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Malay singing in Pahang villages: identity and practice

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CHAPTER 2

THE PAST MUSICAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE MALAY WORLD

2.1 Introduction

According to folk stories, the cultural practices of Pahang Malays were adopted from Melaka (Aripin Said, personal communication, 26 November 2014). This claim has been reinforced by Abdul Jalil Borham (2012), who demonstrated how cultural links between Melaka and Pahang began in the late-fifteenth century during the reign of the first Sultan of Pahang, Raja Muhammad (r.1470-75), who was the son of the Melakan Sultan Mansur Syah. Substantial migration into Pahang occurred from Melaka following the appointment of the first ruler of Pahang. Aside from the political impact this had, the people of Pahang were also introduced at this time to the art and culture of the Melakan people. Hence, in this chapter[1], I will be discussing a certain social environment that is part of the Malay world, of which Pahang is, in turn, a part. As two-thirds of my work focuses on vocal forms, which are understood to be inherited from the past, I believe that this aspect is relevant as some of the functions and meanings of historical songs have been retained in present music genres.

In his study, Nicolas (2017) explores the historical significance of musical terms mentioned in a number of examples of Malay classical literature dated from the late fourteenth to early seventeenth century. He presents musical terms using the chronological data provided by the Malay Concordance Project (MCP) website (http://mcp.anu.edu.au). From the late fourteenth century, Malay literary authors made use of musical references and musical imagery as mentioned by Nicolas as 'illustrations of a musical life in that period' (Nicolas, 2017: 5). He also adds that the musical world 'portrayed in these texts can be deduced from these musical terms' (Nicolas, 2017: 30). Nicolas divided the musical and literary terms into seven categories: 1) musical

[1] Part of this chapter was presented on 14 September 2017 at Garuda Plaza in Medan, Indonesia, and published in the Proceedings of the International Seminar of Oral Literature by *Balai Bahasa Sumatera Utara* (ISBN 978-602-9172-33-1).

instruments; 2) vocal music; 3) playing techniques; 4) dance; 5) theatrical forms; 6) literary genres and 7) religious texts. From these I will only look further at three categories: musical instruments, vocal music and literary genres.

According to Nicolas, terminology relating to musical instruments can be associated with four sources: Sanskrit musical terms; musical terms from the Middle East, exemplified by the term *nobat*; Javanese musical terms as products of long-term contact between the three early Malay kingdoms, namely Majapahit, Samudra-Pasai and Melaka, and exemplified by the term gong; and musical terms shared with the Orang Asli. Several vocal music and literary genres are also mentioned. For vocal music, Nicolas identifies *zikir*/*dikir* and *gurindam*. Meanwhile, rhymed verses, *pantun*, *syair*, *seloka* and prose narrative *hikayat* (narrative text), fall into the category of literary genres.

Nicolas's findings, however, are subject to at least two limitations. Firstly, there is limited evidence of how the songs mentioned above are performed within the context of the literary world. Secondly, Nicolas' work does not cover the musical instruments that are used to accompany singing performances. With these limitations acknowledged, in this chapter I hope to provide useful, additional insights into what Malay music was like in the past through a contextual analysis of Malay literary works.

2.2 Malay classical literature

Malay classical literature is part of the cultural heritage of island as well as mainland South-East Asia. Malay literature presents a consistent tradition, with form and content displaying classical values: thematic control, stylistic simplicity and formal structure (Aveling, 2002). These features perhaps have inspired Winstedt (1969), Osman (1971) and Liaw (1975) to use the term 'classical' in their writings. To study Malay music from the past, I have referred to twelve Malay classical works (historical or fictional) from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries (Table 1).

The dates of these texts are mostly speculative. Except for *Syair Seratus Siti*, all of the works are in prose. I chose these twelve literary works on the basis of the historical context of the songs and the musical practices described in them. The language and literature derived from the written traditions in these transition periods from the late Hindu-Buddhist period into the Islamic period shaped the earliest values associated with Malays.

Table 1: Selection of Malay classical literature

Title	Dated circa
1. *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*	1371
2. *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*	<1380
3. *Hikayat Raja Pasai*	1390
4. *Hikayat Pandawa Lima*	1525
5. *Hikayat Indraputra*	<1600
6. *Sejarah Melayu*	1612
7. *Hikayat Aceh*	1625
8. *Bustan as-Salatin*	1640
9. *Hikayat Hang Tuah*	1700
10. *Misa Melayu*	1780
11. *Adat Raja Melayu*	1779, 1850
12. *Syair Seratus Siti*	1890

Many of the works are not set in a Malay context; some are adaptations of texts from other languages, for instance, Indian/Sanskrit, Persian and Old Javanese (Kawi). A question I wished to examine was: To what extent is the story-world, including its musical aspects, a reflection of Malay realities? I argue that in many of them the story-world is 'Malayized' in some respects. Other scholars of the subject agree: Swettenham (1878) even applied the Indian term 'nautch' (traditional dance in India) to a performance on the Malay Peninsula, and Sheppard (1967) links Malay instruments to Java. Malay authors repackaged stories from the original works with new and beneficial additions to appeal to the tastes of people from the Malay Archipelago. This gave new Malay interpretations to the original story adding to the existing information, wisdom, learning and entertainment they contained. This demonstrates the attitude Malay authors had towards the concept of multiculturalism, emphasizing the aspect of 'accommodates' but not 'discriminates' in Malay tradition. For instance, the Persian-Arabic genres of *ghazal*, *qasida*, *qit'ah*, *ruba'i* and *mathnawī* were sung or performed, having been adapted for the Malay population.

Ghazal emerged in Persian-Arabic countries as a genre of poetry presented to an audience through chanting and singing. As a result, *ghazal* developed as a singing genre in many local cultures. Malay *ghazal* is one of many *ghazal* genres which evolved in the Malay world by merging poetic and musical ideas from the Middle East and India. In Malay *ghazal*, the essential feature is Malay traditional *pantun* verses that are very different to the Indo-Persian (Urdu) literary adaptations. The text in Malay *ghazal* does not directly

reflect feelings of romance, which is the main subject of *ghazal* genres in Persia and India. The Malay *ghazal* performance experiences the aesthetics of the music rather than the aesthetics of the poetry. *Ghazal* and *qasida* emerged in the same time period and have influenced each other in terms of being special singing styles cultivated through the input of other cultures. *Qasida al-Burdah*, the panegyric of the Prophet Muhammad, was furnished with a translation into Malay prior to 1600. The Malay version was not in a *qasida* format, but was a type of rhyming prose. Inspired poets and singers in the Malay world have adapted the *qasida* text into their music with different musical arrangements. The modern *qasida* is often a fusion with contemporary or traditional Arabic, Western and South-East Asian idioms and has been seen as a creative means of preaching (Agha, 2019). *Qit'ah* is an occasional poem and is of greater simplicity than *qasida*. This simplicity of the language used is closer to spontaneous and direct utterances of grief. In most references that I have consulted, *qit'ah* is a term for a short rhythmic song used in the recitation of the Qur'an.

Ruba'i is usually, but inaccurately, considered a quatrain (a stanza of four lines, especially one having alternate rhymes). *Ruba'i* is rather a poem of the type which Malays call *syair*. One of the outstanding manuscripts exhibited in Aceh Museum due to 'the scarcity of its contents, the fame of authors, the beauty of calligraphy or illumination, great age or unique physical characteristics' is a *ruba'i* (Nurdin AR, 2012: 102). *Ruba'i* by Hamzah Fansuri from Aceh spread rapidly through the dissemination of copies, which were initially designated as the *syair* of Hamzah, meaning simply his 'poems' (Teeuw, 1966: 440). This general term then became the name of a specific genre and began to inspire imitation not only on the original religious themes, but also across a wider range of subjects. At present, *ruba'i* (*syair* with religious themes) is one kind of *syair* performance in Malaysia and Indonesia. Finally, *mathnawī* (spiritual couplets) has been very thoroughly studied and appreciated by scholars, devotees and men of letters from both the East and the West. Mathnawī is often quoted and many people know lines or longer segments of their texts by heart (Safavi and Weightman, 2009: 40).

Malays had traditionally associated with Java. Java had greater political and economic power than the Malay-speaking region. Indeed, the Javanese language was admired and Malays would appear in Javanese attire at court (Robson, 1992). The huge influence of Javanese culture upon the Malay world has been described by Cortesáo (1944), who noted that soon after the Portuguese had captured Melaka, Tome Pires wrote that its inhabitants were 'fond of the mimes after the fashion of Java'. Malay traditional literature and

performances contain elements with strong Javanese influences. The Javanese presence in Malay texts in various Malay languages is not considered to be a passive adoption. There are Malay texts with that contain episodes including Javanese characters such as *Sejarah Melayu* (c.1612) and *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (c.1700). *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* (c.1525), authored by a Javanese, is referred to as 'Malayo-Javanese literature' (Robson, 1992: 27).

Arps (2018) has coined a new term, Javanaiserie, in his endeavour to look at the role of Javanese elements and other cultural influences in the Malay world. Arps pays special attention to the Javanese roots of '*Nawaruci*', a Javanese manuscript written in Malay. The Javanese background has, in part, been relevant to Malay literary works and performance. Here, I consider Javanaiserie with regard to the 'prestigious singing' (Putra and Creese, 2012: 279) of two styles of Javanese poetic texts: *kakawin* and *kidung*. The term *'kakawin*' is derived from the Sanskrit word *kavya*. It refers to long epic poems, usually hundreds of stanzas in length. The oldest known *kakawin* is *Ramayana* from the mid-ninth century. The romantic and domestic aspects of court life for women in the courts of pre-Islamic Java are the dominant themes in *kakawin* (Rubinstein, 2006). Written in indigenous metres, *kidung* is a chant, song and melody that is concerned 'with the exploits of legendary Javanese kings and religious themes' (Putra and Creese, 2012: 274).

Hikayat Seri Rama (the Malay version of the *Ramayana*) and episodes from the *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* (a version of the *Mahabharata*) provide names and Javanese features for Malay shadow puppet play. Some changes developed as a result of local traditions. The Malay shadow puppet play uses smaller puppets than its Javanese counterpart. Also, Javanese subjects and assumptions are expressed in the Malay performer's own style and from his own perspective and understanding. Malay shadow puppet plays have been performed in a variety of Malay languages: the Kelantanese dialect in the border provinces of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang; the Kedah dialect in the north-east; and Javanese in the south-eastern part of Johor.

In summary, the wealth of other cultures (mainly Persian-Arabic and Javanese) blended aesthetically with local beliefs in many aspects of Malay culture in the past. Musical references and musical imagery in Malay literary works offer perspectives on musical life of that time. Some of these have been discussed by Nicolas (2017), but with limited information on vocal music. Before I analyse the past musical forms/songs, below I provide an introduction to the Malay literary works used in this study.

2.2.1 *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*

Hikayat Bayan Budiman (The Tale of the Wise Parrot) derives from the Hindu/Sanskrit work, *Sukasapti* (Aveling, 2002: 163), and takes its Malay title from the bird that relates the seventy stories included in the manuscript. The manuscript of *Sukasapti* has been translated into many languages. The most important translation is *Tutinameh*, a Persian translation by someone called Nakhshabi (Aveling, 2002: 164).

The Malay version is considerably shorter than Nakhshabi's work, because it skips many plots of the stories. The Malay version was adapted from an earlier Persian version. This work has other names in Malay such as *Hikayat Khoja Maimun*, *Hikayat Khoja Mubarak* and *Cerita Taifah*. Besides the Malay version, there are also versions of it in Buginese and Makasarese. The Malay version differs in a significant number of ways from the original work. In the original manuscript, the major characters are named Haradatta, Madanasema and Prabhawati, while in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* they are called Khoja Mubarak, Khoja Maimun and Bibi Zainab (Aveling, 2002: 165).

2.2.2 *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*

The region of North Sumatra has been the centre of Malay traditions ever since the emergence of Melaka in the fifteenth century. *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* came from the region of North Sumatra as it was translated from Persian. The manuscript tells of the courage and nobility of Amir Hamzah, an Islamic figure. Interestingly, the Sultan of Melaka asked his defenders and soldiers to read this work as a way of raising their spirits on the night before the Portuguese stormed the city of Melaka in 1511 (Braginsky, 2004).

2.2.3 *Hikayat Raja Pasai*

The fourteenth-century *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (Tale of the Kings of Pasai) is of North Sumatran provenance, and was influenced by the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*. This prose work combines the genres of historical chronicle and heroic epic. The histories provided in this work are a mixture of facts and fascinating myths (Aveling, 2002).

2.2.4 *Hikayat Pandawa Lima*

Hikayat Pandawa Lima (Tale of the Five Pandawa) is based on an Old Javanese *kakawin*, *Ghatotkacasraya*, and the *kakawin Arjuna Wiwaha* (Zoetmulder, 1974), which was adapted from the Indian-inspired epics of either *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata*. This work is considered '*hikayat* literature' (Aveling, 2002: 13). The *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* appears in Malay literature between the late-fourteenth and early-sixteenth centuries and was known under various titles including *Hikayat Pandawa Panca Kelima*, *Hikayat Pandawa Jaya*, *Hikayat Pandawa*, *Hikayat Darmawangsa*, *Hikayat Pandawa Lebur* and *Hikayat Gilaran Pandu Turunan Pandawa* (Hussain, 1964).

The language used is similar to the language used in other Hindu-derived *hikayats*, and differs from the language of strongly Islamic texts, for instance, *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*. *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* was translated into Malay at about the same time as the composition of the Malay literary version of the *Ramayana*, the *Hikayat Seri Rama* (Chronicle of the Great Rama), between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. Javanese authors may have composed these two works. 'In Suma Oriental (1944)', said Aveling, 'Tomé Pires tells that many Javanese migrated to Melaka when it was at the height of its prosperity and power. The Javanese embraced Islam and settled in the Malay capital for lengthy periods. A few would have had an interest in literary course. *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* bears no name of its author or a date of composition. It was composed at the request of some major figures' (Aveling, 2002: 134). In *Hikayat Pandawa Lima*, reference to singing appears to be used to praise a person's beauty.

2.2.5 *Hikayat Indraputra*

Hikayat Indraputra is the epitome of romantic *penglipur lara* or 'rhapsodist' literature. It contains what were originally Hindu stories with a strong overlay of Islamic elements (Aveling, 2002: 146). As a 'transitional *hikayat*', Aveling (2002) also mentioned that this work was composed at the time when Hinduism and Islam were equally potent influences on Malay culture. Roolvink (1975: 9, 13) points out that *Hikayat Indraputra* was probably written during the seventeenth century, when Malay literary activity was focused on Aceh and not on other parts of the Archipelago. He also points out that the *Hikayat Indraputra* is written in good Malay and is unlikely to be a translation from any other language. Several texts may have influenced this work including *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*. *Hikayat Indraputra* was recited to the

accompaniment of tambourines, an instrument very popular among Malays (Braginsky, 2004).

2.2.6 *Sejarah Melayu*

Sejarah Melayu or *Sulalatus Salatin* is one of the finest literary and historical works in the Malay language, which Winstedt (1938a) has dated as being written not later than 1535-1536. The recension of *Sejarah Melayu* was composed around 1536 by an author who may have lived in Melaka before being captured by the Portuguese and who could still remember life in the Melaka court environment. *Sejarah Melayu* is an important source of historical information about Melaka and the Malay world prior to Melaka's defeat by the Portuguese in 1511. It relates the history of the Malay Sultanate in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, the period of the transformation of the Malays from a Hindu-Buddhist culture to an Islamic one (Nicolas, 2017).

Sejarah Melayu has a number of versions (Roolvink, 1976; Braginsky, 2004). Braginsky (2004) indicates that in *Sejarah Melayu*, the word *nyanyi* designates popular *pantun* (stanzas with cross rhyming). He also added that in the post-1612 recension of *Sejarah Melayu*, stanzas of *syair* describing the garden owned by the magical princess of Mount Ledang are found. However, each *syair* stanza in *Sejarah Melayu* correlates with special occurrences or celebrations. *Sejarah Melayu* indicates that dance was a form of social contact between Malays (Melaka) and the Javanese (Majapahit). In it, Tun Bijaya Sura of Melaka was asked to perform a dance that used to be danced by the clerics of Majapahit. Prior to this in the story, the clerics of Majapahit had requested that Laksamana of Melaka perform a dance, as the former had declared that he had never seen Laksamana, who was not only great in battle but had a talent for and fame in dance.

2.2.7 *Hikayat Aceh*

Aceh produced many anonymous works, including the *Hikayat Aceh* (Tale of Aceh). This work is a seventeenth-century epic composed after the enthronement of the famous ruler of Aceh, Iskandar Muda (1606-1636) in 1607, and before the late-seventeenth century. A blending of Hindu and Muslim beliefs is found in this work: both Alexander the Great (considered an early Islamic prophet) and the Hindu god Vishnu play a role in the chronicle's foundation story (Aveling, 2002: 271). Kloos (2015) interprets this Malay-

language work as hagiographic of the life and rule of the Sultan, and representative of an older hagiographic tradition, fashioned after Persian examples. In this work, it was stated that the French admiral, Beaulieu, who visited the court of Sultan Iskandar Muda in 1621, had heard that there were female singers who glorified the sultan's military exploits in their songs (Lombard, 1986). Based on that, this gives the impression that vocal music began to reach its peak in the early seventeenth century.

2.2.8 *Bustan as-Salatin*

Jelani Harun (2004) reveals that the Persian tradition of universal history and the Indo-Persian tradition of precision in historical writing were brought to the Malay world in the seventeenth century by the Gujarati theologian, Nuruddin al-Raniri through the work of *Bustan as-Salatin* (the Garden of Sultans). This work was written in Malay and was composed between 1638 and 1641 on the orders of Sultan Iskandar Thani, son of the Pahang ruler Sultan Ahmad Shah, who had been brought to Aceh at the age of seven when his native country was conquered by Sultan Iskandar Muda in 1618. Sultan Iskandar Thani was the son-in-law of Sultan Iskandar Muda. Even though Nuruddin did not mention that Sultan Iskandar Thani ordered him to write this work, one would guess that the work is closely linked to the monarch because of the fulsome praise he, the king, receives in part of this work to detriment of the other kings mentioned (Aveling, 2002: 274). Several works, including *Sejarah Melayu*, influenced the author of this work. *Bustan as-Salatin* is considered a theological and historical treatise.

2.2.9 *Hikayat Hang Tuah*

Hikayat Hang Tuah (Epic of Hang Tuah) from the early eighteenth century is a well-known and popular work that began as oral tales associated with the legendary heroes of the Melaka kingdom in the fifteenth century. *Hikayat Hang Tuah* was probably composed in Johor on a single occasion at some time between 1688 and the 1710s. Compositionally, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* strongly resembles traditional Malay historical works, particularly *Sejarah Melayu*. One of the best known stories about Hang Tuah, the most well-known warrior from Melaka, is that he was sent to Pahang on a mission to present a proposal of marriage from the Sultan of Melaka to Tun Teja, the beautiful daughter of Bendahara of Pahang. The importance placed on the Pahang River in this work as the main route used by Hang Tuah to bring Tun Teja to Melaka

is discussed in Shaffril et al. (2011). The phrase '*tanah Melayu'* (land of Malay) is scattered throughout this *hikayat* to refer to the peninsula, rather than Sumatra (Andaya, 2011). There is an indication in *Hikayat Hang Tuah* that the people of Melaka were pleased to listen to songs by a singer from Inderapura (Pahang). There is also mention in this work of '*bunyi-bunyian cara Melayu*', which literally translates to 'Malay ways of making sounds'. Dancing also features in this *hikayat*, as indicated by '*menari cara Melayu'* or, literally, 'dancing in Malay style', and a *laksamana* (a warrior) of Melaka demonstrates a dance in front of the people of Inderapura who proclaim that they have never seen such dance performed by the *laksamana* before.

2.2.10 *Misa Melayu*

Misa Melayu belongs to what Winstedt referred to as Malay Histories (1969: ix) or what Liaw calls *Sastra Sejarah* (History of Literature) (1975). The author of this work is Raja Chulan bin Raja Abdul Hamid. He was a member of the royal family of Perak in the eighteenth century and had the title of *Raja Muda* (Crown Prince). Sultan Muzaffar Shah asked Raja Chulan to write *Misa Melayu* twice, once in prose and once in verse (Aveling, 2002: 268). Other names for *Misa Melayu* include *Misal Melayu, Hikayat Salasilah Perak* and *Hikayat Raja Ke Laut.*

Misa is probably taken from the word '*misal*' ('example'), as noted by Maxwell in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (JRAS) in 1878. Maxwell corrected his interpretation in the same journal, suggesting that *Misa* was based on the name of a very popular Javanese romantic story in Perak at that time, *Misa Perbu Jaya* or *Misa Jawa*. As far as I am able to ascertain, the title of the Javanese romance in Perak, however, is unknown. The comparison between the Javanese romance in Perak and *Misa Jawa* resulted in the name *Misa Melayu* (Sutrisno, 1983). *Misa* in Sanskrit means war-buffalo, champion of the arena, and was used as a title for warriors in medieval romance. *Misa* is also an ancient Javanese title. According to Buyong Adil (1966) the buffalo in *Misa Melayu* has a symbolical meaning of courage and bravery and thus, *Misa Melayu* means the hero of Malay.

According to Winstedt (1969), *Misa Melayu* is a historical work, as the focus of attention is on historical events rather than its fictitious aspects. While *Misa Melayu* is initially a narrative work with aesthetic and fictitious elements like other literary works, it has a historical background. This kind of

writing gives a picture of the past in a certain period and at a certain location. *Misa Melayu* is based on genuine history, emphasizing real places, people and events (Aveling, 2002: 13). This work also provides information on the reigns of various sultans of Perak, placing its greatest emphasis on Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain Shah (Aveling, 2002: 62). The power struggles and the enmity of the nobles, the frequent interference of outside powers such as the state of Selangor, the Buginese and the Dutch are also recounted in *Misa Melayu*. The events recounted in this work were contemporaneous with the author, suggesting that Raja Chulan lived from about 1720 to 1786.

In *Misa Melayu*, Raja Chulan included accounts of a number of interesting events, such as royal fishing festivals (Aveling, 2002: 62). Sutrisno (1983) discusses the various musical instruments used at a royal ceremony mentioned in *Misa Melayu*. These included gong*, gendang, serunai*, *nafiri*, *negara*, *ceracap*, *rebab/harbab*, *rebana, bangsi* and *biola*. However, Sutrisno has not provided evidence as to whether or not these instruments were used to accompany song performances.

2.2.11 *Adat Raja Melayu*

This work describes the ceremonies and customs related to pregnancy, birth, betrothal and marriage, as well as coronation and funeral ceremonies as recorded in Malay courts and as noted by Tuan Abdulmuhit, an eighteenth-century observer and mosque official. This work has several versions: *Peraturan Adat Raja-Raja* (Customs of the Rulers), *Perintah Adat Raja-Raja dan Bidan* (Customary Order of the Rulers and Midwives) and *Bahwa Ini Kitab Adat Segala Raja-Raja Melayu Dalam Segala Negeri* (The Customary Book of Malay Kings in all States).

2.2.12 *Syair Seratus Siti*

Syair Seratus Siti is a Malay work of nineteenth-century literature associated with singing/songs. Junaidi Kasdan (2004) highlighted that, apart from the Malay language, some dialects from the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, as well as Arabic-Persian and Javanese can be found in this work. It was written, as the title suggests, in *syair* stanzas and had a social function, serving both as entertainment and for didactic purposes.

In summary, the twelve works described above, dating from the late fourteenth century to the late nineteenth century, are part of the cultural heritage of the Malays of South-East Asia. They demonstrate form, provide content and exhibit certain classical values. In the next part, I will discuss the song forms and perspectives illustrated in these works.

2.3 Songs from the past in Malay classical literature

A remarkable range of genres, musical practices and instruments is mentioned in Malay classical literature (Andaya, 2011), suggesting that music in the past was diverse and broad-ranging. In this section, three specific areas will be examined: song forms, the representation of songs and songs with instrumental accompaniment.

2.3.1 Song forms

Malay literary writers made use of songs and musical imagery as illustrations of musical life in the period in which they were writing. Song reference is a literary device used to record musical events that were part of the narrative of a particular event in Malay classical literature. Song imagery, mostly short, is a literary technique used to embellish narrative flow and the literary appeal of a prose or verse form in Malay literary texts. None of the Malay literary texts 'take music as their principle topic, neither are they written for a specialist musical audience, meaning that no technical details are provided' (McCallum, 2019: 106).

The following is a reflection on the poetic forms mentioned in Malay classical literature as songs that incorporate context. All quotations listed below are transcribed from the website of the MCP and translated by the author.

1) In Winstedt's (ed.) edition of *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* there is a quotation that mentions four written song forms, *syair, gurindam, pantun* and *seloka*. Raja Harman Syah used these song forms to express his passionate love. The related quote reads:

> [*S*]*erta diambilnya kertas yang tersurat beberapa syair dan gurindam, pantun dan seloka yang menyatakan berahinya akan Raja Harman Syah itu.* (Bayan 149: 16)

> Then, Raja Harman Syah took a piece of paper containing stanzas of the *syair* and *gurindam, pantun* and *seloka* which to reflect his intense love.

Hikayat Bayan Budiman also includes mention of the term *berhikayat*, which means a romantic/historical text (*hikayat*). The text includes *pantun* and *seloka*. In this context, *pantun* and *seloka* are mischievous or witty quatrains that would distract the listener, making him/her forget about his/her emotion (*lalai*). For example:

> [*M*]*aka kata Bibi Zainab, 'berhikayatlah dahulu, supaya suka hatiku'. Maka dalam hati Bayan, 'Baiklah. Boléh hamba berhikayat tetapi dengan hikayat juga aku perlalaikan. Dengan pantun seloka itu, maka padamlah hawa nafsunya'.* (Bayan 73: 22)

> Thus, Bibi Zainab says, 'Please tell me a story to delight me'. The parrakeet reflects, 'Fine. I will narrate but with the narration, you will be distracted. Thus, the *seloka* verses will make you forget the Prince'.

Another form of song, *madah*, is commonly referenced in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*. A *madah* is a praising song. *Madah* is mentioned along with *pantun*, *seloka* and *syair*, as shown in the following quotation:

> [*S*]*etelah ia sampai kepada Bibi Zainab itu, maka dikhabarkannya segala pesan perkataan anak raja itu, semuanya habis disampaikan orang tua itu, serta lagi dengan beberapa pantun seloka madah dan syair akan memberi ghairat berahinya dengan pujuk yang lemak lembut.* (Bayan 6: 29)

> Once he reached Bibi Zainab, he conveyed all the messages of the Prince, including the *pantun*, *seloka*, *madah*, and *syair* to instil her love and passion for the Prince through gentle coaxing.

In brief, *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* provides examples of five forms of song: *pantun*, *seloka*, *madah*, *syair* and *gurindam*. From these song forms, this work demonstrates that *pantun* and *seloka* are included as part of the *hikayat*.

2) In *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, several forms of song are found. *Pantun* continues to be mentioned in this work and, in the following quotation, it is referred to as the 'sayings' of the elders:

[*M*]*aka titah Raja Nusyirwan, 'Pekerjaan ini tidak dapat tiada seperti pantun orang tua-tua'.* (AHmz 127: 26)

Thus, Raja Nusyirwan declares, 'This work can never be like the *pantun* of the elders'.

Syair, like *pantun*, continues to be mentioned in this work. *Syair* is part of *hikayat*. In this context, the *syair* is about the Prophet Muhammad. The relevant quotation reads:

[*M*]*aka Amirul Mukminin Abbas pun menceterakan kisah ini kepada segala sahabat Rasulullah seperti kata syair: Muhammad itu lebih daripada Kaf dan Nun. Bahawa apabila hari dukacita, bacalah hikayat ini, nescaya hilang dukacita itu.* (AHmz xxx: 1)

Thus, Amirul Mukmini Abbas narrated the story of the Prophet Muhammad to his friends like a stanza of the *syair*: The qualities of the Prophet Muhammad were more than that of the Kaf and the Nun. Hence when you experience sadness, your sorrow will be lessened after reading the story of the Prophet.

It is in the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* that two songs, *zikir* and *bait*, are mentioned for the first time in Malay classical works. *Zikir* (a loud chanting of religious sayings, from Arabic) is a form of prayer that, in this context, is recited after a meal. A quotation mentioning *zikir* reads:

[*S*]*etelah sudah makan, maka ia pun membaca doa dan membaca zikirullah.* (AHmz 608: 16)

After dinner, they offered prayers and recited *zikir* in prays of Allah.

The word *bait* comes from the Arabic word *bayt* meaning a poem with two lines. It is performed for Arabian warriors whilst eating. The quotation mentioning *bait* is as follows:

[*M*]*aka segala pahlawan Arab, pahlawan Zamin Ambar, dan pahlawan Zamin Tauran pun makan minum bercampur baur. Maka ketika itu Amir Hamzah pun berbait.* (AHmz 671: 9)

Thus, all the Arabs, Zamin Ambar and Zamin Tauran warriors even ate and drank together. Then, Amir Hamzah recited a *bait* poem.

In summary, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* illustrates the existence of four forms of song: *pantun*, *syair*, *zikir* and *bait*. Thus it was not until the late fourteenth century that the author became familiar with Arabian people and things and started including Arabic terms (*syair*, *zikir* and *bait*) in his work.

3) *Syair* and *pantun* continue to be mentioned in *Hikayat Raja Pasai*. The work includes *syair* in the form of two lines (in Arabic, with Malay translation) as follows:

> *Sabbat'alaiya 'I-masa'ib,*
> *(Telah didatangkan atasku percintaan,)*
> *Alaiya 'I-ayyam sarat layaliyan,*
> *(Jikalau percintaan didatangkan atasku segala hari ini.)* (Pasai 116: 10)
>
> Love has been presented to me,
> Today, love came to my life.

Pantun appears infrequently in this work. In one of the contexts, a quatrain of *pantun* is presented by an administrator who was making obeisance to honour a king. A related quotation reads:

> [*M*]*aka Tun Perpatih Tulus Agung Tukang Sukara pun berdatang sembah seraya ia berpantun, 'Lada siapa dibangsalkan? Selama lada sekerati, Pada siapa disesalkan? Tuan juga empunya pekerti'.* (Pasai 125:10)
>
> Thus, Tun Perpatih Tulus Agung Tukang Sukara recited a *pantun* to honour the King, 'Whose pepper is kept in the hut? For the pepper is to be severed, To whom does one express regret? You are indeed the source, my lord'.

An interesting insight is that there is an indication that an Arabic *syair* was borrowed and translated into Malay by the author of this work. It seems that the Malay authors in the late fourteenth century were acquainted with Arabic *syair*. The translation of Arabic poems (in this case, *syair*) into Malay is likely to have been part of the process of creating in Malay literature.

4) In *Hikayat Pandawa Lima*, two Javanese literary terms, *kakawin* and *kidung* are mentined, as is the Malay *pantun*. *Kakawin* and *kidung* are mentioned six times in this work and are associated with singing, with *kakawin* performed in a light-hearted, jesting manner. A quotation related to this reads:

> [*A*]*da yang menyanyi, ada yang mengidung, ada yang berkakawin bersenda gurau.* (PandL 29: 29)
>
> Some chanted poems and made jokes.

The rendition of *kakawin* and *kidung* is envisaged as harmonious and pleasant, as the following quotation indicates:

> [*M*]*aka Sang Bimanyu diambilnya bunga cempaka disuratnya dengan kidung dan kakawin terlalu manis bunyinya.* (PandL 30: 16)
>
> Thus, Sang Bimanyu took a frangipani flower and wrote sweet *kidung* and *kakawin* on its petals.

Hikayat Pandawa Lima describes *pantun* as a sung text performed by maidens for the leader, as the quotation below indicates. This strengthens the notion that *pantun* as a sung text has developed since ancient times.

> *[M]aka kata segala dayang-dayang itu, 'Haruslah Sang Bimanyu itu diperbuatnya pantun dan nyanyi kerana terlalu amat baik parasnya'.* (PandL 27: 4)
>
> Thus, the maidens said, 'Let us prepare verses of the *pantun* and song to praise the good appearance'. Because of Sang Bimanyu's good appearance, we shall prepare verses of the *pantun* and sing'.

In summary, *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* exhibits both Javanese and Malay forms of song.

From the first work (*Hikayat Bayan Budiman*) to the fourth work (*Hikayat Pandawa Lima*), *pantun* is seen as a popular song form that appears in every work. This suggests that *pantun* is largely understood as Malay's finest, most effective and touching poetic style.

5) Until the sixteenth century, five significant forms of song appear to be popular in Malay literary works: *syair*, *pantun*, *seloka*, *madah* and *bait*. This situation continues in the fifth work, *Hikayat Inderaputra*. A quotation mentioning *syair*, *madah*, *pantun* and *seloka* reads:

> [*M*]*aka didengari oleh Indraputra bunyi suara orang bernyanyi dan orang bersyair, dan suara orang bersyair dan suara orang bermadah dan berpantun dan berseloka.* (Ind 60: 9)

> Thus, Indraputra could hear the sound of people singing verses of the *syair*, *madah*, *pantun* and *seloka*.

Bait is also mentioned alongside *syair* and *madah*. The mention in the text of three different kinds of birds: the talking-bird of romance, the mynah and the parrot suggests that these informal terms for young women are associated with the songs. A quotation in this context reads:

> [*M*]*aka bayan itu bersyair dan tiung bermadah dan nuri berbait, bagai-bagai rupanya ragamnya.* (Ind 79: 22)
>
> Thus, the parrakeet sang *syair*, the mynah recited the *madah* and the parrot uttered the *bait*.

This suggests that the author of *Hikayat Indraputra* may continue to use these well-known forms of song in his work. I will examine whether this is the case in the next work.

6) It seems that the trend does continue to appear in the sixth work, *Sejarah Melayu* in which five stanzas of *pantun* can be found:

Quatrains	Translations
(1)Mana Sultan Abu Syahid? *budak-budak bermain bantak,* *Tuan seorang dipandang baik,* *bagai cincin dengan permata.*	Where can Sultan Abu Syahid be? the boys are at their games, you, Sir, are well regarded, like a ring with precious stones.
(2)Cau Panden anak Bubunnya, *hendak menyerang ke Melaka,* *ada cincin berisi bunga,* *bunga berladung air mata.*	Cau Panden the son of Bubunnya, who wishes to overrun Melaka, there is a ring decorated with blossoms, and the blossoms are wet with tears.
(3)Lalai-lalai mana bubutan? *bubutan lagi di kelati,* *kakak Tun Telanai, di mana pungutan?* *pungutan lagi di Tanjung Jati*.	Where is Bubutan, Lalai? bubutan is in *kelati*, the sister of Tun Telanai, where was she picked from? she was picked from Tanjung Jati.
(4)Kota Pahang dimakan api, *sampai ke tepi hampir titian,* *bukan kularang kamu berlaki,* *bukan begini perjanjian.*	Kota Pahang is consumed by fire, which reached the edge of the bridge, I did not forbid you to be married, but this is not as we promised.
(5)Apa dijeruk dengan belimbing? *geranggang mudik muara,*	Why mix lime with star fruit? the bamboo rafts is rowed upstream,

apa ditengok di balik dinding?	what do you see behind the wall?
Tun Hassan Temenggung	Tun Hassan, son of the Chief Minister.
anak Bendahara.	

There is a quotation mentioning *syair*, *bait*, *gurindam* and *seloka* in which these forms of song are associated with the game of chess. The quotation reads:

> [*M*]*aka bercaturlah Tun Bahara itu dengan orang Melaka. Lawannya itu berlikir, ia tiada berlikir, pandang kiri, pandang kanan, sambil ia bersyair, dan berbait, dan bergurindam, dan berseloka.* (SM 144: 18)
>
> Thus, the chess-like game began between Tun Bahara and the inhabitants of Melaka. The foes drank liquor; he did not, but looked to the left and to the right, while singing the *syair*, *bait*, *gurindam* and *seloka*.

Like others, this author has incorporated well-known Malay songs in his work, with *Sejarah Melayu* containing five stanzas of *pantun* covering different themes. In my analysis, *Sejarah Melayu* is the first Malay classical work of literature to include stanzas of *pantun*. This inclusion indicates that the author of *Sejarah Melayu* is highly skilled in his writing and familiar with Malay tradition.

7) After about two hundred years, the term '*dikir*' reappeared in literary work, as in the word *padikiran* in *Hikayat Aceh. Dikir* comes from the Arabic '*zikir*', which means remembrance and the act of praising Allah. It is interesting to note, however, that, in the context of *Hikayat Aceh*, the chanters (*padikir*) perform *dikir* with body movements or dance as indicated in the following excerpt:

> [*M*]*aka ada di lepau istana itu beberapa dari padikiran yang menari dan segala perhiasannya dan beberapa daripada biduan yang maha merdu suaranya.* (Aceh 105: 2)
>
> Then, several singers with melodious voices sang, and at the same time they danced in the throne room of the palace.

This discovery reinforces the present-day notion that Aceh in North Sumatra has long been associated with a musical culture of *dikir*, and that, according to Kartomi (2012: 16), there are 'many commonalities between the musical arts of the various Malay subgroups around Sumatra's coast'.

8) In *Bustan as-Salatin*, two ancient musical instruments, the *dap* (tambourine) and the *rebana* are mentioned as being used to accompany performances of *dikir*. These instruments are embellished with gold, gems and silver. This work also identifies the term *biduan* to refer to the chanter or singer of the *dikir*, who is visualized as having a melodious, tuneful voice and wearing gold and jewellery. The related quotation reads:

> [*B*]*iduan yang baik suaranya pun bernyanyilah dengan memalu dap emas bepermata, dan suasa, dan perak, dan rebana pun demikian jua. Maka pedikiran yang berbagai-bagai jenis pun memakai sekaliannya emas bepermata dan belazuardi dan suasa.* (BS.L 2/13: 32)
>
> The singer with a melodious voice sang, accompanied by an ornateny-decorated drum sprinkled with diamonds, silver and other precious stones. Thus, the singer sang several songs, well decorated with jewellery and gold.

The Javanese term, '*kidung*' appears in *Bustan as-Salatin*. A singer performing *kidung* is called a *pedendang* (chanteuse). *Kidung*, according to this work, is performed as part of a religious ceremony, as indicated in the following quotation:

> [*K*]*emuncaknya daripada mulamma dan sulur bayungnya daripada perak dan di bawah sulur bayung itu buah pedendang daripada cermin, kilau kemilau mengidung orang.* (BS.R 2/13: 251)
>
> At the climax of the religious ceremony, from the religious *mulamma* from silver and fruit, people then recite the *kidung*.

It is interesting to note from this work that two terms – *biduan* and *pedendang* – used to signify a Malay singer and that these terms continue to be used in contemporary song culture in Pahang and many parts of Malaysia. Equally, a new insight demonstrated in this work is that *kidung* (Javanese poetic form) has been 'Malayized' and is performed in religious ritual. Finally, it is worth noting that, so far, three Sumatra-based literary works have mentioned *dikir*: *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* (before 1380), *Hikayat Aceh* (c.1625) and *Bustan as-Salatin* (c.1640).

9) In *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, the Melakan warrior Hang Tuah delivers the *pantun* and *seloka* that is adored by Tun Teja, the Princess of Pahang. A related line reads:

> [*M*]*aka Tun Teja pun terlalu sukacita hatinya mendengar pantun dan syair Tun Tuah itu, kerana Tun Teja tahu erti pantun dan syair itu memberi jalan hati sabar.* (Tuah 210: 7)
>
> Thus, Tun Teja was moved to listen to the lyrics of the song sang by Tun Tuah, because she understood their meaning as an encouragement for her to be patient.

Similarly to the way *pantun* occurs in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, *pantun* in *Hikayat Hang Tuah* is intertwined with *seloka* (witty poetry). *Pantun* in this context is regarded as having a mocking and critical quality. For example:

> [*S*]*udah makan buah-buahan itu maka ia duduk mengarang bunga sambil bersenda bernyanyi dan berpantun dan berseloka berbagai-bagai ragamnya.* (Tuah 173: 2)
>
> After consuming the fruits, they sat and created a necklace of petals while singing witty verses, and reciting varies of forms of the *pantun* and *seloka*.

Mention of *dikir* is found in *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and in this context is performed in a dance as the relevant line indicates:

> [*S*]*yahdan adalah segala merpati itu sekaliannya tahu menari, bergelar padikiran.* (Tuah 491:10)
>
> Meanwhile, all those who know how to dance stood up and dance were known as *padikiran*.

In brief, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* resembles the traditional Malay historical work *Sejarah Melayu*, and mentions *syair*, *pantun*, *seloka* and *dikir*. The story about Tun Teja and Hang Tuah remains one of the popular themes in *bangsawan* (Malay traditional theatre) to this day. The story is enhanced with the performance of *syair* and *pantun* as one of the essential elements in the story.

10) Mention of *pantun*, *seloka* and *syair* continues in the tenth work, *Misa Melayu*. As in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, the song forms of *pantun and seloka* in *Misa Melayu* are regarded as light-hearted quatrains. A great number of these can be found in *Misa Melayu*. I was fortunate to be able to personally access this work physically from the Leiden University Special Collection as a primary source. The quatrains are taken directly from the original work. The following quatrain is presented to ask forgiveness from a member of the nobility and imploring him or her not to be angry. It reads:

Mohonlah ampun jangan murka,
sembah sekadar berjenaka,
ini satu pantun seloka,
persembahan patik akan penyuka.

Please forgive me and be not angry,
this salutation is only to amuse you,
it is a *pantun seloka*,
I hope my song will please you.

Reciting *syair* in the context of *Misa Melayu* was the way to impress members of the nobility who followed the teachings of Islam (*Hadith*). Here I paraphrase a stanza of *syair* containing the notion of Sultan Iskandar departing for the sea (*bermain ke laut*):

Tuanku raja sangat budiman,
mengikut hadith menurut firman,
dikarangkan syair suatu zaman,
berangkat bermain sempurna iman.

Your Highness, you are so wise,
you imbibe traditional wisdom and the Prophet,
I wrote this *syair* of the times,
so that you may dedicate in complete faith.

Misa Melayu provides an example of another kind of Malay song, the *lagu gendang nobat*, or royal drum song. 'It generally receives the greatest respect. It sounds certain time signals and performs at specific places in court ceremonies, particularly at the installation of rulers' (Dobbs, 1972: 95). *Lagu gendang* has between eight and sixteen tunes[2]. The Malays regard the *nobat* instruments with respect. Only privileged people, usually those with hereditary rights, are allowed to play or handle them. This attitude of respect is linked unconsciously, 'with their religious beliefs for the royal band provides a meeting place for the three religious forces, Islam, Hinduism and animism, that have influenced their thinking and moulded their character' (Dobbs, 1972: 90).

Mandora is also mentioned in *Misa Melayu*. *Mandora* is an operatic performance of the *topeng* (mask) akin to the *makyong* (a theatrical

[2] In *lagu gendang* or *lagu gendang nobat* has sixteen songs. They are '*Gendang Berangkat', 'Arak Antelas', 'Kubang Si Kumali', 'Rama-Rama Terbang Tinggi', 'Arak-Arakan Panjang', 'Arak-Arakan Pandak', 'Dang Gidang', 'Puteri Mandi Mayang', 'Juang Beraleh', 'Lenggang Enche Kobat', 'Gendang Perang', 'Anak Raja Basoh Kaki', 'Tabal', 'Nobat Khamis', 'Nobat Suboh',* and *'Nobat Isha'*.

performance in the northern states of the Peninsula). In *mandora*, according to Sujiman (1983), some hundreds of women with good voices who know the art of bantering in verse and speaking in parables will compete with a few hundred of men. I paraphrase the quotation mentioning *mandora*:

> [*M*]*aka bermainlah mandora itu, berbunyilah segala bunyi-bunyian terlalu ramai, sangatlah gemar orang yang melihat mandora itu bermain-main.* (Misa 86: 13)
>
> Thus *mandora* was performed, the music was loud and the audiences were enjoying it to the fullest.

It is interesting to note that *Misa Melayu* is the primary work that introduces the royal drum song and *mandora* in Malay writing. Sixteen names of royal drum tunes are found in this work. However, to discuss all of them is beyond the scope of this study. The *nobat* drum, the drum of sovereignty, is an important item at all court ceremonies, and is not related to contemporary song culture in Pahang.

11) *Adat Raja Melayu* makes frequent mention of three forms of song: *nasyid*, *zikir* and *mandora*. *Nasyid* and *zikir* are regarded as mystical songs and are accompanied by the frame drum. Generally, men perform both of these types of song. *Nasyid* and *zikir* are performed during a ritual procession. The quotation translated by Sujiman (1983), referring to the context of *nasyid* and *zikir* in this work reads:

> [*T*]*atkala diarak sirih itu, didudukkan segala laki-laki yang muda-muda belia, memukul rebana serta berzikir dan bernasyid.* (ARM 34: 1)
>
> When the ceremonial betel leaves arrangement, several young men were given seats. They beat on the frame drums while chanting loudly the praises of Allah.

Mandora is also mentioned in *Adat Raja Melayu*. However, the form of *mandora* mentioned in this context relates to that performed in Siam, which today is the southern part of Thailand. The performance of *mandora* incorporates dances, *joget* and *tandak*, accompanied by several traditional instruments. The term '*joget*' (a Low Javanese term for dance – it is the most popular traditional Malay dance, originating from a Portuguese dance, and has a fast tempo) and '*tandak*' (an old Javanese term which means 'to dance with song') can be traced back to Javanese sources (Winstedt, 1938). The quotation relating to this reads:

[*S*]*etelah sudah mustaib segala pekerjaan sirih itu, serta melengkapi segala arak-arakan, segala topeng, wayang, joget, tandak, mandora Siam, rebab, kecapi, dandi, muri (berlengkap), serdam, kopok, ceracap, sekalian itu diperbuat dalam sembilan bulan lamanya, berlengkap diperbuat segala mereka itu.* (ARM 35: 9)

After all the observers around ceremonial betel-leaves have been completed, the betel was taken in the parade along with the masks, shadowplay, *joget*, *tandak* dance, Siamese *mandora*, *rebab*, *kecapi*, *dandi*, *muri*, *serdam*, *kopok* and *ceracap* were used; all these were completed within nine months.

An important insight from the *Adat Raja Melayu* is that it is seen as the first Malay literary work to mention *nasyid*. This discovery suggests that operatic performance of *mandora*, alongside *nasyid* and *zikir*, is part of Islamic culture. To this day, *mandora* has been the iconic musical culture of the community in Terengganu, the state neighbouring Pahang.

12) The work *Syair Seratus Siti* includes seven forms of song: *syair*, *gurindam*, *dana*, *nazam*, *lagham*, *nasyid* and *zikir*. All songs are introduced within stanzas of *syair* that form the basis of the work. *Syair* and *gurindam* are mentioned in one stanza. Both songs are associated with *bersiram* – the bathing – of a princess with maidens in a pond. The quotation mentioning *syair* and *gurindam* in this work reads:

Bersiramlah puteri di dalam kolam,
Siti dayang-dayang selam-menyelam,
berapa gurau syair gurindam,
gurau dan senda berbagai ragam. (SSiti 90: 5c)

The princesses took a ceremonial bath in the royal pond,
playing, spotting and diving the water,
how wonderful their wittisicm,
jests of various styles.

Dana from the Arabic, means 'babble'; *nazam*, also from Arabic, signifies song composition; and *lagham*, from Persian, means a string of songs. All of them, including *nasyid* and *syair*, are mentioned in the same stanza. They are described as melodious and climactic song. The related quotation reads:

Ada yang berdana ada yang bernazam,
terlalu merdu lagunya lagham,

nasyid dan syair beragam-ragam,
bedil seperti merendang garam. (SSiti 234: 10d)

Some intone the verses of poetry,
how melodious their refrains,
and the verses of the *nasyid* and the *syair* of various kinds,
and a cannon exploding like salt erupting in the pan.

In this work, *zikir* and *lagham* are associated with the community of Mecca and Medina. Both are holy lands according to Islam. Stanzas illustrating this connection read:

Sekalian kaum Madinah dan Makkah,
memalu rebana berzikrullah,
laghamnya elok Subhanallah,
lidahnya fasih memuji Allah. (SSiti 235: 1a)

And all the inhabitants of Medina and Mecca,
beat on the *rebana* drums and sang praises to Allah,
the cadences of such beauty, most Holy Allah,
their lips eloquent in praising Allah.

However, *Syair Seratus Siti* provides limited description or context of how these songs, excluding *zikir*, are performed. Performance of the *zikir* in *Syair Seratus Siti* is, like the *dikir* in *Bustan-as-Salatin*, accompanied by the frame drum.

An important insight from the literature then is that in the nineteenth century, many Islamic-influenced songs were widely performed among the Malay population. There is also an indication that *zikir* was popular among the people of Johor and Pahang. *Zikir* is one of the musical practices in Pahang contemporary musical culture that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

From this research, I have identified fifteen song styles portrayed in twelve Malay literary texts. All fifteen songs are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Forms of songs in Malay classical literature

Song forms	Malay classical literature
1. Pantun	*Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Hikayat Raja Pasai, Hikayat Pandawa Lima, Hikayat Indraputra, Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Misa Melayu*

2. Seloka	*Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Hikayat Indraputra, Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Misa Melayu*
3. Madah	*Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Hikayat Indraputra*
4. Syair	*Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Hikayat Raja Pasai, Hikayat Indraputra, Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Misa Melayu, Syair Seratus Siti*
5. Gurindam	*Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Sejarah Melayu, Syair Seratus Siti*
6. Zikir/dikir	*Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Hikayat Aceh, Bustan as-Salatin, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Adat Raja Melayu, Syair Seratus Siti*
7. Kakawin	*Hikayat Pandawa Lima*
8. Kidung	*Hikayat Pandawa Lima, Bustan as-Salatin*
9. Bait	*Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Hikayat Indraputra, Sejarah Melayu*
10. Lagu gendang nobat	*Misa Melayu*
11. Nasyid	*Adat Raja Melayu, Syair Seratus Siti*
12. Mandora	*Misa Melayu, Adat Raja Melayu*
13. Dana	*Syair Seratus Siti*
14. Nazam	*Syair Seratus Siti*
15. Lagham	*Syair Seratus Siti*

The twelve Malay literary texts are rich sources of information on these song forms and their contexts. In the following section, I discuss the representation of songs in the period from the late fourteenth until the nineteenth century, exploring what the descriptions of songs in these texts tell us about their significance in this context.

2.3.2 The representation of songs

In this part, I explore descriptions of songs based on three fundamental concepts that emerge from the Malay literary texts already identified in no special order of significance. Firstly, songs most often mentioned and favoured by the nobility; secondly, songs associated with celebrations and festivals; and thirdly, human voice perception.

2.3.2.1 Songs relating to the nobility

It is explained that the King used *pantun*, *seloka*, *syair* and *gurindam* to deliver passionate messages. For example, a relevant line in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* reads:

> [*S*]erta *diambilnya kertas yang tersurat beberapa syair dan gurindam, pantun dan seloka menyatakan berahinya akan Raja Harman Syah itu.* (Bayan 149: 16)
>
> Then, Raja Harman Syah took a piece of paper containing stanzas of the *syair* and *gurindam, pantun* and *seloka* which to reflect his intense love.

There is evidence in *Misa Melayu* that *syair* is sung to amuse the King, as the following extract illustrates:

> *Tuankulah raja sangat budiman,*
> *Mengikut hadith menurut firman,*
> *Dikarang syair suatu zaman,*
> *Berangkat bermain sempurna iman.* (Misa 116: 26)
>
> My lord, a man of generosity,
> devoted to the words of the Prophet and of Allah,
> they composed a *syair* of the times,
> according to the percept of a true believe.

The King also employed *kidung* to entice his wife, as indicated in the following related lines drawn from *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* read:

> [*M*]*aka oleh Maharaja Salya pun lalu memimpin tangan isterinya dibawanya ke peraduan. Maka Maharaja Salya pun mengkidung dan berkelakuan membujuk isterinya, suaranya terlalu manis seperti laut madu.* (PandL 165: 39)
>
> Thus, the Emperor led his wife to the bedchamber. He recited verses of the Javanese *kidung* and soothed her emotion with romantic words. His voice as sweet as the Sea of Honey.

Mandora involves the presentation of music for all, including kings and governors, as this relevant quotation taken from the *Misa Melayu* reads:

> [*T*]*etapi yang terlebih gemar orang melihat dan segala raja-raja dan orang besar-besar pun permainan mandora yang terlebih elok daripada permainan yang banyak itu.* (Misa 87: 2)

> However, the audiences were extremely excited to watch the *mandora* performance, which was more enchanting than the other performances.

The King demanded *mandora* performers from Kedah to be brought back to him. Such a description tells us that *mandora* practitioners, borrowed from the Siamese (in the southern part of Thailand), were popular among Malay in Kedah, the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. This is described in the following quotation:

> [*S*]*etelah sudah membuat surat itu, maka baginda pun menitahkan sebuah perahu belayar pergi ke negeri Kedah mengambil mandora itu.* (Misa 83: 12)
>
> After the letter is made, His Majesty directed for a boat to sail to Kedah to fetch the practitioners of *mandora*.

Because of the significance of *mandora* to the King, *mandora* performers were bestowed with good clothes. This act is noted in the following line:

> [*S*]*etelah itu, maka mandora itu pun dikurnia baginda persalin dengan kain yang baik-baik dan disuruh baginda bermainlah.* (Misa 86: 8)
>
> After that, the *mandora* performers were bestowed with good woven fabric and were advised to continue performing.

In sum, songs favoured by the nobility such as *pantun*, *syair*, *seloka*, *gurindam* and *mandora* feature prominently in literary accounts. These songs symbolized the musical expression of a ruler and constructed a soundscape that reflected his superiority.

2.3.2.2 Songs associated with activities

Another significant aspect of songs in the identified classical literary works is the variety of them associated with celebrations and festivals. A text that demonstrates this particularly well is the *Misa Melayu*. *Zikir* is performed in celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid*). The related line reads:

> [*M*]*aka baginda pun mauludlah di dalam mahaligai itu, pada segenap tingkat mahligai itu tempat orang membaca maulud*

itu dan berzikir. Adapun kepada tingkat yang di atas pada peranginan itu, Syarif dan raja-raja membaca maulud dan zikir (Misa 94: 33)

Thus, His Majesty celebrated the Prophet's birthday in the palace; at each and every level in the palace were people who read the *mawlid* and recited the *zikir*. At the highest-level, resident kings and governors read the *mawlid* texts and praises of Allah.

There is an indication from the above quotation that the practitioners of *zikir* consist of multiple groups. The king and governors are at the highest level. Another quotation mentions Muslim scholars and governors being at the second level; and there being a third level for spiritual leaders and state proclamation officers. The quotation reads:

[*M*]*aka pada tingkat yang kedua segala ulama-ulama dan segala orang besar-besar membaca dia; dan kepada tingkat yang ketiga segala imam dan segala bentara membaca maulud dan berzikir.* (Misa 95: 6)

So too on the second level, the scholars and governors; and on the third, all the imams and the courtiers.

Religious beggars (*fakir*) and travellers, as well as travelling traders, also communicated *zikir*. They were grouped in the bottom level as mentioned in the following line:

[*D*]*an pada tingkat ketujuh segala fakir dan musafir dengan segala dagang senteri membaca zikir. Maka sekaliannya itu semuanya membaca maulud dan pedikiran.* (Misa 102: 22)

And on the seventh level, religious beggars, travellers and travelling traders recited the *zikir*. All of them recited the *mawlid* and *pedikiran*.

Zikir is also chanted during the recitation of the holy Qur'an from its beginning to its end – an occasion called *Khatm al-Qur'an* – which takes place over a period of three nights. In Islam, *Khatm al-Qur'an* is performed either individually or collectively. Buffaloes were slaughtered for food for the Qur'an reciters and attendees, and the recitation of *zikir* (also of the Qur'an) took place in a hall. *Misa Melayu* provides a descriptive quotation of this:

[*T*]*elah datang semuanya berkampung ke Berahmana Indera, maka baginda pun memulai berjaga-jaga mengaji dan*

berzikir tiga hari tiga malam. Maka beberapa kerbau disembelih akan makanan orang mengaji khatam itu dan makanan segala orang yang berhimpun di dalam balai itu. (Misa 58: 33)

All were arrived in Berahmana Indera, thus, His Majesty began to read the Qur'an and recited *zikir* for three nights. Then, several buffalos were slaughtered for food for all the Qur'an reciters and attendees gathered in the hall.

In the *Hikayat Aceh* it is noted that *zikir* is performed mainly on Fridays. The related quotation reads:

[*M*]*aka segala hulubalang pun dipanggil serta segala orang dzikir itu. Maka ada tatkala itu berzikir Allah di lepau Jum'at.* (Aceh 74: 8)

Then, all the warriors and the reciters of the *zikir* were invited. On the Friday balcony, they sang praises to Allah.

In *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *zikir* is featured as taking place after a meal. In many ways, the recitation of *zikir* after a meal shows thankfulness and gratefulness to Allah for His blessings. A line referring to this reads:

[*S*]*etelah sudah makan, maka ia pun membaca doa serta membaca zikirullah*. (AHmz 608: 16)

After dinner, they offered prayers and recited *zikir* in prays of Allah.

The same literary work mentions a poet performing *bait* during a meal at a specific celebration attended by warriors. Lines related to this account read:

[*M*]*aka segala pahlawan Arab, pahlawan Zamin Ambar, dan pahlawan Zamin Tauran pun makan minum bercampur baur. Maka ketika itu Amir Hamzah pun berbait.* (AHmz 671: 9)

Thus, all the Arabs, Zamin Ambar and Zamin Tauran warriors even ate and drank together. Then Amir Hamzah recited a *bait* poem.

As mentioned in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *pantun* and *seloka* are sung after eating fruit and while forming a chain of flowers as indicated in the following quotation:

> [*S*]*udah makan buah-buahan itu maka ia duduk mengarang bunga sambil bersenda bernyanyi dan berpantun dan berseloka berbagai-bagai ragamnya.* (Tuah 173: 2)
>
> After consuming the fruits, they sat and created a necklace of petals while singing witty verses, and reciting varies of forms of the *pantun* and *seloka*.

The singing of *syair* on royal feast days is also noted. In an example drawn from the *Hikayat Indraputra*, on one such occasion kings were competing with yachts and boats (ancient ships) on a lake in front of lively and noisy crowds. The quotation includes mention of *syair*:

> [*M*]*aka segala raja-raja bermain lancang dan pilang di tasik itu berlomba-lomba dan berlanggar-langgaran dengan tempik soraknya dengan bunyi-bunyian, ada yang bersyair, ada yang bernyanyi terlalu ramai.* (Ind 97: 20)
>
> Thus, all kings played and competed in yachts and ancient ships on the lake. The boats collided to cheers, shouting and music, some recited the *syair*, some sang too much.

In the context of the people in Melaka, they sing *syair*, *bait*, *gurindam* and *seloka* in a chess-like game in order to divert their opponent's attention. A related quotation from the work *Sejarah Melayu* reads:

> [*M*]*aka bercaturlah Tun Bahara itu dengan orang Melaka. Lawannya itu berlikir, ia tiada berlikir, pandang kiri, pandang kanan, sambil ia bersyair, dan berbait, dan bergurindam, dan berseloka.* (SM 144: 18)
>
> Thus, the chess-like game began between Tun Bahara and the inhabitants of Melaka. The foes drank liquor; he did not, but looked to the left and to the right, while singing the *syair*, *bait*, *gurindam* and *seloka*.

Singing *syair* is an additional element in the activity of reading Javanese history (*hikayat Jawa*). This impression is mentioned in the *Misa Melayu*:

> [*A*]*da yang bermain jogar dan ada yang bermain barang yang digemarnya dan ada yang bermain membaca hikayat Jawa dan syair ikat-ikatan berbagai-bagai ragam bunyinya riuh-rendah siang dan malam.* (Misa 55: 24)

Various games like the *jogar* and the *barang*, some read the Javanese narratives and the verses of *syair* in all styles in a great commotion day and night.

Maidens entertained themselves by singing *kidung* and *kakawin*, as this quotation from *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* indicates:

> [*S*]*etelah datang ke taman, maka segala dayang-dayang Dewi Banuwati pun bermain masing-masing pada kesukaannya. Ada yang mengkidung, ada yang berkakawin, ada yang bertandak, ada yang mengerang-ngerang, ada yang bercelempung, ada yang berbisikan mengatakan berahinya.* (PandL 106: 4)

> Once they arrived in the garden, all the Banuwati's ladies-in-waiting chose their favourite melodies. Some read the *kidung*, some chanted the *kakawin*, some danced and groaned, some played the *gamelan*, some whispered their passion and desire.

In addition, *kidung* is performed in religious ceremonies, as mentioned in *Bustan as-Salatin*:

> *Kemuncaknya daripada mulamma dan sulur bayungnya daripada perak dan di bawah sulur bayung itu buah pedendang daripada cermin, kilau kemilau mengidung orang.* (BS.R 2/13: 251)

> At the climax of the religious ceremony, from the religious *mulamma* from silver and fruit, people then recite the *kidung*.

The literary works suggest that *nasyid*, *dana*, *nazam* and *lagham* are likely to be performed on religious occasions. A related stanza from the *Syair Seratus Siti* reads:

> *Ada yang berdana ada yang bernazam,*
> *terlalu merdu lagunya lagham,*
> *nasyid dan syair beragam-ragam,*
> *bedil seperti merendang garam.* (SSiti 234: 10a)

> Some intone the verses of poetry,
> how melodious their refrains,
> and the verses of the *nasyid* and the *syair* of various kinds,
> and a cannon exploding like salt erupting in the pan.

To summarize, these examples indicate that *zikir*, *bait*, *pantun*, *syair*, *gurindam*, *seloka*, *kidung*, *kakawin*, *nasyid*, *dana*, *nazam* and *lagham* are

valued in celebrations and festivals, and encourage a range of people to engage with the songs.

2.3.2.3 Human voice perception

The human voice is one of the greatest musical instruments. Different types of voice and vocal sounds are noticeably represented in Malay literary works, with many traits of human vocalization recorded. The authors of literary works paid close attention to the particular sounds of voices, expressing them distinctly and mentioning them repeatedly. It seems that this concern with voices played an important part in the Malay literary authors' affective world.

In Malay literary works, specific aspects of the sounds of voices are often mentioned. In *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, for example, the voice is characterized as *baik* (good) as the following quotation indicates:

> [*B*]*iduan yang baik suaranya itu pun bernyanyilah berbagai-bagai ragam lagunya.* (Bayan 264: 13)
>
> The singer with a melodious voice sang many different songs.

In *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, human voices are attributed with *manis merdu* (a sweet tone). This point supports the thoughts of Moor in his influential work 'The Hindu Pantheon' that Malay music is, indeed, proverbially sweet' (Moor, 1810: 66). A related quotation from *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* reads:

> [*B*]*erbagai nyanyian dan berbagai lagunya dengan suara yang manis merdu didengar oleh Amir Hamzah telah dinyanyikan oleh kedua perempuan itu.* (AHmz 173: 1)
>
> Their many songs in different styles were heard by Amir Hamzah.

The author of *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* also made comparisons between singing voices and the Prophet Daud's melodious voice, as the following quotation indicates:

> [*M*]*aka dikeluarkannya kecapi dari dalam bocaknya serta dipetiknya pelbagai ragam yang indah-indah sambil menyanyi selaku suara Nabi Allah Daud merdu bunyinya* (AHmz 610: 28)

> Then, he fetched the *kecapi* from his box and he played tuneful melodies while singing with a voice like the Prophet David's.

In *Hikayat Inderaputra*, the voice is attributed with *halilintar* (thunder).

> [*M*]*aka Gur Akas pun bersuara seperti halilintar bunyinya.* (Ind 140: 51)

> Then, Gur Akas exploded in a voice like that of a thunder.

In *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, human voices are characterized as *nyaring* (having a high-pitched tone).

> [*M*]*aka Laksamana dan Seri Maharaja Lela pun berseru-seru dengan nyaring suaranya.* (Tuah 217: 2)

> Subsequently, the Laksamana and Seri Maharaja Lela exclaimed in a high-pitched tone.

In some notes, the human voice is allegorically described as *buluh perindu* (yearning bamboo). 'It is a rare dwarf bamboo a sliver of which placed in the mouth was believed to make a person's voice irresistible' (Dodge, 1981: 12). The related quotation reads:

> [*M*]*aka raja pun terlalu sukacita mendengar Hang Jebat membaca hikayat itu, suaranya terlalu manis seperti buluh perindu.* (Tuah 313: 11)

> Then, the Raja was very pleased to hear Hang Jebat reading the *hikayat* with his melodious voice like the singing bamboo.

The same work indicates that someone reciting *pantun* is comparable with a Qur'an reciter. An extract that supports this idea reads:

> [*S*]*yahadan lakunya seperti laku orang membaca Qur'an. Maka Tun Teja dan segala dayang-dayang yang mendengar Tun Tuah berpantun itu terlalu hairan dan berahi hatinya akan Tun Tuah itu.* (Tuah 210: 10)

Furthermore, his voice was like a chanter's reciting verses of the Qur'an. Tun Teja and all the maidens were filled with passion, subsequently falling in love with Tun Tuah.

In *Syair Seratus Siti* frequent mention is made of the characteristics of voices within the storylines. Singing *nasyid* is identified as *lantang* (out loud), as in the following stanza:

Seraya berjalan pergi datang,
sambil bernasyid suaranya lantang,
diambil mahkotanya lalu ditatang,
di hadapan baginda duduk bertentang. (SSiti 243: 9b)

While walking to and fro,
while singing verses of the *nasyid* with a high-pitched voice,
he picked the crown and carried it in his hands,
and sat before the King.

Religious leaders read religious sermons with soft voices (*latib*) and performed *nazam* and *tasydid* (represented by the smallest letter, *sin,* as an indicator of the emphasis in certain words in the Qur'an) with melodious voices (*merdu*). This is demonstrated in the following stanza:

Tampilah imam kadi dan khatib,
menjadi saksi terlalu tertib,
membaca khutbah suaranya latib,
terlalu merdu nazam dan tasydid. (SSiti 243: 9b)

The prayer leaders, and the *kadis* came forward,
acting as polite witnesses,
reciting the pledge of marriage,
while the *nazam* and the *tasydid* were sung in beautiful tunes.

Another interesting aspect to be considered here is that there are also characteristics not associated with the human singing voice. In many ways, the literary authors used these so as to strengthen their storylines. *Menderam* (a grumbly voice) is related to loud voices learning Islam, *dengung* (buzzing voice) with the sound of mountains, *nyata* (authentic voice) is related to shouting, *tertahan-tahan* (enduring voice) connects with a feeling of longing for parents and *gementar* (spooky voice) relates to war news. In certain contexts, the human voice is allegorically addressed as *tagar* (thunder/loud deep sound) or as sounding like sheep bleating.

In conclusion, different vocal characteristics are associated with different identities. The human voice, both singing and non-singing, produces a

range of different sounds. Descriptions of the affective impact of voices in Malay literary texts indicate the position and stance of the authors of literary works in relation to the potential of such voices in real life.

The matter of musical instruments is equally important and is frequently mentioned in literary works. In the following section, I shall discuss musical instruments and their relationship to songs.

2.3.3 Songs with instrumental accompaniment

In some Malay classical works, one may detect repetitive references – *bunyi-bunyian* (sounds in plurality) – that refer to the employment of musical instruments in song. However, not all songs are accompanied by music. In the analysis that follows I describe the musical instruments employed in particular songs and/or in particular singing activities.

Lagu gendang nobat is one of the fifteen song forms identified in this study. As indicated by its name, the *gendang* or native drum is the primary instrument used in the song. *Lagu gendang nobat* is mainly performed at royal events in Perak and several states in Peninsula Malaysia, and has between eight and sixteen tunes (Raja Chulan, 1991).

Syair is performed in a hall, and is usually accompanied by several musical instruments including the *rebab*, *kecapi*, *muri*, *bangsi*, *serunai* and *dandi*. *Syair* is popular among young people, as the following indicates:

> [*D*]*i atas balai itu orang memalu bunyi-bunyian, rebab, kecapi, muri, bangsi, serunai, dandi. Segala orang muda-muda bermain; ada yang berpantun, ada yang bernyanyi, ada yang bersyair, ada yang bermadah, masing-masing dengan tahunya.* (Ind 186: 17)
>
> In the audience hall of the palace, those present made music with exotic musical instruments: the *rebab*, *kecapi*, *muri*, *bangsi*, *serunai* and *dandi*. All the young men and women spotted and sang the *pantun*, some recited the *syair* and the *madah*; everyone with his or her own talent and skill.

The performance of *pantun* and *seloka* song forms is accompanied by a *redap*, a *rebana*, and a *biola*. The singer plays the *rebana* to accompany the singing performance, as the following indicates:

[*M*]*aka segala biduanda pun memukul rebana serta menyanyi berbagailah kelakuannya.* (Misa 40: 21)

Subsequently, the royal singers beat the *rebana* drums and and sang in many different styles.

Zikir is another song form that is accompanied by *rebana*. It is played while praising *Subhanallah* (the Greatness to Allah). The related stanza reads:

Sekalian kaum Madinah dan Makkah,
memalu rebana berzikrullah,
laghamnya elok Subhanallah,
lidahnya fasih memuji Allah. (SSiti 235: 1a)

And all the inhabitants of Medina and Mecca,
beat on the *rebana* drums and sang praises to Allah,
the cadences of such beauty, most Holy Allah,
their lips eloquent in praising Allah.

Besides the *rebana*, some other instruments including *genderang*, *gung*, *dap*, *harbab*/*rebab*, *dandi*, and *kecapi* are employed to accompany the performance of *dikir*. Some people would also perform dances. This is referred to in *Hikayat Aceh*:

[*G*]*enderang dan gung dan dap dan segala bunyi-bunyian daripada harbab dan dandi dan kecapi, dan beberapa daripada orang bertandak dan mengigal dan menghiasi segala pedikiran akan menari.* (Aceh 121: 16)

The *genderang*, gong and *dap*, and all instrument sounds of the *harbab*, *dandi* and *kecapi*, and several people danced and praised verses to Allah.

There are also young men, who perform *zikir* and *nasyid* to the accompaniment of the frame drum within processions. In processions, betel-leaves (*sirih*) are arranged in a mountain-like shape, call *gunung beredar*, and carried. Serving *sirih* is an essential part of almost all ceremonies. The leaves are either served in a betel-casket to be chewed, or are presented as a gift (Sujiman, 1983). An extract describing the performance of *zikir* and *nasyid* in the procession reads:

[*T*]*atkala diarak sirih itu, didudukkan segala laki-laki yang muda-muda belia, memukul rebana serta berzikir dan bernasyid.* (ARM 34: 1)

> When the ceremonial betel leaves arrangement, several young men were given seats. They beat on the frame drums while chanting loudly the praises of Allah.

The performance of *mandora* is also complemented by the sound of music (*bunyi-bunyian*) as this quotation shows:

> [*M*]*aka bermainlah mandora itu; berbunyilah segala bunyi-bunyian terlalu ramai; sangatlah gemar orang yang melihat mandora itu bermain-main.* (Misa 86: 13)

> Then, the *mandora* was performed; a variety of instruments were played; the audiences were pleased to watch the performance.

Mandora is related to the Siamese culture and is performed within processions. Several instruments accompany *mandora* and these include *rebab, kecapi*, *dandi, muri, serdam, kopok* and *ceracap*. This is mentioned in the following quotation:

> [*S*]*etelah sudah mustaib segala pekerjaan sirih itu, serta melengkapi segala arak-arakan, segala topeng, wayang, joget, tandak, mandora Siam, rebab, kecapi, dandi, muri (berlengkap), serdam, kopok, ceracap, sekalian itu diperbuat dalam sembilan bulan lamanya.* (ARM 35: 9)

> After all the observers around ceremonial betel-leaves have been completed, the betel is now taken in the parade along with the masks, shadowplay, *joget*, *tandak* dance, Siamese *mandora*, *rebab*, *kecapi*, *dandi*, *muri*, *serdam*, *kopok* and *ceracap* are used; all these were completed within nine months.

Some works mention the adoption of Javanese instruments to produce sounds, as indicated in the *Sejarah Melayu*:

> [*D*]*engan bunyi-bunyian Jawa pun bertarulah bunyinya; gong, gendang, serunai, nafiri, nagara, gendir, sambiannya, sekati, kopok, ceracap, celimpong dan rebab, gelinang, suling, gambang, dandi, tiadalah sangka bunyi lagi.* (SM 117: 15)

> With such wonderful sounds of Javanese instruments fill the air: gong, *gendang*, *serunai*, *nafiri*, *nagara*, *gendir*, *sambiannya*, *sekati*, *kopok*, *ceracap*, *celimpong*, *rebab*, *gelinang*, *suling*, *gambang*, and *dandi*.

The *gedombak* (a single-membrane drum) is identified as another Javanese musical instrument associated with cultural performances, specifically with *makyong* (operatic play) and *mandora* (operatic dance). A related quotation reads:

> [*D*]*an adalah lagu nyanyi yang dinyanyikan bujang Nanta Berahi itu berbagai jenis. Dan ada setengah mereka itu melihat orang bermain gedombak, dan ada setengah melihat Jawa bermain tombak, dan beberapa pula permainannya cara Jawa, daripada wayang, dan topeng, dan tandak, dan beberapa ratus ragam bunyi-bunyian.* (BS.L 2/13: 66)
>
> And there were various kinds of songs sung by the young Nanta Berahi. Some spectators watched performers playing the *gedombak*, while others watched Javanese games with spears operatic plays. Others still were enthralled by the various performances of other musical instruments.

To summarize, evidence from the literary works suggests that several musical instruments were used to complement specific songs in the past. However, a huge number of the aforementioned instruments are no longer played in Malay compositions in the present day and are now obsolete. Nevertheless, two musical instruments: the *gendang* and the *rebana*, which were used to accompany *lagu gendang nobat*, *zikir* and *nasyid* in the past, are still used in contemporary Malay music. It is interesting to note that it was only in the early seventeenth century that the *rebana* began to accompany singing performance. The use of *gendang* and *rebana* as an accompaniment in contemporary Pahang music will be explored in the following three chapters.

2.4 Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I have identified fifteen songs or vocal genres mentioned in twelve literary works. They are derived from Sanskrit/Indian (*seloka* and *gurindam*), Persian/Arabic (*madah*, *syair*, *nasyid*, *bait*, *zikir*/*dikir*, *dana*, *nazam* and *lagham*), Siamese (*mandora*), Malay (*pantun* and *lagu gendang nobat*) and, last but not least, Javanese (*kakawin* and *kidung*) backgrounds. This chapter also demonstrated the historical views of the uses of songs that I would loosely call 'authentic' in the context of literary works.

The identification of these styles through literature raises a number of questions. Which traditions continue to represent the identity of the Malay people of Pahang in the present day? How do the Malays perform or sing all of

the songs from the past? How do songs from the past feature in today's music making? And how are the songs remembered?

In order to answer these questions, the musical styles and musical practices performed by the Malays in Pahang need to be examined and analysed through fieldwork. My initial response to the questions focuses on two ideas: adaptability and relevancy. I hypothesize that the continued use of certain song forms today is partly due to these songs' ability to be adapted for different performance outlets. Furthermore, since these song forms are open to change, the topics of the songs have enabled them to remain relevant. In the following three chapters, I will share my experiences of discovering the musical world of the Malay population in present-day Pahang villages and its future prospects.