition, musicology and ethnomusicology. The Australian program requires students to study abroad for their second, third, and fourth years.¹¹

The academy is well equipped with the Yamaha Festival Hall where student recitals, concerts, and master classes are held. It also has for its students' benefits several practice rooms, a piano laboratory, a resource center, an audio visual laboratory at Music Production Room. Besides the diploma degree, the academy offers performance courses designed for the individual musician's needs, it equips them with the necessary skills to undertake external examinations or to gain entrance into institutions of higher learning, improve their performance ability in festivals and competitions, and assist in interpretation of music. This program guides students to further external music examinations that are affiliated with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Trinity College of Music, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, and Yamaha Higher Grade Examinations.¹²

¹¹ Yamaha Music School (2002); available from <http://www.yamahamusic.com.my/Arts/avd.html>; internet, (accessed 11 May 2002).

¹² Yamaha Music School (2002); available from <http://www.yamahamusic.com.my/Arts/perform.html>; internet, (accessed 11 May).

Other Private Music Colleges

There are also other private music colleges offering music diplomas and Twinning Degree Programs. Both the Ocean Institute of Audio and Technology and the School of Audio Engineering offer programs in music production and audio engineering; Malaysia Institute of Arts (MIA) offers a diploma program that can be transferred to other universities in China, United Kingdom and United States. Colleges such as Stamford College, INTI College, and Kolej Damansara Utama offer music appreciation courses as elective subjects in the area of humanities.

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) of PETRONAS

The process of privatization occurs immediately in the commercial, industrial and government bureaucratic sectors. Since the government is pursuing privatization, the nation's economy has progressed and has been developed in the direction of Vision 2020. Many government-owned companies have been partially privatized to facilitate better administration and efficiency. PETRONAS (National Petroleum) is one of the best examples to demonstrate the concept of privatization.

PETRONAS is one of the nation's leading petroleum companies, both locally and internationally. Since its privatization, the company has experienced tremendous expansion and growth in its profits and personnel. PETRONAS continues to assist the government not only economically but also structurally, socially, and educationally through its successful program to train a better generation of skillful workers and its commitment to develop and improve social conditions. One of the most recent achievements of PETRONAS is the completion of the PETRONAS Twin Towers at the Kuala Lumpur City Center claims to be the world's tallest towers and is fully equipped

with a mega shopping complex, an entertainment site, a recreation park, and a majestic auditorium known as the Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS, or Philharmonic Hall of PETRONAS. The auditorium is a center of excellence for the performance and appreciation of Western classical music. It welcomes those who are serious connoisseurs of Western classical music as well as those who are newcomers to the art form. The auditorium is the permanent residence of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO).

Architects Cesar Pelli and Associates and Acousticians Kirkegaard and Associates were responsible for the design and the acoustic system for the auditorium.¹³ The design is set in the traditional shoebox shape of the great European concert halls built in the Nineteenth Century. Unique acoustic devices have been incorporated into the design of the auditorium to maximize its natural acoustic qualities. It represents a fusion of both Malaysian and Western cultures. The auditorium is equipped with a modern pipe organ for both solo and large group performances. The orchestra consists of one hundred and five players headed by the Dutch conductor, Kees Bakels, assisted by the Malaysian resident conductor Chean See Ooi. The MPO debuted in mid 1997 and the first rehearsal took place on July 1, 1998. This was followed by an inaugural concert at Dewan Filharmonik in August 1998. The MPO's repertoire includes a broad artistic program designed to appeal the widest possible audience. Besides its regular concerts

MPO hosts an international concert series featuring many of the world's great performers, such as Sir Neville Marriner, conductors Andrew Litton, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Jiri Belohlavek, James Judd, Mark Elder, Donald Runnicles, John Nelson, and Manfred Honeck; the English Chamber Orchestra with Pinchas Zukerman, the King's

¹³ Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS, [Concert Program] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS,

Singers, flautist, James Galway; a series of rush hour concerts, concerts for children, and a variety of other musical events. Although the main emphasis is on the performance of Western classical music, the artistic program actually integrates other complimentary musical styles, including traditional Malay music and dance Chinese opera, Indian classical music, and Jazz. In addition, the MPO presents a series of music education activities throughout Malaysia to train the younger generation of musicians. The MPO has arranged a mini concert series for children as education packages offered to the parent. Children can also enroll in private instrumental lessons with the members of MPO.

CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Public school music education had its humble beginnings in the primary schools in Malaysia in the eighteenth century. After thirty-nine years of being an independent and sovereign state, Malaysia has included music education at all levels of its educational system from kindergarten through university. Upon the completion of a music degree program at most public universities, graduates are now able to continue their education at the graduate level. Scholarships, academic grants, and government loans are now more accessible, a factor has motivated graduates to strive for higher excellence in higher education. Malaysia is now equipped with more qualified and experienced music teachers, specialists, lecturers, and professors.

Secondary school graduates have the option to continue their learning experiences at private colleges under the Twinning Program, a joint-collaboration between local colleges and foreign universities. The statistics from the research of Molly Lee show that the number of students enrolled in private colleges has increased from 35,600 in 1990 to 127,594 in 1995.¹ This significant increase enables students to have the exposure to learning Western music culture at a lower cost.

The return of oversea graduates actually supports the structure and framework of the music staff at most music higher learning institutions. These talented graduates bring

¹ Molly N.N. Lee *Private Higher Education in Malaysia* (Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia Press, 1999), 2.

their capabilities and performance experiences that will help shape the next generation of musicians. Many music departments at universities and colleges have academic staff who have studied in Australia, Great Britain, and the United States. Consequently, the Western music influence brought back by the overseas graduates in Malaysia has been greater than before.

There is no bad music education system, but just some bad music teachers.

A popular statement by most music teachers in Malaysia clearly demonstrates the current scenario of Malaysian music education. There is no doubt that music teachers now are more abundantly available in the school system in Malaysia. However, both the evaluation system and assessment process need to be implemented. For this reason, the Ministry of Education's Accreditation Board and Teachers' Training Colleges bear the major responsibility to ensure that the music training and learning at all levels of school are regulated constantly. The cooperation between the Malaysian government and the private sectors will play a crucial role in deciding the future of music education in Malaysia.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Lah Boh Yong was born in Sibu, Sarawak, Malaysia, on May 11th, 1967. After completing his secondary education at Sacred Heart Secondary School in Sibu, he pursued his tertiary education at the University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, from January 1987 to May 1990. On May 11th, 1990, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in music with emphasis in string performance. In the fall quarter of 1990, John began his graduate studies in music, specializing in composition at the Minnesota State University, Mankato, where he graduated with his Master of Music degree in December 1991. Upon completion of his graduate studies, John became the principal of A and E Music School in Sibu and joined the National Symphony Orchestra in Kuala Lumpur and was a member of this ensemble until 1994. He was also a freelance lecturer specializing in music theory, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, composition, violin, classical guitar, choral conducting, instrumental ensemble, history, and music appreciation at several government universities including Universiti Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia's Music Conservatoire, Universiti Teknologi MARA, and several private colleges including Sedaya College, Malaysian Institute of Arts, Ocean Institute of Audio Technology, Higher Education Learning Program (HELP) Institute, Stamford College, INTI College, and Fairview International School.

He began his second graduate studies in string education in August 2000 at the University of Florida and will receive his Master of Music in December 2002.