

## **SESSION 13 (Pre-organized panel)**

### **Identities of Diaspora and Translocality: Music and Minorities in Malaysia**

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Samuel Tan Hsien Chih and Abdul Azeem Shah,  
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Malaysia is a multicultural nation located at the nexus of “mainland” and “island” Southeast Asia. Through maritime links, communities from the region, Asia, and Europe participated in mercantile activities and eventually settled in British Malaya. Despite the cultural diversity, the British developed racial classifications that were institutionalized after independence in 1957. Thus, Malaysia was increasingly divided into racial categories of Malay, Chinese, and Indian and agglomerated numerous cultural groups under the category of “other”. Revisiting governmental regulations and national cultural policies, this panel examines diaspora, ethnic vis-à-vis national identities, and translocality in relation to music and minorities in Malaysia. In the first presentation, Santaella examines a Javanese performance heritage in Johor, Malaysia as an early diaspora and contemporary translocality. In the second presentation, Nithyanandan looks at the cultural intersections of Malaysian composers of diverse backgrounds and the ways in which they navigate personal identities within national categorizations. In the third presentation, Samuel Tan investigates the Malaysian Chinese art song as a genre that is product of multiple diasporas and reflects alternative forms of translocality. Finally, Azeem Shah discusses the dabus heritage as a genre that emerged from an earlier diaspora and was adopted by the Malay national majority to celebrate state cultures. The panel addresses all Malaysian racial categorizations and discusses the production of (trans)locality through the performing arts in the 21st century.

**Mayco A. Santaella**

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### **Javanese Wayang Kulit in Malaysia: Early Diasporas and Current (trans)Locality(ies)**

The transmigration program was initiated by the Dutch in the 1910’s and continued to develop with the Indonesian government after independence in 1945, making it one of the largest resettlements schemes of the 20th century. The program aimed to resettle communities from Java, Madura, Bali, and Lombok to other less populated islands of the archipelago. During this time, Javanese communities moved to Malaya establishing Javanese settlements in Johor, Selangor, and Perak, present-day states of Malaysia. This