

presentation discusses a Javanese transmigrant community in Malaysia and the negotiation of a Javanese identity within a different national context in Johor, Malaysia. Despite being an ethnic majority in Java, the Javanese become minorities in the new locale, (re)defining ethnic signifiers through the performing arts while adjusting to the new provincial and national context respectively. An analysis of Wayang Kulit allows an investigation of the production of (trans)locality, considering encounters with the ‘other’, and geographical translocality vis-à-vis community, ethnic, and cultural translocalities beyond geographical conceptualizations (see Appadurai 1996). The tensions between “cultural homogenization” and “cultural heterogenization” are negotiated by the culture bearers which in turn manoeuvre both the production of locality at the micro level and translocality at the macro level outside Java. Re-evaluating anglophone dyadic conceptualizations of homogenization/diversification, this presentations considers the “in-betweens” of the fluid conceptualization of “communitas” as alternative modernities (Gaonkar, 2001) particularly for minority communities in maritime Southeast Asia.

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**Composing the Malaysian: Reflecting on Shared Spaces  
in Malaysian Contemporary Compositions and Composers**

Malaysia is a country that is diverse and hybrid in its ethnic make-up and culture but steeped in an ethno-national ideological rubric through which everything is sieved or evaluated, resulting in binary constructs of the centre-periphery and state defined notions of what (or who) belongs and what (or who) doesn’t belong. This presentation explores the process of music creation and production by selected Malaysian contemporary music composers, Bernard Goh, Jillian Ooi and Samuel J Das as well as myself, as a platform for identity presentation and representation. It posits that Malaysian-ness transcends constructed ethnic boundaries, is not defined by this categorization alone, and discusses how the permeability of boundaries, intersections and overlaps of cultures translates into music. On a deeper and more personal level, it delves into the composer’s Malaysian identity related anxieties and how he/she articulates these issues via music and performance. Thus, through the processes of music creation and production, the composers negotiate their multi-layered and multicultural experiences that stem from their day-to-day social interactions and activities. Therefore, this presentation aims to present these composers as social actors who through the medium of music and performance, articulate their “everyday-defined” social reality and thus hope to provide an alternative method to the authority driven reality, in order to negotiate the status quo and opposing viewpoints in Malaysia’s contemporary social environment in relation to the country’s national identity that is currently framed to favour the centre (majority) and under-representing the periphery (minority). It also takes into

consideration Malaysia's geographical and historical position as an important seaport that was fuelled by the Spice trade, and that over time resulted in the formation of a pluralistic society, thus giving rise to the propagation of many cultural exchanges, hybridised communities as well as art forms.

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**Malaysian Chinese Art Song Competitions:  
An Invented Tradition Bridging Past and Future**

The Malaysian Chinese art song has its past as a transnational "variant" of the European art song and a lineage from both the Chinese art song and revolutionary song. The genre combines musical realms from the West and the East, while also engaging with the local cultural practices where it is produced. The emergence of this local art song in the 1950s, pioneered by the first generation of Malaysian Chinese composers, reflected a desire to reform and hybridise cultural identity in diasporic Chinese communities. In comparison, the recent generation of composers has been redefining the genre to reflect the evolving cosmopolitan Malaysian Chinese culture. However, the literary and musical components of the art song are not the only sites that reflect and negotiate a hybridised identity; rather, through the dynamic forces of social, cultural, political, and economic functions of art song competitions, the genre becomes one of the participating signifiers that exuberantly express Malaysian Chineseness. By examining extensive archives of competition and festival booklets dating back to the 1960s, this study seeks to uncover socio-cultural facts about how the art song genre is disseminated and preserved through the singing competitions. Moreover, I argue that these singing competitions contributed to the creation of an "invented tradition" across West and East Malaysia, which collectively shaped the performativity of Malaysian Chineseness.

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**Dabus Variant: The Acclimatization of Dabus in Malaysian Political Landscape**

Dabus is a ritual art form practiced by communities in both Malaysia and Indonesia. Its arrival in Malaysia over 300 years ago, has seen various adaptations made to adapt it to the Malaysian context. Policies such as the National Culture Policy, which incorporate the role of Islam in their design, have influenced both music and dance heritage in Malaysia.