

# Recapitulation of Malay asli music genre transcriptions for a chamber trio employing music score analysis

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## Abstract

Music transcription in notation form is preferred method of preserving traditional music, which is generally transmitted orally. The purpose of this study is to generate educational materials through the collaborative analysis and editing of six transcriptions of Malay *asli* music for a flute, viola, and piano trio. The central concerns of this research are whether the six transcriptions sufficiently convey the features of this traditional music form whether these features should be imitated from the original sound. The research is practice-led and involves experimental and analytical approaches employed by participants who assume the role of researcher and collect data via self-observation. Following the recapitulation outcomes from the analyses of the transcribed music scores, the six transcriptions were corrected with modified interwoven voices, a range of sound pitches for each musical instrument, and a classification of the rhythmic styles, music structure, and texture. The resulting transcriptions resemble typical Western music scores, which are required to convey traditional music features through the imitation of previously listened-to audio or video recordings of traditional ensemble performances. An advanced understanding of the interpreted transcriptions through music score analysis may have significant practical benefits for music performers, educators, and learners preparing to perform Malay *asli* music. Additionally, this may provide a future framework for scholarly work on classical ensembles.

## Keywords

*asli, chamber trio, music form, music score analysis, transcriptions*


## Introduction

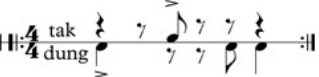
Among classically trained musicians, one prevalent approach to performing the traditional music of foreign cultures involves the use of musical notation transcriptions. Such transcriptions may provide musicians with music-analytical interpretations of the expressions of a particular music form via reliance on intercultural borrowing. The need for music transcription and arrangement emerged in the nineteenth century as a means of fostering social interaction during home entertainment activities (Casagrande, 2019; Irving, 2014; Miller-Kay, 2018). Through music transcription analysis, musicians can discover new varieties of music and come to understand the historical evolution of musical forms while developing their own critical and creative thinking skills. Determining the structure and mix of melodic phrasing, rhythmic patterns, and texture is an essential aspect of exploring

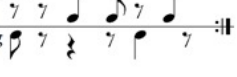
transcriptions of traditional music (Dansby, 1989).

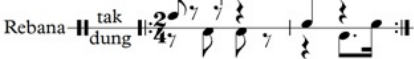
Malay *asli* is one of the lesser known and explored forms of traditional music. According to a brief definition provided in the Dictionary of the Art of Music, Malay *asli* is a syncretic music form performed at a slow, leisurely pace of 2/2 or 4/4 time signature, typically in diatonic scales with flat 3rd, sharp 4th, and flat 7th chromatic tones (Arshad et al., 2022; Kong-Chiang, 2009, 12-13; Matusky & Tan, 2017; Mazlan et al., 2020). Syncretic music in Malaysia emerged in the sixteenth-century post-Portuguese period. The music form involves unique rhythmic patterns such as the *asli*, *inang*, *zapin*, *masri*, and *joget*, which are typically produced by drum instruments and integrated from Arab, Indian, Chinese, and Western music (Arshad et al., 2022; Matusky & Tan, 2017, p. 6; Mazlan et al., 2020).

Recapitulation of Malay asli music genre transcriptions for a chamber trio employing...

a) **Zapin style**  
 Rebana  $\text{H} \parallel \frac{4}{4}$  tak dung 

b) **Inang style**  
 Rebana  $\text{H} \parallel \frac{4}{4}$  tak dung 

c) **Masri style**  
 Rebana  $\text{H} \parallel \frac{4}{4}$  tak dung 

d) **Joget style**  
 Rebana  $\text{H} \parallel \frac{2}{4}$  tak dung 

Malay *asli* music form consists of a linear texture with embellishments in the instrumental and vocal melodic lines, making it more appealing (Matusky & Tan, 2017, p. 311). ‘Dondang Sayang’ is one of the oldest prominent songs that represents the asli musical framework, which is characterised by a lyrical improvisational style derived from the Chinese diaspora in Melaka (Chopyak, 1986; Matusky & Tan, 2017). Historically, Malay *asli* traditional music was transmitted orally from family, cultural community members and traditional ensemble musicians to apprentices (Irving, 2014; Isyak, 2018; Matusky & Tan, 2017; Shah, 2013).

Notes 1. The basic rhythmic styles comprising Malay asli music form



Photograph 1. Music ensemble instruments for performing Melayu Asli traditional music

Generally, this music is comprised of a simple main melody that is elaborated by traditional ensemble instrumentalists who add improvisational musical embellishments such as glissando, turns, acciaccaturas, mordents, and combinations of running passages (Isyak, 2018; Mazlan et al.,

2020). Malay *asli* traditional music is rarely published in fully notated transcriptions or arrangements for individual classical Western instruments. Thus, publications on Malay *asli* music transcription predominantly consist of textual research on the music itself, comprising general definitions of

the characteristics of traditional musical instruments, pitch, and rhythmic styles (Arshad et al., 2022; Irving, 2014, p. 199; Mazlan et al., 2020). Consequently, since the nineteenth century, few publications have focused on the study and practice of transcribing Malay *asli* traditional music, mainly for piano or flute. One of the most significant transcriptions of *Malayan tunes* book was published for piano by James Low in 1837 (Irving, 2014).



Notes 2. *Malayan tunes* published for piano by James Low in 1837 (Irving 2014:208)

To expand intercultural education and performance repertoire for classical instrument musicians, there is a need for notated transcriptions of traditional Malay *asli* music. However, creating transcriptions of this music is only possible using existing audio and video recordings of traditional Malay ensembles, who perform this music with their own style improvisations that are never fully notated. Generally, these performances involve a melody supported by

chord progression. In this study, the Malay *asli* songs 'Bunga Tanjung', 'Tanjung Puteri', 'Rancak Bertemu', 'Dondang Sayang', 'Laksamana Raja di Laut', and 'Pantun Budi' are chosen and transcribed for a trio of flute, viola, and piano using Western music notation. At the initial stage of the research, these transcriptions are created with the intention of developing educational materials and presenting a concert performance. In addition, the recapitulation of transcribed songs is necessary as a framework to achieve cognitive comprehension in transferring the musical expressiveness of this unique music form (Dansby, 1989; Shaffer, 1995; Stain, 1962).

This article presents findings from the recapitulated analysis of transcriptions of the Malay *asli* form, which are slightly modified to verify and facilitate the transmission of the main aspects of the interpreted music. The researcher, participant-performer, and observer viewpoints of this analysis are reported by the violist of the trio ensemble.

### Problem of Study

The primary aim of the study is to produce transcriptions of Malay *asli* songs for a trio ensemble of flute, viola, and piano and to determine a suitable repertoire for a concert performance. Successive rehearsals and suggestions from an expert performer of traditional Malay *asli* music will allow us to define convenient solutions to achieve balance between the instruments and implement them in transcriptions. As mentioned above, the subject of this study is the six transcriptions, which are a means of Malay *asli* recapitulation analysis from the perspectives of classical musicians.

### Objectives

- To analyse and clarify tempo varieties, music form structure, texture, tonality, scale features, voice interlocking, and rhythmic patterns implemented in transcriptions of Malay *asli* music created for a piano, viola, and flute trio.

- To explore music embellishments in audio-video recordings of traditional ensemble performances of Malay *asli* music that should be implemented and imitated by the trio musicians in the performance of the six transcriptions.
- To verify that recapitulated corrections of music transcriptions meet the level of educational and stage performance materials for ensemble musicians.

### Methodology

The key features of this practice-led research involve the adoption of experimental and analytical approaches in data collection carried out by researchers who combine the dual roles of researcher and participant and employ self-observation (Williamon et al., 2021, p. 86). The researchers draw on introspective observations of their musical performance experiences and work with a local traditional Malay *asli* music expert to listen to and replicate the advised

demonstrations to acquire the subtleties of musical phrases that are not apparent to classically trained musicians (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Williamon et al., 2021). Numerous video recordings of Malay *asli* songs performed by traditional ensembles, music scores available in libraries, and other online sources are used by the researchers (Rosny & Rosly, 2018).

### Participants

A trio of professional Western classically trained instrumentalists (a pianist, violist, and flautist) and a Malay asli traditional musician who plays the flute and rebana serve as participant-researchers for this study. All four participants are educators from the Faculty of Music at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia, who teamed up in 2016 to work on this research project. Local music students from the same music faculty were recruited to assist with the notated transcription of this distinctive musical form.

Table 1. Demographics of participant-researchers

Participant No.	Gender	Age	Seniority	Expertise
1	Female	50	Doctor senior lecturer	Flute
2	Female	34	Doctor senior lecturer	Piano
3	Female	42	Lecturer	Viola
4	Male	55	Lecturer and Malay <i>asli</i> expert	Flute, rebana, music transcription
5	Male	28	Master student	Rebana, trombone, music transcription
6	Male	23	Bachelor student	Music transcription
7	Male	22	Bachelor student	Music transcription
8	Male	23	Bachelor student	Music transcription
9	Male	24	Bachelor student	Music transcription

### Materials

The Malay *asli* songs 'Bunga Tanjung', 'Tanjung Puteri', 'Rancak Bertemu', 'Dondang Sayang', 'Laksamana Raja di Laut', and 'Pantun Budi' were selected for transcription

in this study. These songs were chosen based on the appropriateness of the timbre of the flute, viola, and piano to convey the sounds of traditional Malay *asli* music as precisely as possible. The songs were transcribed

using a Western notation system on Sibelius music software, and Western ornamentation symbols were added to facilitate reading for classical instrumentalists. The exploration and preparation of transcriptions of Malay *asli* music for educational and stage performance repertoire were implemented

during rehearsals at the music faculty. Subsequently, to highlight the elements of the traditional music style, drum parts (*rebana*) were added to the transcriptions. Devices such as laptops and mobile phones were used for sound and video recordings.

Table 2. List of transcribed Malay asli traditional songs

	Title	Rhythmic style	Time signature and beats per minute	Scale and Key	Structure form	Embellishments
1.	'Laksamana Raja di Laut'	<i>zapin</i>	4/4 100 bpm	Heptatonic scale G minor (sharp 4 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Folk song form (ABB'A'CBB'A'C'') Introduction and cadenza	Trills and written-out passages of compound gruppetto (turn)
2.	'Pantun Budi'	<i>zapin</i>	4/4 110 bpm	Heptatonic scale C minor (sharp 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Binary form (ABA'B') Introduction and cadenza	Acciaccatura, passing notes passage, trills, and written-out passages of compound gruppetto (turn)
3.	'Bunga Tanjung'	<i>asli</i>	4/4 40 bpm	Diatonic scale G major (flat 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Binary form (AABB) Opening and closing cadenzas	Written-out of trills with inverted mordent and trills with turns
4.	'Tanjung Puteri'	<i>masri</i> and <i>zapin</i>	4/4 90 bpm	Heptatonic scale D minor (sharp 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Ternary (song) form (ABA'ABA) Introduction No cadenza	Written-out inverted mordent and trills
5.	'Dondang Sayang'	<i>asli</i>	4/4 65 bpm	Heptatonic scale D major (sharp 4 <sup>th</sup> and flat 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Folk song form (AA'BA'B') No introduction No cadenza	Trills and written-out passages of compound gruppetto (turn)
6.	'Rancak Bertemu'	<i>inang</i>	4/4 72 bpm and 120 bpm	Heptatonic scale D major (sharp 4 <sup>th</sup> and flat 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Complex folk song form (A, A', A'', A''', A''''', A''''', B, A'', B') No introduction No cadenza	Acciaccatura and trill

## Procedure

The exploration and negotiation of verbal reports and concepts from the individual practice sessions of each instrumentalist took place during each rehearsal session. Experimentation involved employing different approaches to editing the transcribed songs within the general

music structures utilised in traditional performance, the interweaving of voices, and the range of sound pitches for each musical instrument. Embellishments to melodies and improvisations were added based on video-audio recordings of traditional Malay *asli* ensembles and suggestions from the *asli* expert.



Photograph 2. Practice and discussion sessions

## Results

### Laksamana Raja di Laut (*Hero of the Sea*)

This transcription for a classical trio ensemble is an interpretation of the song Laksamana

Raja di Laut, composed by Suhami Mohd Zain in the contemporary *zapin* style produced by Vangelis Tika Spencer and Mohd Pauzi bin Majid.

<p>Laksamana Raja di Laut (04:16) Flute: Karen Anne Lonsdale Viola: Violetta Ayderova Piano: Yen-Lin Goh Rebana 1: Pauzi Majid Rebana 2: Mustaqim Abdullah BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018</p>		
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Figure 1. The video from BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018 (web 1)

The music transcription is written in compound strophic or folk song form (ABB'A'CBB'A''C'), with a two-part introduction in G minor (sharp 4th and sharp 7th). The first reprise comprises impetuous passages played in unison on the flute, viola, and piano in semiquavers with syncopated patterns. The passage ends in descending triplets on a dominant chord. The second part of the introduction commences with a cadenza (a written-out improvisation) of flute solo playing across changing time signatures accompanied by piano in broken pedalled chords, which ends in a sequence of chords

V-VI-V, producing an imperfect cadence. This is followed by an exposition section (A), which opens with a two-bar, unison prefix of resolute expressions played on the flute, viola, and piano. This progresses into a life-affirming melody, led by the viola (verse), intercepted by the flute, and accompanied by the piano imitating a rhythmic pattern in *zapin* style. This section ends with a suffix (chorus), three instrumental passages in total unison, finishing in dominant cadence. The development section (B), led by the flute in a continuous life-asserting mood, is supported by the viola in short phrases,

and in the third voice, at intervals in the main melody, accompanied by the piano accompanies in syncopated chord progressions, leading to the suffix (chorus), with all three instruments in full unison. In the developmental section (B'), the lead role is passed to the viola, with the flute following in unison in identical rhythmic patterns at mixed harmonic intervals accompanied by the piano in syncopated harmonic chords in the right hand, while the left hand exposes a bass zapin rhythmic pattern with a suffix (chorus) ending with all instruments in full unison. The recapitulation section comprises an arch form (A'CBB'A'C), summarising an improvised exposition section (A'). It includes a new reprise section (C) that culminates in full unison passages (chorus) on the dominant chord, returning to the development sections by repeating (BB'), which ends in

a coda. The (A') section, initially led by the flute alone, is later empowered by adding a similar melody from the viola with an interval of six (down) to highlight a sense of victory in the sea element. Concurrently, both hands on the piano transition to the basso register to keep illustrating the zapin rhythmic style. The coda represents a slightly improvised reprise (C) section that concludes with a duet of flute and viola in mixed harmonic voice intervals common in Eastern music. The coda continues with the zapin rhythmic pattern on both hands of the piano and ends in a unison (chorus) passage of three instruments. Finally, it transits into an exciting perfect cadence in a pace-ascending scale in thirds on the flute and viola, supported by the piano in a semibreve dominant chord that ends on the tonic chord.

**Laksamana Raja Di Laut**  
*for Flute, Viola, Piano and Two Rebanas (Congas)*

Suhani Mohd Zain  
 Transcribed by Yungie' The Spencer  
 Edited by Karen Anne Lomdale, Yin-Lin Goh, Violetta Ayderova & Pasit Malik

*♩ = 100 Moderato*

Notes 3. Music score transcription (part) of Laksamana Raja di Laut

**Pantun Budi (Poem of Good Deeds or Quatrain of Kindness)**

This transcription of the song Pantun Budi (or Zapin Budi) is an interpretation by Mohd

Mustaqim Abdullah and Mohd Pauzi Majid. Zapin is the most prominent rhythmic style of the Malay asli form and is presented in this renowned song.



Figure 2. The video from BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018 (web 2)

The song creates the impression of a pleasant dancing atmosphere. The transcription is written in simple binary form (ABA'B') and a heptatonic C minor (harmonic) scale with a sharp 7th tone. The introduction—described as Taksim in Malay traditional language—is typically an improvisation played by a traditional ensemble player on the gambus or violin in a cadenza style in rubato tempo (measure-free). For this study, an asli genre specialist interpreted the improvisation for the flute and wrote it out into a notated music score as an illustration of one of the potential variations. This melody is enriched with a range of embellishments, such as acciaccaturas, passing notes passages, and trills, ending with a gruppetto (turn), all of which were written out note by note in detail, like passage groups, in the music score. During experimentation, it was decided that the Western ornamentation symbols be added only for a particular sequence of note groupings for which they are well suited. The exposition begins in bar 20, with the piano (chorus) right hand playing the primary melody (A), accompanied by a distinctive zapin beat on the piano left hand. After four bars, this theme is transferred to the viola, on which it is embellished with a mordent pattern, while the piano continues to play a harmonised zapin rhythm as an accompaniment part. At the end of the first section, the viola and piano play a descending passage in a heterophonic

texture, finishing in a dominant cadence. The second part of the exposition (B) is converted into interlocking controversial conversation melodies between the flute and viola, repeated as a reprise, which seamlessly transits into the first main theme (A'). However, this time, the theme is again played on the flute, and after experimenting several times, it was agreed that this melody should be enhanced with a specific zapin *kopak* rhythmic pattern in bar 46, played on the viola on double strings in a lower register. Typically, the *kopak* rhythmic pattern as a special excerpt is originally performed by drum players (marwas or rebana) in an interlocking manner as a bridge between sections (verses). The developmental part that follows opens with the second melody from exposition (B'). During rehearsals, it was decided that this part should be handed over to the piano right hand, while the left hand, with extended double notes in fifth, sixth, and fourth intervals, is accompanied by the flute and viola in weak beats (from the 2nd and 4th beats) bars 51-57. This section continues—bridged by a descending stepwise scale on the viola—preparing the refrain of the second part of the exposition (B, A', B, A'), which is an interlocking conversation between the flute and the viola. Meanwhile, the piano plays a harmonised, prolonged rhythmic pattern typical of the zapin style during both the exposition and the refrain. The major chorus theme, bars



74-79, is used to complete the final coda (described as *tahtim* or *wainab* in Malay traditional language), which is performed in unison on the flute and the piano, with an accompaniment on the viola characterised

by a *kopak* rhythmic pattern. The coda concludes with a heterophonic descending scale passage played in unison on all three instruments.

**Pantun Budi**  
*for Flute, Viola, Piano and Two Rebanas*

Malay Traditional  
Transcribed by Mustaqim Abdullah, Pauzi Majid  
Edited by Karen Lonsdale, Goh Yen-Lin, and Violetta Ayderova

**Allegretto moderato**

The image displays a musical score for 'Pantun Budi'. It includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Viola (Vla.), Piano (Pno.), and two Rebana instruments (Reb. 1 and Reb. 2). The score is in 4/4 time and G major. It features various musical notations such as triplets, trills, and dynamic markings like 'Sola, freely' and 'f'. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto moderato'. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, 12, 16, 18, and 22 indicated.

Notes 4. Music score transcription (parts) of Pantun Budi

**Bunga Tanjung (Cape Flowers)**

The contemplative sound of this song portrays a gorgeous flower named Bunga Tanjung. The form and structure of the music transcription of this song in the Malay asli

traditional form for a classical trio ensemble is an interpretation by a professional performer of the Malay asli music, Mohd Pauzi Bin Majid.

<p>Bunga Tanjung (03:29) Flute: Karen Anne Lonsdale Viola: Violetta Ayderova Piano: Yen-Lin Goh Rebana 1: Pauzi Majid Rebana 2: Mustaqim Abdullah BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018</p>		
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Figure 3. The video from BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018 (web 3)

The basic structure of a Bunga Tanjung song is the binary form AABB, which includes opening and closing cadenzas on the flute at the beginning, and on the viola at the

end. Playing on the piano are broken arpeggio chords and tremolo rhythmic patterns supporting the main melodies. Both cadenzas are written out in G major

and rubato (measure-free) tempo, which the traditional asli musician would often improvise. Each cadenza comprises two phrases: an introduction and an elaboration with flat 6th and 7th tones of the diatonic scale. The elaboration phrase ends with an imperfect cadence (V), anticipating an ensuing main section characterised by a distinct sense of the rhythmic style of asli music. Two reprises, with interweaving instrumental phrases in stepwise motion and rhythmic layers acting as a discussion between two voices complementing one another, make up the exposition. The first reprise (AA) is led by flute and supported with a heterophonic texture as a counter voice using an interval of third on the viola and on the piano right hand, while the bass line of the piano left hand illustrates the rhythmic pattern of asli. For the convenience

of the reader, ornamentations such as trills with inverted mordent in descending running passages and trills plus turns in connecting passages in the flute part were written out. After conducting a variety of experiments, it was decided that the second reprise (BB) should begin led by the viola accompanied by brief counter melodic flute phrases, with the piano providing support for both instruments with a brief reply in bars 27-28 in the right hand, while the left hand emphasises the asli rhythmic pattern. It was decided that the flute passage in bars 30-34 be enhanced with a heterophonic assist from the piano at a third interval in the right-hand stepwise passage. In bars 36-37, the viola, flute, and the right hand on the piano all play the same cadence in a heterophonic texture, leading to the finish of the last cadenza on the viola.

**Bunga Tanjung**  
for Flute, Viola, Piano and Two Rebanas

Traditional Malay  
Transcribed by Pauzi Maid  
Edited by Karen Anne Lonsdale, Yoo-Lin Goh & Violenta Aydenova

Rubato, *espressivo* ♩ = 40

Notes 5. Music score transcription (parts) of Bunga Tanjung (Cape Flowers)

### Tanjung Puteri (Cape of Princess)

This song is considered a Malay *asli* traditional song and was composed by Ali

Othman. The music transcription of the song for the flute, viola, and piano ensemble is an interpretation by Adib Bunyamin.



Figure 4. The video from BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018 (web 4)

By combining homophonic and heterophonic textures, the transcription was transcribed in the traditional ternary (song) form (ABA'ABA) in D minor heptatonic scale. The song should be played with an imaginary sense of contemplating the view of Tanjung Puteri's sandy beach and its entrancing sunset scenery. The introduction combines two sections. It was decided that the first section should commence from six bars with a piano-led melody that ends in a trio unison in a half-dominant cadence, which leads to the second section. Bars 7-9 of the second section of the introduction provide a continuous polyphonic dialogue between the flute and the viola, with the piano contributing harmonic accompaniment and a steady *Masri* rhythm on the piano left hand. Following bars 10 through 15, featuring octave-unison playing on the flute and viola, the piano joins in bar 15, ending with perfect cadence. The exposition part (A) comprises the seven bars of flute solo melody accompanied by the piano in a harmonised and maintained *Masri* rhythm. The viola enters with a bridge phrase in bar 24, and from bars 27 to 32, the viola interweaves with the leading melody of the flute—which is an octave higher—in brief replies throughout the next eight bars. This section commences with a bridge (prefix) of four bars of short viola phrases, which leads to the main second melody, modulating into a parallel G minor mode with a rising fourth note. In bars 37 to 44, the melody is led by the flute and assisted by the melodic intervals on the viola in minims and short contradictory phrases while the piano accompanies both instruments in arpeggiated chords, leading to the unison of

three instruments in two bars and ending in a dominant cadence. The refrain melody (A') in bars 45 to 52 is led by the viola intertwined with contrasting dialogue on the flute while the piano sustains and integrates both instruments with warm broken chords and the *Masri* rhythm. The reprise that follows contains the second part of the main melody (A) of the exposition, which overflows into (B) and flows back to the main melody (A). The coda commences in bar 80, with an agitated sense conveyed by the viola, along with arpeggiated semiquavers on the piano. The coda then culminates with all three instruments playing in unison, ending in a tremolo.

**Tanjung Puteri**  
for Flute, Viola, Piano and Two Rebana (Congas)

Arranged by Adib Banyamin  
Edited by Karen Lonsdale, Yen-Lin Goh, Violetta Ayderova and Pauzi Majid

Masri ♩ = 90

The image shows a musical score for a chamber ensemble. The instruments are Flute, Viola, Piano, and two Rebana (Congas). The score is in 4/4 time and D major. It includes dynamics like *mf*, *mp*, and *f*, and features various musical notations such as trills and triplets. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering measures 1-8 and the second system covering measures 9-12.

Notes 6. Music score transcription (parts) of Tanjung Puteri (Cape of Princess)

### Dondang Sayang (Love Song)

One of the most prominent Malay songs, Dondang Sayang (love song), from which the Malay asli form is derived, originated around the 12th to 15th centuries (Ho 2004).

The music transcription of this song for the trio ensemble is an interpretation by Nazmi Muzaffar and Pauzi Majid, with the intention of conveying the authentic mode.

<p>Dondang Sayang (3:17) Flute: Karen Anne Lonsdale Viola: Violetta Ayderova Piano: Yen-Lin Goh Rebana 1: Pauzi Majid Rebana 2: Mustaqim Abdullah BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018</p>		
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Figure 5. The video from BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018 (web 5)

The song should be played expressing a light-hearted, entertaining, dancing mood. This transcription is written in D Major with additional sharp 4th and flat 7th tones. It follows a traditional song format, with verses and choruses (AA'BA'B') repeated based on the number of verses (Matusky and Tan 2017, 312). In this transcription, the viola is given the role of counter melody, originally performed on the violin as a

preparation melody for the vocalists, whose melody line is presented on the flute in this interpretation. The music transcription of the song opens with a four-bar prefix melody on the viola. In bar 3, the piano right hand joins in as a heterophony melody, an octave down. Together, the viola and the piano culminate in a tonic triad enhanced by trill embellishments on the viola. After some experimentation, it was decided to empower

all the leading melodies on the viola with a heterophonic texture on the piano, except bars 33 to 37. From bar four, the flute enters with the main verse melody (A), with the piano right hand joining in on the fourth beat. In bar five, the viola takes over in unison with the melody on the flute an octave down. In bar six, the viola is in unison with the piano right hand, again in thirds and stepwise, countered to the melody on the flute, while the piano left hand sustains the melody in the bass with octave steps in harmony. Together, all three instruments illustrate the majesty and cheerfulness that characterise the song. The prefix melody on the viola then arrives back (A') in bar 7 as a core section with a fortified piano texture on the piano right hand and an empowered bass line in octaves on the left hand. Meanwhile, the flute emphasises the distinctive rhythmic pattern of a little counter phrase in bar 10. In bar 12, the melody on the viola is highlighted with a piano ornamental descending passage, bringing both the piano and the flute to a dominant cadence. The bridge, or prefix, beginning in the second half of bar 14, is produced with a heterophonic texture

in the subdominant key of G major on the viola and piano in the two subsequent bars, transferring it to the chorus melody (B) in the main tonality of D major. The flute represents the chorus melody (reprise section, bars 17-22), and the viola, in heterophony with the piano, sustains it with counter-short melodic responses. In bars 23-24, the reprise section ends with the flute and viola in unison in an octave melody, supported on the piano right hand with a harmony progression and on the left hand with a vigorous *asli* rhythmic pattern. From bar 25, the three voices are combined into a homophonic texture that returns to the first verse section. Before the flute verse melody begins at bar 29, the prefix viola melody from bar 27, enhanced by piano broken arpeggio chords, drives both into unison in an octave interval. In the developing part, the flute continues like a vocal melody, supported by energetic *asli* rhythmic patterns on the piano from bars 42 to 51 in both hands. Then, the flute transits forward through the second chorus section (B'), with a reprise that concludes the music work with all instruments in unison.

**Dondang Sayang**  
*for Flute, Viola, Piano and Two Rebanas (Congas)*

Melayu Traditional  
Transcribed by Naimi Muzaffar & Puanj Masid  
Edited by Karen Lomdale, Yeo-Lin Goh & Violetta Ayderova

**Cheerfully** ♩ = 65

The score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 14 to 16, and the second system covers measures 16 to 18. Each system includes staves for Flute (FL), Viola (Vla.), Piano (Pno.), and two Rebana (Conga) instruments (Reb. 1. Con. 1. and Reb. 2. Con. 2.). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the tempo is marked as 'Cheerfully' with a quarter note equal to 65 beats per minute. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf), articulation (accents), and performance instructions like 'V' for breath or phrasing marks. A section labeled 'A' is indicated above the Flute staff in measure 14.

Notes 7. Music score transcription (parts) of Dondang Sayang (Love Song)

### Racak Bertemu (*Random Meet*)

This song should convey the sense of a swinging dance mood and hidden hope for mutual love. Music transcription of the song

Racak Bertemu (Random Meet) for the trio ensemble is an interpretation by Izaidin Zainudin.



Figure 6. The video from BrisAsia Festival in Brisbane, 20 February 2018 (web 6)

The song is transcribed using heptatonic scale D Major with sharp 4th, flat 3rd, and 7th tones, employing the *inang* rhythmic style. Because of the improvisational treatment of the two primary melody themes (A and A') throughout the transcription, the structure appears to be a complex song form (A, A', A'', A''', A''', A''', B, A'', B'). The main theme (A) is introduced in a slow rubato tempo, opened by a flute solo accompanied by piano semibreve valued chords. At bar 8, the viola enters with short replicas countered to the second theme of the main melody (A') of the flute. Simultaneously, the piano alternates between the viola and the flute in unison, supporting both with short excerpts. In the 13th and 17th bars, the flute and viola perform in a homophonic texture at a third interval in a range of over an octave, sounding like a brief chorus. The piano accompanies both voices with an extended chord progression. The developing part then commences with a prefix of short phrases on the flute and viola in homophonic texture with an interval of sixth, turning into dialogue mode from bars 25 to 28, accompanied by the *inang* rhythm style expressed by the piano left hand, with harmonised chords in the piano right hand. The main theme melodies are slightly modified (A'') on the flute in an octave higher, returning in bars 29-48, supported by replies on the viola while maintaining the *inang* dance mood on the piano. After several trials, it was decided to switch the parts of

the flute and viola starting in bar 49, with the viola leading the main theme melody (A'''), the flute providing brief responses, and the piano providing a continuous *inang* sense. The recapitulation section begins with a prefix connecting section (B) from bar 68, with additional piano texture passages in the right hand and an unaltered rhythmic pattern in the piano left hand. Consequently, from bar 77, the piano has the role (A''') of leading the main theme melodies, while the flute and viola maintain a continued *inang* rhythm mood. Starting at bar 84, the *inang* rhythmic element fades out, allowing the piano to lead a vividly enriched melody in double stops in thirds and octaves, while the flute and viola continue to reply in unison in rhythmic patterns at varying intervals. The chorus on bars 94-95 culminates with all three instruments in unison, giving the illusion of a false ending. However, the main initial theme melodies are again led by the flute (A''), with a return to the *inang* rhythm from bar 97. Concluding, the coda uses the slightly varied second (chorus) melody (B') enriched with triplets, unison in the third interval between flute and viola, and the fortified sound of the *inang* rhythmic pattern on the piano in the third interval. Iridescent passages in the piano right hand and octaves in the left hand culminate in the last three bars, finishing in sync with the half-scale ascending passages on the flute and viola in demisemi-quavers.

**Rancak Bertemu**  
for Flute, Viola, Piano and Two Rebanas (Congas)

Malay Traditional  
Transcribed by Ismail Zamudin  
Edited by Karen Lonsdale, Yen-Lin Goh, Violetta Ayderova and Pauzi Majid

Notes 8. Music score transcription (parts) of Rancak Bertemu (Random Meet)

## Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to recapitulate six Malay *asli* music transcriptions made for a chamber ensemble of flute, viola, and piano with the intention of performing them on a concert stage and disseminating these transcriptions to classical instrumentalists as educational materials and concert repertoires. The findings of the study revealed that the presented transcriptions maintained distinct rhythmic characteristics of the *asli* (40–62 bpm), *inang* (120 bpm), *zapin* (90–110 bpm), and *masri* (90 bpm) styles, which captured the sentiment of Malay *asli* music-making. The time signature of the six Malay *asli* transcriptions was 4/4, and the tempo ranged from 40 to 120 bpm (see Table 2). Consequently, the transcriptions verified previous studies' claims that Malay *asli* music is generally performed at a 'leisurely pace or melancholic tempo' (Arshad et al., 2022; Kong-Chiang 2009, pp. 12–13; Matusky & Tan, 2017; Mazlan et al., 2020). In accordance with the descriptive analysis of the structure of Malay

*asli* music (Arshad et al., 2022; Mazlan et al., 2020; Ng Kea Chye, 2016), the present transcriptions were written in folk song form (i.e. AB binary form with an introduction, a bridge connecting the phrases, a repeating section, and a conclusion). Similarly, the transcriptions compound the heterophonic texture on a heptatonic or diatonic scale with flat 3rd, flat 6th, flat 7th, sharp 4th, and sharp 7th chromatic tones (Kong-Chiang 2009, 12–13; Matusky & Tan, 2017; Mazlan et al., 2020; Arshad et al., 2022). As mentioned in the introduction, Malay *asli* music was historically transmitted orally (Irving, 2014; Isyak, 2018; Matusky & Tan, 2017; Shah, 2013) and transcribed mostly in simple melody lines with chord progressions written above the melodies (Mazlan et al., 2020; Isyak, 2018). As a result of the collaborative experimentation and negotiation, the six transcribed music scores were slightly modified to bring them closer to the traditional sound timbre. Each transcription was slightly corrected to balance the sound and interweaving voices of the three

instruments (Arshad, 2015; Arshad et al., 2022; Mazlan et al., 2020). Thus, suitable solutions were applied according to the voice-leading intervals in thirds, octaves, or unison playing. The first leading voice in six Malay *asli* song transcriptions belonged to the flute. Three of the transcriptions began with the introduction played by the flute in cadenza style (measure-free) with written improvisations, which were interpreted by the *asli* music expert. The range of sound registers for the flute part extended from the fourth octave to the seventh. Then, the viola carried the second leading voice, which accompanied and interweaved with the flute's melodies as short-phrase replies. For the viola, only one song included a solo cadenza, which was improvised as suggested and written by the *asli* music expert. The viola's role in the presented transcriptions is similar to its role in classical music: it is the medium voice between flute and piano that fills up the middle register in the octave range from the third up to the sixth. The piano embraced a register ranging from the first to sixth octaves. Most of the melody embellishments in the six transcriptions were written down for easy readability, with additional common Western ornamentation signs of *acciaccatura*, trills, turns, passages of compound *gruppetto* (turn), and trills with passing notes. These were included considering that the main melody is generally elaborated by traditional ensemble instrumentalists who add various embellishments (Isyak, 2018; Mazlan et al., 2020). Furthermore, dynamic nuances were rarely implemented, given that the performers of these transcriptions were expected to add their own intuitive expressions. However, the recapitulated analysis of the transcriptions suggested that the expressive properties of the traditional sounds of this music form would not be transmitted through music notation. Instead, it should be imitated via preliminary audio-visualisation of traditional performances with an emphasis on implicit musical features, such as the nature of the sound of melodic phrasings and embellishments.

It is expected that recapitulated analyses of the presented transcriptions would offer additional knowledge for ensemble collaborative practice sessions of traditional Malay *asli* music. Additionally, it was assumed that the six fully notated and transcribed Malay *asli* scores and their analyses would encourage awareness and knowledge that would sustain the worldwide dissemination of this unique syncretic music form. While most articles discussing the Malay *asli* traditional form are mostly available in the Malay language, this article intends to provide researchers, educators, and students with information on the musical analysis of notated songs in addition to the literature sources. The validation process to confirm the validity of the modified transcriptions was completed during performance occasions, and it was proven that Malay *asli* traditional music transcriptions could serve as educational materials for classical instrumentalists developing their analytical and intuitive approaches to their performances. Moreover, these transcriptions provide musical awareness and new semantic meaning of Malay *asli* music from an epistemological perspective for classical chamber ensemble players.

Unexpectedly, limitations in the creation of transcriptions and recapitulated analysis arose due to the lack of relevant sources in certain song transcriptions and reference materials in similar studies (Ayderova et al., 2017; Matusky & Tan, 2017). Thus, the hope is that this article will inspire young researchers to create other fully notated Malay *asli* music transcriptions for each voice and to write out descriptions of musical analysis for other songs. This will help sustain, preserve, and develop this music form not only in oral transmissions but also in music transcriptions.

In conclusion, there are opportunities for further research and explorations of analytical and intuitive approaches (Gritten, 2005) by classic musicians learning and performing the distinctive rhythmic styles of Malay *asli* music.



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### Web Sites

**web 1.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9W8V6Xs2Cl>

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**web 3.** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whdP93nnSBI&list=PLsEwXDuh\\_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp\\_kC1I&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whdP93nnSBI&list=PLsEwXDuh_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp_kC1I&index=3)

**web 4.** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSCgtFsFuGU&list=PLsEwXDuh\\_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp\\_kC1I&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSCgtFsFuGU&list=PLsEwXDuh_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp_kC1I&index=4)

**web 5.** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F3lZdn5ew4&list=PLsEwXDuh\\_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp\\_kC1I&index=5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F3lZdn5ew4&list=PLsEwXDuh_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp_kC1I&index=5)

**web 6.** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GjXlhxcqX0&list=PLsEwXDuh\\_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp\\_kC1I&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GjXlhxcqX0&list=PLsEwXDuh_-MAKPjRUtCk8GOLOrLp_kC1I&index=6)

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