



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Malay singing in Pahang villages: identity and practice
Silahudin, S.

Citation

Silahudin, S. (2021, May 18). *Malay singing in Pahang villages: identity and practice*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3166306>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3166306>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/3166306> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Silahudin, S.

Title: Malay singing in Pahang villages: identity and practice

Issue date: 2021-05-18

Malay singing in Pahang villages: Identity and practice

**Shafa'atussara Silahudin
2021**

Copyright © 2021 Shafa'atussara Silahudin
Cover illustration: Noor Kasmara Sokarnor
Printed by: UFB/Grafimedia, Leiden

All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form or by any means, without written permission from the author.

Malay singing in Pahang villages: Identity and practice

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van rector magnificus prof.dr.ir. H. Bijl,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 18 mei 2021
klokke 16:15 uur

door
Shafa'atussara Silahudin
geboren te Muar, Johor, Maleisië
in 1983

Promotor: Prof. dr. B. Arps

Co-Promotor: Dr. Suryadi

Promotiecommissie: Prof. dr. B. A. Barendregt

Prof. dr. G. R. van den Berg

Prof. dr. W. van der Molen

Untuk Abah (1958-2013), guru muzik pertamaku...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of illustrations and tables

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Reflections on my pilot study: early encounters with Pahang musicians at two musical events 5
- 1.2 Background 7
- 1.3 The setting 9
 - 1.3.1 The Malay community in Pahang villages 13
 - 1.3.2 The Pahang River 14
- 1.4 Previous studies of musical ethnography in Malaysia 17
 - 1.4.1 Studies of musical ethnography in Pahang 17
 - 1.4.2 Works on musical ethnography in other parts of West Malaysia 18
- 1.5 Theoretical perspectives 21
 - 1.5.1 Historical overview 21
 - 1.5.2 Music as cultural system 22
 - 1.5.2.1 Style 23
 - 1.5.2.2 Space 25
 - 1.5.3 Talent as representation 26
 - 1.5.4 Community formation around music 28
- 1.6 Methodology 28
 - 1.6.1 Participant-observation 29
 - 1.6.2 Interview sessions 30
 - 1.6.3 Textual analysis 31
- 1.7 Organization of the book 32

Chapter 2: THE PAST MUSICAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE MALAY WORLD

- 2.1 Introduction 35
- 2.2 Malay classical literature 36
 - 2.2.1 *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* 40
 - 2.2.2 *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* 40

2.2.3	<i>Hikayat Raja Pasai</i>	40
2.2.4	<i>Hikayat Pandawa Lima</i>	41
2.2.5	<i>Hikayat Indraputra</i>	41
2.2.6	<i>Sejarah Melayu</i>	42
2.2.7	<i>Hikayat Aceh</i>	42
2.2.8	<i>Bustan as-Salatin</i>	43
2.2.9	<i>Hikayat Hang Tuah</i>	43
2.2.10	<i>Misa Melayu</i>	44
2.2.11	<i>Adat Raja Melayu</i>	45
2.2.12	<i>Syair Seratus Siti</i>	45
2.3	Songs from the past in Malay classical literature	46
2.3.1	Song forms	46
2.3.2	The representation of songs	59
2.3.2.1	Songs relating to the nobility	60
2.3.2.2	Songs associated with activities	61
2.3.2.3	Human voice perception	66
2.3.3	Songs with instrumental accompaniment	69
2.4	Concluding thoughts	72

Chapter 3: TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND REGIONAL POP MUSIC

3.1	Introduction	75
3.1.1	The background of traditional music	75
3.1.2	The background of regional pop music	76
3.2	Traditional music	77
3.2.1	Aripin Said	77
3.2.1.1	Singing event 1: traditional folk songs at the commemorative event <i>Malam Semantan Berbunga II</i>	80
3.2.1.2	Singing event 2: traditional folk song at a wedding reception within the Pahang elite community	82
3.2.2	Roslan Madun	84
3.2.2.1	New folk songs in a social context	88
3.2.2.2	Traditional poetry songs in a social context	90
3.2.3	Anak Kayan	94
3.2.3.1	A singing event in the village of Permatang Badak	97
3.2.4	Community formation around traditional music	99
3.2.4.1	The <i>Syair</i> Academy	100
3.2.4.2	The 2016 <i>syair</i> concert	102
3.2.4.3	<i>Syair</i> singing competition	107

3.3 Regional pop music	110
3.3.1 Anok Semantan	110
3.3.1.1 Anok Semantan's album	111
3.3.1.2 Local features in music videos	113
3.3.2 Community formation around regional pop music	116
3.3.2.1 Intrinsic benefits of attending Anok Semantan's concert performance	116
3.3.2.2 Virtual community on YouTube	118
3.4 Concluding thoughts	120

Chapter 4: KUGIRAN AND PUNK ROCK

4.1 Introduction	123
4.1.1 The background to <i>kugiran</i> and how it relates to the emergence of rock and punk music	123
4.1.2 The background to punk rock music	126
4.2 <i>Kugiran</i> music	129
4.2.1 Kugiran Muzik Asli of Paya Luas village	130
4.2.1.1 Repertoire and musical performance	133
4.2.2 Community formation around <i>kugiran</i> music	135
4.2.2.1 The wedding host's options: a live music band or a DJ with music in MP3 format	136
4.2.2.2 Song requests	137
4.3 Punk rock music	139
4.3.1 Hibiscus	142
4.3.1.1 Repertoire of songs	144
4.3.1.2 Orchid Studio as a music space	148
4.3.1.3 Islam in the lives of Malay punk rocker in Pahang	149
4.3.2 Community formation around punk rock	152
4.3.2.1 Skinhead culture	153
4.3.2.2 Punk rockers' forum	155
4.4 Concluding thoughts	158

Chapter 5: AMATEUR MUSIC GROUPS (*NAZAM BERENDOI* AND *DIKIR REBANA*), AND YOUNG WOMEN AND MUSIC

5.1 Introduction	159
5.2 The Islamic book, the <i>Kitab Barzanji</i>	161
5.3 <i>Nazam berendoi</i>	164

5.3.1	The women's singing group and its background	165
5.3.2	The performance of <i>nazam berendoi</i>	166
5.3.3	The creation of community through <i>nazam berendoi</i>	169
5.4	<i>Dikir rebana</i>	171
5.4.1	The women's singing group and its background	173
5.4.2	The performance of <i>dikir rebana</i>	175
5.4.3	The creation of community through <i>dikir rebana</i>	179
5.5	Young women and music	181
5.5.1	A brief summary of the participants' backgrounds	183
5.5.2	Participants' music consumption	184
5.5.3	Musical activities at school	186
5.5.4	Karaoke singing after school	188
5.6	Concluding thoughts	190

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

6.1	Introduction	193
6.2	Social status of musicians	194
6.3	Continuity and discontinuity in genres	196
6.4	Gender-specific songs	199
6.5	Community formation in genres	201
6.6	Final remarks	204

Glossary	207
-----------------	-----

Appendices	211
-------------------	-----

Bibliography	223
---------------------	-----

Samenvatting	245
---------------------	-----

Curriculum vitae	253
-------------------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Map 1 The location of Pahang in Malaysia
Map 2 The major rivers of the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia
Map 3 Location of the Pahang River
- Figure 3.1 Aripin Said on a single frame drum (*kompang*)
Figure 3.2 Front covers of Aripin Said’s music albums
Figure 3.3 Aripin Said’s performance accompanied by young musicians
Figure 3.4 The martial art ensemble of the *Gendang Silat Pesaka*
Figure 3.5 Roslan Madun
Figure 3.6 Album artwork from several of Roslan Madun’s albums
Figure 3.7 Anak Kayan in traditional Malay costume
Figure 3.8 Man Kayan produced an album of contemporary poetry songs
Figure 3.9 A dancer performing *tarian pelanduk* accompanied by *rebana* and *gendang* players
Figure 3.10 A female student (right) delivering a traditional song at the concert alongside Roslan and the present author
Figure 3.11 The 2016 Malay Archipelago *syair* concert
Figure 3.12 Several contestants in the *syair* competition in Maran, Pahang
Figure 3.13 Members of Anok Semantan (taken from the album cover) in traditional Malay costumes
Figure 3.14 A screenshot from the music video for the song ‘Ngape Bio Semok’ with the backdrop of an abandoned old house
- Figure 4.1 Kugiran Muzik Asli at a rehearsal in the *bangsal*
Figure 4.2 Kugiran Muzik Asli at a wedding reception
Figure 4.3 A wedding DJ with a sound person at a reception party in Temerloh, Pahang
Figure 4.4 Hibiscus
Figure 4.5 Hibiscus’s logo
Figure 4.6 Front cover of Hibiscus’s album
Figure 4.7 Poster advertising Eid gig
Figure 4.8 Pokcix Sham and his wife at their wedding reception

- Figure 4.9 Skinhead fashions
 Figure 4.10 Poster advertising a punk rockers' forum in Kuala Lumpur
- Figure 5.1 The cover of the Islamic book, the *Kitab Barzanji*
 Figure 5.2 Makcik Ani (right) and Makcik Noor demonstrating *nazam berendoi* to the author
 Figure 5.3 The singing group in a circle singing *nazam berendoi*
 Figure 5.4 A Pahang frame drum being played in a *dikir rebana* performance in 1963
 Figure 5.5 The author conducting a group discussion with members of a *dikir rebana* group in the village of Jeram Landak
 Figure 5.6 A screenshot from a video recording of a *dikir rebana* performance by elderly women from Jeram Landak in 2015
 Figure 5.7 An excerpt of *amin tazaki* in the *Kitab Barzanji*
 Figure 5.8 Two pupils in their school attire practising karaoke singing in the music studio with their schoolteacher's supervision

TABLES

- Table 1 Selection of Malay classical literature
 Table 2 Forms of songs in Malay classical literature
 Table 3 Themes of *syair* texts and names of *syair* tunes
 Table 4 List of chapter headings in the *Kitab Barzanji*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all those who have made this work possible. I am very grateful to the two major sponsoring institutions that have provided me with study grants. Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) provided me with the initial funding for my studies at Leiden University, in the Netherlands, from 2013 to 2017. I also wish to express my gratitude to the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur for awarding me a place on the Doctoral Fellowship Programme in Malay Studies.

I wish to record my deepest gratitude to Leiden University Library, Leiden University Special Collection, the University of Malaya Main Library, the Academy of Malay Studies Library, the Institute of Language and Literature and Temerloh District Library in Pahang for the invaluable help I received in the course of my research.

Many people in different parts of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have given me various kinds of help in the preparation of this work. Although they are too many to be named individually, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all of them. I owe a great deal to my colleagues: Dr. Els Bogaerts, Dr. Ernanda, Dr. Nurenzia Yannuar, Dr. Edegar da Conceição, Dr. Mohamad Naquiuddin Dahamat Azam, Dr. Ahmad Syibli Othman, Norlela Ismail, Mark van de Water (paranymph), Taufiq Hanafi (paranymph), Mohd Zacaery Khalik, Mubarika Nugraheni, Nazarudin, Sudarmoko, Syahril Siddik and Julia Se at Leiden University for their willingness to discuss many aspects of the present study. I also wish to thank my colleagues from University of Malaya in Malaysia for their moral support throughout my doctoral studies at Leiden University.

A note of gratitude too to the helpful editors, Dr. Klarijn Anderson Loven and Vicky Nash of Academic Affairs in the United Kingdom, and to the rigorous critical readers of an earlier draft of this work. A special thank you to Emeritus Prof. Dr. Muhammad Haji Salleh from University of Malaya and Prof. Dr. Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf from International Islamic University in Malaysia for helping me with translations in Chapter 2. Thank you to Dr. Els Bogaerts and Mark van de Water for helping me with Dutch translation.

I wish to thank Encik Roslan Madun for providing me with the opportunity to learn about the musical culture in Pahang. To all Pahang musicians, I owe a debt of gratitude for their insights into Pahang musical culture. To my music friends in Pahang, Melaka, Johor, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, I am deeply grateful for all the assistance given to me.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my husband, Jedzry Fadzlin Jalaluddin for the patience and unending encouragement that he extended to me throughout my research period. His confidence in me was a continuous source of inspiration. To my mother, Hajah Sanariah Ahmad and my siblings (Saiidi Ameir Silahudin, Saidatussazlin Silahudin, Saiidi Shakirin Silahudin, Ahmad Kamal Silahudin and Ahmad Kamil Silahudin), thank you for your endless love.

'Knowing the world through sound is fundamentally different from knowing the world through vision' (Smith, 2003: 129)

