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## Editorial

This issue of the Malaysian Music Journal contains a range of topics that span a diversity of musical cultures, environments and practices. It is an eclectic compilation from six scholars, all of whom work in the university sector in Malaysia. Articles discuss research on the sustainability and cultural identities in a variety of Indonesian ensembles, music and locations; the impact of noise exposure in the Malaysian environment; the development of effective choral pedagogies in Malaysian communities; analysis of score and performance practice in works for guitar; and a reflective piece reviews the status and benefits of practice-led methods in music research.

In the first article, *Sustainability Strategies Among Balinese Heritage Ensembles*, Made Mantle Hood contributes a robust discourse on heritage ensembles in Bali, on the instruments and repertoire, and the ways in which communities access and maintain them. Approaches to sustainability, community partnerships, industry and ritual are expounded through a perspicacious intersection of theory and practice.

In the second article, *Tradition, Kreasi Baru and Ethnotainment: Three Representational Kakula Spheres Among the To Kaili of Central Sulawesi*, Mayco Santaella discusses the impact of cultural policies and changing identities on traditional performance practices, reflecting political and cultural transformations that have occurred. Santaella draws parallels between styles of compositions and performances that have become a contemporary expression of Kailiness through the performing arts.

Having moved to Malaysia from the hills outside Melbourne several years ago, I have observed the invasiveness and high levels of noise in some parts of the country, and have often thought of the effect on analytical listening and hearing this might have. Chan Jan Cheong addresses the issue of environmental noise and its impact on Malaysians in *Noise Exposure in the Malaysian Living Environment from a Music Education Perspective*. An intersection of statistics of noise levels and reflections on a perceived threat to the quality of life is discussed. Connecting the issue to music education and student learning represents a novel approach, and a crucially important one for future living and learning quality.

Andrew Blackburn's extensive experience as conductor of a large number of choirs in Australia contributes a unique view to learning in our fourth article: *A Model For an Effective Note Teaching and Learning Strategy For Community Choirs, Incorporating Malay Folk and Childrens' Song Material Exemplars*. This paper identifies pedagogical difficulties encountered by directors of community choirs in Malaysia and elsewhere, and offers suggestions for effective leadership. The role of the choir director as music teacher is explored, and proposals are offered to enhance and facilitate the development of skills for a range of choristers' ability levels. Repertoire exemplars from Malay folk-song sources and performance arrangements are provided.

Nathan Fischer's article, *Pride, Pedagogy, and Performance: Getaran Jiwa, Variations on a Malaysian Song, Op. 125 by John Duarte*, presents an interesting investigation of a work for classical guitar. Duarte, an English composer, utilised the well-known Malaysian song by composer P. Ramlee in this work. Fischer's perceptive analyses of score, techniques, and transcription are focused towards developing local pedagogy and performance practice through this medium.

The final article in this issue confronts practice-led research methods as they pertain to music performance. My own experience as a flautist/researcher has motivated a personal research pathway that is central to my life as a musician, and based on information and practice accumulated across a broad spectrum of professional activity. This experience has impelled a personal enthusiasm and pro-active academic life with regard to artistic practice-led and based research methods. The article explores ideas on what this method is, argues for its acceptance, argues for the establishment of dialectic models that combine theory with practice, and reflects on the substantial benefits and potentials that flow from this engagement. Underlining this investigation is the presence of a particular cultural background and bias – with an emphasis on contemporary Western art music – which I acknowledge impels questioning, creative and sometimes unconventional solutions, and the articulation of the artist’s perspective by the artist. It is a perspective equally relevant to Malaysian research.

As chief editor of the Malaysian Music Journal, I have contributed this article to share my own experience and reflections on my specialist field with a research community that is now looking for guidance in this area. The article has undergone the same double blind peer review processing as all others submitted for this journal.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the editorial and advisory boards of the Malaysian Music Journal, our team of reviewers and, especially, our authors for their assistance with achieving publication of this issue. The importance of giving ‘voice’ to musicologists and practitioners through this journal remains highly valuable to our contemporary academic discourse, and provides a rich and manifold contribution to our engagements with, and widening understandings of, music in Malaysia and abroad.

**Jean Penny**

Chief Editor

Malaysian Music Journal